

**Sharon Public Schools  
Sharon, MA**



**Elementary Handbook  
2021-2022**

This handbook can be translated for you. Este manual se puede traducir para usted.  
Это руководство может быть переведено для Вас. 这本手册可以为您被翻译。

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**The Sharon School Committee and the administration of the Sharon Public Schools review district policies on a continuous basis. Updates are sometimes made after the beginning of a school year that can not be reflected in a Student / Parent Handbook that was finalized in late June. Therefore, it is important to note that any policy referenced in this handbook may have an updated version on the district website. For the most recent version of all school district policies, please visit the district website at [www.sharon.k12.ma.us](http://www.sharon.k12.ma.us). Policies can be found under the "School Committee" heading.**

# SHARON ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Sharon, Massachusetts

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Sharon Public Schools! It is our goal to provide the learning experiences needed for your child to develop to his/her potential. In order to meet your child's intellectual needs, we must also strive to meet his/her physical, social, and emotional needs.

Success in meeting students' needs requires the cooperation of home and school. Open communication must exist in order for us to develop the best educational program for all children. The more information we share, the better we can work together to create a positive and productive learning experience.

We are committed to joining with you in fostering the development of individuals who feel positive about themselves as learners and who are thoughtful and caring of others.

Through this handbook we hope you will gain a fuller perspective on the Sharon Public Schools. The policies are listed with their reference letters. A complete copy of each policy is available in the Central Administration Office or at each school office. In addition, policies revised by the Sharon School Committee during the school year will not be revised in this handbook until its next scheduled update. However, the most recent policy will be in effect. Families can also visit the district website for a full list of updated policies at: [http://www.sharon.k12.ma.us/pages/Sharon Public Schools/Main Menu/School Committee](http://www.sharon.k12.ma.us/pages/Sharon_Public_Schools/Main_Menu/School_Committee). **Have a great year!**

**Dr. Dion, Mr. Madden, Dr. Reynolds**

**Please see the elementary building Opening Guides for specific information as it relates to COVID routines and procedures.**

## MISSION STATEMENT of the SHARON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Sharon Public Schools, in partnership with the community, has as its mission the responsibility to prepare students to live in a rapidly changing society. Together we will provide an environment that maximizes the student's academic, artistic, social, emotional, and physical development. This atmosphere will encourage each individual to develop the skills and sensitivity for living effectively and responsibly.

### Sharon School Committee

Tania Lewis/Chair  
Wenxiao Tiano/Secretary  
Avi Shemtov

Veronica Wiseman/Vice Chair  
Adam Shain

Julie Rowe  
Prisnel Dominique

### Elementary Administration

#### **Cottage Street Elementary School**

30 Cottage Street 781-784-1580

Principal: Mr. Kevin Madden

Assistant Principal: Ms. Caitrin O'Rourke

#### **East Elementary School**

45 Wilshire Drive 781-784-1551

Principal: Dr. Darrin B. Reynolds

Assistant Principal: Mrs. Cheryl Carlson

#### **Heights Elementary School**

454 South Main Street 781-784-1595

Principal: Dr. Lisa Dion

Assistant Principal: Mr. Mark Crehan

**Central Administration 781-784-1570**

Dr. Peter Botelho, Superintendent  
Dr. Meg Dussault, Assistant Superintendent  
Mrs. Jessica Murphy, Director of Student Services  
Dr. Angela Burke, Director of Curriculum and Instruction  
Mr. Anthony Kopacz, Director of Facilities

Mrs. Claire Jones, METCO Program (1554 x8046)  
Mrs. Lisa Robinson, Early Childhood Director (784-1575)  
Mrs. Fran Derry Transportation (784-1545)  
Dr. Meg Dussault, Director of Community Ed. (784-2333)  
Mrs. Tina Kemp (Math, x9017), Mrs. Amy Harvey (ELA, x 9018)

**Program Coordinators/Supervisors**

<p><b><u>PROCEDURES</u></b></p>
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*In accordance with all relevant and appropriate state and federal laws, the Sharon Public Schools does not discriminate in its programs, services, and course of study based on the student's race, color, sex, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or disability.*

**IMPORTANT/EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

Emergency Forms are sent home at the beginning of each year (or on registration for new students). It is critical that all sections of these forms are filled out accurately, and are kept up to date as the year progresses.

Sharon Public Schools uses an electronic notification system that will allow us to communicate with you quickly in the event of public safety, emergency, school closings, information regarding school meetings and your student's attendance or account balance. Emergency notification to you will be through your home phone, and "regular" communications through email. Please supply us with email addresses and any additional phone numbers, either a land line or cell, that can be used to notify you. **In order to ensure that everyone has access to this service, it is critical that all families read and sign off on this handbook.**

**A copy of any legal documents related to parental rights must be on file in the school office.** In the case of a restraining order, a photo must be on file.

**PARENTAL AND/OR COMMUNITY CONCERNS**

It is the belief of the Sharon School Committee and the Administration that the best interests of our students are served whenever teachers and parents work together on behalf of the children. Therefore, it is essential that all attempts to resolve problems be initiated quickly and carefully.

The Sharon School Committee has adopted the following guidelines to be used by parents or the public in order to expedite information giving and/or problem solving:

- (1) Questions and problems concerning individual students must first be addressed to the teacher or staff member in question;
- (2) If unresolved, these matters and/or problems concerning individual students, departments, or schools should be directed to the appropriate principal or program administrator;

(3) If the matter is still unresolved, or in the event that questions and/or problems concerning the entire school system occur, they should be directed to the Superintendent of Schools;

(4) If the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee cannot bring about a satisfactory resolution to the matter, it may be brought to the School Committee. This should be done in writing by sending the correspondence to the attention of the Chair of the School Committee at 75 Mountain Street. The Chair may decide that action is required by the full School Committee and that the matter will be placed on a regular agenda for discussion and action. The sender will be notified of the date and time.

## STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential for success in school. The Committee recognizes that parents/guardians of children attending our schools have special rights as well as responsibilities, one of which is to ensure that their children attend school regularly, in accordance with state law.

Therefore, students may be excused temporarily from school attendance for the following reasons: illness or quarantine; bereavement or serious illness in family; weather so inclement as to endanger the health of the child; and observance of religious holidays. The principal or designee of each school may excuse cases of necessary absence for other excusable causes not exceeding 7 day sessions or 14 half day sessions in any period of 6 months.

Parents/guardians will promptly notify the school of any absence or tardiness of a child. This will be required in advance for types of absences where advance notice is possible. Each school will establish the method by which parents/guardians shall notify the school in the event of absence or tardiness. If the absence is for a reason other than those reasons allowed under this policy or in the school handbook, then the absence will be considered "unexcused."

### ABSENCES DUE TO ILLNESS

In all events, and regardless of how many absences have occurred to date, students should stay home if:

- A temperature over 100°F. Please remember that Tylenol, Advil, etc. can mask the effects of a fever. Your child should be fever-free (without medication) for 24 hours before returning to school.
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea (unrelated to a known, non-communicable condition) within 24 hours before returning to school
- A severe cold with fever, sneezing, and thickened nasal discharge
- A cough that keeps a child awake at night, worsens with increased activity, or is combined with other symptoms
- A persistent red, sore throat, especially if the tonsils are enlarged
- A severe and persistent earache
- Redness in the whites of the eyes, yellow discharge, and matted lashes are symptoms of conjunctivitis (pinkeye). A doctor should be consulted, as this may be highly contagious.
- Rashes can be difficult to evaluate. If they are all over the body, blistering, oozing, or painful, they could be a sign of a contagious infection. Please check with your school nurse or your doctor before you send your child to school.

If you are unsure whether to send your child to school, please call your school nurse. If you are keeping

your child home from school, please call and notify your school on the day of absence. In instances of chronic or irregular absence reportedly due to illness, the school administration may request a physician's statement regarding the absences.

Sharon High School Nurse:	781-784-1554, ext 8007
Sharon Middle School Nurse:	781- 784-1560, ext 6005
Cottage Elementary School Nurse:	781- 784-1580, ext 1010
East Elementary School Nurse:	781- 784-1551, ext 2010
Height Elementary School Nurse:	781- 784-1595 ext 3230
The Children's Center Nurse:	781- 784-1594 ext 6604

### HOME OR HOSPITAL TUTORING

Students who will be out of school for an extended or chronic illness may be eligible for home or hospital tutoring if the absence will extend beyond, or are reasonably expected to accrue to, fourteen days and the situation meets the home/hospital regulations. (603 CMR 28.03 (3) (c), 28.04 (4)).

### MAKE-UP WORK

Students who have missed school or a class are expected to make up missed assignments, tests, and other school work. Students who know that they will miss school because of planned activities (including college visits, exchange trips, field trips, academic competitions, etc.) should notify the affected teachers in advance in order to make arrangements with the teacher for making up work and with classmates to take class notes and record assignments on their behalf.

### EARLY DISMISSAL

No pupil will be dismissed from school before the close of the school day, except in case of illness or other emergency, unless the school receives a request from the parent/guardian. All cases of early dismissal will be recorded. Students may not leave the school building until the person receiving the student has been properly identified. No student may leave the school grounds without permission of the principal or his/her designee.

### UNEXCUSED OR CHRONIC ABSENCES

An unexcused absence or tardy may include, but may not be limited to, repetitive or chronic absence or tardiness due to illness or injury not documented by a doctor or other medical professionals, truancy, family vacations, undocumented absences, and non-emergency family situations.

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

Students' understanding of the importance of day-to-day schoolwork is an important factor in the shaping of

their character. Parents/guardians can help their children by not allowing them to miss school needlessly.

Chronic absenteeism may lead to academic failure for the year and retention of the student.

### UNEXCUSED ABSENCE NOTIFICATION

Each school is required to notify a student's parent/guardian within 3 days of the student's absence in the event the parent/guardian has not informed the school of the absence. Each school will use reasonable efforts to confirm all absences of children in grades K – 12 on the same day, if possible.

