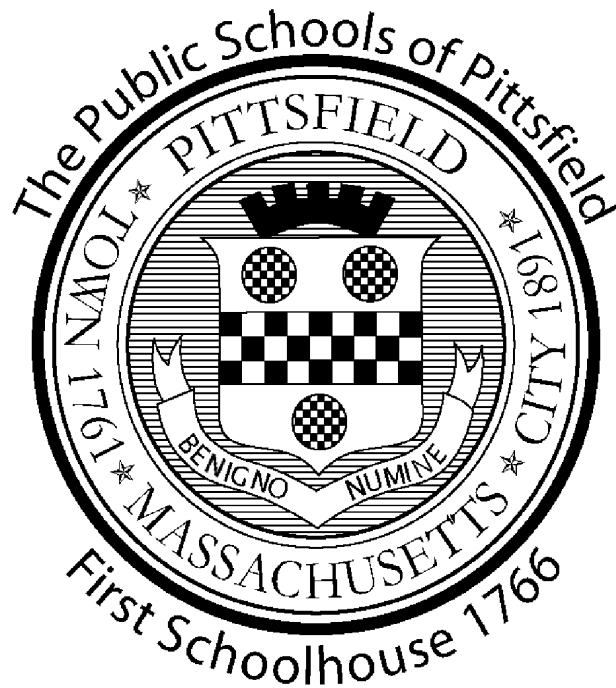


Policy Handbook for Parents and Students

2021-2022 School Year



Pittsfield Public Schools

Pittsfield, Massachusetts



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Pittsfield Public Schools 2021-2022 School Year Calendar

Approved by School Committee
3/24/21, Amended 5/26/21

August 2021

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

0/0

September 2021

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

21/21

Kindergarten students will start on September 8

October 2021

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

20/41

November 2021

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

17/58

** See below for Parent Conferences Dates

December 2021

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

16/74

** See below for Elementary Parent Conferences Dates.
12/13 is a half day for elementary students for elementary conferences.

January 2022

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

20/94

THS Open House: February 13 - PHS Open House: February 29
High School Open House Snow Date: February 27

★ November 2 - Full Day for Staff - No School for Students

February 2022

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

15/109

May 2022

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

21/168

March 2022

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

23/132

June 2022

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

12/180

April 2022

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

15/147

Elementary Schools Provide Grades by Trimester
Secondary Schools Provide Grades by Quarter

Elementary Schools

Progress Report	10/15 (31)	1/21 (28)	4/29 (29)
Report Card	12/3 (30)	3/11 (29)	6/16 (33)

Secondary Schools

Progress Report	10/8 (27)	12/17 (22)	3/4 (20)	5/6 (19)
Report Card	11/12 (23)	1/28 (23)	4/1 (20)	6/13 (25)

Jewish Holidays

Rosh Hashanah: Sundown September 6, September 7, September 8
Yom Kippur: Sundown September 15, September 16
Passover: Sundown April 15- April 23

Parent/Guardian Conferences

** 12/9 & 12/10 Elementary Parent/Guardian Conferences
** 11/17 & 11/18 Middle School Parent/Guardian Conferences
** 11/16 & 3/24 PHS Parent/Guardian Conferences
** 11/9 & 3/23 THS Parent/Guardian Conferences

Calendar Key

- NTO New Teacher Orientation
- ★ No School for Students; Full Day for Staff 8:00-3:00p.m.
- ⊙ Half Day for Students; Full Day for Staff
- ☼ High School Graduation
- * Snow Day Make-up Dates

Secondary Open Houses

Taconic School - January 13 Pittsfield High School January 20
Reid Middle School - February 3 Heberg Middle School February 19

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Date	Event
September 1	First Day for Students Grades 1-12
September 6	Labor Day
September 7	First day of school for Pre-Kindergarten students
September 8	First day of school for Kindergarten students
October 11	Indigenous Peoples' Day
November 11	Veterans Day Observed
November 24-26	Thanksgiving Recess
December 23 - January 2	Holiday Recess
January 17	Martin Luther King Jr. Day
February 21	Presidents' Day
February 21-25	Winter Recess
April 15	Good Friday
April 18	Patriots' Day
April 18-22	Spring Recess
May 30	Memorial Day
June 5 & 12	High School Graduation
June 16	Last Day of School (snow days must be replaced)
June 20	Juneteenth Observed

192 Day Calendar: 180 Student Days, 3 Full Staff PD Days, and
9 Emergency/Weather Days

PITTSFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS POLICY HANDBOOK

Pittsfield School Committee

Katherine Yon, Chairperson
Mayor Linda Tyer
Mark Brezeau Daniel Elias Dennis Powell
William Cameron Alison McGee

Pittsfield Public Schools

Superintendent Joseph Curtis, M.Ed.
Deputy Superintendent
Ms. Kristen Behnke, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance
Mrs. Tammy Gage Interim Assistant Superintendent of Career Technical Education

This publication summarizes many laws, policies, regulations and practices that are important to Pittsfield Public Schools (PPS) students and their parents and guardians. It is not intended to be a complete directory of all laws and policies relating to students and parents. Federal and state laws, PPS policies, regulations and practices at the system-wide and school building levels are subject to change.

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

Visit the PPS on the Web:

www.pittsfield.net

District and School Phone Numbers

Superintendent of Schools.....	499-9512
Deputy Superintendent of Schools.....	499-9510
Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance.....	499-9502
Assistant Superintendent of Career Technical Information.....	448-9601
Special Education Director.....	499-9515
Allendale Elementary School.....	448-9650
John C. Crosby Elementary School.....	448-9670
John T. Reid Middle School.....	448-9620
Morningside Elementary School.....	448-9690
Pittsfield High School.....	499-9535
Robert T. Capeless Elementary School.....	448-9665
Silvio O. Conte Elementary School.....	448-9660
Stearns Elementary School.....	499-9554
Taconic High School.....	448-9600
Theodore Herberg Middle School.....	448-9640
Williams Elementary School.....	448-9680

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I. Equal Education Opportunities

Non-Discrimination Policies

Pursuant to the requirements of Massachusetts and federal law, the Pittsfield Public Schools (PPS) prohibits discrimination in school admissions, participation in courses of study and extra-curricular activities, the hiring and employment of staff, and access to school facilities and activities based on race, color, age, disability, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The District does not tolerate any form of discrimination, intimidation, threat, coercion and/or harassment that insults the dignity of others by interfering with their freedom to learn and work. [M.G.L. c.76, s5]

A. RACIAL OR ETHNIC DISCRIMINATION/HARASSMENT OF STUDENTS

This regulation prohibits the discrimination or harassment of students, including treating students differently, using insulting language or actions that create an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment, or refusing to let a student participate in an activity because of his/her race, color, sex, age, disability, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

B. POLICY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT AGAINST STUDENTS

Pittsfield Public Schools policy states that sexual harassment in any form will not be tolerated on school grounds, at school-sponsored events or activities, or while traveling to and from school or school-sponsored events or activities. The policy includes a definition and descriptions of sexual harassment and the procedure for filing a complaint.

C. POLICY ON SEXUAL ASSAULT

This extension of the sexual harassment policy states that sexual assault will not be tolerated whether committed by staff, students, or third parties; and retaliation against a person who reports such assault or cooperates in an investigation also will not be tolerated. This policy also sets forth procedures for students to report a sexual assault.

D. POLICY FOR THE PROTECTION OF STUDENTS AGAINST DISCRIMINATION BASED ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION

This policy addresses the School District's efforts to ensure equity and to protect all students, including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered students, from violence, harassment and discrimination.

