

NEW HINGHAM REGIONAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



2021-2022 HANDBOOK

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Dear Families and Students,

With the teachers and staff, I welcome you to New Hingham Regional Elementary School!

The School Handbook has been written to provide important information concerning specific rules, policies, and procedures related to the safety and operation of our school. In order for school to operate safely and efficiently, you and your student(s) must be familiar with and abide by the information outlined in this handbook. The content may be changed from time to time throughout the school year, and it is the responsibility of students and parents to remain apprised of the current version of the handbook. An up-to-date version will be maintained online at <https://www.newhingham.org/>.

The handbook summarizes district policy and contains general guidelines and information. However, in the event of a conflict between this handbook and a school committee policy, regulation, or Massachusetts law, the policy, regulation, or law takes precedence and controls. Refer to official policy and regulation documents for specific information at <https://www.hr-k12.org/policies-be59ee6e>.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at jmcmillan@hr-k12.org or (413) 296-0000 with any questions, concerns, or comments regarding this handbook. Thank you!

Respectfully,

Jesse McMillan
Principal

ATTENDANCE, CALENDAR, AND DELAYS/CANCELLATIONS

Hours:

- PreK: 8:55 a.m. - 2:55 p.m. (Full Day)
 - Half Day: 8:55 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.
- K-6: 8:50 a.m. - 3:10 p.m. (Full Day)
 - Half Day: 8:50 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (PreK-6)

A. Absences/Tardiness

Regular attendance is important to a student's academic success and establishing positive relationships. A student who is not in school by 10:30 A.M. will be considered absent and an automated phone notification will be generated. Please call the attendance line at **(413) 296-0000, ext. 1**, if your child will be absent or tardy. Voicemail is available 24 hours a day.

A student is considered tardy if he/she arrives at school after 8:50 AM. A student who is tardy *must* report to the office to make certain that his/her name will not be placed on the absentee sheet, thus preventing a needless call home. Students who arrive late because of a late bus will not be marked tardy, but must report to the office.

When there is a pattern of tardiness, parents/guardians will be notified by the Principal. A pattern of tardiness can be an indicator of parent/guardian neglect and shall be reported to the Department of Children and Families.

B. Early Dismissal

New information coming soon!

C. Frequent Tardies and Absences

Following 5 incidences of absence or tardiness – letter home from Principal reminding parents/guardians of the attendance policy and their responsibility in supporting it.

Following 10 incidences of absence or tardiness – phone call home requesting a meeting to develop a plan to improve attendance.

Following 15 incidences of absence or tardiness – certified letter home from Principal requesting meeting to revisit plan to improve attendance; referral to Department of Children and Families

D. Family Vacations

We recognize the value of family trips and travel as worthwhile experiences. It is important to strike a balance between this family time and the negative consequences of falling behind from missing classroom instruction. This is particularly true when some students return to school overwhelmed with make-up assignments. The entire learning experience that will be missed cannot be duplicated by outside assignments. In order to ensure a positive educational experience, we offer the following guidelines for you and your child when an extended absence is anticipated.

- If at all possible, schedule your vacation during a regularly scheduled school vacation.
- If this is not possible, parents should notify their child's teacher at least two weeks in advance of the planned absence. The teacher will then review your child's progress and suggest the best plan to compensate for missed learning experiences.

E. School Calendars

Individual school calendars can be found on the District website and each school's website.

F. Delays and Cancellations

In case of bad weather or other emergencies causing school delays or closings, information will be broadcast through SwiftK12 phone calls, on local television stations, and the district website beginning as early as possible.

It is not our policy to close school during the day except in the case of an extreme emergency. If a serious weather condition develops during the morning, afternoon preschool classes may be canceled.

Delaying schools for one or two hours will be seriously considered on any day when the weather conditions are improving and with the additional time the roads and walkways would be safe for ALL students. On delay days, all schedules are affected by one or two

hours. This includes bus pick-up times and also the time when children, either walkers or students who are dropped off, can arrive at school. Dismissal time will always be the normal time.

NOTE: ONCE A DECISION IS MADE TO DELAY, WE WILL NOT CHANGE THE LENGTH OF A DELAY, AND ONLY IN EXTREME CASES WILL WE CANCEL AFTER A DELAY CALL HAS BEEN MADE.

ARRIVAL and DISMISSAL

A. Arrival

For safety, no student should arrive at school earlier than 8:40 AM. There is no guarantee of adult supervision prior to that time. Students are expected to remain outside the school building until the bell rings at 8:50 AM, unless they are having breakfast in the cafeteria. In severe inclement weather, students may be brought into the school building to wait for the arrival bell. Once students have arrived on school grounds in the morning, they are not permitted to leave school property without permission of the Principal and/or parent or guardian. Students are expected to enter the building in an orderly manner.

B. Dismissal

All students will be dismissed at 3:10 p.m.

Walkers are expected to leave school grounds at dismissal time unless parent/guardians have provided written permission for them to remain on the playground unsupervised. *There is no adult supervision after the buses depart.*

Students who ride the school bus or van home will be put on the appropriate bus unless the school office is notified of alternate arrangements in writing. If a bus student is being dismissed after school to a destination other than the usual one, the parent/guardians should send instructions to the school in writing otherwise the child will be expected to follow their usual dismissal routine.