Each school will notify a student's parent/guardian if a student has at least 5 days in which the student has an unexcused absence for 2 or more periods. In such case, each Principal, by whatever title they may be known, or designee shall contact any student and that student's parent/guardian to develop action steps to improve student attendance. The parties may seek input from other relevant school staff and/or officials from relevant public safety, health and human service, housing, and nonprofit agencies.

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

### HABITUAL TRUANCY

Under state law, a student may be considered “habitually truant” for willfully accruing 8 unexcused absences in a quarter. In such case, school officials may file a CRA (Child Requiring Assistance) or a CHINS (Child in Need of Services) petition with the Juvenile Court which could result in a hearing before a Juvenile Court Judge. Prior to the filing of a CRA, Families and Students will be required to work with school administrators to improve the student’s attendance.

### DROPOUT PREVENTION

No student who has not graduated from high school shall be considered to have permanently left public school unless an administrator of the school which the student last attended has sent notice within a period of 5 days from the student's tenth consecutive absence to the student and the parent or guardian of that student in both the primary language of the parent or guardian, to the extent practicable, and English. The notice shall initially offer at least 2 dates and times for an exit interview between the superintendent, or a designee, and the student and the parent or guardian of the student to occur prior to the student permanently leaving school and shall include contact information for scheduling the exit interview. The notice shall indicate that the parties shall agree upon a date and time for the exit interview, and that interview shall occur within 10 days after the sending of the notice. The time for the exit interview may be extended at the request of the parent or guardian and no extension shall be for longer than 14 days. The superintendent, or a designee, may proceed with any such interview without a parent or guardian if the superintendent, or a designee, makes a good faith effort to include the parent or guardian. The exit interview shall be for the purpose of discussing the reasons for the student permanently leaving school and to consider alternative education or other placements.

The superintendent or a designee shall convene a team of school personnel, such as the principal, guidance counselor, teachers, attendance officer and other relevant school staff, to participate in the exit interview with the student and the parent or guardian of the student. During the exit interview, the student shall be given information about the detrimental effects of early withdrawal from school, the benefits of earning a high

school diploma and the alternative education programs and services available to the student.

The provisions of this section shall not apply to a student who has completed the regular course of education, or apply to a student whose absences have been excused, nor shall this section be construed to permanently exclude a student who wishes to resume his education.

### POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The School District is required to comply with state laws on school attendance. If there is a conflict between state law and this policy, then state law will prevail.

The School Committee directs the Superintendent to develop guidelines for the implementation of this policy and to publish these guidelines in the appropriate handbooks. These guidelines will include procedures to monitor student attendance, to communicate with parents/guardians about student attendance, and to intervene if a student has a pattern of poor attendance.

SOURCE: MASC October 2014

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 76:1; 76:1B; 76:16; 76:18; 76:20

REVISED: April \_\_\_, 2019

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER: NO SCHOOL OR DELAYED OPENING-**

The following plans will be in effect during days of adverse weather or other emergencies:

**A. No School:** If conditions are severe, school will be canceled. The No School Announcement will be made by 6:30 A.M. through electronic communication system phone calls, by Radio Stations WRKO (680) OR WBZ (1030), or Television Channels 4, 5, 7, cable channel 22 and on the Sharon Schools Website. **NOTE: An Electronic Communication System Phone Call will go out to all families.**

All classes, school activities, Kindergarten Early Drop-off, Before-School Care, After-School Care, Enrichment Classes and Adult Education will be canceled for the day.

**B. One Hour Delayed Opening:** Under this alternative plan, the opening of school and all bus pick-ups will be DELAYED ONE HOUR. This simply means that the:

HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL will open at 9:50 A.M., with the first bus pick-up at 8:45 A.M., -A.M. Kindergarten will start at 9:50 A.M., pick-up at regular time.

COTTAGE STREET SCHOOL will open at 9:40 A.M., with the first bus pick-up at 9:10 A.M., A.M. Kindergarten will start at 9:55 A.M., pick-up at regular time.

EAST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL will open at 10:00 A.M., with the first bus pick-up at 9:10 A.M., A.M. Kindergarten will start at 10 A.M., pick-up at regular time.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER - will open at 9:45 A.M., with the first van pick-up at 9:00 A.M.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION BEFORE-CARE DROP-OFF – **NO DELAY** unless parents are contacted otherwise. Program will open at the usual 7:15 am start time for those children enrolled.

**PARENTS ARE REMINDED NOT TO DROP THEIR CHILD OFF EARLIER THAN THE DELAYED OPENING TIME. THERE IS NO ADULT SUPERVISION AND DRIVEWAYS MAY NOT BE PLOWED.**



Minor adjustments in pick-up times may be necessary due to the number of children riding on school buses and the length of individual routes. The One-Hour Delayed Opening announcement will be carried by the same radio and television stations and announced on our electronic communication system starting at 6:30 A.M., and will be specifically announced as such, i.e., "ONE HOUR DELAYED OPENING FOR ALL SCHOOLS IN SHARON." On that day, schools will be dismissed at their regular times:

Heights Elementary School	3:05 P.M.
East Elementary School	3:15 P.M.
Cottage Street School	3:10 P.M.

Meals, afternoon dismissals, and all other school activities will take place at their regularly scheduled times, unless otherwise indicated.

**C. Early Dismissal:** In the event that school is closed early for weather or other emergencies, the following procedure will be followed:

If an emergency is called after school is in session for the day (power outages, snow, no heat, other emergencies), the principal will notify the superintendent of any building level emergency and the superintendent will determine the course of action.

**Staged Dismissal:** If the Superintendent decides that a gradual dismissal of the student population is the best course of action, a Staged Dismissal will be initiated. A Staged Dismissal is an early release of students ONLY to parents or emergency contacts who come to the school to pick up their children before regular dismissal time due to weather or other emergencies. An electronic phone call and/or email calls this plan into action. The plan reduces the school population until buses can take home remaining students at close to the regular time.

**Parent Notification under Staged Dismissal:** Parents and/or emergency contacts will be notified to pick up children immediately. All afternoon programs will be canceled. (Electronic calls, Room parent call lists will be activated.) Office staff will dismiss students to parents or to those on the emergency contact list.

**Staff Dismissals:** If the condition of the roads is an issue and as the student population decreases with parent pickups, the superintendent will allow the principals to dismiss staff who live far away to leave early.

**Administration:** Central and building administration are expected to remain on site until all buses report in that they have delivered children home. The Transportation Supervisor will notify the Central Office staff who will notify the building administrators.

**Early Dismissal:** If the Superintendent decides that a dismissal prior to the close of the school day is the best course of action, an Early Dismissal will be initiated. This is generally due to road conditions that require sending children home but with the understanding that, given deteriorating road conditions, elementary students will arrive home close to the regular dismissal time.

**High School** buses will be dispatched to the high school to pick up and transport children home approximately 45 minutes before the normal dismissal time (dismissal around 1:15PM).

**Middle School** buses will arrive at the Middle School for student pickup approximately 30 minutes earlier than the normal (2:15) dismissal time (early dismissal around 1:45).

**Heights Elementary School** buses will arrive at the first school (Heights) for student pickup approximately 20-25 minutes earlier than the normal (3:05) dismissal time (early dismissal around 2:35).

**East and Cottage Elementary School** buses will arrive at the second and third schools (East & Cottage) for student pickup approximately 20-25 minutes earlier than the normal (3:15) dismissal time (dismissal around 2:45).

**Evacuation:** This may be used to move the school population off site to a different dismissal location during emergencies that require evacuation. The electronic communication system will notify parents where to pick up children.

**Snow – No School Days**

Electronic Communication System Calls Parents: 6:00 AM for High School and Middle School

6:30 AM for Elementary School

**In the event a parent cannot be reached, children will be transported to the Community Education After School Care Program at Cottage, East, and Heights. Parents will be responsible for payment at the rate of \$20.00 per child during the 2021-2022 school year for each occurrence. The After School Care Program operates until 6:00pm unless a specific notification is made to the opposite.**

**Note: Community Ed After-school Care and Before-School Care programs most often are open at regular times. Any changes to After or Before Care will be announced specifically.**

**Please make sure that all "student emergency forms" on file at your child's school are up-to-date.**

**WE ASK THAT YOU DO NOT CALL CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION NOR THE INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS FOR DELAYED OR NO-SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENTS. It is important to leave contact information so that you can be reached. Please note that in the event of a power failure, house phones that rely on electricity to operate (cable phones, wireless phones, etc) do not work. It is a good safety precaution to leave cell phone numbers and to have a regular “wired-in” telephone in your house.**

**ONLINE ACCOUNTS**

Sharon Schools maintains various databases to which parents have access. These systems help ensure accurate information about students, emergency contact information, grades/student progress, and the ability to register and pay for various items.

- **Powerschool.** Powerschool is our current Student Information System, which holds demographic and academic information on our students. Parents (and secondary students) receive log-in information upon registration.
- **Blackboard** Our school and classroom websites are hosted by Blackboard. Homework, assignments and some class information are shared on each site.
- **My Payments Plus.** SPS uses an online payment and registration system called MyPaymentsPlus, which allows families to pay for food in the cafeterias, pay for bus fees, Full Day K, and sign up for some Community Ed programs. Parents will get log-in information at the beginning of the year.

- **Google G-Suite for Education.** SPS uses Google G-Suite for Education with all students. Students are given accounts beginning in first grade. Information is kept secure and use of these accounts adheres to our Acceptable Use Policy. Any concerns or questions about Google Apps may be directed to Dr. Burke, Director of Curriculum & Instruction.

## **LUNCH**

**LUNCH AND BREAKFAST IS FREE FOR ALL STUDENTS FOR THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR.**

A lunch period including outdoor recess is scheduled daily. Accounts can and should be maintained for lunch, milk only, and a la carte items. A computerized pre-purchase program is available for parent convenience (and also really keeps the lines moving more quickly). On workshop days, a bag lunch can be purchased.