E. NON-DISCRIMINATION AGAINST STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The PPS is committed to a policy of non-discrimination against qualified students with disabilities, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Massachusetts Anti-Discrimination Law. [M.G.L. 151B] Qualified students with a disability may not be excluded from, denied the benefits of, or denied access to any program or activity based solely on their disability.

F. HAZING LAW POLICY

This policy addresses hazing (a crime), which is any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization that willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. It includes a discussion of a person's legal obligation to report to law enforcement authorities if he or she knows that someone is a hazing victim or is at the scene of such a crime.

G. ANTI-BULLYING/PEER HARASSMENT

Bullying and/or peer harassment is not acceptable conduct in the Pittsfield Public Schools and is prohibited. Any student who engages in conduct that constitutes bullying and/or peer harassment shall be subject to disciplinary consequences up to and including suspension or expulsion in accordance with the student handbook. A student's bullying and/or peer harassment behavior may also be addressed through other behavioral interventions. For more information about Anti-Bullying/Peer Harassment policies, see Section VII. I., on page 29.

H. PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT GRIEVANCES OF DISCRIMINATION

This policy addresses how to file complaints regarding alleged discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, sexual orientation and disability.

The Pittsfield Public Schools has adopted procedures to assist any person who believes that she/he has been discriminated against for a prohibited reason, and to rectify any instances of such discrimination. Any student, or any parent or guardian, who believes that she/he has been discriminated against for any reason stated above should make her/his complaint, either formally or informally, to the school building principal or to the district's designated coordinator for compliance with the requirements of Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, Section 504, ADA, IDEA, and M.G.L. 151B. Any person who believes that she/he has been discriminated against for any reason stated above in a matter of hiring or employment, or in having access to school facilities or activities, should make her/his complaint, either formally or informally, to the district's designated coordinator for compliance with the requirements of Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, Section 504, ADA, and IDEA.

The Pittsfield Public Schools' designated coordinators for all such matters are:

	Problem Area	Position	Phone
Title VI	Discrimination by race, color, national origin	Deputy Superintendent	499-9510
Title VII	Discrimination by employers on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin	Human Resources Director	499-9505
Title IX	Discrimination in educational programs or athletics, on the basis of gender	Title IX Coordinator	499-9515
Section 504	Discrimination against individuals with disabilities	504 Coordinator	499-9515
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, employment, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications.	Special Education Director	499-9515
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act guarantees early intervention, special education, and related services to children with disabilities from birth to the age of 21.	Special Education Director	499-9515
Ch. 151 B	Discrimination by MA employers on the basis of race, color, national origin	Human Resources Director	499-9505

Rights of Students with Disabilities

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

- Every Pittsfield public school offers academic support services. These programs provide specialized instruction for eligible students in the area of documented disability.
- The PPS also offer services in a substantially separate setting for students with developmental delays, intellectual impairments, autism, and behavioral disorders when documented within a student’s IEP or 504 Plan. These programs provide specialized instruction in a structured and predictable learning environment.

If you believe that your child is having difficulty making progress in a regular classroom due to a suspected disability, you have the right to seek through the school principal or the district’s Office of Special Education an evaluation of your child to determine if she or he does have a disability and is eligible for special education services. As a first step, contact the building principal to discuss convening a Building Assistance Meeting. For more information contact your child’s principal or the Office of Special Education at 499-9515.

Rights under Section 504

A student with a disability recognized under the federal statute known as Section 504 (29 USC §794[a]) is entitled to accommodation of that disability. Section 504 covers qualified students with disabilities who attend schools receiving Federal financial assistance. To be protected under Section 504, a student must be determined to: (1) have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; or (2) have a record of such an impairment; or (3) be regarded as having such an impairment. Section 504 requires that school districts provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to qualified students in their jurisdictions who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Section 504 also prohibits discrimination against any student based on such a disability. A student whose disability is recognized under special education law, known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA: see USC §1401[3]) is entitled to educational programs and assignments that are designed to develop her/his educational potential. [M.G.L. c. 71B §1] Section 504 accommodation plans and special education individualized education programs (IEPs) must be developed in accordance with procedures set out in federal and Massachusetts law and regulations. The 504 Coordinator is responsible for assuring compliance with Section 504. Contact the Superintendent’s Office for referral to the 504 Coordinator.)

For a copy of the Massachusetts Department of Education Special Education *Parents’ Rights Brochure* and the *Section 504 Handbook*, available in many languages, visit www.doe.mass.edu/sped/parents on the Web.

II. Procedures For Enrolling Students In School

The Pittsfield Public Schools (PPS) requires the following information from parents/guardians interested in enrolling their children in any of our schools:

- Proof of residency – a current lease, mortgage receipt, tax bill, or utility bill
- Age verification – student’s birth certificate, birth abstract, or passport
- Record of immunization (See Section V – Massachusetts State Law requires certain immunizations and a physical exam done within the last year before a student can enroll in this state.)
- A copy of any previous student records or a Transfer Slip for proper grade placement

Students may register to attend the Pittsfield Public Schools at the School Administration Center, 269 First Street year round, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 8:00 – 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Registration forms will be supplied by each school but are also available through the district website at http://www.pittsfield.net/family_community/registration/.

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

III. English Language Learner (ELL) Support

Core curriculum is delivered through the Sheltered Content Instruction (SCI) approach in all elementary and secondary content classrooms with ELL students. This approach integrates specific instructional strategies to address the linguistic, cultural, and academic needs of our ELL students.

Students will be administered an English language proficiency assessment when the answer to any question on the Home Language survey is a language other than English. If deemed eligible for ELL services, the student will be placed in an ELL program. Students receive pullout English language development instruction in addition to sheltered content instruction in the classroom.

Students are eligible to exit the ELL program once state and local assessments indicate that a transitional level of English proficiency has been achieved. Upon exiting, students are monitored for four years to ensure appropriate transition into the mainstream classroom setting. Should the student demonstrate a need for English language support, s/he may be placed back into the ELL program.

Parents have the right to opt out of ELL services. Information regarding this process can be obtained by contacting the ELL Coordinator at 413-770-7115.

For information regarding the ELL program, entrance and exiting procedures, and the rights of families of English Language Learner students, please call the ELL Coordinator at 413-448-9745.

IV. Student Attendance (See Pittsfield Public Schools Policy STU-6 and your student's school handbook.)

Regular school attendance is essential to the total education of the student. It is the belief of the Pittsfield Public Schools (PPS) system that one of the most significant factors affecting school success is regular attendance. Time in class is essential to the growth and development of each student and time lost will limit the opportunity for uniform instructional interaction and support. Parents are ultimately responsible to ensure that their children attend school on a regular basis.

By improving attendance and encouraging punctuality, Pittsfield Public Schools hopes to achieve the following:

- Improve scholastic performance by staying current with academic assignments.
- Create and maintain a positive school culture.
- Place responsibility for attendance and punctuality on the students and their parents.

- Develop habits in students that are beneficial skills for both post-secondary educational experiences and future employment.

Teachers are expected to cooperate with and assist students who miss class work, quizzes, or examinations due to absences. While the fact that an unexcused absence is not in itself justification for automatic grade reduction, it is to be expected that such absences will adversely affect student performance due to missed quizzes, examinations, assignments, and participation in class activities. It is therefore appropriate for teachers to establish marking procedures which will include grades for daily activities, which, when not made up, will be reflected in the teacher's grade book.

At the elementary and middle school levels, excessive unexcused absences will result in truancy interventions described under regulations. These include, but are not limited to, parent conferences, referral to the truancy/attendance officers, and referral to the courts. At the high school level, while truancy interventions will be executed in the case of excessive unexcused absences.