C. Safety Issues

For Walkers: It is important that students know the route to school. If students are going to walk and are new to the school, it is advisable for parent/guardians to walk them over the route a few times so that they are familiar with the way and know how to make all of

the crossings safely. An older brother or sister may help rehearse the route with younger students. Parent/guardians are encouraged to review the following pedestrian safety rules with their children:

- Cross at crosswalks.
- Look left right left for moving cars before crossing.
- Make sure the driver sees you. Make eye contact with the driver.
- Cross only when the road is clear.
- Keep on looking for cars even as you are crossing the street.
- Walk when you cross - don't run.

For Bicycle Riders: Students may ride their bicycles to school. Racks are provided and must be used at all times. Bicycles should be locked to ensure their protection. Students must exercise extreme care because of buses and automobiles. Students should not ride bicycles on sidewalks or lawns unless riding in the street would be hazardous. **State law requires that helmets be worn.** Those abusing the privilege and the laws will not be permitted to ride their bicycles to school. **Please note, skateboards, roller blades, scooters, and hoverboards are not permitted.**

For Parent/Guardian Transportation: Parent/guardians who provide transportation to and from school are expected to comply with all traffic and school regulations regarding parking and safety. The school has areas designated for parent/guardian drop off and pick up. This information will be available from the school office. The safety of children is of critical concern. Parent/guardians are asked to demonstrate safe behavior during arrival and dismissal by parking in designated parking areas, not passing school buses loading or unloading students, not double parking, not allowing children to exit on the street side of vehicles, not walking between waiting school buses, and not leaving unattended vehicles running.

For Bus Students: Bus drivers will not dismiss a kindergarten student from the bus without a parent or guardian present at the bus stop unless older children are getting off at the same stop. When the bus driver judges that it is not safe to let any student leave the bus, the student will be returned to the school office where the parent/guardian will have to pick him/her up.

Students must wait until the bus comes to a complete stop and the driver opens the door to the bus before approaching to load. Students must not run or walk towards a moving bus.

The following items are not allowed on the bus: skateboards, scooters, large athletic

equipment, balls that cannot be carried safely in backpacks or large school projects that cannot be held on the student's lap, live animals, insects or reptiles. Other items that are questionable for transportation will be looked at individually. Ultimately the bus contractor and the driver have discretion in what is safe and what is not.

Inappropriate behavior will result in a bus conduct report and disciplinary action by the Principal.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

All students are eligible for school bus transportation. Information on buses, routes, stops and pick up and drop off times are available in the late summer from the transportation office and are printed in the local newspapers. In August listed times are approximate and students should be at the bus stops at least five minutes earlier than the scheduled time.

Only students designated for a route may ride a school bus. *Guests, friends, and relatives are not permitted to ride on a bus.* Parent/guardians are also not permitted to ride school buses.

IMPORTANT: The school must be notified IN WRITING of any change in your child's transportation schedule.

Bus drivers are not permitted to pick up or drop off students at a place other than an approved stop. There is no regular adult supervision at bus stops. Parent/guardians are encouraged to accompany younger children to the stop.

Students who are on Individualized Educational Plans or 504 plans may be eligible for school transportation regardless of the distance from home to school. Eligibility for special transportation is determined during the special education or 504 evaluation process. Students who are placed in district-wide special programs such as those for English Language Learners may also be eligible for transportation to the school site with the appropriate programming. .

Students who are transported by the Hampshire Regional School District are expected to follow all rules. These standards for behavior are necessary in order to provide safe and efficient school transportation. To assist in this effort, the buses all are equipped with cameras that include audio recording which allow for administrative oversight as needed.

GENERAL PROCEDURES AND ROUTINES

A. Dressing for School

Clothing for school should be chosen for comfort, health, safety and appropriateness. Whenever possible, students should wear outer garments that can be taken on and off easily with minimal or no assistance. Clothing should be suited to the weather and support attitudes of respect for others and an educational environment.

Health regulations require that footwear be worn at all times. Outdoor boots and flip flops may not be worn all day in school.

Young children can have soiling accidents at school. Parents of pre-kindergartners may want to send children to school with a change of clothes.

B. Lost and Found

There is a "Lost and Found" where students can look for lost articles. Students often bring personal items such as toys, hats and other things of value with them to school. The school cannot be responsible for the loss of these items. Personal items of value to students should remain at home. If a student brings an item to school, he or she should be encouraged to keep it in his/her desk or pocket at all times. Items left in the hallway, bathrooms, and cafeteria or on the playground are not frequently recovered. *The chance of recovering any lost item is greatly increased when the item is clearly labeled with a child's name.*

C. Keeping a Student After School

A teacher or administrator may keep a student after school when he/she needs additional academic help, or for disciplinary purposes. The administrator or teacher may detain a student up to one-half hour as a disciplinary consequence. The student will be given one day's notice in order to arrange for transportation. In all cases, parents will be notified prior to the event. Failure of student to remain after school for disciplinary reasons will result in additional disciplinary consequences.

D. Care of School Property

Pride in the school building and property is necessary in order to keep the building and grounds clean and attractive. Students who deface, damage, or destroy school property will have to pay the cost of repairs or damages.