No fast food, caffeinated sodas or candy can be brought into or delivered to the lunchroom (or used for snack). Parents may not bring in birthday foods or treats to cafeterias. No low-nutrition foods may be served or sold by any group until lunch is over. School lunch menus are posted on the web site. Allergen free cafeteria tables are available for students with allergies to eat their lunch. These tables will be cleaned with separate materials to prevent contamination from other tables. Paper copies are available on request (*The School Department's Wellness Policy (ADF) is posted on the web site.*).

The cafeteria is supervised by School Assistants.

### **Lunchroom Rules**

This school year we are eating lunches outdoors as much as the weather permits. When eating indoors, students will be split between their classrooms and hallways to ensure six feet of distance while eating.

1. School Assistants are in charge of the lunch period. They should be treated with respect and kindness at all times.
2. Follow rules of good manners and politeness. School rules of respect, safety and cooperation are always in effect in the lunchroom.
3. Talk in a low voice to your neighbors. Noise making, popping bags or cups are unacceptable.
4. Do not leave your seat without raising your hand.
5. Pick up all trash and be sure the area in which you are sitting is clean.

## **RECESS**

If your child is in attendance at school, he/she is expected to participate in all aspects of a school day, including recess. Recess is an integral part of a child's day at school. It provides a time for physical activity and social interaction. Please be sure children are dressed appropriately for the weather. Children are excused from recess when a written medical excuse from a physician is sent to school or at the discretion of the school nurse.

### **Playground Rules**

1. Play in designated areas.
2. No one may leave the playground area without the permission of an adult.
3. On swings, swing back and forth only. No standing, twisting or side-ways movement is permitted on swings.
4. The following activities are considered dangerous and are not allowed on the playground:

*Tackle football*

*Rock and sand throwing*

*Pushing, shoving, kicking, wrestling, and rough play*

*Games played with a hard ball*

*Throwing snowballs and/or climbing on snow banks*

5. Returning to class must be quiet and orderly. At the end of recess, line up promptly in a straight line.

## **TOYS**

Children are not allowed to bring toys, electronic devices, iPods/Music players, Yu-Ghi-O/Pokemon cards or other fads, or valuable items to school. Too often they are lost, misplaced or stolen and are distracting to the learning environment.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Electronic devices and equipment, including but not limited to cell phones, music players, smart phones, video-game systems, CD and/or DVD players, laser pointers, voice or video recorders, portable radios or televisions are not to be turned on, used, or visible during the school day unless written or verbal permission has been granted by the administration. (In emergency situations, violations of this policy will be taken into consideration.)

Students found using any of the aforementioned electronic devices in violation of this policy will be directed to the administration at the school and the device will be confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the day.

The principal and/or his/her designee has the right to adapt or modify any consequences on a case by case basis.

It should also be noted that the school is not in any way responsible for lost or stolen property; therefore, it is our expectation that students who find items of value, such as electronic devices, return them to the office immediately. Failure to do so will subject a student to the disciplinary consequences associated with being in possession of stolen property.

## **Cell Phones**

Since cell phones are very common, they must be turned off before entering the building. Cell phone use including but not limited to the following are not allowed in school: making/receiving calls, text messaging, emailing, use of social media, taking photographs, and recording video. No form of photography or video recording is permitted on school property, including on school-provided transportation. Owners of cell phones should be cognizant of the legal difficulties that improper use can present.

## **Inappropriate Technology Use**

Use of technology in schools is guided by the district Acceptable Use Policy (see policy IJNDB), grade-specific Responsible Use Agreements, and district Social Media policies (see SC policies). Legal consequences (as well as school consequences) are possible if any devices or computers are used inappropriately including sending inappropriate or bullying messages or taking a picture or video of someone without the person's permission. Students and parents should be aware that all in-school technology use is monitored by tech staff.

Any students who make requests of classmates for revealing or inappropriate photos or videos or students who send or post revealing or inappropriate photos or videos will be subject to discipline including suspension from school. The school will address any inappropriate communication through electronic devices. This behavior can happen at any time or any place and will be subject to school discipline issue as well as potentially a criminal issue. Similar to the district's and state's language on bullying, any action,

regardless of location, that creates a hostile/unsafe learning environment for a student or disrupts the educational environment will be subject to discipline by school personnel.

## **HOMEWORK**

Recent research about homework has found the Sharon Schools re-examining our practice in this area. Today, we view homework as another learning opportunity for students but one that must be meaningful and not be seen as a default that will happen every night. Teachers will give homework that is high-quality and advances the learning begun in the classroom. Teachers are not expected to give homework every night. Teachers will try to differentiate homework based on student needs and abilities.

Homework is a tool to reinforce and extend skills and concepts taught in school, and to build students' abilities to learn independently. Homework provides students with opportunities to supplement work done in school and to apply their learning to the world around them. Homework gives students experiences in following directions, managing time and developing good study habits, and organizational skills. Homework assignments and responsibilities can take many forms, including drill, extra practice, raising questions for study, responding to reading, collecting data, preparing special projects, research, and preparation for tests and quizzes. Variety in homework assignments, open-ended activities and modifications allow for individual differences in needs, abilities and interests.

Parental support is a key to making homework a positive experience. Parents can help their children to become independent and responsible learners by showing an interest in their children's homework through guiding, encouraging and clarifying. By supporting their children in taking responsibility for completing a task from start to finish, parents can help their children develop positive attitudes toward learning and a sense of competence. However, if difficulties or frustrations develop or if the student spends excessive amounts of time on his or her homework, these concerns should be brought to the teacher's attention.

**In addition to regular reading**, the following GUIDELINES are recommended for reasonable amounts of homework in each grade ON AVERAGE. These should not be seen as expectations:

Grade K:	Informal assignments (i.e., extra practice, collecting materials for the classroom)
Grade 1:	Approximately 10 minutes, two times per week
Grade 2:	Approximately 20 minutes three times per week
Grade 3:	Approximately 30 minutes four times per week
Grade 4:	Approximately 40 minutes four times per week
Grade 5:	Approximately 50 minutes four times per week

Since homework is based on prior class instruction, teachers will not provide homework assignments for students who are going on vacation during school time.

## **STATE MANDATED TESTING**

As mandated by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 766, all children entering Kindergarten are screened to evaluate motor, cognitive, visual, perceptual, and language development. Kindergarten screening is scheduled before students start kindergarten.

State regulations require that students in grades 3-5 take the MCAS test. However, parents should notify the school principal if they have questions regarding their child not participating in this assessment. Parents of

students that do not take the MCAS test will be informed that this reports negatively on the school and district. The testing schedule for each year will be posted on the school calendars as soon as specific dates are set.

## **REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS**

On-going efforts are made to keep parents informed about the educational program and their child's progress. The formal reporting system for Grades K-5 includes scheduled conferences that are held in the fall and spring. Report cards are issued to students in Grades K-5 in February and at the end of the school year. If you wish to speak to your child's teacher between scheduled conferences, please contact the teacher to arrange a mutually satisfactory time that will not disrupt classroom activities.

## **ALICE/Lockdown/Evacuation Procedures for Visitors/Volunteers**

Parents visiting or volunteering at school may find themselves in the building during a fire drill or emergency situation. During a fire drill, visitors should leave the building by the nearest exit and immediately report to the staff official with the two-way radio (walkie-talkie), usually the principal or assistant principal.

During any other emergency situation, the **ALICE** protocol will be implemented. During lockdown, visitors in a classroom should stay in the classroom with the children and teacher and remain in place until the lockdown is over. Visitors in non-classroom areas such as cafeterias or workrooms should report to the office immediately and stay there until the lockdown is over. These types of situations illustrate the importance of ALL visitors of signing in at the office and wearing a Visitor's Badge.

- Soft lockdowns are those where doors to the school are locked and limited movement is allowed inside the building. Hard lockdowns are those where everyone inside the building must move to a safe, locked area and remain in place until further notice.
- All adults leaving the building with children must carry and be able to use a 2-way radio to communicate back to the building.
- All adults in the building are responsible to ensure that no one unauthorized is in the building. Ask individuals who they are and if they need help. Report anything unusual to the office immediately.
- During lockdowns, stay away from doors and windows, pull shades down. In a hard lockdown, move children to a safe spot in the room away from doors and windows.

## Pledge of Allegiance

In 1942, *Barnette v. West Virginia*, the Supreme Court ruled that students do not have to stand or recite the Pledge of Allegiance which is part of our daily routine per Massachusetts law (M.G.L. - Chapter 71, Section 69 ). Those who choose to use the freedom granted to them by the Constitution of the United States may not disrupt those who are reciting the pledge which includes talking during the reading of the Pledge in buildings.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

Open House (Back to School Night): Early in the school year, an Open House is held for all parents/guardians to inform them about school programs, curriculum, and teacher expectations.

School or PTO Newsletter: Communication is regularly available which features information about programs and activities at the school. School websites include a calendar to highlight upcoming school events and may also include a summary of PTO activities.

Student Progress: In Grades K through 5, report cards are issued two times per year (February and June). Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled on a regular basis two times per year (November and April).

Communicating with Teachers: Teachers often contact parents to gain their perspectives on issues and to share information. If parents have questions about their child's progress or problems arise, parents should contact the school and leave a message for the teacher. **Teachers will not be interrupted during the day to take phone calls or to check email.** There should be no expectation that teachers can properly communicate with parents while they are responsible for their classes.

Websites: Each elementary school has a website that posts information about school events and information related to school activities. Classroom homework and short and long term assignments will be posted on classroom websites.

School Office Phones: The school office serves as the center for the wide range of important activities. **Please do not call and ask the office to relay a message to your child in his/her classroom, or ask to speak with your child, unless it is an emergency.** All efforts are made to eliminate disruptions to classrooms. By sending a note to school, your concerns can be addressed appropriately.

*Student use of the Office Phone for social purposes or to retrieve forgotten items will be **strongly discouraged.***

All communications from outside of the school system are subject to review and approval by the Superintendent of Schools.

## **RELEASE OF DIRECTORY INFORMATION AND PHOTOS**

Often the media/press requests information regarding student awards, honors, scholarships, and sports or club memberships. Throughout the year, the local cable TV channel, newspaper, and school department will take pictures or write about school activities and students. It is the policy of the Sharon School Department to make this information routinely available **unless parents have requested in writing**, in advance, that they do not wish to have this information published. The school department will comply with parents' written requests. If they do not receive a written request, then they will proceed with the publication of student information as described above.