All regulations can be found in PPS Policy STU-6 and in each school handbook.

A. EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Students must bring in a note or have a parent/guardian contact the school for each day, or part of a day, that they are absent. This note or contact must include the date absent and the reason for the absence. Such absences are classified as either excused or unexcused.

Absence for any of the following reasons will be classified as excused provided that the school receives verification from the parent/guardian within three (3) school days of the student's return from absence:

1. Illness or injury that prevents the student from attending school. The illness or injury must be verified by the school nurse or the parent. If the absence is three (3) or more consecutive days it needs verification by a healthcare provider. Note: tutoring will be available to any student who is ill for 9 consecutive days and presents medical documentation (a physician's note);
2. Bereavement for a member of the immediate family, (parent, sibling, grandparent, aunt/uncle, cousin); other bereavement if approved by the Principal or designee;
3. Specified religious holidays (STU-17)
4. Required court appearances
5. Medical or psychological tests during the school day. The parent must show evidence (such as a note from the health care provider) that the tests could not be scheduled after school
6. Other functions, activities, or extraordinary situations approved by the school principal

The school office will maintain records for all students delineating excused and unexcused absence from school or class.

B. TARDINESS

Tardiness to class not only limits the amount of time that an individual student can be engaged and on task but also is disruptive to the class as a whole. In order to encourage student promptness to class, school staff will continually research best practices and adjust guidelines accordingly.

For high school and middle school students, being late for class may result in detention. In the elementary schools, tardiness may result in the calling of a parent meeting.

C. DISMISSALS

Parents/guardians should make all efforts to schedule professional appointments after school hours. In cases that students must be dismissed, parents must provide a note indicating the time of dismissal as well as the reason for the early dismissal. This note must be presented to the classroom teacher or personnel in the main office. The school nurse will also assess student illness/injury within the school day and will coordinate dismissal with the parent.

At the elementary level there will be no dismissals allowed after 2:40. At the middle school level no dismissals will be allowed after 2:00.

D. PARENTS' LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ENSURING STUDENTS' ATTENDANCE (M.G.L. c. 76 §2)

Parents or legal guardians are required to see that their children attend school regularly. Failure to do so may result in the Attendance Officer—or school personnel filing a 51A petition for suspected neglect with the Department of Children and Families or a Child Requiring Assistance (CRA) with the Berkshire Juvenile Court. This may lead to the court seeking juvenile court fines pursuant to M.G.L. 76 §2 or criminal charges pursuant to M.G.L. c. 119 §63.

E. WITHDRAWALS AND TRANSFERS

Parents/guardians must notify the school's office or principal concerning the transfer of their child to a school in another school district. Parents/guardians must obtain a Massachusetts transfer slip from the sending school and sign a record release form at the receiving school.

F. HOMELESS STUDENTS

Consistent with the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act, homeless students are defined as those who lack a regular, fixed nighttime residence including supervised temporary accommodations (see definition, Policy STU-14). Students have the right to stay in their school of origin for the entire time they are homeless, even if they move to a different school district. Students who move into permanent housing during the school year can still finish the year in the same school. They may also choose to enroll in a school within the new zone, town or city where they live temporarily. Transportation will be provided unless your new address is within the walking distance of your child's school. For help, call the Deputy Superintendent's office at 499-9510 to put you in contact with the District Homeless Coordinator (499-9521).

V. Student Safety, Health, Immunizations, and Wellness Policy

A. THE SCHOOL NURSE

Every school has a school nurse. If you need to speak to the school nurse, call the main number of your child's school.

School nurses:

- Evaluate and manage the health needs of all students in their schools.
- Identify and manage students with special health needs.
- Work with other school-based groups to provide safe and healthy environments.
- Administer medications as prescribed by a doctor.
- Help families get health insurance and find a health center.
- Manage the control of communicable diseases.
- Provide first aid and emergency care which may include notifying emergency medical services as needed.

- After professional nursing assessment for illness or injury, may recommend referrals to child's parent and primary physician.
- Document all health interventions.
- Manage all student health records.
- Provide the following grade-appropriate health screenings: measure heights and weights for BMI (Body Mass Index), check for possible scoliosis, support follow-up communication with parent/guardian regarding school-based vision and hearing screening, once done by school district vision/hearing technician.
- Teach "anaphylaxis symptoms and epinephrine training to school staff.
- Teach "Medication Delegation Training for Field Trips" to school staff who will be administering medications on field trips.

You can help the school nurse care for your child by:

- Letting the nurse know if your child has any chronic or acute illnesses
- Communicating with the nurse directly if medication or health needs change (written physician's document)
- Updating your child's emergency form so the school can always reach you.

For information or assistance with health care issues, contact:

The Deputy Superintendent's Office at 413-499-9510

B. IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

According to state regulations (102 CMR 7.09 and 105 CMR 220.00), students must be on an immunization schedule before they enter school. The Pittsfield Public Schools require that students have immunizations that are up to date for school entry at the time they enter school. Records will be given to the school nurse for verification and record-keeping purposes.

The following immunizations need to be in place by the first day of school:

MA REQUIRED IMMUNIZATIONS TO REGISTER FOR KINDERGARTEN – GRADE 12*	
Hepatitis B	3 doses by 18 months
DTaP/DPT/ Tdap	4 doses, by Kindergarten 5 doses, by 7th grade (1) dose of Tdap. grade 7
Polio	4 doses by Kindergarten
Hib	(3 or 4 doses for pre-school)
MMR	2 dose by Kindergarten.
Varicella (Chickenpox)	2 doses by Kindergarten
Meningococcal	2 dose series (recommended) 11- 12 years and 16 years.
Please contact the nurse at your child's school if you have questions. School immunizations Mass.gov	

Parents/guardians must submit a doctor's record stating that their child has been immunized against diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus, poliomyelitis, measles, German measles (rubella), mumps and hepatitis B. Varicella (chickenpox) immunization is required if the child has not had chickenpox.

The record must include the day, month and year when the immunizations were given. In addition, we strongly recommend that each child have a Tuberculosis Risk Assessment. Parents are responsible for keeping immunizations current and providing the school nurse with written documentation from the child's physician when their child has received additional immunizations. All school nurses review immunization records regularly. Students whose immunizations are not up to date may be excluded from school.

Special Situations. Except in an emergency or epidemic, a student may start school if a parent or guardian presents a written statement (1) from a physician stating that the child has not been immunized for medical reasons, (2) that the child has not been immunized due to his or her religious beliefs, or (3) homeless children. A student must have a current physical exam from a physician prior to entry into the school system.

C. PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS

While parents have final responsibility for their child's health, the school is responsible for the safety and well being of students while they are in school. Under state law, students new to the school system must present results of a comprehensive physical examination within six months of enrollment and at intervals of either three or four years thereafter. During the first weeks of school, the school nurse will request results of a recent physical examination. An updated vaccination record and physician's documentation of the date the child had a lead test must accompany the physical exam. If your child has any booster shots during the summer, be sure to send the nurse an updated health record. Students also must have a record of a complete physical exam, done within the last 12 months, on file with the school nurse in order to participate in high school athletics. [Keep in mind that many health providers need at least two weeks to copy records, and all athletic physicals must be recorded on the MIAA-provided template.] Please provide a physical exam record to the school at the beginning of kindergarten and first, fourth, seventh, and ninth grades. If your child has a physical exam during the school year, please provide the school nurse with a copy of the updated record. All high school students participating in school athletic teams must have a current physical exam on record in the nurse's office.