E. Party Invitations, Valentines, and Gifts

Children love to share special events and occasions with their friends. Party invitations, valentines, and similar things cannot be distributed in class unless each child is receiving one and unless permitted by the classroom teacher. Children should not bring individual gifts to school for birthdays or holidays to share with friends. Gift giving cannot take place during school time.

F. Classroom Treats for Birthdays and Holidays

For birthday or holiday celebrations, we can only accept food that can be certified as nut-free to share with the class; therefore, all food must be sealed and must contain the nutritional information printed by the store. Unfortunately, home-baked goods cannot be certified as nut-free and cannot be served in our classrooms. There are many other safe options such as fruit, non-food items (e.g., stickers, pencils, a book donated to the classroom in your child's name, etc.), or other snacks that are labeled as nut free. Please notify the classroom teacher in advance if you are planning on sending in a treat with your child. We apologize in advance, but any item that cannot be certified as nut free will be returned home with your child.

G. Communication and Complaints

Concerns & complaints from students and/or their parents are encouraged to follow the order below whenever possible:

1. Talk with the teacher for clarification of problem.
2. Meet with the teacher and if no satisfactory solution is found then meet with the Principal.

Following the above order will help to expedite the procedure in that the individual(s) closest to the situation can most likely be those expected to help with the resolution.

H. Field Trips

Parents and guardians must have a CORI check to chaperone field trips and prior approval of the Principal. CORIs expire every 3 years. All field trips require a signed permission slip prior to each trip. Failure to return permission slips result in your child remaining at school with a staff member. The classroom teacher chooses field trip chaperones. Chaperones must not have younger children (i.e., siblings) in their care during field trips.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

A. Student Records

The student record contains all information concerning a student that is kept by the school district and which personally identifies the student; it consists of the temporary record and the transcript. For purposes of these procedures, custodial parent refers to a divorced or separated parent who has physical custody of the child. Non-custodial parents may not be eligible to access their child's student record, or may have to follow certain procedures in order to access the student record.

The rights outlined below may be exercised by the custodial parent(s)/guardian(s) for a student under the age of 14 years, or jointly by the student and custodial parent(s)/guardian(s) of a child over the age of 14 years. Each eligible student and custodial parent/guardian, except as limited herein for certain parents, has the right to see the student record for that student within ten (10) days of submitting a written request to see the records. Copies of any record may be obtained upon request and shall be provided within ten (10) days of the request. The District may charge for the cost of reproducing copies.

The student's record is available to authorized school personnel who work directly with the student, or administrative/clerical personnel who need to have access to records in order to carry out their responsibilities. The term "authorized school personnel" includes, but is not limited to, administrators, teachers, counselors, therapists, paraprofessionals, administrative office, staff and clerical personnel. Authorized school personnel included those employed by the District or under contract with the District as an independent contractor. Authorized school personnel do not need permission to see the student records.

No information in the student's record is available to anyone outside the school system without written permission from the eligible student and/or parent and/or guardian, unless the requesting party is listed as an exception as provided by the Student Records regulations. Exceptions to the requirement of written permission include, but are not limited to, a probation officer, court order, subpoena, where health or safety requires the disclosure of student information/records or upon transfer to another school district. However, eligible students and/or their parent/guardians will generally be notified before these records are released. A written release must be signed to have any part of the school record sent outside the school. This includes, but is not limited to prospective employers, other technical school(s), and colleges.

B. Health Records

All students entering the school system must provide the school with immunization records, or copies, which meet the requirements of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Proof of a comprehensive physical examination within the past 6 months is required. It is the responsibility of the parent/ guardian to provide current immunization records and a copy of the most recent physical exam. The health record is considered a temporary record and it is the practice that if a student transfers to another school district, the paper record, and any pertinent electronic record, will be transferred directly to the receiving nurse. The original health record may also be given to the parent/guardian at the time of transfer. An electronic copy of the immunization record will be kept. Health records are maintained separately from student educational records and there is no access to the records by anyone other than the school nurse.

C. Directory Information Notice

A federal law allows New Hingham Regional Elementary School to disclose appropriately designated “directory information” without written consent to third parties, unless you have advised the school not to release the information. It is important to note that the federal law allows schools to create their own policies surrounding directory information.

New Hingham Regional Elementary School has chosen to adopt a “limited directory information” policy. With this “limited” policy, the only parties that may receive directory information without written consent include the following: New Hingham PTO (Parent-Teacher Organization)

New Hingham has designated the following information as directory information: student's name; parent/guardian name; address; phone number; email address; and grade level.

If you **do not** want New Hingham Regional Elementary School to provide directory information to the parties listed above, the school will provide a specific date for opt-out notification.

D. Rights of Certain Divorced or Separated Parents

It is necessary for divorced parents to submit a copy of the custody agreement or order, and any subsequent changes made thereto, to the District so that District personnel may identify which of the parents has physical custody of the child. The non-custodial parent may access his/her child's record unless:

1. the parent has been denied legal custody or has been ordered to supervised visitation, based on a threat to the safety of the student, and the threat is specifically noted in the order pertaining to custody or supervised visitation, or
2. the parent has been denied visitation, or
3. the parent's access to the student or to the custodial parent has been registered by a temporary or permanent order, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record, or
4. there is an order of a probate and family court judge which prohibits the distribution of student records to the parent.