### **Release of Directory Information:**

According to FERPA (20 U.S.C. 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99): Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

**Children may not bring toys or other valued possessions to school.** The school will not be responsible for lost or stolen items. Each school has a Lost and Found area which parents are encouraged to check. Unclaimed items will be donated after a reasonable amount of time has been allotted for people to claim items and will be given to a designated shelter/charity. **Names should be written on EVERYTHING.**

Valuables that are found are kept in the office. Items lost on the bus are kept on the bus.

## **LOST BOOKS**

Students are responsible for replacing any lost school books. Students will pay a replacement fee equal to the value of the book and will be given a receipt. If the lost book is found, the replacement fee will be reimbursed.

## **INVITATIONS/NOTICES**

Students are not allowed to use the school as a vehicle to distribute any notices or invitations about private events. All notices that parents or students want distributed must be approved, in advance, by the Superintendent.

<b><u>STUDENT BEHAVIOR</u></b>
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Our aim is to build a safe, orderly, and productive school environment where students take responsibility, appreciate and respect themselves and others, and are cooperative. Sensitivity about the feelings of others is encouraged along with an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of the individual. We try to help students build self-esteem along with self-discipline and a sense of responsibility. In an effort to ensure that students understand expectations for behavior, the staff discusses and reviews the rules of behavior throughout the year.

It is expected that students will adhere to the rules consistently. When a student experiences difficulty with behavior, the staff will make every effort to respond reasonably and fairly. We expect students to understand that they are responsible for their actions and that consequences for their misbehavior will be applied. We also want parents to recognize that school is a learning environment and therefore, we are committed to helping all students learn from negative experiences, and not just issue punishments.

**The Sharon Public Schools has a zero tolerance policy for any behavior that interferes with the rights of others. This may include but is not limited to verbal threats, physical aggression, and any actions that endanger the safety of other students or adults. Such actions will result in a student being subject to suspension. The Principal may issue an emergency suspension when the student's actions and/or threats pose a potential danger to persons or property, and will immediately notify the Superintendent. The Police Department may be notified. Suspension is defined as separating the student both from other students and from regular school activities. The suspension may be implemented in school or out of school. When a student's action warrants a suspension, written notification will be sent to the parents with a copy placed in the student's permanent record. The student shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the Superintendent.**

## **GENERAL RULES**

1. Sexual harassment is prohibited by both federal and state statutes and will not be tolerated in the Sharon Public Schools.
2. Be courteous and kind to others. VERBAL DISRESPECT IS NOT TOLERATED.
3. Be considerate of the ideas and feelings of others.
4. Respect the rights and property of others.
5. Follow the directions of adults in authority.



6. Dangerous or illegal materials, or weapons are not allowed in school.
7. Appropriate school attire is expected at all times.
8. Clothing displaying offensive pictures, words, or slogans (i.e., promoting alcohol, drugs, etc.) is not allowed. Anyone wearing an inappropriate tee-shirt will be asked to turn it inside out. Clothing should also be both appropriate to the season and not too physically revealing. (For example, spaghetti straps, very short shorts or exposed midriffs are not allowed.)
9. Chewing gum and candy are not allowed.
10. Pushing, shoving, rough play, and fighting are unacceptable at any time.
11. Use of obscene, abusive, or profane language or gestures is unacceptable.
12. Take care of all materials, property, and equipment throughout the school.
13. Refrain from shouting or using loud voices in a school building.
14. **RUDE OR DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR AT ANY TIME IS NOT ALLOWED.**
15. Have your best manners ready at all times for visitors, guests, and presentations.
16. Help keep the school attractive, clean, and safe. Please use trash barrels inside and outside the building.
17. Walk into the school and walk at all times inside the school.
18. Items that are deemed inappropriate for a school setting will be taken away.
19. While school is in session, children and adults are not permitted to wear head coverings except for religious purposes.
20. Lockers and desks are the property of the school system. The principal reserves the right to inspect this equipment as needed.

### **CONSEQUENCES/DUE PROCESS**

All school rules concerning student discipline and consequences are intended to follow MGL 37H and 37H1/2. Students who break school rules will face various consequences depending on the type and severity of the infraction. Consequences include but are not limited to separation from the group, loss of privileges, school detention, conference with the principal and parents, and in-school or out-of-school suspension. Students will always be given the opportunity to express their views to the principal prior to any disciplinary action. **The principal or his/her designee has sole authority to determine the type and duration of any consequence, including limiting student participation in class if he/she deems the student's presence to be a negative impact on the educational environment of the class or school.**

A student who engages in any of the behaviors listed below will be suspended from school for a period of time lasting no less than ten (10) school days. The student will also be subject to an expulsion hearing (see *Expulsion*) and an immediate referral to the police department will be made which may result in court appearances and further court ordered discipline.

In-school suspension is not an option for the behaviors listed below.

1. Using, possessing, distributing, or selling controlled or banned substances or items purported to be controlled or banned substances, including but not limited to: drugs, alcohol, dangerous weapons, and pyrotechnics (see *Substance Abuse* and *Expulsion*)
2. Arson, or starting a fire
3. Assaulting or threatening serious bodily harm to, a member of the faculty, staff or other adult persons authorized to be on school property (see *Chapter 71, section 37H and 37H 1/2*)
4. Any assault or threat of violence that disrupts the operation of the school and/or requires the intervention of the police or other law enforcement.

The Principal retains the right and responsibility to all students and staff to issue penalties for acts not stated herein, to examine any mitigating factors that, in the Principal's judgment, should be considered, and to utilize penalties stated herein as guidelines (which may be adjusted to reflect the seriousness of the conduct in question). Furthermore, though progressive discipline is generally used, the Principal reserves the right to apply all provisions of this handbook consistent with what he/she determines to be in the best interest of the learning environment and educational processes in the school.

In all cases, the decision of the administration may be appealed.

## **DISCIPLINARY DUE PROCESS**

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

## **DISCIPLINE AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in this handbook. In addition to those due process protections afforded to all students, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and related regulations require that additional provisions be made for students who have been found eligible for special education services or who the school district knows or has reason to know might be eligible for such services. Students who have been found to have a disability that impacts upon a major life activity, as defined under §504 of the Rehabilitation Act, are, generally, also entitled to increased procedural protections prior to imposing discipline that will result in the student's removal for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or where there is a pattern of short term removals exceeding ten (10) school days in a given year. The following additional requirements apply to the discipline of students with disabilities:

- (1) The IEP for every student eligible for special education or related services shall indicate whether the student can be expected to meet the regular discipline code of the school or whether the code should be modified to address the student's individual needs.

- (2) Students with disabilities may be excluded from their programs for up to ten (10) school days to the extent that such sanctions would be applied to all students. Before a student with a disability can be excluded from his/her program for more than ten (10) consecutive school days in a given school year or subjected to a pattern of removal constituting a “change of placement”, building administrators, the parent(s)/guardian(s) and relevant members of the student’s IEP or 504 Team will meet to determine the relationship between the student’s disability and behavior (Manifestation Determination). In most instances, during disciplinary exclusions exceeding ten (10) school days in a single school year, the student shall have the right to receive services identified as necessary by the Team to provide him/her with a free appropriate public education during the period of exclusion.
- (3) If building administrators, the parent(s)/guardian(s) and relevant members of the student’s IEP or 504 Team determine that the student’s conduct was not a manifestation of the student’s disability, the school may discipline the student in accordance with the procedures and penalties applicable to all students but will continue to provide a free appropriate public education to those students with IEPs. The student’s Team will identify the services necessary to provide a free appropriate public education during the period of exclusion, review any existing behavior intervention plan or, where appropriate, conduct a functional behavioral assessment.
- (4) If building administrators, the parent(s)/guardian(s) and relevant members of the student’s IEP or 504 Team determine that the conduct giving rise to disciplinary action was a manifestation of the student’s disability, the student will not be subjected to further disciplinary removal or exclusion from the student’s current educational program based on that conduct (except for conduct involving weapons, drugs, or resulting in serious bodily injury to others) until the IEP or 504 Team develops, and the parent(s)/guardian(s) consent to a new placement or until the District obtains an order from a court or from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA) authorizing a change in the student’s placement. The student’s Team shall also review, and modify as appropriate, any existing behavior intervention plan or arrange for a functional behavioral assessment.
- (5) If a student with a disability possesses or uses illegal drugs, sells or solicits a controlled substance, possesses a weapon, or causes serious bodily injury to another on school grounds or at a school function, the District may place the student in an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) for up to forty-five (45) school days. A court or BSEA Hearing Officer may also order the placement of a student who presents a substantial likelihood of injury to self or others in an appropriate interim setting for up to forty-five (45) school days.

The following chart has been developed to clarify the consequences for certain behaviors. This chart, developed in conjunction with parents and the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center at BSC, also helps standardize the expectations and consequences for violating them across the three elementary schools. It is NOT meant to dictate staff or administrative responses to all behaviors but to act as a guide.