Circumstances that may require a physical exam are:

- Frequent absences due to unexplained illness
- Known physical defects that require repeated appraisal
- Nurse-teacher conference based on student's not making expected progress in school or signs of illness noted by the teacher or nurse
- Request of student under 16 and over 14 years of age for employment certificate
- Preparation for participation in competitive athletics

D. MEDICATIONS IN SCHOOL

School nurses oversee the administration of medications. In most cases, the school nurse will be the person administering the medication. However, there are three specific circumstances when someone other than a nurse may give a student medication:

- When the student is on a field trip, the nurse may delegate and train another school staff member to administer the medication(s). Pittsfield Public Schools holds a Certificate of Registration for Field Trips, from MA DPH, it is only applicable for daily meds excluding all insulin and diabetic injections as well as any as needed seizure medications.
- Students who are at risk for life-threatening allergic reactions may be administered prescribed epinephrine injection as a emergency medication by school personnel. The nurse is responsible for training and supervising all individuals involved in giving medication. Pittsfield Public Schools holds a Certificate of Registration for the Administration of Epinephrine, from MA DPH.
- Some students may administer their own medication, such as an asthma inhaler. To allow this, the parent must contact the school nurse to arrange a Self-Medication Plan. Written consent for a student's self-administration must be obtained from both physician and parent/guardian.

In order to administer prescription medications, the nurse must have a doctor's order and signed parent's permission. Non-prescription ("over the counter") medications such as *Tylenol*, *Tums*, and *Benadryl* can be given by a School

Nurse who already possesses written authorization by the School Physician, but the Nurse will still require written permission yearly from the parent or guardian. Ask the nurse in your child's school for the permission form. Parents must supply their child's medication, which must be in the original pharmacy container. If the physician has changed a medication type or dose, the school nurse must have a new physician's order and signed parent's permission.

E. SCREENINGS/ DENTAL

Our schools already provide health screenings for vision/hearing, BMI (Body Mass Index), and scoliosis for students. SBIRT (Screening and Brief Referral to Treatment) Screening to 7 and 9th Grade will commence School Year 17/18.

F. MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

If a student is sick or injured at school, the school will make every effort to reach the parent or the emergency contact person named on the student's emergency contact file in the office. The principal and school nurse will decide what action to take. Most illnesses and injuries that occur during the school day are minor and can be treated by the nurse. If the student's condition is very serious, the school nurse, principal, or other member of the school staff will call for an ambulance. A school employee may accompany the student at the hospital until the parent/guardian arrives. **It is crucial that parents/guardians keep the schools informed of current family contact information. Notify your child's school of changes of address, phone numbers, email addresses, and emergency contact information as they occur.**

G. ACCIDENTS

Accidents of any nature should be reported to the nurse and the Main Office. The adult who witnessed the accident will fill out the Student Accident Report. All accident reports are to be sent to the Director of Bus Operations with copies to the Deputy Superintendent's Office, a copy of the accident report will be filed in the students medical file in the nurse's office.

H. TUTORING FOR HEALTH REASONS

If health issues affect a student's ability to attend school and the student is hospitalized or homebound for a period of nine consecutive days or more, the parent or guardian must contact the child's principal or guidance counselor. Certified medical reasons for tutoring, documented by a medical physician's statement, must then be submitted to the principal. The principal or counselor will notify the coordinator of tutors to identify a tutor, arrange an agreement, and process the tutor's time sheets. When the student returns to school, the school nurse is to be given a physician's note stating whether the student is to return to full or restricted activity.

I. INSURANCE FOR STUDENTS

There will be a school insurance policy available for all students. This will be announced the first week of school. Information concerning athletic insurance should be obtained from coaches. The City of Pittsfield does *not* carry insurance to cover any property losses during school or any personal injuries. It should also be noted that the school insurance covers only costs not assumed by family medical insurance or if the student has no medical insurance.

J. MANDATED REPORTER STATUS OF SCHOOL EMPLOYEES (M.G.L. c. 119 §51A)

If school staff suspect that a student is abused or neglected, they are required by law (Chapter 51A) to report it to the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF). All reports are strictly confidential. The DCF maintains a 24-hour hotline for reporting staff or parental concerns: 1-800-292-5022.

K. CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Under Massachusetts law (M.G.L. c. 71 § 37G) and School Committee policy, school personnel may not punish a

student by striking, pushing, or any other use of physical force. School staff may use *reasonable* physical force to restrain a student, but *only* if (1) non-physical intervention would be ineffective or has been ineffective and/or (2) they believe the student's actions may result in physical injury to the student or other people. Any school employee who uses unreasonable force may be subject to discipline.

L. RESTRAINT OF STUDENTS AND STAFF RESTRAINT TRAINING

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has specific regulations concerning the use of physical restraint of students in public schools (603 C.M.R. 46.00). These regulations apply to all students whether in regular education or special education.

All Pittsfield Public Schools personnel shall receive appropriate notification regarding this policy at the start of the school year. Additionally the principal shall identify staff members as school-wide resources in the use of physical restraint on students. Except as set forth below, only school personnel who have received appropriate training as required by Massachusetts regulations may administer physical restraint on students.

Nothing in the regulations precludes a teacher or other staff member from using reasonable force to protect students, themselves, or other persons from assault or imminent, serious physical harm.

All staff involved in a physical restraint must complete required written documentation and submit it to the Deputy Superintendent's office. Parents/guardians will be notified in the event their child requires physical restraint.

M. SEX EDUCATION

The Pittsfield Public Schools recognizes the right of a parent or guardian to exempt his/her child from any curriculum that involves primarily human sex education or human sexuality issues. Schools are required to notify parents about any classes that will be held related to human sexual education or sexual issues. To exempt a child from such classes, a parent/guardian should write a letter to his or her child's principal. For more information about sex education in the PPS or information about "opting out" your child, please contact the Unit Leader for School Psychologists and School Adjustment Counselors at the Special Education Office.

N. HEAD INJURY AND CONCUSSION REPORTING

Pittsfield Public Schools follows the current Massachusetts Law 105CMR 201.000 Head Injuries and Concussions in Extracurricular Activities. According to the regulations, all injuries such as concussion or traumatic brain injury must be reported to the current coach, athletic trainer, and school nurse. All players must abide by the current guidelines in that a player cannot return to any athletic event until a medical professional, such as a neurologist or the primary care physician, has cleared him or her in writing.

All parents are required to fill out the "Pre-participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting Form." Also all parents and students must fill out the "Pre-season Head Injury/Concussion Educational Training CDC 'Heads Up' Fact Sheet."

O. PITTSFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS WELLNESS POLICY

The Pittsfield Public Schools district is committed to affording students and staff with school environments that promote and protect children's health, well being, and ability to learn by supporting good nutrition, physical activity, and overall wellness. For more information or greater detail, please refer to the complete Wellness Policy (STU-79) at www.pittsfield.net (Policy)

The school district will follow the Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods and Beverages in Public Schools (105 CMR 225.000) as well as Pittsfield Board of Health and the Pittsfield Public Schools' Severe and Life-Threatening Allergies policies to address all foods and beverages sold/provided to students, including those available outside of

school meal programs on school grounds.

Competitive foods and beverages refer to food and beverages sold outside of the reimbursable school meal program. These foods and beverages will meet the nutrition and portion size standards set forth in the policy and include the following sources: vending machines, cafeteria a la carte, school stores, fundraising activities during the school day, or programs for students 30 minutes before and after the school day.

Competitive foods and beverages shall comply with the MA School Nutrition Bill guidelines outlined below.

