

2021-2022
Petersham Center School



Parent Handbook

**PETERSHAM CENTER SCHOOL
MISSION STATEMENT**

The Petersham Center School community is committed to providing a teaching and learning environment in which the educational needs of every individual child are met. We offer a stimulating, positive atmosphere that is responsive to developmental needs and individual learning styles and challenges each student to develop to his or her fullest potential and to become a creative and self-motivated individual. Our curriculum is designed to enable students to meet specific academic, social, and physical goals; as an educational system, we accept responsibility for our students meeting those goals.

Petersham Center School welcomes families and the community as participants in the educational experience, and we seek to give students skills to participate as valued members of their families, and social and educational communities. At Center School, the physical, social, and mental integrity of each child is respected and we affirm the importance of differences as well as similarities amongst individuals. We encourage the ideals of cooperation, caring, and respect in school, at home and in the community. We strive to provide students with an educational experience that will equip them to become confident and capable learners throughout their lives and to become productive citizens in a democratic society.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PETERSHAM CENTER SCHOOL

1. The students will be provided with a curriculum that introduces them to basic skills and knowledge that will enable them to achieve.
2. The students will be provided with challenges and opportunities to expand their knowledge, interests, and cultural awareness lifelong
3. The students will be guaranteed a curriculum that allows achievement for all; a curriculum that provides for individual differences; socially, physically, mentally, and emotionally.
4. The students will be provided with experiences and opportunities to acquire the ability to make responsible decisions and to find positive solutions to problems.
5. The students will be made aware of the importance of being a productive member of our democratic society and will be provided the history, values, and ideals upon which our nation was founded.
6. The student will be encouraged to respect and cherish individual differences among themselves and others; learning to recognize and accept their potentials and limitations.
7. The students will be aided in developing a positive self-image and in becoming self-disciplined.
8. The students will develop an appreciation for using leisure time productively for physical, intellectual, creative, and social activities
9. The students will be encouraged to develop a desire for life-long learning.
10. The students will be provided with experiences that encourage them to love, enjoy, and respect their natural environment.
11. The students will be provided with experiences to prepare them for the transition from the Petersham Center School to Middle/High school.
12. The students will be guaranteed a school administration, faculty, and support staff that will uphold the philosophy and objectives of the Center School.

Orange Elementary, Petersham Center School and R.C. Mahar Regional

WHAT IS THE CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT AND WHY DO WE NEED IT?

THE CODE OF CONDUCT for Orange Elementary, Petersham Center School, and Ralph C. Mahar Regional Schools are based upon the laws, rules, regulations, and policies that seek to allow access to education for all while protecting the due process rights of the individual. Discipline, as defined by the Code, must have the qualities of understanding, fairness, flexibility, and consistency. It is the responsibility of the school personnel, students, parents/guardians, and the community to contribute to a school atmosphere that promotes a safe, healthy, and supportive whole-school environment that is conducive to learning. Preventive and positive discipline is a shared responsibility for students, administrators, teachers, parents/guardians, and the community. The Code of Conduct is intended to be instructive, not punitive, and is based on the principles of preventative and positive discipline (i.e. interventions, skill-building, and consequences) will be aimed at addressing the causes of misbehavior, resolving conflicts, meeting students' needs, and keeping students in school. In addition, the Code is intended to create clear expectations and graduated levels of support and intervention for all students with consequences for misbehavior that are individualized, consistent, reasonable, fair, age-appropriate, and that match the severity of the student's misbehavior. Our schools within the Consolidated Districts recognize the importance of individual student growth and development within a safe environment that supports and encourages learning. To help maintain that environment, the Code of Student Conduct will:

- Identify a multi-tiered system of support to ensure safe and supportive whole school environments and individualized student interventions before exclusionary practices
- Describe the conduct that is disruptive and/or a violation of the Code of Conduct
- Standardize procedures that the school will use in responding to conduct problems
- Define Due Process
- Specify the rights and responsibilities of students, parents, and staff
- Suggest reintegration strategies for disciplined students

Each disciplinary case will be decided according to the facts accompanying it. Efforts will be made to discipline students while maintaining them in regular school programs. Our schools encourage parent(s) and guardian(s) to be involved in the disciplinary process. Due process will be followed for all disciplinary actions. In accordance with the United States Constitution and applicable federal and state laws and regulations, no student shall be suspended, excluded, or otherwise disciplined on account of race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, genetics, or active military status.

The Code of Student Conduct is in force:

During regular school hours. Portal to portal including when students are being transported on a school bus. At such times and places including, but not necessarily limited to, school-sponsored events, field trips, athletic functions, bus stops, and other activities where school administrators have jurisdiction over students.

Additionally, it is important to understand that Massachusetts law provides a principal with authority to suspend a student for conduct that occurs away from school if the student is charged with a felony or is the subject of a felony delinquency complaint and the principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantially detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. This law also provides a principal with authority to expel a student who has been convicted, adjudicated, admitted to guilt with respect to a felony or felony delinquency, if the principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantially detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

WHAT PREVENTIVE MEASURES ARE EMPHASIZED IN THE CODE OF CONDUCT?

The mission of our schools is to support academic achievement and to develop self-discipline.

Therefore the measures emphasized in the Code of Conduct are incremental with the goal of using the least extreme measure that can resolve the discipline problem. In the past, disruptive students and the teachers involved in the incident were not given the opportunity to interact prior to a student's return to the classroom; in fact, teachers often did not know when a student would return from a suspension.

This code includes a multi-tiered system of interventions (Appendix A) aimed at preventing behavioral problems as well as bridging and reintegration strategies to decrease the recurrence of the offending behavior. Schools and parents/guardians may offer other bridging strategies that teach appropriate behavior. Teachers and administrators will continue to use and develop a variety of informal disciplinary and guidance strategies in teaching new behaviors before, during, and after disciplinary measures.

School administrators should conduct a thorough investigation into school-related discipline matters, including student interviews, prior to recommending disciplinary action.

DEFINITIONS

Behavior Intervention Plan: An individualized student plan that describes problematic behavior and provides a prescriptive menu of incentives and consequences based on the function of the behaviors to replace the problematic behavior with appropriate behavior.

Safe and Supportive School Environments: Includes Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Developmental Design.

Student Interventions: Disciplinary responses to violations in the Code of Conduct that do not involve removal from class or suspensions such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, behavioral contracts, and positive behavioral interventions and supports.

Principal: The instructional leader or headmaster of a public school or his or her designee for purposes of school disciplinary matters.

Parent: A student's father, mother, or legal guardian, or person or agency legally authorized to act on behalf of the student in place of or in conjunction with the father, mother, or legal guardian.

Superintendent: The chief executive officer employed by a school committee or board of trustees to administer a school system, charter school, or virtual school pursuant to G.L. c. 71, §§59, 59A, 89, or 94, or his or her designee appointed for purposes of conducting a student disciplinary hearing.