## Sharon Elementary Schools Behavior Consequences Guide\*

Behavior	1st Time	2nd Time	3rd Time	Beyond
Disrespect to adults or peers (Examples: Talking back, Mocking, Disrupting classroom)	Teacher speaks to child. Warning.	Teacher speaks to child. Loss of preferred activity. Parent Communication.	Principal speaks to child, Loss of preferred activities, Parent Conference.	Principal sets consequence including loss of preferred activity, separation from class, Plan developed. Possible Suspension
Hurtful Verbal or Written Remarks/ Teasing	Teacher speaks to child. Warning.	Teacher speaks to child. Loss of preferred activity. Parent Communication. Principal notified.	Principal speaks to child, Loss of preferred activities, Parent Conference.	Principal sets consequence including loss of preferred activity, separation from class, Plan developed. Possible Suspension
Lying	Teacher speaks to child. Warning.	Principal speaks to child, Warn, Note to parents. Loss of preferred activities.	Principal speaks to child, Further loss of preferred activities, Parent Conference.	Principal sets consequence including loss of preferred activities, separation from class, Suspension.
Stealing	Teacher speaks to child. Warning. Restitution. Principal informed.	Principal speaks to child, Loss of activities, restitution, parent notified.	Loss of preferred activities, P Conf, comm. service, restitution, Possible Suspension.	Restitution, Conference with Team, Refine plan. Suspension.
Cheating/Plagiarism	Teacher speaks to child. Warning. Principal informed. A zero given. Parents informed.	Principal speaks to child, zero given, parent conference with child.	Possible Suspension. Zero given, loss of activities.	Longer Suspension. Plan for re-integration. Conference.
Damaging property (either peer or school property)	Teacher speaks to child. Child repairs damage.	Principal speaks to child, Damage repaired, Note to parents.	Child repairs damage, Principal meets with parents, plan developed,	Child repairs damage, paperwork in permanent record. Suspension.

			community service performed.	
Verbal or Written Taunts or Threats (Examples: If you don't...I'm gonna... )	Teacher speaks to child. Warning. Principal informed.	Principal speaks to child, Loss of activities, restitution, parent notified.	Principal speaks to child. Loss of activities, separation from class, Possible suspension. Behavior plan developed.	Separation for extended periods, Suspension with plan for re-integration.
Encouraging peer bullying or aggressive behavior (Examples: Hey, go get Johnny. Being an “egger”)	Principal informed and involved. Students are educated. Parents are informed.	Principal speaks to child, loss of preferred activity. Parents are informed. School psychologist is involved.	Principal Conference. Work with school psychologist, Probable suspension.	Suspension then plan developed for re-integration.
Bullying/Cyber-bullying/Harassment (Persistent, continual statements, threats, treatment of an individual)	Principal informed and involved. Students are educated. Parents are informed.	Principal informed and involved. School psychologist is involved. Parents informed. Possible Suspension.	Principal Conference. Work with school psychologist, Probable suspension.	Suspension then plan developed for re-integration.
Physical threats (Examples: I'm gonna kill you. I'm gonna beat you up.)	Teacher speaks to child. Warning. Principal informed. Parents notified.	Principal Conference. Parents informed. Loss of preferred activities. Possible suspension.	Probable suspension. Parents involved. Possible work with school psychologist.	Longer suspension then plan developed for re-integration.
Physical attacks (Any hitting, punching, grabbing, kicking, etc. regardless of motive.)	Principal speak to child, Warn, Note to Parents. Possible Suspension.	Principal speaks to child, loss of preferred activities, Parent Conference. Probable Suspension.	Principal conference. Suspension. Develop behavior plan with a Team. Parents involved.	Longer Suspension with possible longer term ramifications.

- Please note. As stated earlier, this is a general guideline for discipline in the schools. The principal and/or his/her designee has the right to adapt or modify this chart on a case by case basis.

## Important Explanations and Definitions

**Please see School Committee BULLYING policy**

### **Bullying Procedure based on MGL 2404:**

- Principal/or designee investigates preliminary aspects of alleged bullying incident.

- Principal/or designee talks to accuser and accused.
- Principal/or designee determines whether the conflict is deemed *bullying*. If so, a bullying incident form is completed by the principal/designee.

If the incident is deemed bullying:

1. Complete the bullying incident form:
2. Carry out the action plan which includes:
  - -Interview target
  - -Interview child accused of bullying
  - -Develop a summary of findings
  - -Identify action taken (education of school values and behavioral goals as well as consequence assigned)
  - -Notify parents

### **Definitions:**

**Preferred Activities:** Students may be removed from activities they like including recess, Friday activities, electives, etc.

**SST:** Student Support Team, a standard format in all Mass schools where teachers confer about students in need.

**Boxes shaded in gray** are behaviors that may have suspension as an **immediate** consequence.

**Bullying:** Repetitive hurtful behavior where a power imbalance is present.

**Incident Reports:** State of Mass requires that all suspensions are reported to DOE. SPS also has forms kept in-house.

### **Explanations:**

**Confidentiality:** Often parents ask what is going on with another child who caused a problem or was involved in an incident. As a school, we have a legal obligation NOT to discuss other students' situations with anyone but his/her parents/guardians. While we may want to share information, we simply can not by law. Please know that we will be following this chart and/or setting up plans and consequences to ensure the safest possible environment for our school communities.

**Principal Discretion:** Depending upon severity, **any** behavior can be met with more severe consequences including loss of privileges and/or suspension, as per handbook and Principal assessment.

**Logs/Reports/Communication:** Every time the principal is involved, the incident will be logged. We will communicate with parents/guardians as much as possible to support home/school communication.

**Think About It Form** OR format where students are asked to reflect on their behavior will be used in conversations following up on any of the above behaviors.

**Preview:** All of these Consequences should be preceded by teachers/staff reviewing school and class rules/values.

**Privacy:** All conversations between teacher/principal and child are considered "private" in that they will be conducted out of the general classroom environment or in such a way as to avoid humiliation.

**Re-occurring behavior** that is not curbed by above consequences may require the development of a plan through either the SST process, with the principal, and/or in consultation with parents. Sharon policy does not allow for ANY student to damage or continually disrupt the learning environment of the class/school.

**Dangerous or injurious behavior** to self or others will be stopped by any staff immediately.

**Hearing-** Parents may request a hearing with the Principal to discuss Suspension.

## **BUS TRANSPORTATION, FEES, SCHEDULING, AND STUDENT CONDUCT ON BUSES**

### **STUDENT TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT**

The School Committee shall provide transportation service for eligible students based on efficiency, adequacy and economy.

All school buildings and school buses are equipped with security cameras that record video and may also record audio. There should be no expectation of privacy on school grounds or buses, except in locker rooms and restrooms. All video and audio recordings from security cameras will be kept confidential, only to be used by school staff under the direction of the Superintendent and/or their designee. If warranted, recordings from security cameras may be used as part of disciplinary inquiries.

### **WALKERS AND RIDERS**

Transportation at town expense shall be furnished to **all pupils in grades K-6** who live two miles or more from the school they attend. If pay-to-ride buses are running on their route, those who participate in the free and reduced lunch program are eligible to ride free. Additionally, transportation shall be provided at town expense via Special Education vans for children whose Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) requires such transportation or whose physical condition makes such transportation necessary as stated in an (IEP).

No additional buses and no new stops will be added for students paying late. New residents will be allowed to purchase a seat on the bus if there is room. If a family moves out of town prior to the start of the school year, a refund of the fees paid will be allowed.

If a student is participating in pay-to-ride program and loses his/her transportation privileges, the fee shall not be refunded.

The two-mile measurement shall be made from the sidewalk or public way in front of or nearest to the pupil's home to the public way in front of the school the pupil is attending. The measurement shall be made using the shortest (walking) route.

Transportation at parent's expense shall be available to all pupils who live less than two miles from the school they attend. The School Committee will determine the cost of this transportation.

Parents with special circumstances may appeal fees to the Superintendent to establish a payment plan.

All students being transported, either at town or parent expense, shall be issued a bus tag on the first day of school and may be required to display them in order to be eligible to board the bus.

### **SCHEDULING AND ROUTING**

Common bus stops shall be established for purposes of economy and efficiency. Stops may be changed as conditions warrant. Each student on the bus must have a seat. Standing is not allowed, except in case of emergency as designated by the Superintendent of Schools.

Parents of pupils eligible for transportation, either at parental or town expense, may designate a regular bus stop other than the one closest to their residence if (1) the stop is on a route scheduled for their child's school and (2) space is available on the bus. Only **one** stop other than a student's home may be requested.

All efforts will be made to schedule bus routes so that no child is riding for more than one hour.

### **BUS CONDUCT**

While the law requires the School District to furnish transportation, it does not relieve parents of students from the responsibility of supervision until such time as the child boards the bus in the morning and after the child leaves the bus at the end of the school day.

Once a child boards the bus and only at that time - does he or she become the responsibility of the school district. Such responsibility shall end when the child is delivered to the regular bus stop at the close of the school day.

In view of the fact that a bus is an extension of the classroom, the School Committee shall require children to conduct themselves in the bus in a manner consistent with established standards for classroom behavior. The authority for enforcing School Committee requirements of student conduct on buses will rest with the principal.

In cases when a child does not conduct him/herself properly on a bus, the bus driver or the supervisor of transportation shall bring such instances to the attention of the building principal within 48 hours of the incident. The building principal shall inform the parents of the student of his/her misconduct, request their cooperation in monitoring the child's behavior and possibly set consequences such as an assigned seat or time off the bus.

Parents of children whose behavior and misconduct on school buses endangers the health, safety, and welfare of other riders will be notified that their children face the loss of transportation privileges in accordance with regulations approved by the School Committee. In such cases, the parents of the children involved become responsible for seeing that their children get to and from school safely.

### **SCHOOL BUS RULES AND REGULATIONS**

#### ***Introductory Statement***

The courts have held that the right of a student to transportation is a qualified right, one that is dependent upon good behavior. In cases where students seriously or continuously break the rules, parents will be notified in writing that a recurrence of the misbehavior will result in the suspension of the student's privilege of provided bus transportation. Any infraction of the School Bus Rules and Regulations that is reported to the school authorities will be investigated before any disciplinary action is taken, and if there is a basis for the report, the student will be given notice of the charges against him or her. If he or she denies the charges, an explanation of the evidence the School Department has and an opportunity to present his or her side of the story will be afforded the student.

#### **RULES OF BEHAVIOR (Students)** Loading and Unloading at Bus Stop:



1. Riders must be on time. Bus drivers will not stop or wait for students. Students should arrive 5 minutes before scheduled pick up time.
2. Riders will enter or leave at regular stops only.
3. Orderly behavior and respect for personal property will be required.
4. When entering or leaving the bus, riders must follow instructions and directions of the driver. If a student must cross the road after getting off the bus, he/she must walk along the side of the road to the right front side of the bus until he/she can see the bus driver, stop and wait for the bus driver to signal to cross the road, and walk and look for traffic both ways. If he/she sees a vehicle that has not stopped, he/she should go back to the bus immediately. If all vehicles have stopped, he/she should cross the road quickly.
5. Pupils may not stand in any roadway while waiting for a bus. Students may not push or shove while awaiting the bus nor while on a bus. Approach the school bus only when it has come to a complete stop. Do not cross the road to board the bus until the driver signals to do so.
6. Parents should set appropriate rules for walking to and from bus stops to ensure maximum safety, including not allowing children to wait alone at bus stops on major roads.