<u>Beverages</u>	<u>Food</u>
Juice <input type="checkbox"/> 100% fruit or vegetable juice; no added sugar <input type="checkbox"/> Portion Limit: 4 oz (no calorie limit)	Calories No more than 200 calories per food item; except a la carte entrées which shall not exceed calories of comparable NSLP entrée items.
Milk & Milk Substitutes <input type="checkbox"/> Must be 1% or Fat Free <input type="checkbox"/> 8 oz portion limit <input type="checkbox"/> Flavored milk & milk substitutes contain no more than 22 g sugar per 8 oz, until August 2013 , when all beverages with sugar content greater than that of plain milk (12 g per 8 oz) will be prohibited as competitive beverage options. This includes flavored milk and flavored milk substitutes.	Fat & Saturated Fat <input type="checkbox"/> No more than 35% of total calories from fat* <input type="checkbox"/> No more than 10% of total calories from saturated fat* <input type="checkbox"/> All foods to be trans fat free. <i>* Exceptions: 1 oz nuts, seeds, nut butters or reduced-fat cheese.</i>
Water Contains no added sugar, sweeteners or artificial sweeteners, but may contain natural flavorings and/or carbonation.	Sugar No more than 35% of total calories from sugar* <i>*Exceptions: 100% fruit w/ no added sugar; and non-fat or low-fat yogurt, including drinkable yogurt, w/no more than 30 g total sugar per 8 oz package</i>
	Sodium No more than 200 mg sodium per item; except a la carte entrées which shall contain no more than 480 mg sodium per item.
	Grains All bread and other grain-based products must be whole grain (i.e. whole grain should be listed first in the ingredient statement)
<u>Food & Beverages</u> <input type="checkbox"/> No food/ beverage shall contain artificial sweeteners <input type="checkbox"/> No food/beverage shall contain more than trace amounts of caffeine <input type="checkbox"/> A packaged item may contain no more than one serving per package	

School lunch menus and prices as well as suggestions for healthy snacks and fundraisers are available at

http://www.pittsfield.net/district_info/nutrition_services

The Pittsfield Food Service department has assisted the schools and parents with birthday celebrations. Each elementary school celebrates “Birthday Friday” once per month with a special treat provided by the food service department for all students with a school lunch. Pittsfield Public Schools shall limit celebrations that involve food to no more than one per class per month.

Pittsfield Public Schools employees and volunteers shall not use foods or beverages as rewards in the classroom for academic performance or good behavior. For more information about The Wellness Policy, please contact Joseph Curtis, Deputy Superintendent at 413-499-9510.

P. SEVERE AND LIFE-THREATENING ALLERGIES POLICY

The Pittsfield Public Schools is committed to providing a safe and healthy school environment for all students. Allergies can be a significant health problem or even life threatening for some students.

We recognize that it is not possible to eliminate all possible exposures. The purpose of these guidelines is to minimize the risk of exposure to allergens that pose a threat to students in the Pittsfield Public Schools, provide all students, through necessary accommodations where required, the opportunity to participate fully in all school programs and activities, and to educate the school community about severe or life-threatening allergies. The focus of this district-wide allergy policy is prevention, education, awareness, communication and emergency response.

Successful allergy management is a partnership among the parent(s)/guardian(s), the student, the prescribing physician and the school system. The student's physician must be involved in the diagnosis and treatment plan that the school will follow for students with allergy intolerance while in the school or at any school-sponsored event. The plan must be reviewed annually and revised as needed. No student will be excluded from school activities based solely on his/her allergies.

Adequate plans and staff who are knowledgeable regarding preventive measures and well prepared to handle severe allergic reactions can save the life of a child. For the student who is allergic *total avoidance of the substance to which the student is allergic is the only means to prevent severe and life-threatening allergy reactions.*

Each student with a diagnosis of a severe or life-threatening allergic condition will have an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) developed and implemented at the school preferably prior to the entry to school. It is the responsibility of the parent to notify their child's school of their child's allergies at the beginning of each school year. Parents must provide the emergency medication epinephrine , and a physician order annually for their child.

Schools should ensure that all staff entrusted with the care of students receive basic education concerning severe and life-threatening allergies, and have training in the prevention and management of allergic conditions including basic anaphylaxis epi-pen education every six months.

The district, through the IHCP and any other educational plan that is in place, will educate the student to understand and be proactive in caring for his/her health through age-appropriate self-management of allergies and their reactions.

Many students with severe allergies have experienced a life-threatening anaphylactic reaction and are more acutely aware of their own mortality than other students their own age. Therefore, physical safety and emotional well being of children with severe and life-threatening allergies must be taken into consideration when planning or organizing any school activity or lesson. All school staff responsible for children with severe and life-threatening allergies must establish predictable routines and maintain communication with caregivers regarding changes in the allergic student's schedule, which increase the risk to exposure to allergens.

A student who expresses concern about or elects not to participate in an educational activity where there is a potential risk for increased exposure to allergens should not be penalized. A safe alternative option should be provided without grading penalty.

For more information on the implementation of the severe and life-threatening allergy policy please contact the Deputy Superintendent, at 413-499-9510 or jcurtis@pittsfield.net

VI. Student Transportation

The Pittsfield Public Schools (PPS) view conduct on the school bus as an extension of classroom behavior. In order to promote the health and safety of each student, the following are the accepted norms:

- Students should wait in an orderly manner at their designated bus stops.
- Students should board and exit the buses in an orderly manner at the direction of the driver.
- All students must obey the rules of safety. They should remain seated with voices controlled, in order to enable the driver to fulfill his/her responsibilities.
- For the safety of all, windows are to be opened or closed only by the driver except in an emergency.
- Only authorized students will be allowed to ride the bus to and from school.
- In order to promote the safe transportation of students, video and/or audio may be used to monitor students' behavior on buses.

A. GENERAL RULES FOR AVAILABILITY

Students are eligible for transportation to and from school if they live more than:

- 1/2 mile from their elementary school for kindergarten
- 1.5 miles from their elementary school for grades 1-5
- 1.5 miles from their middle school (grades 6-8)
- 2 miles from their high school (grades 9-12)

When parents/guardians register their child for school, they will be told if their child is eligible for transportation. If the child is eligible, they will receive a notice in the mail with the bus stop location, time of pick-up and drop-off, and bus number.

B. DECISIONS FOR MAKING BUS STOPS

The School Department receives many inquiries and requests relative to bus stops. During the last school year, there were over 100 requests to make new bus stops. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, road conditions, and a number of other factors, there cannot be a positive response to every request. Each request is reviewed by at least one person before decisions are made.

The first consideration is to determine whether the student is eligible for transportation per the Pittsfield School Committee Policy number SRV-29, Student Transportation Services. The policy states that kindergarten students who reside in excess of one-half mile from school, elementary and middle school students who reside in excess of one and one-half miles from school, and high school students who reside more than two miles from school shall be eligible for transportation services. In addition, transportation will be provided in situations where walking routes are determined to be hazardous. Bus stops for all students may be up to one mile from their residence, according to MGL Ch. 71, §68.

The determinations for the distances are measured from the property line of the residence over regularly traveled ways to the designated bus stop or the property line of the school. While the parent/guardian is responsible for the safety of the student between the residence and the designated bus stop, every attempt is made to designate locations for bus stops which are as safe as possible under local conditions, and as considerate as possible of the continuous and smooth flow of traffic. (Stopping too frequently presents hazards to other vehicles on the road.)