Temporary Removal from Class: Removal of the student from his/her assigned classroom to a comparable educational program within the school building for up to one (1) school day. Beyond one (1) school day, removal constitutes an in-house suspension.

In-House Suspension: Removal of the student from the regular classroom activities but not the school premises. In-school suspensions of ten (10) or fewer days consecutively or cumulatively is not considered a "short-term suspension." In-house suspensions of more than ten (10) consecutive or cumulative days will be considered a "long-term suspension" for due process purposes. Students must be able to make progress in school including doing work, taking tests/quizzes, receive information about long-term assignments and other similar classroom activities during the in-house suspension period.

Short Term Suspension: Removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for:

Elementary 1-3 school days*

Secondary 1-4 school days

Short-term suspensions resulting in ten (10) or more days of suspension cumulatively for multiple disciplinary purposes in any school year will be considered a long-term suspension for due process purposes.

*Written notification to the Superintendent or designee is required prior to an out-of-school suspension taking place for students PreK- Grade 3 explaining the reasons for the suspension.

Long Term Suspension: Removal of a student from the school premises and/or regular classroom activities for:

Elementary 3-6 school days*

Secondary 4-9 school days

Long-term suspensions may be served in school.

*Written notification to the Superintendent or designee is required prior to an out-of-school suspension taking place for students PreK- Grade 3 explaining the reasons for the suspension.

Emergency Suspension: A student may be removed for not more than two (2) school days following a suspendable offense where continued presence in the school building posing a danger to persons or property and materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school and in the principal's judgment there is no alternative to alleviate the danger or disruption. In such cases, the principal must immediately notify the superintendent or designee in writing and describe the danger presented by the student. A principal may not remove a student from

school on an emergency basis for a disciplinary offense until adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation.

Indefinite Suspension: Exclusion from a school for a period of time from ten (10) to ninety (90) school days due to a felony charge and a determination that continued presence will have a substantially detrimental effect on school's general welfare. The suspension shall continue pending adjudication of the case. Educational services must be provided to the student during this disciplinary period.

Expulsion: Removal of the student from the school premises, regular classroom activities, and school activities for more than ninety (90) school days or permanently. Educational services must be provided to the student during this disciplinary period.

Alternative School Transfer: (Secondary Only) Decision made by the Superintendent or designee following a district process documenting repeated violations or a single episode of severity causing a threat to the safety of others.

School-Wide Educational Service Plan: A document developed by the principal which includes a list of educational services available to students who are suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days. Such a plan will detail the events and activities which represent the student's opportunity to continue to receive educational services and make progress while out on discipline.

DUE PROCESS

IN HOUSE SUSPENSION OF TEN (10) OR LESS CONSECUTIVE OR CUMULATIVE DAYS

At a hearing at which an in-house suspension is to be imposed, the principal/designee must:
Advise the student of the disciplinary offense(s) charged and the basis for the charge.
Provide the student with an opportunity to dispute the charge or explain the circumstances.
If charges are substantiated then the student is informed of the length of the in-house suspension.

Make reasonable efforts to notify the parents orally on the same day the decision for an in-house suspension is imposed of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding the student committed the infraction, and the length of the in-school suspension. Invite the parents to a meeting to discuss the student's academic performance and behavior as well as strategies for student engagement and responses to the behavior. The meeting shall be scheduled on the date of suspension if possible or soon thereafter. Two (2) attempts to contact the parents must be documented under such circumstances.

Following the decision to impose an in-house suspension the principal/designee must send written notice to the parents and invite the parents to meet if the parents were unavailable for a meeting after oral notice. This notice must be forwarded by hand- delivery, certified mail, first-class mail or email to an address provided by the parents.

During in-house suspensions, the student must be able to make progress in school, be able to do his/her work, take tests, quizzes, receive information about assigned long-term assignments and other similar classroom activities.

OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS (SHORT/LONG TERM)

Prior to the suspension, the principal or designee must:

Provide written notice to the parent in plain language English and home language that states:

- (a) All charges;
- (b) Basis for the charges
- (c) The reason for the potential exclusion; and
- (d) Provides an opportunity for a “meeting” or “hearing” with the principal and the date, time, and location of the meeting/hearing where parents are given the opportunity to discuss the student’s conduct and offer information including mitigating circumstances.
- (e) The right to interpreter services at the meeting, if relevant, and
- (f) If the long-term suspension is a possibility, then notice of the right to appeal to the superintendent as an appeal if the principal does suspend the student for longer than ten (10) consecutive days.
- (g) If long term suspension is a possibility, notice must also include the following:

Prior to the hearing, the student/parent is afforded the opportunity to review the student record and documents on which the Principal/designee may rely.

The student has the right to be represented by counsel or a layperson and his/her own expense.

- The student has the right to produce witnesses and to present the student’s explanation of the incident. Student witnesses/victims do not have to be summoned if the Principal/designee specifically rules, orally or in writing, at the hearing that identification of the student witness, or the presence of a known witness/victim at the hearing, would endanger his or her physical safety or cause intimidation. All witnesses must be voluntary and accompanied by a guardian if under 18 years of age.

- Students have the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district. All witnesses must be voluntary and accompanied by a guardian if under 18 years of age.

- The student has the right to request that the hearing be recorded and to receive a copy of the audio recording if an audio recording is requested by the principal.

Parental participation and evidence to secure is required –The principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parents orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. The regulations continue that “reasonable efforts” are made with written notice AND two (2) attempts to contact the parents. Written notice includes hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, or email to an address provided by the parent.

In all cases of out-of-school suspensions for PreK-Grade 3, the principal/designee must send a copy of the written determination to the Superintendent/Designee explaining the reasons for an out-of-school suspension BEFORE the suspension takes place.

AFTER THE MEETING/HEARING:

Determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense.

If so, determine after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension, the remedy or consequence to be imposed, in place of or in addition to a suspension.

Send the written determination to the student and parents by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal/designees and the parents.

Prepare a written determination that:

- Identifies the disciplinary offense, the date of and participants at the hearing.
- Sets out the key facts and conclusions reached by the principal/designee.
- Identifies the length and effective date of the suspension, and the date of return to school.
- In the case of a long term suspension, informs of the right to appeal the principal/designees' decision to the superintendent/designee, which shall be in plain language in English and the primary language of the home and contains the process for appealing the decision

EMERGENCY SUSPENSIONS

A student may be removed for not more than two (2) school days following the date of the emergency suspension if the student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property or material and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the principal's/designee's judgment, there is no alternative to alleviate the danger or disruption.

The principal/designee must immediately notify the Superintendent/designee in writing and describe the danger presented by the student.

During the two (2) day emergency suspension the principal/designee must make reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and parents of the emergency suspension, the reason for the removal, and must also notify them of the process in oral and written form and in the primary language of the home if not English.

The notice must include the type and duration of the suspension and the opportunity to make up work assignments or other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal. This notice must be forwarded by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail or email to an address provided by the parents.