## **RULES OF BEHAVIOR (Students)**

### **While riding on the bus:**

1. Students are to sit in their seats and remain there until time of discharge.
2. Students are not to climb over seats.
3. Students are not to open or close windows.
4. Students are to keep their entire bodies including arms, legs and heads inside of the school bus.
5. Students are not to throw anything in the school bus or out of the windows.
6. Students are not to push, shove, strike nor verbally abuse other students.
7. Students are to keep the interior of the school bus neat and clean. Books and personal belongings must be kept out of aisles.
8. Students are to report on time and in good order to their assigned bus-loading stop.
9. Verbal disrespect or any other form of abuse, directed at the school bus driver will not be tolerated.
10. Students should not have conversations with the driver, shout, whistle or make any loud noises.
11. There will be NO SMOKING (including e-cigarettes), NO USE OF DRUGS, NO DRINKING OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, NO USE OF PROFANITY, and NO POSSESSION OF WEAPONS OR AMMUNITION OF ANY KIND on the school bus.
12. Students are to use emergency exits only in cases of emergency or when directed to do so by the school bus driver.
13. No pets or animals other than a muzzled seeing-eye dog may be transported on a school bus.
14. Students will be permitted to ride on other than their regularly assigned bus. Permission can only be granted if seating is available. Starting the first week in October and ending the last Thursday in May, students will be permitted to ride on other than their regularly assigned bus, a maximum of three (3) times per month. Permission to ride will only be granted from Monday through Thursday, after written parental request 24 hour in advance, and with approval of the Principal. Bus changes are not allowed on early release days or when buses are filled to capacity.

Students who do not have bus tags (i.e. they are not free or paid riders) may use this option to ride the bus based on space available, but must pay a per trip fee that is collected by the building office and sent to the Transportation office of the Sharon Public Schools. This privilege may be used a maximum of three (3) times per month. It should be noted though that priority will be given to students with

regularly assigned seats (that is, those students with bus tickets which guarantee a seat on a specific bus).

Parents will be held responsible for any defacing or damaging of the bus by their child.

When students do not abide by the School Bus Rules and Regulations, or take any action that diverts the school bus driver's attention from the task of operating the school bus in a safe manner, the school authorities will take the following steps:

#### **FIRST OFFENSE**

The building principal or his/her designee will attempt to notify the parent by telephone and will inform the parent of the incident in writing. If the offense warrants suspension of school bus privileges as determined by the building principal or his/her designee, the student will not be allowed to ride on the school bus for a period of time up to a maximum of five school days. The building principal or his/her designee will determine the number of school days that the student will not be allowed to ride on the school bus.

This written notification to the parent will include a statement that a second offense will result in the student not being allowed to ride on the school bus for a period of time up to a maximum of ten school days.

#### **SECOND OFFENSE**

The building principal or his/her designee will attempt to notify the parent by telephone and will inform the parent of the incident in writing. The student will not be allowed to ride on the school bus for a period of time up to a maximum of ten school days. The building principal or his/her designee will determine the number of school days that the student will not be allowed to ride on the school bus.

This written notification to the parent will include a statement that a third offense may result in a recommendation to the Sharon School Committee that the student not be allowed to ride on the school bus for the remainder of the school year.

#### **THIRD OFFENSE**

The building principal or his/her designee will attempt to notify the parent by telephone and will inform the parent of the incident in writing. The student will not be allowed to ride on the school bus for a period of time up to a maximum of ten school days. The building principal or his/her designee will determine the number of school days that the student will not be allowed to ride on the school bus.

If a recommendation is to be made to the Sharon School Committee that the student not be allowed to ride on the school bus for the remainder of the school year, the building principal or his/her designee will attempt to notify the parent by telephone and will inform the parent of the recommendation by certified mail. A timely hearing will be held by the School Committee to determine the conditions under which the offending student will be provided with the privilege of school bus transportation. The student will not be allowed to ride on the school bus until the date of the hearing with the School Committee, provided such date is within ten school days.

#### **FOURTH OFFENSE**

A recommendation will be made to the Sharon School Committee that the student is not allowed to ride on the school bus for the remainder of the school year; the building principal or his/her designee will attempt to notify the parent by telephone and will inform the parent of the recommendation by certified mail. A timely

hearing will be held by the School Committee to determine the conditions under which the offending student will be provided with the privilege of school bus transportation. The student will not be allowed to ride on the school bus until the date of the hearing with the School Committee, provided such date is within ten school days.

#### **ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS**

1. Should any infraction of the School Bus Rules and Regulations place any student in serious danger of injury, or in any way impede the school bus driver from the safe operation of the school bus, the incident will be treated in the same manner as a Fourth Offense by the building principal or his/her designee.
2. Specific infractions of the School Bus Rules and Regulations may result also in school disciplinary action. The building principal or his/her designee will determine if the infraction violates school rules and will result in school disciplinary action.
3. If an infraction of the School Bus Rules and Regulations results in damage to the school bus, restitution will be obtained from the parent by the school bus company.

#### **RULES OF BEHAVIOR (Bus Drivers)**

1. No school bus driver shall operate a school bus at a rate of speed in excess of the posted speed limits or in violation of the statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
2. There will be NO SMOKING(including e-cigarettes/nicotine products), NO USE OF DRUGS, NO DRINKING OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, NO USE OF PROFANITY, and NO POSSESSION OF WEAPONS or AMMUNITION OF ANY KIND by the school bus driver while transporting students.
3. School bus drivers will not leave a school bus unsupervised while students are on the school bus, except in an emergency.
4. Students are not allowed to leave a school bus, except at regularly designated school bus stops, without the specific written permission from the parent and approval by the building principal or his/her designee.
5. Each school bus driver shall be responsible for the maintenance of discipline on the school bus and will report to the appropriate school authorities any incident of improper student conduct. The building principal or his/her designee will investigate any incident that is reported and appropriate action will be taken. A school bus driver has no authority to put a student off the school bus nor deny the student transportation for disciplinary reasons. This action is reserved for the school authorities. Nothing herein shall prevent a school bus driver from reprimanding a student for behavior that might cause injury to the student or others or in any way impedes the school bus driver from the safe operation of the school bus.
6. School bus drivers are to load and discharge students only at the regularly designated school bus stops.
7. No school bus driver is to push another school bus or allow the school bus for which the school bus driver is responsible to be pushed by another school bus while students are in either vehicle.
8. School bus drivers are to communicate to the contractor's base stations via their two-way radio any school bus accident, injury to a student or significant event, which may result in the bus running late in excess of twenty minutes. The bus contractor will immediately relay the information to the appropriate school. The School Department Central Administration Office shall also be notified immediately regarding all mishaps that result in the police or other assistance being called to assist the bus, passengers on the bus, or the driver.

#### **Procedure in Case of Weather Related Emergencies**

In the event of a weather-related emergency, the Superintendent of Schools will:

1. Declare a weather-related emergency on cable TV (channel 22) and via local channels and Electronic Communication System phone/email messaging system whenever possible
2. Identify and publicize special common bus pick-ups and drop-offs along main thoroughfares.
3. May declare a time delay for the opening of the school day.

Walkers may be allowed to use bus transportation during a declared weather-related emergency if there is room on the bus.

## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE 2021-2022 STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM**

1. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO RIDE AT TOWN EXPENSE?  
All students, grades K-6 who live two (2) miles or more from the school they attend are eligible to ride at no charge. If a PAY TO RIDE route exists near their home, all students on free and reduced lunch are eligible to ride at no charge.
2. WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE PAY BUS SYSTEM?  
ALL STUDENTS in GRADES 7-12 are eligible to pay to ride the bus. THOSE IN K-6 WHO LIVE WITHIN TWO MILES OF THEIR ASSIGNED SCHOOL and who want transportation may pay to ride on the Sharon Schools transportation system. The cost of that transportation is based on actual seat costs as listed. If pay-to-ride buses are canceled due to insufficient enrollment by signup deadlines, fees will be returned.
3. HOW DO I KNOW IF MY HOME IS LESS THAN TWO MILES FROM THE SCHOOL MY CHILD ATTENDS?  
There is a list of street addresses posted at the Schools, Town Hall, Police Station, Fire Station, Library, and the School Administration Building. Parents /Guardians must go to one of these places for this information.
4. HOW IS THE TWO-MILE DETERMINATION MADE?  
In accordance with state law, the distance is measured using the distance portal to portal over a commonly traveled [walking] route. Measure from the sidewalk or public way in front of or nearest to the pupil's home, to the public way in front of the school the pupil is attending.
5. WHAT DO I DO IF I DISAGREE WITH THE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT'S MILEAGE MEASUREMENT?  
You may contact the Supervisor of Transportation, 784-1570 X 9011 or by calling 781-784-1545 directly.
6. WHERE WILL MY CHILD BE PICKED UP?  
The bus routes will be similar to the current ones. Children will have to walk to a common stop. While the law requires the school district to furnish transportation for some students, it does not relieve parents from the responsibility of supervision until such time as the child boards the bus in the morning and after the child leaves the bus at the end of the school day.  
  
Once a child boards the bus and only at that time, does he or she become the responsibility of the school district. Such responsibility shall end when the child is delivered to the regular bus stop at the close of the school day. An adult must meet kindergarten students who do not have a sibling on the bus.
7. CAN I HAVE MY CHILD PICKED UP OR DROPPED OFF AT OTHER THAN THEIR HOME BUS STOP?  
You may designate a regular bus stop other than the one closest to your home if:
  - (1) The stop is on a route scheduled for your child's school;
  - (2) space is available on the bus;
  - (3) only one alternate stop per child is allowed.
8. CAN MY CHILD, ON OCCASION, RIDE HOME WITH A FRIEND WHO TAKES ANOTHER BUS?