After determining eligibility for transportation, the student's residence is checked to see whether or not there is a current stop within the parameters set by the policy. If there is a stop within the parameters, the student is added to that stop. If there is not a stop in that location, it is determined whether there are any other students eligible. If so, a stop is created that is beneficial for all students. A number of other factors are reviewed in making decisions about where to locate bus stops, including, but not limited to:

- Age of the student(s)
- Whether there are sidewalks in the area
- Whether we can centralize a stop on a corner rather than send a bus down a side street
- Whether, if a bus must go down a side street, the bus can turn around
- Whether we can centralize a stop if it affects multiple students

Unfortunately, it is impossible to accommodate every request based on the current number of stops per bus and the timing of the bus routes. Some routes have fewer stops but longer runs (miles) and some buses have more frequent stops with shorter routes. Because the entire network has to operate within the time constraints set by the School

Committee (based on the opening and closing times for each school), not every request can be accommodated. The school bus industry estimates that each stop can add 3-5 minutes to a route (it varies based on the speed of the bus before it starts to brake for the stop, the number and age of the students loading, whether students are crossing the street, and other factors).

Although the district makes every effort to provide the best possible service to all students, not every house or side street can have a bus stop, as doing so would negatively impact students' arrival times at school.

C. TICKET TRANSPORTATION

Students living closer to their respective school than outlined above, may be eligible to purchase a seat on a bus servicing that school on a space available basis. Contact the Transportation Office for a *Ticket Transportation Application* and fee information: 499-9525. *Ticket Transportation Applications* must be submitted by June 1 in order to be reviewed for possible bus service in the fall.

D. SUSPENSION OR LOSS OF TRANSPORTATION RIGHTS

The following acts may result in denial of the privilege to ride the bus:

- Profanity on school buses
- Fighting or other aggressive physical behavior
- Smoking on school buses
- Lewd or lascivious conduct
- Unnecessary distraction of the driver
- Destruction of any bus property [restitution will be the parents' or guardians' financial responsibility]
- Violation of rules for safety on school buses
- Any act which interferes with the safe and orderly transportation of students
- Possession of weapons or drugs

In all cases, the principal or designee must inform the parent before keeping the student off the bus.

The student is expected to come to school on the days when he or she is not allowed on the bus **unless** the student has also been suspended from school.

Specific details regarding transportation can be found in the regulations and policy Student Conduct on Buses (STU-31). These expectations of student conduct are also outlined in the following section of this handbook.

VII. Student Meals

School Meal Payment

- All Pittsfield school students will receive one breakfast and one lunch per school day free of charge.
- **There will be no charging of additional meals or food items.**
- All students (Elementary & Secondary) who wish to buy 1 or 2 food items or an additional meal must have funds at hand: either cash or sufficient positive balance in their meal account.
 - For example: Students who wish to buy bottled water, milk or a second lunch will need to have sufficient funds to make the purchase.
 -

School Meal Accounts:

- Meal accounts can be prepaid at any time. Prepayments are a convenience for your family. Prepayments can be made by cash or check presented at your child's cafeteria or through www.myschoolbucks.com. A return check fee of \$5.00 is charged for all checks returned to the cafeteria by the bank.

VIII. Code of Student Conduct

Please refer to the Code of Conduct, Character, and Support Handbook.

High School Parents: Please see individual high school handbooks, which outline the Code of Student Conduct in more detail.

Co- and Extra-Curricular Activities:

Motor Vehicles or Other Vehicles on School Property

Parents and others are welcome to visit our schools but should park in designated areas only. It is illegal for anyone to operate any type of recreational motorized vehicle on school fields or walking paths. Violators will be reported to the police. [Use of motorized wheelchairs and/or carts for the disabled are permitted.]

Proper Use of Bicycles, Skateboards, Rollerblades, Scooters

Students should secure their bicycles in racks where provided. We encourage students to wear bicycle helmets. State law requires anyone aged 12 or under to wear a bicycle helmet. Use of skateboards, rollerblades, hoverboards, or scooters is not permitted on school walkways, patios, or stairs. There is also no provision for storage and safekeeping of this equipment in school. Please inquire with your school principal for specific school based practices for riding bikes to school.

Textbooks and Library Books

Our schools supply students with the textbooks and other materials they need for school. Textbooks and library books are owned by the Pittsfield Public Schools, and students are expected to return them in good condition. All textbooks that are taken home by students should be covered. Textbooks and library books can be very expensive, some costing more than \$85.00 each. If a book is lost or damaged, the student or parent must pay for a replacement.

Labs, Shops, and Gym

Students are to observe safety requirements in areas where possible hazards exist because of the kind of equipment and materials used. Students will follow the established rules, including the wearing of safety goggles, SPECIFIC UNIFORMS/CLOTHING/FOOTWEAR, and other protective items that are prescribed. Failure to observe safety requirements could lead to denial of activity participation.

Fire and Safety Drills

Fire and safety drills, such as evacuation and relocation exercises, at regular intervals are required by law and are an important safety precaution. It is essential that when the first signal is given, everyone obeys promptly and leaves the building by the prescribed route as quickly as possible. Students must remain with their designated school staff during any emergency school evacuation.

Acceptable Use Policy for Computers, Networks, and other Electronic Devices

The Pittsfield Public Schools have invested in computer technology, network infrastructure, and Internet access to enhance the learning opportunities for all students and staff, to improve communications, and to enhance administrative efficiency. The school district is the owner of the computer technology and will establish the regulations for policy determining the use of that technology.

The Pittsfield Public Schools district offers Internet access for students and staff. The district's Internet system has

been established for specific educational purposes to include classroom activities, career development, and limited high quality, self-discovery activities. The system has not been established as a free public access forum. Further, the system may not be used for commercial purposes or political lobbying. The district has the right to place reasonable restrictions on the material users access and post and the training users need to have before they are allowed to use the system. The district also has the right to enforce all rules set forth in district regulations and the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Students and staff should have no expectation of privacy or confidentiality in the content of electronic communications or other computer files that are sent and received on the district/school computer network or stored in his/her directory. The district or school network's system manager, or other authorized school employees, may, at any time, review the subject, content, and appropriateness of electronic communications or other computer files, reporting any violations of regulations to appropriate school administrators. The use of the school district's computer technology is a privilege and may be revoked at any time, as violations warrant. All students and staff are required to sign an Acceptable Use Contract and agree to the conditions within the policy before using any district computer or accessing the network.

No Possession of Weapons

A weapon includes but is not limited to firearms, knives, ice picks, or any other item that may be used to physically harm another student or staff member, such as scissors, pencils or paperclips, etc. This includes any items that appear to look like a firearm, knives, ice picks, or any other item that may be used to physically harm another student or staff member, such as scissors, pencils or paperclips, etc.

HAZING

M.G.L. c. 269, §17-19 specifies that hazing shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conducts shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this section.

Individuals found guilty of organizing or participating in the crime of hazing shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$1000, or by imprisonment of not more than one hundred days or both. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$500. Added by [st. 1985, c. 536].

In accordance with these provisions, the following procedures shall apply in all public secondary schools in the city of Pittsfield:

- Every applicant for and participant in each co-curricular and extracurricular activity under the jurisdiction of a secondary school, as well as the chief advisor or head coach of said activity, shall be provided a copy of the regulations concerning hazing violations form.
- All recipients of this form will sign and forward it to the building principal for use in preparing the annual report for the Department of Education.
- It shall be the responsibility of the building principal to report any and all cases of M.G.L. c. 269, §17-19 violations to the Department of Education and to appropriate law enforcement officials.

VIOLATION OF COMPUTER RESOURCES AND ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Please read this section carefully.