The District shall place in the student's record any documentation indicating that a non-custodial parent's access to the student record is limited or restricted pursuant to 603 CMR 23.07(5)(a)

Non-Custodial Parent Access: In case of a non-custodial parent who is eligible to access the student record, i.e. does not fit any of the four (4) categories under 1-4 above, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student records to the Principal. Upon receipt of the request, the Principal and/or his/her designee shall immediately notify the custodial parent by certified and first class mail, in English and the primary language of the custodial parent, that it will provide the non-custodial parent access after 21 days, unless the custodial parent provides the Principal with documentation that the non-custodial parent is not eligible to obtain access as set forth under 1-4 above .

When the student record is released to the non-custodial parent, the school will delete all electronic and postal address and telephone number information relating to either work or home locations of the custodial parent from student records provided to non-custodial parent. In addition, such records will be marked to indicate that they shall not be used to enroll the student in another school.

E. Notice on Transfer to Other Schools

Pursuant to 603 CMR 23.07 (g), notice is hereby given to parents and eligible students that the District forwards the complete school record of a transferring student to schools in which the student seeks or intends to enroll. Such a transfer of records takes place without consent of the parent or eligible student.

F. Destruction of Records

1. Notice is hereby given that the temporary record of a student will be destroyed no later than five (5) years after that student transfers, graduates or withdraws from the school system. When the student transfers, graduates or withdraws from school, and if the eligible student or the parent/guardian want the temporary record, they must request, in writing, prior to the last day of school, that the documents be provided to them. No additional notice, other than this Notice in the handbook, will be provided to the student or his parent/guardian of such destruction.
2. In addition, each year, the Principal and/or teacher and/or other service providers may destroy the following documents that are considered part of the student's temporary records: disciplinary records (other than documentation suspension/expulsion/exclusions), any notes from the parent/guardians or other documents concerning absences, early dismissals late arrivals, as well as examples of student work. If the eligible student or the parent/guardian want those records, they must request, in writing, prior to the last day of school that the documents be provided to them, rather than be destroyed. No additional notice, other than this Notice in the handbook, will be provided to the student or his parent/guardian of such destruction.

G. School Choice

It is the policy of the school district to admit non-resident students under the terms and conditions of the Inter-district School Choice Law. Applications are required for each applying students. Families moving out of the town during the school year can apply to remain in the school through the school choice program if seats are available and there is no wait list for that grade and school. By law, seats are filled on a random basis and no preference is given to current or former students, or children of town/city or school employees. Preference is given to siblings of enrolled students. The number of available school choice slots at each grade level rests exclusively with the building Principal.

H. Withdrawal

Parent/guardians who are moving their families out of the town during the school year are requested to inform the school office of the intent to withdraw and complete a withdrawal form and permission to forward school records.

CLASS ASSIGNMENT

A. General Procedures

The main purpose in class assignment is to construct the best possible learning environment for each child. Classes are balanced in terms of achievement, socio- economic levels, gender and friendship groupings that bring out the best in each child. There is an optimal size for classes recommended by the school committee. Wherever possible the special interests and needs of students and faculty are also considered. Teachers, special subject teachers, remedial teachers, special education teachers and counselors meet in the spring to discuss and make recommendations for class placement. Teachers take into account learning styles, achievement, friendship groups, and similar criteria in assembling their lists. The classroom teachers submit a final list of recommendations to the Principal before the end of the school year.

Class assignment is a painstaking process that balances the needs of both the individual student and the class group as a whole. Once placement decisions are made, Principals rarely make changes to the assignment. Switching a single child can negatively affect the learning environment for the entire class group.

B. Promotion and Retention

Promotion from one grade to another is based on the individual child's completion of the grade level work to the satisfaction of the classroom teacher. Throughout the school year, assessment data and observations will be collected by the teacher and a recommendation for retention will be discussed with the Principal. In supporting the retention the Principal will notify the parents/guardian of the recommendation.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Schools are most successful in meeting their goal of educating all students when families support schools and schools support families. Parents/guardians are encouraged to support the Hampshire Regional schools in many ways: by attending parent/teacher conferences and communicating with teachers throughout the year; serving on established ad hoc committees and councils; becoming working members of a PTO, SEPAC, or other parent/teacher group; volunteering as individuals; and attending sporting, cultural and other kinds of events and presentations. Parent/guardians support the schools at home by taking an active interest in their child's day; assuring the health and well-being of their

child; helping with homework; and being available to talk with and listen to their child talk about his/her school experience.

A. Parent/Guardian and Visitors to School

Parent/guardians, community members and other visitors are encouraged to visit the schools and acquaint themselves with the wide variety of exciting learning experiences taking place. Please call the school office to make an appointment for a mutually convenient time. All visitors to schools are asked to report to the office upon arrival. If this is a first visit, please bring picture ID.

B. CORI Checks

Schools in Massachusetts are required to perform CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) checks on any current or prospective volunteers in the school department. Any parent/guardian that is interested in volunteering at the school or that may be interested in attending field trips should complete a CORI form. Forms are available at the school office. CORI checks can take up to several weeks to process. The school suggests completing the paperwork and having it on file so that parents may be available to volunteer or chaperone without any delay. CORIs expire every 3 years.