Provide the student with an opportunity for a hearing with the principal consistent with the hearing for a short/long-term suspension.

Provide the parents an opportunity to attend the hearing before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for a hearing is otherwise agreed to by the principal/designees, student, and parent.

Render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day consistent with the decision issued for a short/long term suspension.

APPEALS TO THE SUPERINTENDENT

Long-term suspensions (more than 10 consecutive or cumulative days) may be appealed to the Superintendent/designee upon the filing of a written appeal by the parent or student. The following appeals process must be followed:

- Student or parents must file a written notice with the Superintendent/designee within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long term suspension subject to an

extension of the filing, upon agreement with the Superintendent/designee for up to a total of seven (7) calendar days.

- Long-term suspension remains in effect unless and until the Superintendent/designee decides to revert to the principal.
- The Superintendent/designee must send written notice to the parent of the date, time, and location of the hearing and must make a good faith effort to include the parent in the hearing process.
- Students shall have all the rights afforded the student at the principal/designee's hearing for long-term suspension.
- A hearing shall be held within three (3) school days of the request subject to an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days.
- A tape recording of the appeal at the Superintendent/designee level must be made and a copy must be provided to the student and parent upon request.
- The Superintendent/designee's written decision must be made within five (5) calendar days. If it is determined the offense was committed the decision must state the consequence, which may be the same or lesser than the principal/designee but shall not be greater than that imposed by the principal/designee.
- The Superintendent's /designee's decision is final.

APPENDIX A

STUDENT INTERVENTIONS AND TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT

All of our schools have adopted a multi-tiered approach to help struggling learners. Guided by student outcome data, a multi-tiered approach is used to make decisions to improve student achievement and behavior by assisting in the creation of a well-integrated and seamless system of instruction and intervention.

Orange Elementary, Petersham Center School, and R.C. Mahar Regional are implementing the Massachusetts model of tiered systems of support (MTSS). MTSS is a blueprint outlining a single system of support that is responsive to the academic and non-academic needs of all students. This blueprint provides a framework for school improvement that focuses on system-level change across the classroom, school, and district to meet the academic and non-academic needs of all students, including students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are academically advanced. It guides both the provision of high-quality core educational experiences in a safe and supportive learning environment for all students and academic and/or non-academic targeted interventions/supports for students who experience difficulties and for students who have already demonstrated mastery of the concept and skills being taught.

DEFINITIONS

Tier I: Core Instruction/Universal Behavior Supports - All students in Tier I receive high-quality, scientifically based instruction, differentiated to meet their needs, and are assessed on a periodic basis to identify struggling learners who need additional support.

Tier II: Supplemental and Core-In Tier II, students not making adequate progress in the core curriculum are provided with increasingly intensive instruction matched to their needs on the basis of levels of performance and rates of progress.

Tier III: Intense and Core-At this level, students receive individualized, intensive interventions that target the students' skill deficits for the remediation of existing problems and the prevention of more severe problems.

APPENDIX B

DISCIPLINE RELATED INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES UNDER IDEA and SECTION 504

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

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

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

1. Is the misconduct the result of failure to implement the student's IEP?
2. And is the misconduct caused by, or does it have a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability?

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

If the TEAM finds that the misconduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, then the student may be disciplined according to the discipline policy in this handbook. The student will receive educational services during this period of suspension or exclusion. If the TEAM finds that the misconduct was a manifestation of the student's disability, then the school may still be able to implement an IAES (see ## 2 and 3 above). If the IAES is not possible, then the student will remain in his/her current placement, and the TEAM will arrange for a functional behavioral assessment (if one has not been conducted on the student) and the development or modification of a behavior intervention plan. The Principal (or designee) will notify the Special Education/Pupil Services Office of the suspendable offenses of a special needs student and a record will be kept of such notices.

Students not yet determined to be eligible for special education or 504 services:

The law applies to general education students if the school system had knowledge prior to the misconduct that the student was disabled. Under the law, a school district is presumed to have “had knowledge” that a general education student was disabled if the students:

- Parent(s)/guardian(s) has “expressed concern in writing” to the school district that the student is in need of special education and related services;
- Parent/guardian(s) have requested a special education evaluation of the child, or
- District staff has “expressed concern” directly to the special education direction or other supervisory personnel specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the student. If there was no knowledge, the parent/guardian(s) may request an expedited evaluation. During this period, the student may be suspended or expelled under normal School Committee policy. Students determined to have a disability must receive appropriate educational services.

Students identified as having a disability and provided with a Section 504 plan:

Students are expected to meet the expectations for behavior identified in this Code of Conduct. A student on a Section 504 plan may be disciplined like any other non-disabled student. However, if the student is going to be suspended for ten (10) or more consecutive days, expelled or suspended for more than fifteen (15) cumulative days (and there is a change in placement as a result), then a manifestation determination review shall be conducted. The student’s 504 team shall convene, and answer two questions, after reviewing relevant documents and the misconduct of the student:

1. Is the misconduct the result of failure to implement the student’s 504 plan?
2. Is the misconduct caused by, or does it have a direct and substantial relationship to the student’s disability? A summary of the manifestation determination review will be written and a copy provided to the Parent(s)/guardian(s) as soon as possible after the review, but no later than five (5) school days after the review. If the misconduct is not a manifestation of the student’s disability, then the disciplinary process can proceed. If the misconduct was a manifestation of the student’s disability, then the student shall be reevaluated while he/she remains in the current placement.

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DISTRICT PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

Petersham School District is committed to providing a secure and stimulating environment in which to work and learn. We provide a climate that promotes healthy, human relationships and enhances the quality of life for children as well as adults. We believe that:

1. Everyone has the right to be physically safe.
2. Everyone has the right to be treated with courtesy and respect.

3. Everyone has the right to a clean, positive, and safe learning environment.

These rights go hand-in-hand with the responsibility to contribute positively to the school environment and to strive for excellence at all times.

Petersham Center School students are expected to observe the following code of conduct throughout the school day, including lunchroom, bus, and playground activities.

Code of Conduct

Everyone has the right to be safe. Hurtful behavior will not be tolerated.

Physical threats and injury to ourselves and others will be avoided by:

- ❖ Keeping our hands, feet, bodies to ourselves, except when being helpful.
- ❖ Keeping hurtful comments to ourselves.
- ❖ Facing forward while walking in the building.
- ❖ Using school equipment carefully and appropriately.

I'll ensure each person's physical safety by not:

- *hitting*
- *kicking*
- *fighting*
- *tripping*
- *pushing*
- *throwing objects*
- *inappropriate touching*
- *play fighting*
- *attempting to hurt*
- *biting*

Weapons (real or toy), illegal drugs, and other unsafe items (matches, firecrackers, snappers, etc.) are not permitted on school property

Everyone has the right to feel respected and free of fear. Disrespectful or threatening behavior will not be tolerated.