The Pittsfield Public Schools declares unethical and unacceptable behavior just cause for taking disciplinary action, revoking networking privileges, and/or initiating legal action for any activity through which an individual:

- Uses the network for illegal, inappropriate, or obscene purposes, or in support of such activities (Illegal activities shall be defined as a violation of local, state, and/or federal laws. Inappropriate use shall be defined as a violation of the intended use and/or purpose and goal of the network. Obscene activities shall be defined as a violation of generally accepted social standards for use of a publicly owned and operated communication vehicle.)
- Uses the network for any illegal activity, including violation of copyrights or other contracts violating such matters as institutional or third party copyright, license agreements and other contracts
- Intentionally disrupts network traffic or crashes the network and connected systems
- Degrades or disrupts equipment or system performance
- Uses school district computer resources for commercial or financial gain or fraud
- Steals data, equipment, or intellectual property
- Gains unauthorized access of others' files or vandalizes the data of another user
- Gains or seeks to gain unauthorized access to resources or entities
- Forges electronic mail messages or uses an account owned by another user
- Wastefully uses finite resources
- Invades the privacy of individuals
- Posts anonymous messages
- Possesses any data that might be considered a violation of these rules in paper, magnetic (disk), or any other form
- Violates the district's policies against threatening behavior, violence, bullying, cyber bullying, or peer harassment through electronic means (e.g. text messaging, blogging, social networking, etc.)

Consequences of Violations

Please refer to the Code of Conduct, Character, and Support Handbook.

Remedies and Resources

If a student is accused of any of the above violations, she/he has all of the rights and privileges that would exist if she/he were accused of school vandalism, fighting and so forth. The network manager or building principal has the right to restrict or terminate network and Internet access at any time for any reason. The network manager further has the right to monitor network activity in any form that she/he sees fit in order to maintain the integrity of the network.

By signing the Acceptable Use Policy form at the front of the handbook, students agree to abide by the restrictions outlined. Furthermore, the Pittsfield Public Schools do not have control of the information on the Internet, although it attempts to provide prudent and available barriers. Other sites accessible via the Internet may contain material that is illegal, defamatory, inaccurate or potentially offensive to some people. While the District's intent is to make Internet access available to further its educational goals and objectives, account holders may have the ability to access other materials as well.

The Pittsfield Public Schools believes that the benefits to educators and students from access to the Internet, in the form of information resources and opportunities for collaboration, far exceed any disadvantages of access. Ultimately, however, the parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their students should follow. To that end, the Pittsfield Public Schools support and respect each family's right to decide whether or not to apply for District network access. Any questions should be directed to the district's Network Manager, or the building principal.

Students and their parents/guardians must understand that student access to the District network is being developed to support the school's educational responsibilities and mission. The specific conditions and services being offered will change from time to time. In addition, the District assumes no responsibilities for:

- The content of any advice or information received by a student from a source outside the District, or any costs or charges incurred as a result of seeing or accepting such advice
- Any costs, liability or damages caused by the way the student chooses to use his/her District network access
- Any consequences of service interruptions or changes, even if these disruptions arise from circumstances under the control of the District

Students and staff must understand that their district email privacy is not guaranteed.

The student agrees to the following terms:

- My use of the District computer network will be consistent with the school's primary goals.
- I will not use the District computer network for illegal purposes of any kind.
- I will not use the District network to transmit threatening, obscene, or harassing materials, and the District will not be held responsible if I participate in such activities.
- I will not use the District network to interfere with or disrupt network users, services or equipment. Disruptions include, but are not limited to, distribution of unsolicited advertising, propagation of computer worms and viruses, and use of the network to make unauthorized entry to any other machine accessible via the network.
- It is assumed that information and resources accessible via the District network are private to the individuals and organizations that own or hold rights to those resources and information unless specifically stated otherwise by the owners or holders of rights. Therefore, I will not use the District network to access information or resources unless the owners or holders of rights to those resources or information have given permission for me to do so.

IX. Student Searches and Personal Privacy

A. SEARCHES TO STUDENT'S PERSON

In all circumstances of search and seizure in the school the interests of the student will be abridged no more than is necessary to achieve the legitimate end of preserving order in the school. A student search and resulting seizure will be carried out if (a) there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school, and (b) the search itself is conducted in a manner reasonably related to its objectives and not excessively intrusive in light of the age and sex of the student and nature of the infraction. When possible, the search should be conducted under the direction of the principal or designated administrator with at least one other adult witness, all of the same sex as the alleged offender. Whenever possible, reasonable efforts must be made to inform the student's parents/guardian prior to taking such action. The search should be conducted as discreetly as possible making sure to avoid intrusive searches or random searches. If the search and seizure so warrants, it will be brought to the attention of the appropriate law enforcement authorities and the student's parents will be so informed.

B. SEARCHES OF LOCKERS, DESKS, COMPUTERS

Students may be issued lockers, desks, and computers, or other school equipment or facilities at the opening of school or thereafter. *Students should have no expectation of privacy in their school lockers, desks, computers, etc.* Lockers, desks, and computers are for the use of students but remain the property of the Pittsfield Public Schools. Students are advised that their *lockers, desks, computers, or other school equipment or facilities may be inspected without notice by school administrators* to ensure cleanliness, safety, and adherence to federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

C. CANINE INSPECTIONS OF SCHOOLS

At the discretion of the Superintendent of schools and his/her designee, the Pittsfield Police or State Police Canine Unit may be requested to perform an inspection of the school.

D. COOPERATION WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT

All cases of actual possession, use, sale and distribution of alcohol, a controlled substance or weapons in school, upon school property, or at school-sponsored events will be reported to the Pittsfield Police Department for appropriate action.

X. *Student Safety, Building Safety, and Public Accessibility*

A. SNOW/EMERGENCY DAY CANCELLATION PROCEDURES

Extreme weather conditions such as heavy snow, ice, or flooding may result in the cancellation of classes at all schools. A localized emergency such as the loss of heat or a water main break may result in the cancellation of classes at a single school. In either situation, an automated phone and email notification system will be activated to provide families with timely notice. In addition, the superintendent or designee will notify local radio and television stations and post a notice on the education cable access channel by 6:00 a.m. The following stations will be contacted:

Channel 6
WBEC 95.9 FM
Channel 13

Capital News 9
PCTV Channel 17

School closings will also be posted on the Pittsfield Public Schools (PPS) website, www.pittsfield.net, the Pittsfield Public Schools Facebook and Instagram account. **It is crucial that parents/guardians keep the schools informed of current family contact information. Notify your child's school of changes of address, phone numbers, email addresses, and emergency contact information as they occur.**

In circumstances where the emergency situation may improve, there may be a one- or two-hour delay to the starting time set for each level. In the event that an emergency develops during the day while schools are in session, plans will be communicated using the same stations and be supplemented with family or emergency contact phone calls. When necessary, students may remain in school until arrangements for a safe dismissal are arranged.

B. VISITOR PASSES

The Pittsfield Public Schools extend a warm welcome to parents and others to visit our schools and classrooms. At the same time, we must ensure that our students and staff are safe and that learning is not disrupted. Schools must be aware of who is in the building and why they are there. All visitors must first report to the office, sign-in, and display a visitor's pass/identification provided for use while in the building. "Visitors" include parents and school department employees, as well as others.

C. SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS AND C.O.R.I. CHECKS

Anyone who wishes to volunteer time to work with our students and is likely to have access to students who, at times, may be unsupervised, either on school premises or while participating or assisting in school-sponsored programs or activities, must register with the district for a Criminal Offender Records Information (CORI) check before engaging in volunteer activities. The opportunity to volunteer may be denied if the check reports evidence of criminal conduct

deemed by the Superintendent or designee to create a credible risk to students, staff, or the public. M.G.L. c. 71, §38R and PER-10A.