C. PTO

Parent/Teacher Organizations help parent/guardians meet other parent/guardians and share in programs of common interest that support their children and the school. Often the PTO offers enrichment projects for the benefit of all the school students and plans money-raising projects to help finance such enrichment projects.

Parent/guardians are encouraged to inquire at the school office about the existence of the PTO in their child's school. Notices will be sent home with each student concerning PTO meetings, usually held in the evenings at the school. All parent/guardians are encouraged to join and participate.

SCHOOL COUNCIL and SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Each elementary school has an established School Council, which is a representative, school-building-based, committee composed of the Principal, teachers, parents and community members. Community members volunteer to serve on the committee or are recruited by the Principal. Councils meet throughout the school year.

Areas of Responsibility The Massachusetts Education Reform Act outlines four major areas of responsibility for School Councils. Councils assist Principals in:

- Adopting educational goals for the school that are consistent with local educational policies and statewide student performance standards
- Identifying the educational needs of students attending school
- Reviewing the annual school building budget
- Formulating a school improvement plan

School Improvement Plan The School Improvement Plan is submitted to the School Committee and outlines the goals, action plan, and assessment of accomplishments.

ELEMENTARY CURRICULA AND RELATED SERVICES

As a result of this process, the Curriculum Frameworks are of high quality, results driven, and focus on world class standards. What is important to remember is that each of the curriculum frameworks will always be considered as works in progress, and we will continue to refine them to strengthen them and to keep them current. Local communities will use the frameworks to develop more specific curriculum. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will base the new student assessment program on the frameworks.

A . English Language Learners

Under G.L. c. 71A, Sheltered English Immersion is the method used to provide instruction and support the English language acquisition process for young children in which all classroom instruction is in English but with the curriculum and presentation designed for children who are learning the language. English learners will be provided language support services until they are proficient enough in English to participate meaningfully in the district's education program. Some

English learners will reach this level of English proficiency within one year, but some will not. Since students acquire proficiency in English at different rates, districts cannot limit to one year the provision of language support services to English learners who are not yet able to participate meaningfully in the district's programs in English, and all reading, writing, and subject matter are taught in English.

Sheltered Immersion (ELL) Under G.L. c. 71A, all textbooks and other instructional materials are to be in English, no subject matter shall be taught in any language other than English, and students learn to read and write solely in English. However, teachers may use an English learner's native language when necessary for clarification purposes.

Instruction and curriculum are designed to permit active engagement by ELL students throughout the school day. English learners can bring personal and educational backgrounds and experiences to their classrooms that are different from those students born and educated in the United States. Teachers design instruction to link academic concepts to each student's prior knowledge and experience. Classroom instruction emphasizes English vocabulary by combining the teaching of vocabulary and the teaching of content. Teachers adapt content, including texts, assignments, and assessments. Content is presented in all modalities, including written texts which are within the student's English proficiency level. Testing and informal classroom assessments are also appropriate for each student's English proficiency levels. Regular classroom activities provide opportunities for students to practice and apply new language and content knowledge in English with frequent opportunities for students to demonstrate their mastery of English and content in English.

B. Special Education

In Massachusetts, the special education system is based on the federal special education law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), in combination with the state's special education law (MGL c. 71B). These laws protect students with disabilities who are eligible for special education and guarantee them an Individualized Education Program (IEP) designed to meet their unique needs.

Students ages 3-21 suspected of having a disability affecting her/his ability to progress effectively in education can be referred for a full evaluation to determine eligibility for Special Education services. The referral can be made by school personnel, a parent/guardian, pediatrician, nurse and/or therapist. Prior to a referral all efforts will be

made through the Child Study Team (CST) process. This may include Tiered Intervention and Response to Intervention where reasonable accommodations and modifications are made for the needs of a student within the regular education setting, utilizing regular education services such as Title I, ELL, and before/after school enhanced instruction. In addition, a parent/guardian has the right to request the services of the building based pre-referral support team in each school. If a school refers a student for a special education evaluation, parent/guardians will be notified in writing and written parent/guardian consent for an evaluation will be obtained. Evaluations will be completed by qualified Hampshire Regional School District staff.

Each school in the Hampshire Regional School District is committed to providing special education services to students in the least restrictive environment. This means that, to the maximum extent possible, children with disabilities must be educated with children who do not have disabilities. Special education services will be provided to the child with a disability in the regular classroom when appropriate. Removal of a child from the regular education environment will occur only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be satisfactorily achieved.

If a parent/guardian feels his/her child may be eligible for services under special education, a referral can be made directly to the school Principal. Further explanation of parental/guardian rights under IDEA can be obtained from the Director of Pupil Services. Please contact the Director of Pupil Services at 413-527-7200 with any questions or concerns related to special education services within the Hampshire Regional School District.