We will show respect for ourselves and others by:

- Using appropriate words and tone of voice.
- Taking charge of my work and behavior, letting others take charge of theirs.
- Including others in our conversations and activities.
- Respectfully express our own ideas, opinions, and feelings and listen respectfully to others.
- Accepting responsibility for our own actions.

I'll ensure each person's right to be respected by not:

- *Swearing*
- *teasing*
- *making threatening remarks*
- *Saying put-downs*
- *Ignoring speakers*
- *Acting rudely*
- *Disrupting*
- *Yelling or screaming*
- *Bullying*
- *Encouraging aggression or violence*
- *Using vulgar language/gestures*

Hats or hoods (other than religious or cultural) may not be worn in the building.

We take care of our environment, our property, and the property of others. Destructive behavior will not be tolerated.

We will show care and respect for our environment and property by:

- Leaving work areas and eating areas clean.
- Enjoy bulletin boards and displays by looking and not touching.
- Touching only personal property or property of others with permission
- Recycling

We will ensure respect for our environment and property by not:

- Stealing
- touching or borrowing others' property without permission
- climbing on furniture
- defacing walls, displays, or furniture
- Misusing equipment
- jumping up to hit doorways, flags, or signs
- Jumping downstairs
- chewing gum (at teacher's direction)

BULLYING

The State has enacted legislation regarding bullying. Bullying is defined as repeated use by one or more students or staff of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school... §370 a member of the school staff includes, but is not limited to, an educator,

administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional. A member of the school staff may be named the “aggressor” or perpetrator” in a bullying report

The Petersham Center School Committee developed an official Bullying Policy that will address prevention and intervention as required by the State. Bullying is prohibited at school, on school vehicles, and during school events. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken for all bullying issues.

The Petersham Center School Bully Policy and Facebook Policy are attached.

Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, *An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools*, was signed into law on May 3, 2010, and took effect immediately. The law requires each school district, charter school, non-public school, approved day or residential school, and collaborative school to develop and implement a plan to address bullying and intervention. The statute directs the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to promulgate regulations addressing a Principal’s duties under one of the ten required elements of the bullying and intervention plan, namely, notification to parents or guardians of the victim and the perpetrator of bullying or retaliation and the action taken to prevent further bullying, and notification to law enforcement of bullying or retaliation, when the perpetrator’s conduct also may result in criminal charges. The law further provides that the regulations must be promulgated by September 30, 2010.

Definition of Bullying:

Pursuant to M.G.L. C71, S 370, means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electron expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that : (i)causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim’s property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or damage to his or her property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Bullying shall include cyberbullying. Amendments were made to the Massachusetts anti-bullying law, which became effective July 1, 2013. The amendments extend protections to students who are bullied by a member of the school staff. As defined in M.G.L. C71, S370, as amended, a member of the school staff includes, but is not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional. A member of the school staff may be named the “aggressor” or perpetrator” in a bullying report.

Bullying is a major distraction from learning. Continued bullying may be defined as harassment that has severe consequences. The fear generated from bullying can lead to chronic absenteeism, truancy, or even dropping out of school. Bystanders feel both guilty and helpless for not standing up to the bully. As a rule bullying behavior starts in elementary school and peaks in the middle school years. However, it attracts more attention from adults when it appears in high school. There the students are older and physically larger and the behavior is recognized as being less tolerable and more inappropriate. Most bullying by students starts out verbally, teasing, and put-downs, and may become progressively worse and assume physical dimensions. Bullying of any type has no place in a school setting. The Petersham School District will endeavor to maintain a learning and working environment free of bullying. Bullying is defined as the act of one or more individuals intimidating one or more persons through verbal, physical, mental, or written interactions.

Examples of bullying include but are not limited to:

1. Intimidation, either physical or psychological.
2. Threats or assaults of any kind stated or implied, in any form.
3. Misuse of student property.

The school committee expects administrators and staff to make clear to students and staff that bullying in the school building, on school grounds, on the bus, or school-sanctioned transportation or at school-sponsored functions will not be tolerated and will be ground for disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion.

The Principal will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of bullying. The Principal will be responsible for handling all complaints by students alleging bullying. The Superintendent will develop administrative guidelines and procedures for the implementation of this policy.

References:	National School Safety Center Maine Project Against Bullying The Wellesley College Center for Research on Women
Legal Reference:	Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 194 as amended Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO Commission Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
Cross Reference:	AC Nondiscrimination ACAB Sexual Harassment JICFA-E Hazing

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION

The Consolidated District has established policies and procedures for receiving and responding to reports of bullying or retaliation. These policies and procedures ensure that all members of the school community, including students, parents, and staff know what will happen when incidents of bullying occur.

A. Reporting bullying or retaliation

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents/guardians or others may be oral or written. Oral reports made by, or to, a staff member must be recorded in writing. All employees are required to immediately report to the Principal (or designee) any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of, or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents/guardians, or other non-employees may be made anonymously. The district will make reporting forms available to the community in each school office, counseling and nursing offices, and on the district website.

At the beginning of each school year, the district will provide the school community, including administrators, staff students, and parents/guardians with notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the Principal (or designee), will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the district website, and in information about the Petersham School District Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan that is made available to parents/guardians. Principal. Telephone # 978-724-3363, Petersham Center School, 31 Spring St., Petersham, MA 01366

1. Reporting by staff: Staff members will immediately report to the Principal (or designee) when they witness or become aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to

the Principal (or designee) does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with the school's policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

2. Reporting by students, parents/guardians, and others. The district expects students, parents/guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the Principal (or designee). Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents/guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private, and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member or with the Principal (or designee).

B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation

1. Safety: Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the Principal (or designee) will assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/ or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. There may be circumstances in which the Principal (or designee) contacts parents/guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will consistent with state regulations 603 CMR 49.00. Responses to promote safety could include: creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a "safe person" for the target and altering the aggressor's schedule and access to the target. The Principal; (or designee) will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of, and after, the investigation as necessary.
2. The Principal (or designee) will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation of a student who has witnessed or reported bullying or retaliation or provides information during an investigation. The confidentiality of students and witnesses reporting alleged acts of bullying will be maintained to the extent possible given the school's obligation to investigate the matter

C. Obligation to Notify Others:

1. Notice to parents/guardians: Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Principal (or designee) will promptly notify the parents/guardians of the target and the aggressor of the incident and discuss the planned response.
2. Notices to Another School or District: If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the Principal (or designee) of the other school/s of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR>
3. Notices to law Enforcement: At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the Principal (or designee) has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the Principal (or designee) will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency.

PROCEDURES FOLLOWED FOR VIOLATIONS OF CENTER SCHOOL RULES:

The goals of these consequences are to help children:

1. Identify the behavior and discuss why it is inappropriate.
2. Take responsibility for the behavior.
3. "Give back" to the community the calm and peace that has been disrupted, by making amends and repairs.
4. Discuss alternatives to inappropriate behavior.