Permission can only be granted if seating is available. Starting the first week in October and ending the last Thursday in May, students will be permitted to ride on other than their regularly assigned bus, a maximum of three (3) times per month. Permission to ride will only be granted from Monday through Thursday, after written parental request and approval of the Principal. Bus changes are not allowed on early release days or when buses are filled to capacity.

The forms to request this permission are available at each school and a copy is attached to this packet. Twenty-four (24) hour notice is required.

Students who do not have bus tags (i.e. they are not free or paid riders) may use this option to ride the bus based on space available, but must pay a \$5 per trip fee that is collected by the building office and sent to the Transportation office of the Sharon Public Schools. This privilege may be used a maximum of three (3) times per month

9. WHAT IF I ONLY NEED THE BUS ONE WAY OR ONLY 2 OR 3 DAYS PER WEEK?

The cost for all students is the same. The amount of time you use the bus does not matter because bus costs cannot be prorated according to a varied daily usage.

10. IS THERE ANY PROVISION FOR A FEE WAIVER?

The criteria for a Transportation Fee Waiver are the same as for the Free and Reduced Price School Lunch. Families who believe they are eligible should contact the Information Services Dept. (784-1570 X9010) for a Free or Reduced lunch application. Eligibility guidelines and the application are also available on the Dept of Education website at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/programs/nslp.html>

11. HOW SHOULD I WRITE MY CHECK?

Checks should be made payable to: SHARON PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

12. WHERE DO I SEND MY CHECK AND FORMS?

Responses should be made to The Supervisor of Transportation, Sharon Public Schools, 75 Mountain Street, Sharon, MA 02067.

## **EMERGENCY EVACUATION DRILLS**

### **Chapter 90, Section 7B of the Massachusetts General Laws reads in part:**

... All pupils transported on a school bus shall receive classroom instruction in safe riding practices at least three times during the following periods of each school year: the first week of the school year, the period between the months of September and January and the period between the month of January and the end of the school year. During each school year, all such pupils shall participate at least twice in on-bus emergency drills.

## **BICYCLES/WHEELED DEVICES**

Students must observe proper safety rules at all times, including wearing a helmet, when riding a bike to and from school. They should be especially careful entering and exiting school grounds at arrival and dismissal times. Students should not ride bicycles on the front sidewalks, the bus loading areas, or by the main exits. To protect against theft, bicycle locks are recommended. Students may not ride skateboards, scooters or rollerblades to school, and may not wear shoes with wheels in them.

### **Bicycle Rules of the Road**

(Mass. General Laws, Chapter 85, section 11B, as amended March 8, 1994)

1. Ride on the right with the flow of traffic.
2. Ride single file.
3. Stop at stop signs and traffic lights.
4. Use proper hand signals for all turns.

5. Give the right of way to pedestrians.
6. Give a clear warning (bell, horn, voice) when needed for safety.
7. Carry no passengers (except on approved infant seat).
8. Check brakes often.
9. Equip bicycles with front, rear, pedal and side reflectors.
10. Do not ride on express or limited access highways.
11. Students may ride on the sidewalk outside of the business district.
12. Do not ride with walkman/discman, ear-phones, or other radio devices.
13. **Any person 12 years of age or younger must wear a helmet.**

## **SCHOOL TRAFFIC PATTERN**

Each school has a unique traffic pattern. Please become familiar with the traffic pattern and parking at the school that your child attends. Traffic pattern information is disseminated through each school at the beginning of the school year.

<b><u>HEALTH AND SAFETY</u></b>
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## **PROCEDURES FOR EMERGENCY AT SCHOOL**

School personnel shall give only emergency care to students who become ill or injured on school property, buses, or while under school supervision.

Each year parents shall supply information indicating where the student is to be taken in case of an emergency; the name, address, and phone number of a neighbor or friend to be contacted in case the parent/guardian is not available; and any allergies or diseases the student might have.

The District shall maintain an Emergency Procedures Handbook, which shall be utilized by District personnel for handling emergencies. Emergency procedures shall include the following:

Provision for care beyond First Aid, which would enable care by the family or its physician or the Paramedic Assistance Unit of the Fire Department.

In instances when the Paramedic Assistance Unit is required, every effort shall be made to provide the unit with the student's emergency information which lists any allergies or diseases the student might have.

Provisions for reporting all accidents, cases of injury, or illness to the Principal.

Provisions shall be made (in all cases of injury or illness involving possible legal or public relations implications) for reporting such to the Superintendent of Schools immediately

Prompt reporting by teachers to the Principal or designee any accident or serious illness and such reports will be filed with the Business Office.

## **STUDENT ILLNESS OR INJURY**

In case of illness or injury, the parent or guardian will be contacted and asked to come for the student or arrange transportation home.

Transportation of an ill or injured student is not normally to be provided by the school. If the parent cannot provide transportation and the student is ill or injured, an ambulance may be called. Expense incurred as a result of emergency ambulance use will not be borne by the District.

## **INDOOR AIR QUALITY**

The Sharon Public Schools is taking a proactive approach to learning about our indoor air quality and preventing situations that contribute to poor air quality in our schools. We use the EPA's "Tools for Schools"

program to help us provide a safe, comfortable, and productive environment for our students and staff so we can achieve our core mission - educating students.

Classroom pets are not allowed unless approved by the school nurse due to the high number of children who have allergies.

No chemical cleaners other than those approved and provided by the school custodian will be used in the building to minimize exposure of harmful chemicals and fumes to our students and staff.

## **INFORMATION/LEGAL RIGHTS OF PARENTS**

A copy of any legal documents related to parental rights must be on file in the school office. In the case of a restraining order, a photo must be on file.

## **SECURITY PROCEDURES**

An emergency response plan for all of the Sharon Public Schools, which includes a communications system and protocols for events regarding safety, has been developed. This plan is called the "Safety & Crisis Intervention Procedures" and includes a "Staff Immediate Response Handbook". Each school will notify parents if children need to be dismissed or taken off-site. Security procedures are in place at each school. A video security system is in place at the entrance to each school. All visitors must sign in at the school office and obtain a visitor's badge to be worn while in the building.

### **Safety**

Whether your child walks or rides to school, the issue of safety should be discussed and reviewed as frequently as necessary. Places to wait for a ride, where and how to cross a street, or where to walk to and from school with friends should be emphasized. Stress to children that they should not speak to strangers. Also, should a stranger approach your child, he/she should be instructed to tell parents or the school immediately. On the rare occasion that school is dismissed early for an unexpected emergency or a parent is unexpectedly not at home, your child should know where to go (i.e. neighbor, relative, etc.) and how to reach you to tell you of his/her whereabouts. We shall make every effort to see that you or your emergency contact is notified.

### **Emergencies**

Emergency Information/Enrollment Forms are sent home at the start of the school year for parents to complete and return. It is very important that they be completely filled out and returned to the school as soon as possible. Please list at least two LOCAL names and telephone numbers other than your own.

Anyone authorized to take care of your child if he/she becomes ill at school (e.g. day-care provider) should be indicated on the emergency information form. **It is extremely important that this information be kept current and accurate and that a local contact person is listed. Please notify the school office in writing of any changes.**

It is sometimes necessary to consider the dismissal of students who are ill or who have been injured at school. In such cases, the school nurse will attempt to contact a parent/guardian. If no contact can be made, arrangements will be made with one of the emergency contacts. If a child's illness or injury is so serious, in the judgment of the school nurse or school physician, that it is necessary to take the child to a physician or a hospital, every effort will first be made to inform the child's parent/guardian of the situation and to obtain permission prior to taking the child to a physician or to a hospital. A child will not be taken to a physician

or hospital without parent/guardian consent except in situations where, in the judgment of the school nurse or school physician, further delay would jeopardize the child's welfare. In such cases, a school staff member shall accompany the child and the principal or his/her designee shall continue to make every effort to communicate the information to the parent/guardian until contact is made.

## **SHARON SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY - ELEMENTARY**

**A student may not use, be under the influence of, possess, or distribute drugs, alcohol, or mood-or mind-altering substances on Sharon Public Schools property or at school functions, whether at home or at "away sites."**

As educational institutions, the Sharon Elementary Schools have a responsibility to provide a substance-free environment. For the purposes of this policy, the word "substance" includes alcohol, drugs, and mood-altering or mind-altering substances. The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear message to students, parents, and the citizens of the community that the use, possession, or distribution of prohibited substances will not be tolerated in school or on school property. It is the intention of the Sharon School System to deal with student problems using rules and regulations tempered in a humane and individualized manner, and to deal with substance related problems in elementary school fairly, equitable, and compassionately.

Any student required to take prescription or non-prescription drugs must do so in accordance with the Sharon School Department Medication Policy (JLCD). The parent(s) or guardian must give the medication to the school nurse in a pharmacy-labeled container with notes from both the parent and the child's doctor.

Offenders of this policy will be dealt with firmly and swiftly, and will be given due process rights. If a student is suspected of having used, possessed, distributed, or of being under the influence of prohibited substances, including alcohol, in school buildings or on school property, the student, principal, and school nurse will immediately review the situation. If the student's explanation satisfies the principal or school nurse, the student will not be considered to be in violation of this Substance Abuse Policy and the incident will be closed without penalty. If the principal or his or her assistant or designee has produced sufficient evidence to prove that a student has violated the Substance Abuse Policy, he or she will furnish the police department with a complete report and will turn over the physical evidence to the police for analysis and such criminal action as the police department may determine. A student found to be in violation of this Substance Abuse Policy will also be subject to the following administrative actions:

### **First Offense**

1. The parent(s) or guardian will be notified immediately.
2. A meeting will be held with parent(s) or guardian, principal, and the school nurse no later than the next school day. If the parent(s) or guardian refuses to cooperate, school authorities may file a "Child in Need of Services" petition with the Juvenile Court of the Stoughton District Court, alleging (as the case may require) that the child lacks the proper attention of his/her parent or guardian, or that the child's parent or guardian is unwilling, unable, or unavailable to provide the needed care, discipline or attention that the child's behavior warrants. Such a petition may seek an order directing that the Department of Social Services be notified and summoning the student and parent or guardian to appear before the Court to show cause why the child should not be committed to the custody of the Department of



Social Services. The Sharon School Department may also petition the Court for other order it deems appropriate.