C. 504

The Federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provide protections for the civil rights of students with diagnosed disabilities that substantially limit their ability to access an education without specific specialized instructional accommodations. The purpose of the law is to ensure that all students have equal access to an education regardless of a disability. Unlike special education eligibility, a student does not have to demonstrate a lack of academic progress to access classroom and school accommodations and services. Student eligibility is determined through an evaluation by a 504 Team who are responsible for determining eligibility. The 504 team consists of the student, teachers, parents, the Principal or his/her designee, and other school providers as necessary. A specialist (ie. physician, occupational therapist, speech and language pathologist, allergist,

psychiatrist, psychologist, etc.) provides a diagnosis of the disability. The 504 Plan is written by the team if the student is determined eligible or through the special education evaluation process. The Principal or a designee is responsible for writing and monitoring the 504 accommodation plan.

D. Health Services

The mission of the health services department of the Hampshire Regional School District is to promote and protect the physical and emotional health of students and staff. The Health Services Department, through the School Nurses, provides comprehensive health programs that advance the well-being, academic success, and life-long achievement of all students.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to inform the school nurse of any health condition that may impact their child while at school. It is the responsibility of the school nurse, working with parents/guardians, teachers, and other staff, to develop an individualized health care plan for any student who has a significant health care need.

E. Counseling

Our elementary school is staffed with a certified Counselor who provides social-emotional support to students who need such support to make effective academic progress. Priority for counseling services is given to students with learning disabilities identified through the special education and/or 504 evaluation process. However, crisis counseling and other on-demand short-term counseling for all students is available as schedules permit.

Counselors are trained to provide crisis intervention as well as to assist students in meeting their developmental social-emotional needs. Counselors provide service through individual and small group counseling and classroom presentations. The counselor also serves as a consultant to school staff, parent/guardians, and referral agencies in the community.

Confidentiality for students and families is an essential component of counseling services. School counseling cannot address major and/or chronic mental health issues. Parent/guardians are encouraged to seek outside professional help for children with substantial needs. Parent/guardians are encouraged to communicate frequently with school counselors regarding the progress toward individual student goals.

F. Child Study Process

The child study team consists of various members including, but not limited to, the Principal, school psychologist, school adjustment counselor, classroom teacher, and specialists. The team's primary function is to evaluate and design appropriate programs for students who are experiencing learning, social, emotional, and/or behavioral difficulties.

Students who are having difficulty in school may first be referred to the Child Study Team (CST) to find solutions to those difficulties. If the school-based, general education efforts do not resolve the difficulty after the first round of intervention, the CST shall make a referral for a second round of intervention. Parents are a part of the process when the first round of intervention is deemed unsuccessful, and a meeting will be arranged to review all available information with the parents/guardians, the Child Study Team, the child's teacher, and others who might have knowledge of the child and his or her difficulty in school. A decision is then made with the specific types of interventions to try over a 6-8 week period.

After the second round of intervention, the CST will reconvene and the parents/guardians will be invited. If there is agreement that the second round of intervention was unsuccessful, the CST will consider a referral for appropriate assessments to be conducted by school personnel. At this point, written parent consent is required for the Child Study Team to complete an evaluation in order to determine eligibility for special education and related services. These are conducted at no cost to parents.

If a student is determined to be eligible for special education and related services, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is developed. The IEP document is confidential and private. The information contained in it may be shared only with other school officials with a legitimate educational interest or may be released to other officials, subject to the exceptions listed in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Please contact the Principal with questions about the Child Study Process.

ASSESSMENT and TESTING

A. State Testing

Massachusetts requires that all public school students participate in the MCAS testing program. Testing occurs in the spring, generally from April through May. Results are mailed home to families in the fall. Students on special education IEPs, students on 504

plans, and students participating in ELL (English Language Learning) are expected to fully participate in the testing program. Schools will provide testing accommodations through the individual accommodation plan for each student as required.

B. Report Cards

Report cards are distributed three times a year. Please see the school calendar for the specific dates. In addition to parent/teacher conferences in November, teachers are always available by appointment to meet with parent/guardians to review the report cards and on- going progress during the year.

C. Progress Notes

By law, all students who have an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) must receive a progress report at the same time as report cards are distributed. Progress reports allow parents/guardians to check on their children's progress toward the IEP goals at set times throughout the year. Special education progress reports help parents/guardians decide whether or not their children are making progress toward the annual goals that were developed during the IEP process. If a parent/guardian believes his/her child is not making the expected progress the parent/guardian should speak with the child's special education teacher or ask the Team to meet again to discuss whether changes in the IEP are needed.

A parent/guardian of any child who is not making adequate progress will be informed by the classroom teacher prior to the close of the grading period. The teacher and/or parent/guardian can refer the student to the building's student support team. The team will review the student's progress and make recommendations designed to help the student improve his/her academic performance.

D. Parent/Teacher Conferences

In the fall, there are scheduled parent/teacher conferences. Each student's parent/guardians are invited to meet with the teacher for a specific appointment to discuss the progress and potential of the student. These conferences are planned for the benefit of the parent/guardian, teacher, and ultimately the student.

Parent/guardians should not hesitate to contact a teacher and/or schedule a conference at any time. In order that teachers can give parent/guardians time to answer questions and address concerns, it is requested that parent/guardians make appointments to meet with

teachers. Appointments can be made through the school office or directly with individual faculty. Because of the tightness of the daily school schedule, it is very difficult for classroom teachers to meet with parent/guardians without 24 hour notice so that appropriate planning and coverage arrangements can be made.