Minor Offenses

Each will be dealt with according to the seriousness of the offense, the age of the student, and whether or not the behavior is a one-time or repeated event. Specific consequences are at the discretion of the supervisory adult. Whenever possible, consequences will include a community service/repair component.

Major Offenses

These would include but are not limited to, physical aggression (actual or attempted), the threat of physical harm, verbal assaults, and gross destruction of property/equipment. These offenses require an automatic Discipline Report. Repeated rude or defiant behavior, repeated use of vulgar language, and repeated disruptions of class, which continue after a specific warning from the supervisory adult, would also result in a Discipline Report.

For each offense, a supervisory adult will complete a Discipline Report. The report will be sent to the Principal and remain on file in the office. The Principal will contact the supervisory adult (and the classroom teacher, if not the same person) and the Counselor to discuss the reported offense. The Principal will speak to the child involved as soon as possible.

Consequences for Major Offenses are:

First Report

1. Loss of 2 days recess, with time spent on community service/repair.
2. Student completes a Behavior Report describing his/her behavior and reasons why it is unacceptable.
3. Parent/Guardian is contacted and the report is carried home by the student for a parent to read, sign and return to school. If necessary, the classroom teacher will follow up.

Second Report

1. Repeat all consequences for first referral, with 3 days of community service/repair.
2. Principal will make personal contact with the parent/guardian. The classroom teacher and supervisory adult will be notified of this contact.
3. Student and parent/guardian will be reminded of consequences if a third report is necessary.

Third Report

1. Repeat all consequences for first referral, with 5 days of community service/repair.
2. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be called to meet with the Principal, classroom teacher, supervisory adult, and the student to discuss the discipline issue.

3. In-school suspension (all assignments completed in a supervised space other than regular classroom) may be administered at the discretion of the Principal.

Additional Reports

In-school or out-of-school suspension may be administered at the discretion of the Principal.

Note:

Some offenses are of such a serious nature that it becomes necessary to circumvent the stated procedures. Possession or distribution of tobacco, drugs, alcohol, and dangerous weapons, as well as major physical aggression, are examples of such offenses. Consequences for these and similar offenses will result in the Principal taking immediate action which may include suspending the student and/or notifying the police.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The Petersham School Committee consists of three members. They are responsible for setting overall policies and establishing programs and procedures which will best allow the individual educational achievement of each student. The Committee also proposes a budget and oversees the spending of money allocated to the school.

The Petersham School Committee meets once a month. Meeting times and dates are posted prior to each meeting at the school, and at the Town Office. Meetings are open to the public.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENTEEISM

Regular attendance is essential to a student's success in school. Most subjects are taught in sequence, requiring the understanding of each concept in order of its presentation. Persistent absenteeism creates a genuine hardship for a child and is regarded as a very serious problem.

The School Committee does recognize, however, that in accordance to state law parents 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:

1. Illness or quarantine,
2. Bereavement or serious illness in the family,
3. Weather so inclement as to endanger the health of the child and
4. For observance of major religious holidays.
5. A child may also be excused for other exceptional reasons with the approval of the school administrator.

Extended vacations during regularly scheduled school time are discouraged. If you plan to excuse your child for an extended vacation, the school work they miss will be provided to them upon their return.

A student's understanding of the importance of day-to-day school work is a critical factor in the shaping

of character. Parents can help their children by refusing to allow them to miss school needlessly.

Accordingly, **parents will provide a written explanation for the absence or tardiness of a child.** This will be required in advance for types of absences where advance notice is possible. A phone call or email from the parents to the nurse is required on the day(s) your child is absent. If we have not been informed of a student's absence by 8:30 a.m. on the day the student is out, the school will make every reasonable attempt to contact the parent or guardian to confirm that the child had not arrived at the school. If a child has missed three or more days for an illness, please bring a doctor's note.

In instances of chronic or irregular absence reportedly due to illness, the school administration may request a physician's statement certifying such absences to be justifiable.

Repeated absence may result in the retention of students in current grade placement.

Parents who wish to pick up an absent child's schoolwork or homework must notify the school in the morning on the third consecutive day the child is absent and may pick the work up at the end of the school day. This will ensure that the child has the exact work that was covered/completed while they were out.

TARDINESS

Prompt arrival at school is expected of all students. Most students find it helpful to arrive at school at 8:15 a.m. This gives them time to settle into the classroom and complete all required morning routines. Students are expected to be in their seats ready to learn at 8:25 a.m. Late arrival, even by a few minutes, disrupts class, causes loss of instruction time, and is often uncomfortable for the tardy student. Any student who arrives at school after 8:25 a.m. is considered tardy and must receive a late pass from the office prior to entering the classroom. Parents will be notified in writing if their child is exhibiting a pattern of tardiness or is frequently tardy.

When absent, the following will happen:

- after three consecutive tardies/absences, the Principal will call home
- after 6 tardies and/or absences, the Principal will send a letter home
- after 9 tardies and/or absences, the Principal and nurse will meet with parents

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Students should arrive between 8:15 A.M. and 8:25 A.M. Students arriving after 8:25 A.M. will be considered tardy. Walkers or students receiving rides to school should not arrive prior to 8:15 A.M. unless special arrangements are made with the office.

Walkers and riders are dismissed through the front doors of the school. Parents are asked to wait outside the double doors for their children. Riders will be dismissed directly to whoever is picking them up and will not be sent out to the cars. Parents who are picking up their children from school should be at school at 2:45 p.m. for the dismissal time of 2:50.

School staff supervises the playground during the lunch recess. The playground is not supervised before

and after school and students are expected to leave for home immediately following dismissal.

Bus students are dismissed through the community entrance near the gymnasium. School is dismissed at 2:50 P.M. for grades K-6.

EARLY DISMISSAL

At times students may need to be picked up from school prior to dismissal time. Parents should send in a note with their child. If you forget to send in a note in the morning, you can call the school. However, a written note is preferred.

WALKERS

Students who walk to school should come straight to school. They should remain on the side of the road at all times and use caution when crossing a street. The cross-walks by the school should be used.

Walkers should not arrive before 8:15 A.M. There is no supervision before that time.

When walkers are dismissed, a teacher is on duty to cross Spring Street and Hardwick Road with the students. Students who are walkers must cross with the teacher at dismissal time.

BICYCLES

Students in grades 2-6 are permitted to ride bicycles to and from school. Bicycles are to be left in the bike rack and may not be ridden during recess periods. The children should observe all bike safety rules when riding their bikes.

The parent or guardian of a student who normally rides the bus must inform the school if his/her child plans to ride a bike. Bike riders should not arrive before 8:15 A.M. There is no supervision before that time.

CHANGES IN GOING HOME ROUTINE

On any day that your child does not follow her or his usual routine for going home, please send a written note to the teacher with complete instructions. Without written instructions, we will help the child follow their regular plan. Please be careful about this; each year we have a good deal of anxiety, confusion, and lost time because children are not sure whether or not they are to be picked up, go home on the bus, or await some other special arrangement. If you must call the school to change your child's dismissal routine, please do so prior to 2:15 p.m. to help avoid any last-minute confusion.