3. The parent(s) or guardian and principal and school nurse will formulate an agreement that will provide needed support services, if any, for the child.
4. The principal will determine what disciplinary or rehabilitative action may be necessary and will outline such action to the parent(s) and the student.

### **Second and Subsequent Offenses**

A student found to be in violation of the Substance Abuse Policy for the second time within the academic year will be subject to the administrative actions outlined above with the following exceptions:

1. The police will be asked to attend the meeting with the parent(s) or guardian, principal, and the school nurse no later than the next school day, for the purposes described in administrative action number 2 above; and
2. The disciplinary or rehabilitative action determined by the principal will include a minimum of one day of in-house suspension.

**Note: If, in the discretion of the principal, the student's presence in school may endanger other students, that child will be removed from the school.**

<b><u>CURRICULUM AND PROGRAMS</u></b>
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The Sharon Public Schools has written and adopted a set of Learning Standards based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and the additional goals and understandings required by the Sharon faculty. These Learning Standards act as the basis for what we expect children to know and be able to do at various grade level. Teachers use these Learning Standards to guide their instruction. Full versions of the standards are available online at [www.sharon.k12.ma.us](http://www.sharon.k12.ma.us) or in your school's office.

Each school has also developed a School Improvement Plan based on the work of the School Council. Included in that plan are goals focused on the district strategic plan and the specific needs of each school.

### **CURRICULUM**

Recognizing each child's individual learning needs and styles, the Sharon Elementary Schools have implemented a developmental approach to instruction in heterogeneously grouped classrooms. The developmental program integrates curriculum that is process-oriented and taps students' interests, matching children's readiness for learning with a variety of teaching methods. Strategies to meet these needs include: compacting (focusing on specific skills), independent projects, interest centers and groups, tiered assignments, flexible skills grouping, learning centers, high level questions, mentorships, and contract/management plans.

### **LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER**

The library serves as the center of the media program. The goal is to develop library and reference skills to promote literacy and an enjoyment of reading. During scheduled library visits, students in all grades receive formal instruction in skills necessary to locate, evaluate, and use information sources. All students are

given the opportunity to use the library/media center through class, small group, or individual visits. Children are responsible for borrowed books and will be asked to pay for any they lose.

#### **PROCEDURES FOR HELPING STUDENTS SELECT LIBRARY RESOURCES**

The library media centers in the Sharon schools provide books and resources that enrich and support the curriculum and take into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the students served. The library media specialists are there to provide knowledge, guidance, and encouragement to help students select the most appropriate books and materials for a particular assignment.

#### **FINE ARTS/PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Children in Grades K-5 have art and music once a week, and physical education twice a week under the direction of a specialist. Children in half-day Kindergarten have art and music on alternating weeks and physical education weekly. Children are excused from physical education only with a doctor's note or at the discretion of the school nurse. In addition, instrumental music lessons are offered to 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. Also, students in grades 4 and 5 have opportunities to participate in choral groups.

#### **COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM**

The Sharon Public Schools has integrated community service-learning into the fabric of our schools, and will continue to do so this year. Each elementary school strives to ensure that all children are actively involved in their communities through various programs that benefit the people around them. Community partners have included the Sharon Historical Society, the Sharon Garden Club, Sharon Department of Public Works, the Sharon Conservation Commission, the Sharon Council on Aging, Mainspring House, as well as other organizations.

#### **FIELD TRIPS**

Schools will not take field trips to start the 2021-2022 school year. This will be assessed throughout the school year. When field trips resume, each student who participates in a field trip must have a signed Parent Permission Slip. Students without signed permission slips will not be allowed to attend the trip. Provisions will be made for those students to spend the time in another classroom. Children must leave from and return to the school. Parents are encouraged to chaperone on field trips; however, no siblings are allowed on any field trips. No student will be denied field trip opportunities based on his/her family's ability to pay.

#### **STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

The elementary schools are staffed with school psychologists, speech and language pathologists, special educators, and instructional assistants. Support services are also provided by occupational and physical therapists. These staff members evaluate and provide specialized instruction to students who have disabilities and who, because of these disabilities, are unable to access the regular education curriculum and make effective progress. They also consult with teachers to provide accommodations and/or modifications in the regular classroom. Evaluation of students is done in accordance with the regulations of Chapter 71B of the Massachusetts General Laws and any other applicable federal or state regulations.

Support services for students with learning and/or perceptual disabilities in the areas of reading, writing, and math are provided by a special educator and/or an instructional assistant in the resource room and/or in the regular classroom. The speech/language pathologist provides speech and language therapy services to students with demonstrated needs in the areas of articulation, receptive and expressive language, fluency,

and voice. Occupational/physical therapy services are provided by occupational therapists, occupational therapy assistants, and a district-wide physical therapist. A student may be referred for an evaluation by the Student Support Team (a mandated regular education pre-referral process) and/or his/her parent. The purpose of the evaluation is to gather comprehensive information to determine the presence (or absence) of a disability, and the impact of the disability in making effective progress. Based on the results of the evaluations, the Special Education Team, which includes the student's parents, determine eligibility for services, and, if appropriate, develops an individualized educational program (IEP). The IEP identifies goals, objectives for the student, classroom accommodations, specialized instruction, and related services that are necessary to address the student's educational needs.

**SSEPAC** (Sharon's Special Ed Parent Group) is available for support and guidance to families of the Sharon Public Schools. Information can be found at their web site, [www.ssepac.org](http://www.ssepac.org).

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

Sharon Public Schools offers educational and recreational opportunities for all students both during and after the traditional school day. All students receiving special education, regardless of placement, shall have an equal opportunity to participate in and, if appropriate, receive credit for the vocational, supportive, or remedial services that may be available as part of the general education program as well as the non-academic and extracurricular programs of the school.

Programs, services, and activities include, but are not limited to: art and music; vocational education, industrial arts, and consumer and homemaking education; work study and employment opportunities; counseling services available at all levels in the district; health services; transportation; recess and physical education, including adapted physical education; athletics and recreational activities; school sponsored groups or clubs; and meals.

#### **Counseling**

The School Psychologist works cooperatively with teachers and parents to provide needed support for students, both within and outside the classroom. Direct support for children may involve individual and/or group counseling on a regular, short-term or crisis intervention basis. Parent knowledge and permission is required for any student involved in regular counseling; the Psychologist may see children without permission on a crisis-intervention basis. The Psychologist also devotes time to consultation with parents and staff. The Psychologist participates in Student Support Team meetings and is involved in evaluations for Special Education Services.

### **COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

A number of programs designed to supplement our core, educational programs, and co-curricula activities has been established in Sharon. Early Childhood Programs located at the Children's Center at Sharon Middle School (781-784-1551) under the direction Amy Steinberg, Early Childhood Director, have been developed. In addition, a wide array of children's programs, including Before and After-School Care K-8 and Enrichment Programs, are offered to elementary school students. For information, contact the Director of Community Education Programs, Meg Dussault, at 781-784-1574.

Various programs for elementary school students are included in the Summer Program. Information on these programs is available in a booklet sent to the home each spring. For information about them and also about family trips, contact the Director of Community Education at 781-784-2333.

<b>FEDERAL AND STATE MANDATES</b>
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## **ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAW**

The Anti-Discrimination Law, Chapter 282 of the Acts of 1993, General Laws Chapter 76, states:

**No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of age, disability, gender identity, homelessness, race, color, sex, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.**

Enactment of this law advances efforts to ensure that all students can attend school in a safe, supportive environment that is conducive to serious learning.

## **PROTECTION FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES/ SECTION 504**

*The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)* provides comprehensive protection to individuals with disabilities in the areas of employment, public accommodations, state and local government services and telecommunications. Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* clearly requires that no institution receiving federal funds shall discriminate against an individual because of a disability. It requires that no school may exclude a child from any course, activity, service, or resource available in the public school because of a disability. Public school systems must comply with the ADA in all of their services, programs or activities, including those that are open to parents or the public.

Any individual who believes he or she is being discriminated against on the basis of a disability may file a grievance, in writing, with the School Principal.

In addition, schools provide Plans under Section 504 for students with a lifelong disability that affects their academic progress and who need accommodations in class in order to access the general curriculum. If your child has a diagnosed, lifelong disability, you need to speak to the Principal regarding the appropriateness of establishing a Plan under Section 504.

## **POSSESSION OR USE OF ILLEGAL WEAPONS OR SUBSTANCES AND USE OF FORCE**

Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including but not limited to, a gun or knife, or a controlled substance\* as defined in Chapter 94, including but not limited to marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, will be subject to suspension from the school by the principal.

Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide, or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored events, including athletic games, will be subject to suspension from the school by the principal.

Any student who is charged with either offense cited above will be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing before the principal. At the hearing, a student may have representation along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses. After the hearing, the principal will notify the student and parents in writing of the outcome. (*See Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 71, Section 37 H and 37 H 1/2 for complete guidelines regarding this policy.*)

\*In the Sharon Public Schools, possession or use of a controlled substance also includes alcohol.

## **POLICIES**

As elected representatives of the citizens of Sharon, School Committee members are responsible for implementing statutory requirements in ways that reflect expectations of local citizens for the education of

the youth of the community. When citizens elect delegates to represent them in the conduct of public education, their representatives have authority to exercise their best judgment in determining policies, making decisions, and approving procedures for fulfilling their responsibilities. All decisions made by the School Committee will be made with the primary goal of optimizing the learning of the children enrolled in our schools. (excerpt from Policy AB)

A full list of policies and their narratives can be found on the district website using the link:

<https://www.sharon.k12.ma.us/domain/43>

The School Committee updates these policies regularly so please check the link above for current narratives. Newly approved laws and policies may supersede this information.