E. District and School Report Cards and AYP Requirements

The Hampshire Regional School District and each elementary school provide annual “report cards” that outline the performance of the district and the schools on the indicators identified by the Every Student Succeeds Act and DESE. These report cards are online and are available for all parents/guardians and community members through the school offices.

HEALTH and SAFETY

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/guardians shall supply information indicating the name, address, and contact phone numbers for family, friends, or neighbors to be contacted in case the parent is not available; and any allergies or health care problems the student may have.

A. Guidelines for Illness and School Attendance

- In the event of fever ≥ 100.0 degrees, vomiting/diarrhea, please keep your child home until 24 hours fever/vomiting/diarrhea-free
- If a student has strep throat, the student may return to school after they are fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-controlling medicine AND have received the appropriate antibiotic treatment for 12 hours.
- If your child is taking a narcotic pain reliever for an illness or injury, in most cases your child should not attend school.
- Please contact your school nurse and/or primary care provider if you have further

question regarding whether your child should attend school.

B. Emergency Forms

An emergency form is sent home the first week of school. It is vital that the form be completed properly and signed so that the child will be able to receive needed treatment. Emergency information must be as accurate and up to date as possible for student safety. Parent/guardians must keep the school nurse informed of any changes to the emergency form. Changes can include alternate emergency contact people, phone numbers, street addresses, medications, new allergies or medical conditions.

C. Sexuality Education

The school nurse and physical education teacher presents puberty education classes to sixth graders. Parents are encouraged to speak directly with the school nurse regarding the curriculum for the classes and parents may choose to opt their children out of these classes. This must be done in writing to the school nurse.

D. Medications

Parents/guardians are required to bring in all medications and discuss the administration plan with the school nurse.

E. School Safety Plan

The school safety plan details procedures to follow in cases of emergency such as fire, earthquake, bomb scare, and similar unlikely but serious occurrences. The elementary school has assembled a school safety committee composed of the Principal, secretary, nurse, custodians, counselor, teachers, and paraprofessionals. The safety committees meet regularly to assess the safety of the school environment, receive training in preparedness and plan and conduct safety drills with students and faculty.

Except for required fire drills conducted during surprise visits by the fire department several times each year, parent/guardians will be informed in advance of planned safety drills as is possible. The first fire drill and lockdown drill are announced in advance to children and staff. All drills are designed to make students and faculty aware of what steps to take, assess the overall preparedness level of the school, make necessary adjustments to the plan, and limit the stress to children.

All doors are locked at all times. In case of an emergency, children have access to the outside. If individuals enter the building on non-school business and appear threatening in any way, the police and the Superintendent will be notified immediately.

In the event of an emergency involving the police or fire department, the Principal will work closely with personnel from each department. The trained police and fire professionals will assume control of the site when it is deemed necessary. If dismissal of students is required, only those adults listed on a child's emergency card will be allowed to dismiss a student.

F. Safety Procedures

The safety of students and adults in the school building is a primary concern of the Hampshire Regional School District. Parent/guardians are asked to encourage children to respect safety procedures and to model safe behavior for children.

- **Sign-in/out:** All visitors, volunteers and parent/guardians are expected to check into the office and sign in/out. It is the responsibility of the office staff to know which adults are in the building at any given time and to maintain an accurate sign-in list which they will bring with them if the building needs to be evacuated.
- **ID Badges:** All faculty and staff are expected to be wearing identity badges in a visible location when school is in session.
- **Alternative Pick Up Arrangements:** Under no circumstances will students be released to a stranger, unless specific permission has been given by the custodial parent/guardian.

G. Gender Identity

All students need a safe and supportive school environment to progress academically and developmentally. Hampshire Regional School District will respect student wishes to be referred to by a different name and gender marker than is on their student record based on an affirmed change in gender identity. Hampshire Regional School District will share this information with parent/guardian unless students expressly do not give us permission to do so. However, in cases where we feel student safety is at risk, we may need to share the information with parent/guardian. Hampshire Regional School District will not change the name and/or gender marker on the student record without the parent/guardian's knowledge. However, the District does recognize that in certain cases, the general rule of

parental knowledge may not be required based upon an individualized assessment of each student's situation.

SCHOOL FOOD SERVICES

All elementary schools participate in the National School Food Service Program. Breakfast and lunch is available every day. Menus are available in each school and are posted on each school's website. Free and reduced price meals are available to those who qualify. Please contact the school office for an application.

The cafeteria operates on a prepayment system. This should not be confused with a credit system. The cafeteria is a financially self-supporting operation, which is dependent on timely payments. Breakfast and lunch payments are collected in advance on a weekly or monthly basis. Please send payment in a sealed envelope, noting the amount enclosed on the front. Checks can be made out to the New Hingham Regional Elementary School.

Meals are offered with milk. Students who bring their lunch may purchase a milk.

Related Issues:

- **Food allergies:** Information about food allergies should be part of a student's medical file in the nurse's office. This information is shared with the affected student's teacher and with the cafeteria staff. Cafeteria staff maintain a confidential list of students with food allergies and take steps to ensure that allergic student's needs are attended to with regard to school meals. Teachers may inform classroom parents about food allergies present in a classroom without identifying individual students so that parents/guardians can provide special snacks that all children can enjoy. Because of the potential danger to allergic students as well as other safety risks, all students are discouraged from sharing food and/or snacks with friends.
- **Dietary Restrictions:** The Food Service is limited in its ability to accommodate dietary restrictions and students with specialized needs may have to bring their lunch to school. However, there are limited choices available for elementary children in addition to the main lunch menu. These include sun butter and jelly sandwiches, cheese sandwiches, and salads.