CANCELLATION AND DISMISSAL OF SCHOOL

Cancellation or dismissal of school takes place only during circumstances such as extreme weather, equipment failure, or public crisis. We are aware of the hardship which can be caused by abrupt cancellation. Therefore, the school will not be canceled unless a significant safety risk has been created by unusual circumstances.

In event of a cancellation or delay, all households will receive an automated message from the Superintendent of Schools with information regarding the change in schedule.

Delayed openings and cancellations are posted on Facebook and local TV stations.

The PTG also sponsors a parent snow chain. In the event of a cancellation or delay the snow chain is activated and parents are called and notified of any changes. Forms for the snow chain are sent home in the PTG packets early in the school year.

On rare occasions, it is necessary to close school early due to rapidly worsening weather conditions or other emergencies.

If school must be dismissed early because of hazardous weather or other emergencies, the office will make every attempt to contact you at the number listed on your child's emergency form. If we are unable to contact you, we will call the emergency contact people listed on your child's form.

Lastly, if school is not closed and you feel road conditions are not adequate for safe bus transportation, it is reasonable that as a parent you may decide not to allow your children to attend a school that day.

BUS RULES

The Petersham Center School currently uses Swift River Bus Company and they may be reached at 978-249-4804.

Approximate pickup times are provided in the Athol Daily News Back to School Edition and posted on the school's website. Bus routes change from year to year depending on the number of students and the area where students live.

All students are expected to remain in their seats and keep conversations at a reasonable volume. Students are expected to follow bus rules to ensure everyone's safety.

Students engaging in inappropriate and/or unsafe behaviors may be suspended from riding the school bus for a specific period of time. Any such suspensions will be initiated by the school principal. Suspension of riding privileges for a specific period of time is automatic with a third bus misconduct notice, but suspension for serious infractions may occur after any one infraction.

PARENT-TEACHER GROUP

The PTG is a very active organization in our school. The purpose of the PTG is to plan programs that are informational and beneficial to parents and teachers and which are under the guidance of the Principal. The most important function of the PTG is to foster the interaction of Parents, Teachers, and Principals who work together for the success and benefit of the children and of the school. All parents are welcome to attend and participate in PTG activities. Meetings are posted on the monthly PTG calendar and also in the newsletters.

VOLUNTEERS

All parents, guardians, family members, and community members are encouraged to volunteer their time in various areas including but not limited to, library, individual classroom, or readers.. All adults who volunteer at the school are required to complete a CORI (criminal offense record investigation) as

well as other forms; these forms can be obtained at the school office. If you are interested in doing volunteer help, please contact any teacher or call the school. Your help will be warmly accepted and we guarantee your efforts will be most rewarding.

SCHOOL COUNCIL

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has enacted legislation that calls for the establishment of a School Council for each elementary, secondary, and independent vocational school in the Commonwealth. Each council is to have the following categories of membership: principal, teachers, parents of students attending the school, and community representatives who are not parents, teachers, or students at the school.

Councils are to assist principals in adopting educational goals for each school, identifying the educational needs of the students attending the schools, and formulating a school improvement plan. Parent representatives on this council must be elected by the PTG.

REPORT CARDS/CONFERENCES

In September there will be an evening Open House to share information about the general nature of your child's classroom and to answer questions you may have about the school program.

Parent-Teacher conferences are held in November for grades K – 4 and December for grades five and six. At this meeting your child's progress is reviewed, questions and concerns shared, and goals established for the school year.

Report cards will be issued three times a year for all students. Please carefully review your child's progress and contact the school if you have questions regarding grades. Report cards should be returned within one week of receiving them. They may be kept upon completion of the grade level.

ADMISSION

All children who reach the age of five years on or before September 1st of the current school year are eligible for Kindergarten in September. Children are registered for Kindergarten in the school office. Proof of birth date (birth certificate, passport) is required, and Massachusetts law requires proof that each child has been immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, measles, polio, Hepatitis B, and Chicken Pox. Effective March 1, 1990, Kindergarten children must have had a screening for lead poisoning.

KINDERGARTEN SCREENING

Each child who enters Kindergarten will be given a "screening" in fulfillment of the requirements of Massachusetts Chapter 766 regulations and to help us know the child and plan appropriately for his or her needs.

The screening gives us information about a child's strengths and needs. For example, the gross motor items on the screening help us identify children who will profit from activities designed to develop their coordination in tasks using large muscles (such as running, throwing a ball, etc.). This screening occurs just before the start of the school year. Parents are notified if there are any concerns regarding their

child's development.

SPECIALS

Technology and Media

Physical Education, Health and Nutrition

Art

Music Theory & Concepts

Performing Arts

*Please be sure your child is dressed in appropriate clothing and sneakers for both P.E. and Music class. Music class is held in the gymnasium and involves a significant amount of movement.

HOMEWORK

Homework is important. It is an extension of the learning that takes place in school. In an effort to increase students' study skills the school has the following homework policy. The average times of the homework assignments are as follows:

Grade 1 -- 15 minutes

Grade 2 -- 15-20 minutes

Grade 3 -- 20-30 minutes

Grade 4 -- 45 minutes

Grade 5 -- 45 minutes

Grade 6 -- 45 minutes - 1 hour

In order to help your child develop and increase his/her study skills, the following suggestions are provided.

1. Establish a homework time and area in your household. Choose a time and place each day that will minimize interruptions and that will be the best for your family.
2. Eliminate distractions. Research suggests that children can concentrate more easily when the television, radio, and stereo are not in use. If you have more than one child, establish a quiet time for all. Younger children could look at a picture book or perhaps play a quiet game. Children in lower grades could read, write a letter to a grandparent, draw, etc.
3. Be available. Don't expect your child to go to his/her room and return later with everything completed. Encouragement, praise, and occasional help let your child know that the work he/she is doing is important and that you care.
4. Time. If your child completes the assignment quickly there is probably a long-term assignment such as a book report or report that could use attention or he/she could review for a test. Encourage your child to go beyond the assigned work and use the extra time for pleasure reading and for letter and creative writing. This helps develop study skills and a lifelong enjoyment for learning.
5. Ask. If you have a question, please call or email your child's teacher at school. Let the teacher know if the assignments are taking considerably longer than expected or if your child fails to bring home an

assignment.

Homework provides practice and drill that reinforces classroom learning and provides opportunities for independent study, research, and creative thinking. It is the responsibility of the student to make sure that all materials needed to complete assignments are brought home at the end of the school day.

INSURANCE

School insurance will be offered at the beginning of each school year. Information and envelopes for school insurance will be issued to each child. If you wish for school insurance, please place the exact amount in the envelope and return it according to the directions given. Checks should be made out to the insurance company.

LUNCH, BREAKFAST, SNACK, AND MILK

Children may purchase hot lunch which includes milk, or purchase milk separately. Children can choose either the hot lunch option or the alternate. The price for hot lunch, which includes milk, is \$2.50. Milk only is 50¢. Reduced lunch is 40¢.