TECHNOLOGY

(TBA)

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

Together, the staff of the Hampshire Regional School District want to partner with you to support your child(ren) having positive relationships with peers and adults. Social and emotional competence is as central to your child's healthy development as academic learning. Our goal is to provide physically and emotionally safe learning environments. This includes interactions with others which are free of bullying.

Parents of students who suspect their child has been bullied (or who observe incidents of bullying) are encouraged to report this behavior to the Principal. We need your assistance with intervening in situations of possible bullying or peer conflict in order to support you and your child. We can't help the situation if we don't know about it in a timely way.

Anyone, including a parent, guardian, student or school staff member, can report suspected bullying. Reports from parents can be made verbally or in writing. Also, it is important to note that no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor of bullying **solely** on the basis of an anonymous report.

The following are some suggestions for parents to prevent and respond to bullying (adapted from the National Crime Prevention Council website):

- Teach kids to solve problems without using violence and praise them when they do.
- If you see any bullying, stop it right away, even if your child is the one doing the bullying.
- Encourage your child to help others who need it.
- Don't bully your children or bully others in front of them. If your children see you hit, ridicule, or gossip about someone else, they are also more likely to do so themselves.
- Talk to your child's teacher about suspected bullying instead of confronting the other child's parents. If the teacher doesn't act to stop the bullying, talk to the Principal.
- Teach your child nonviolent ways to deal with bullies, like walking away, playing with friends, or talking it out.
- Help your child act with self-confidence.
- Don't encourage your child to fight. This could lead to him or her getting hurt, getting in trouble, and beginning more serious problems with the aggressor.
- Involve your child in activities outside of school. This way he or she can make friends in a different social circle.

For additional information, please refer to **MGL c.71, § 370**: Bullying in schools, as well as **603 CMR 49**: Notification of bullying or retaliation.

Policy scope: Any form of bullying, harassment, cyberbullying, and/or cyber-harassment is prohibited, whether in the classroom, on school premises, immediately adjacent to school premises, traveling to or from school, or at school-sponsored events, whether or not held on school premises. "Traveling to or from school" includes on a school bus or other school related vehicle, at official school bus stops, and walking to or from school within a reasonable time before or after school hours.

Bullying or harassment, including cyberbullying and/or cyber-harassment, that is not conducted at locations noted above are covered by this policy if the incident results, or could result, in a substantial disruption of the school learning environment for one or more individuals and/or the orderly day-to-day operations of the school.

A. Reporting and Investigations

Each member of the school community is responsible for reporting any observations of bullying or harassment, or credible information that such an act has taken place. Reports of bullying or harassment incidents, including cyberbullying and/or cyber-harassment, will be investigated to determine if the incident(s) resulted in a potential or actual disruption of the school learning environment for one or more individuals and/or the orderly day-to-day operations of the school.

B. Oversight and Accountability

The Superintendent, and/or his/her designee, will report on the total number of complaints, investigations, verified acts and any trends of bullying, harassment, cyberbullying and/or cyber-harassment district-wide at least annually to the School Committee.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

As children move through elementary school, it is expected that they will learn to work out differences through nonviolent means with the help of the home and school community. Conduct is a standard of personal behavior that supports effective learning and intellectual growth. Discipline is a system of rules, which produces responsible and self-disciplined adults. Both are dependent upon cooperation between home and school. Therefore, parents, students, and staff are asked to share the following beliefs about conduct and discipline:

1. ***All have the right to expect a safe and secure school environment.*** Therefore, all students, parents, and staff must know the rules of the school and the consequences for violating them. Clear and specific definitions of expected behavior help students take responsibility for their actions in school and in society.
2. ***Learning is our primary goal.*** Therefore, prompt action must be taken when unacceptable behavior interferes with teaching and learning.
3. ***We strive to teach mutual respect among all members of the school community by recognizing the dignity of each individual.*** Therefore, enforcement of rules emphasizes a positive attitude toward students, teachers, and parents, with the goal that students ultimately discipline themselves. The Principal will interpret these rules and will apply them with attention to the individual needs of each student.

Although it is understood that some of the rules and regulations might be more appropriate at one age than another, nonetheless, all rules and regulations apply to the entire elementary school population. The expectations and penalties also apply during all school-sponsored activities.

Principals and teachers have the option of using other penalties such as loss of recess and other privileges, after school detention, notes or telephone calls to parents, and request parent conferences as needed. Whenever any penalties arising from violations are assigned, there will be communication between the student, parent/guardian and Principal. The Principal will interpret these rules and regulations.

All student discipline decisions rests exclusively with the Principal. The Principal will make all disciplinary decisions in accordance with 603 CMR 53.00 (Student Discipline laws and regulations). Other behaviors not specifically covered in the following rules and regulations will be considered on an individual basis.

APPENDIX A: WIND-CHILL FACTOR CHART