Children may purchase breakfast prior to the start of school each day. Breakfast costs \$1.50, reduced breakfast is 30¢. Students who are eligible for reduced or free lunch are also eligible for reduced or free breakfast. Everyday breakfast items include cereal, juice, milk. In addition, pancakes, breakfast wraps, homemade muffins, and bagels are served on specific days. Breakfast menus are listed on the monthly lunch menu. Students cannot bring outside food/drink into the classroom to eat breakfast there. If your child is eating breakfast in the car on the way to school, it must be finished before coming into the building or put into their backpack to be eaten at snack time.

Students can either bring their own snack from home or purchase a snack from the school. We offer students a wide range of snack food for 50¢. Snack money is collected at the time of purchase and should not be sent into the office.

Lunch may be purchased by the week or month. Please indicate the student's name and the day or days that hot lunch will be purchased on their ticket. The dollar amount should be included on the outside of the payment envelope. The payment envelope should contain the lunch ticket and money/check for lunch that week or month. If you plan to pay for lunch by check, please make it payable to "PETERSHAM CENTER SCHOOL".

Please note that we do not allow parents to send in snacks or treats for individual birthday recognition or to share with the class. At times the classroom teacher may ask for donations of snacks for a special event such as a holiday party. If your child does bring in a snack to share with the class we will store it for them and send it home at the end of the day.

A student that has any past due to lunch money will receive a written notice on Friday with the past due total listed. This notice will be sent home with the student(s). Past due money will be expected by the start of the following week. If a past due total reaches \$25.00 or more, a phone call home from the

Principal will be warranted.

There will be NO charging for breakfast or snacks. All money needs to be paid ahead of time or by the student that day directly to the cafeteria.

RECESS

Your child will have outdoor recess every day unless there is rain, heavy snow, extreme cold, or wind chill causing extreme cold. All children who are able to attend school are to participate in outside recess whenever it is offered, except in extraordinary circumstances. If children are not able to go outside for twenty minutes, it seems wiser that they are not in school. If there is a severe condition, we shall be glad to make necessary exceptions. Such requests must be cleared through the principal's office and the school nurse.

Please remind your child to dress warmly during the winter months. Boots, mittens, a hat, a jacket, and snow pants are essential. Children who have not dressed appropriately for the weather will not be able to participate in outdoor recess. Students should not wear their boots during the school day; they should have other footwear for the classroom. It is helpful for both student and teacher if all outer clothing worn to school is marked with your child's name, especially in the primary grades.

RECORDS

Records are kept on each student by the administration and classroom teacher. Parents may make an appointment to review the records or test scores by calling the office. Student records are released to a new school when the school receives a signed transfer form or when the parent completes a transfer form at the Center School.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION FORM

On the first day of school, your child will bring home information regarding an emergency information packet which will include important information the school will need if an emergency arises. If there are any changes in the information contained on the form during the school year, please contact the office or your child's teacher.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Petersham Center School will treat all persons equally and will ensure that its programs are open to all. The committee and its agents will not discriminate in any manner against employees, applicants, or students on account of race, color, religion, national origin, marital or veteran status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, and/or handicap.

The Petersham School district does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sexual orientation, national origin, gender, gender identity, disability, religion, marital status, pregnancy, or age in any of its policies, procedures, or practices, in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (pertaining to race, color, and national origin), Title VII (pertaining to employment), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (pertaining to sex), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (pertaining to disability), the Americans with Disabilities Act (pertaining to disability), and the Age Discrimination Act

of 1975 (pertaining to age).

Persons designated to coordinate compliance under Title IX:

Mrs. Michele Tontodonato, Director of Finance and Operation

Ralph C. Mahar School District, 507 S. Main St., Orange, MA 01364

978-2544-2920

Mr. David Messing, Director of Special Services

Ralph C. Mahar School District, 507 S. Main St., Orange, MA 01364

978-544-2535

Person designated to coordinate compliance under Section 504:

Mr. Aaron O'Connor, Principal

Petersham Center School, 31 Spring St., Petersham, MA 01366

978-724-3363

HARASSMENT

The Petersham Center School maintains a learning and working environment, which is free from harassment. It is a violation of this policy for any student to harass another student or staff member, or for a staff member to harass another staff member or student, through conduct or communication of an inappropriate nature. A staff member may be identified as the aggressor or perpetrator in a bullying report.

Students who allege harassment by other students are encouraged to immediately indicate to the harasser that his or her behavior is unwanted and unacceptable. If the student because of fear of reprisal or for any other reason is unable to address the alleged harasser, or if the behavior does not cease, then the student is encouraged to report the incident or incidents to any staff member. That staff may assist the student in resolving the problem or may assist the student in sharing the incident with the Principal, Counselor, or another staff member the student may choose.

The primary goal in responding to claims is to secure an altered behavior on the part of the person or persons who have harassed another. The staff member to whom a student goes will assist the student to articulate what has happened and, in person or by letter, to inform the harasser that the attention is unwanted and unacceptable. The staff member will determine that the harasser understands the complaint and that there is good intent to cease the unacceptable behavior.

Confidentiality for all parties involved is of high importance and information gathered shall be shared only when it is necessary to the successful resolution of the situation. Copies of the substance of oral communication between harassed and harasser, or the letter, if that form is used, together with a resume of the incident and its resolution may, when warranted, be sent to the building principal, the superintendent, and to the parents or guardian of the students involved.

A student who, having been counseled, continues to behave in violation of this policy, will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

Any STUDENT who feels that he or she has been harassed by a TEACHER OR STAFF MEMBER is encouraged to immediately share his or her concern with a teacher, counselor, or principal. If first shared with a teacher or counselor, that person will assist the student in sharing the incident with the principal who will, in turn, inform the superintendent. The superintendent and/or principal will conduct an investigation and, if warranted, will chair a discussion of the incident which includes the person to whom the report was first made, the alleged harasser, the parents or guardian of the student who alleges harassment and, if appropriate and if the parents or guardian consent, the student who has made the claim.

If the complaint is satisfactorily resolved in this meeting, a brief record of the complaint and its resolution shall be provided in writing to the student and his or her parents or guardian and to the person against whom the complaint was made, the building principal and the superintendent. If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved in this meeting, the person against whom the claim is made will be provided a hearing. In conclusion, school records are personal and the Federal Freedom of Information Act of 1974 must be complied with as well as the State Law.

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

Only School personnel who have completed the comprehensive restraint training shall perform restraints. Physical restraint shall be used only in emergency situations after other less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate, and with extreme caution. If a restraint is necessary, the office should be contacted as soon as possible. Trained school personnel shall use physical restraint with the following goals in mind: To administer a physical restraint only when needed to protect a student and/or a member of the school community from imminent, serious, physical harm; and to prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of physical restraint (603 CMR 46.00)

SPECIAL EDUCATION

State and Federal law guarantee a free and appropriate public education for children who have been identified as having a significant handicap that prevents optimum learning or functioning for them within the regular education program. A team of parents, teachers, administrators, and specialists join together to discuss the child's educational needs and create an IEP (Individual Education Plan). Specialists at the Petersham Center School include a Learning Specialist, Speech and Language Pathologist, Guidance Counselor, Nurse, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Behavioral Specialist, and Special Needs Administrator.

Attachment #1

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

On May 3, 2010 Governor Patrick signed an *Act Relative to Bullying in Schools*. This new law prohibits bullying and retaliation in all public and private schools and requires schools and school districts to take certain steps to address bullying incidents. Relevant sections of the law (M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O) are described below.

The following information is for Staff throughout our schools – including substitutes, long-term substitutes, volunteers, and other participants in children’s education and well-being within our schools. The Plan includes the requirements of the new law, and also information about the policies and procedures that the school or school district will follow to prevent bullying and retaliation or to respond to it when it occurs. In developing the Plan, schools and districts must consult with school and local community members, including staff, and parents and guardians.

Definitions

The aggressor is a student who engages in bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation.

Bullying is defined as repeated use by one or more students or staff of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim’s property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school... §370 a member of the school staff includes, but is not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional. A member of the school staff may be named the “aggressor” or perpetrator” in a bullying report

Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings.

A hostile environment is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the student’s education.

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

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

Prohibition Against Bullying

Bullying is prohibited: (i) on school grounds, the property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is owned, leased, or used by a school district or school and (ii) at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the target, infringes on the rights of the target at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Nothing contained herein shall require schools to staff any non-school-related activities, functions, or

programs.

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

Responsibility of Staff to Report Bullying

A member of school staff is required to report immediately any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the Principal or to the School Official identified in the Plan as responsible for receiving such reports or both. Initial reporting is to be with each Building Principal, who will determine the most appropriate next steps. Should a report be made against a Building Principal, then a staff member or member of the public may contact the Superintendent of Schools, another Building Principal, or the local police department.

Staff includes, but is not limited to, an educator, administrator, counselor, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity, paraprofessional, or secretary. Staff may be named the aggressor or perpetrator in a bullying report.

Upon receipt of such a report, the school Principal or his/her designee shall promptly conduct an investigation. If the school Principal or designee determines that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the school Principal or designee shall (i) notify the parents or guardians of the target, and to the extent consistent with state and federal law, notify them of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation; (ii) notify the parents or guardians of an aggressor; (iii) take appropriate disciplinary action, and (iv) notify the local law enforcement agency if the school Principal or designee believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

Professional Development

Schools and districts must provide ongoing professional development to increase the skills of all staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying.

The content of such professional development is to include, but not be limited to: (i) developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents; (ii) developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents; (iii) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying; (iv) research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment; (v) information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and (vi) Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.

Additional information about the school's or district's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will be

made available when it is finalized .

Petersham Center School Bullying/Retaliation Incident Reporting Form

This form is to be confidentially maintained in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. §1232g.

Directions: Bullying or Retaliation are serious offenses and will not be tolerated. If you are a student, the parent/guardian of a student, or faculty member, and wish to report an incident of alleged bullying or retaliation, complete this form and return it to the Principal or Administrative Designee at the student's school. All school employees are required to report alleged violations. Contact the school for additional information or assistance at any time.

Reported act(s) of bullying will be investigated, and parents/guardians will be informed.

Name of Reporter/Person Filing the Report:

(Note: Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of the alleged report.)

Check whether you are the: **Target of the behavior**

☐

Reporter (not the target)

☐

Check whether you are a

☐

student

☐

staff member (specify role)

☐

Parent

☐

Administrator

☐

Other (specify)

Your contact information/telephone number:

If you are a student, what grade are you in?

Information about the incident:

Name of Target: (of behavior)

Name of Aggressor (person who engaged in the behavior)

Date(s) of incident(s):

Time of Incident :

Location of Incident (be as specific as possible):

Witnesses (List people who saw the incident or have information about it)

Name: _____	Student	Staff	Other _____
Name: _____	Student	Staff	Other _____
Name: _____	Student	Staff	Other _____

Describe the details of the incident (including names of people involved, what occurred, what occurred, and what each person did and said, including specific words used). Please use additional space on the back if necessary.

Petersham Center School Bullying/Retaliation Incident Reporting Form

**This form is to be confidentially maintained in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. §1232g.
Administrative Use Only**

Signature of Person Filing this Report: _____ **Date:** _____
(Note: Reports may be filed anonymously.)

Form Given to: _____ **Position:** _____ **Date:** _____

Signature: _____ **Date received** _____

INVESTIGATION

1. Investigator(s): _____ **Position(s):** _____

2. Interviews:

Interviewed aggressor Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Interviewed target Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Interviewed witnesses Name: _____ **Date:** _____

3. Any prior documented Incidents by the aggressor? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, have incidents involved target or target group previously? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Any previous incidents with findings of BULLYING, RETALIATION ☐ Yes ☐ No

Summary of Investigation:

Please use additional paper and attach to this document as needed)

Petersham Center School Bullying/Retaliation Incident Reporting Form

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CONCLUSIONS FROM THE INVESTIGATION

1. Finding of bullying or retaliation:

☐ **YES**

☐ **Bullying**

☐ **NO**

☐ **Incident documented as**

☐ Retaliation ☐ Discipline referral only _____

2. Contacts:

- ☐ Target's parent/guardian Date: _____
- ☐ Aggressor's parent/guardian Date: _____
- ☐ District Equity Coordinator (DEC) Date: _____
- ☐ Law Enforcement Date: _____

3. Action Taken:

- ☐ Loss of Privileges ☐ Detention ☐ STEP referral ☐ Suspension
 - ☐ Community Service ☐ Education ☐ Other
- _____

4. Describe Safety Planning: _____

Follow-up with Target: scheduled for _____ Initial and date when completed: _____
Follow-up with Aggressor: scheduled for _____ Initial and date when completed: _____

Report forwarded to Principal: Date_____ Report forwarded to Superintendent: Date_____

Signature and Title: _____ Date: _____

**Petersham Center School
31 Spring Street
Petersham, Ma 01366
978-724-3363 School
978-544-2535 Superintendent Office**

Stop A Bully

Safe and Anonymous

Date:

Submitted by (optional):

Name of Bully:

Grade of Bully:

Date of Incident:

Details of Incident:

Location of Incident:

Time of Incident:

Number of Witnesses:

Who has been told:

Number of times this has happened:

It is the responsibility of the school to investigate the accuracy of every Bully report and then take the steps necessary to stop any further harassment. The Petersham School district agrees to treat reports in a professional manner and respect the person who submitted it in their desire to remain safe and anonymous. This report is considered confidential whether you choose to remain anonymous or not. School staff will show it only to the persons who are directly involved in the incident.