In order to initiate a C.O.R.I check, fill out the required paperwork in the Human Resources Office of the School Administration Center (269 First Street, 499-9505), bringing a driver's license or other valid photo ID with you. It can take one to three weeks for the process to be completed. Requested schools are informed of approvals.

D. AGREEMENT WITH PITTSFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Pittsfield Public Schools have an agreement with the Pittsfield Police Department to report all cases of actual possession, use, sale, and distribution of alcohol or a controlled substance in school, upon school property, or at school-sponsored events for appropriate action, after the notification of parents.

E. RESOURCE/D.A.R.E. OFFICERS IN SCHOOLS

The Pittsfield Public Schools in cooperation with the Pittsfield Police Department permit the assignment of an on-duty officer to work on school grounds for the primary purpose of being a resource to students and staff in the maintenance of a positive student environment. Should it become necessary, the resource officer can intercede in a situation in his/her capacity as an officer on-duty.

F. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The Pittsfield Public Schools, in cooperation with the Pittsfield Police Department and Pittsfield Fire Department, under the guidelines set by the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), have created district and school procedures that support response to a range of emergency situations. Procedures include, but are not limited to, responding to a bomb threat, a violent intruder, or the need to evacuate the building. Every school has a designated evacuation site and a designated parent reunification site (listed below). Should an evacuation be necessary all students and staff will report to the site and student attendance taken. Safety personnel will advise when it is safe to return to the building or will start a procedure to release students to a parent or guardian who is identified as an emergency contact on the student database and therefore can sign for student release. To the extent possible, announcements will be made through the phone notification system, the district website, local radio stations, and the education cable access channel (PCTV Channel 17) to inform parents about a school-wide emergency and actions that are underway or to be taken. All school sites will facilitate practice emergency drills at the beginning of each school year. [Click here to view the Pittsfield Public Schools Family Emergency Response Booklet.](#)

PARENT REUNIFICATION SITE

All schools will utilize the Pittsfield Municipal Airport 832 Tamarack Rd, Pittsfield, MA 01201

XI. Student Records and Privacy

A. BASIC RIGHTS

Pursuant to the requirements of federal law, notice is hereby provided to all students attending the Pittsfield Public Schools (PPS), and to all persons in parental relation to such students, that the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. §1232-g, provides such persons with certain rights. The parent or guardian of each student who has not yet attained her/his eighteenth birthday, and every student who has attained her/his eighteenth birthday, is hereby notified that:

- She/he has the right to inspect and review the student's educational records.
- The Pittsfield Public Schools limits the disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in students' educational records except (a) by prior consent of the student's parent or guardian, (b) as directory information or information pertaining to honors, awards, achievements, or participation in school- or class-related activities, and (c) under certain limited circumstances permitted by FERPA or by Massachusetts regulation.
- She/he may request that records be amended to ensure that they are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights.
- She/he may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education alleging failure by the Pittsfield Public Schools to comply with FERPA and its regulations.
- She/he may obtain copies of the Pittsfield Public Schools' policy on student records from:

The Director of Human Resources
269 First Street Room 111
Pittsfield, MA 01201
Telephone 413-499-9505
FAX 413-448-8886

B. CONFIDENTIALITY

Except for those authorized by federal or state law, no individuals or organizations but the parent, student, and school personnel working directly with the student are allowed to have access to information in the student record without the specific, informed, written consent of the parent or the student.

C. DIRECTORY INFORMATION

What May Be Reported About Students

The Pittsfield School Committee establishes that, in conformity with federal and Massachusetts law governing the privacy of student information, school district administrators or others acting under the authorization of the Superintendent of Schools may, without the prior written consent of a student's parent or guardian, release directory information on any student attending the Pittsfield Public Schools. As used herein, "directory information" shall mean personally identifiable information about a student that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. Directory information shall include the following personally identifiable student information: (1) name, (2) address, (3) telephone listing, if published, (4) photograph, (5) date and place of birth, (6) dates of attendance, (7) grade level, (8) participation in officially recognized activities and sports, (9) weight and height of members of athletic teams, (10) honors and awards received, and (11) the most recent educational agency or institution attended.

Military Recruiters

Under the federal *No Child Left Behind Act* and the *National Defense Authorization Act* (2002) local education agencies (LEAs) are required to provide military recruiters the same access to secondary school students as they

provide to postsecondary institutions and prospective employers, and to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the names, addresses, and telephone listings of high school juniors and seniors for the purposes of recruiting and informing young people about scholarship opportunities. These two laws include provisions for parents to "opt out" of allowing schools to provide information about their children to military recruiters. Helpful guidance on this issue from the U.S. Department of Education can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/hottopics/ht-10-09-02a.html>

Parental Advisement to Withhold Release of Directory Information:

A parent or guardian who does not wish directory information on her/his child to be released pursuant to either or both of the above, may prevent release of that information by completing and submitting the Parent and Student Agreement/Acuerdo Entre Padres y Estudiantes (pages 3 and 5 of this document) or by making that request in writing directly to the school principal.

D. RIGHTS OF 18-YEAR OLD STUDENTS

Any student eighteen (18) years of age or older may exercise these student record rights alone.

E. DESTRUCTION OF RECORDS

Massachusetts regulations (603 C.M.R. 23.06) require that certain parts of the student record, such as the temporary record, guidance information, health records and some testing results be destroyed five (5) years after the student leaves the school system. School authorities are also allowed to destroy misleading, outdated, or irrelevant information in the record from time to time while the student is enrolled in the school system. Before the temporary record information may be destroyed, the parent and student must be notified, and have an opportunity to receive a copy of the information before its destruction.

F. ACCESS OF NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS TO STUDENT INFORMATION

Massachusetts regulations (603 C.M.R. 23.07[5]) make a non-custodial parent eligible to obtain access to her/his student's records *unless* the school or district have been given documentation that (1) the non-custodial parent has been denied legal custody based on a threat to the safety of the student or the custodial parent, (2) the non-custodial parent has been denied visitation or has been ordered to supervised visitation, or (3) the non-custodial parent's access to the student or the custodial parent has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the order or any subsequent court order specifically allows access to student record information.

G. PARENTAL NOTIFICATION RELATIVE TO SEX EDUCATION

Schools are required by law to notify parents about any classes that will be held on human sexual education or sexual issues. The notice must tell the parent how he or she can review the content and materials of the classes. While parents do not have to give permission for their children to take sex education classes, parents do have the right to exempt their children from such classes. To do this, simply write a letter to your child's principal saying you do not want your child to participate in sexual education classes. For more information about sex education in the PPS, please contact Ann Marie Carpenter, Director of Social Emotional Learning and Student Support at 413-499-9515 or acarpenter@pittsfield.net.

H. MEDIA APPEARANCES

The Pittsfield Public Schools (PPS) may display student work or record classroom or school events via video, photographs, electronic media, and print for display to other students, school staff, parents in the school community, and others. The PPS may also permit the media to cover such events and use a child's name or image in association with the coverage. Parents/guardians must indicate on the Parent and Student Agreement if they do not want this information displayed or released.

XIII. Promotion and Graduation Policies

Students must fulfill several requirements to be promoted to the next grade. All students must:

- Earn passing grades in certain courses
- Maintain good attendance

PASSING GRADES IN COURSES

Teachers base the grades they give students on several factors, including:

- Scores on classroom tests and quizzes
- Completion of required products, for example, a book report or science project
- Participation in class discussion and activities
- Performance on homework assignments
- Preparedness for class.

Homework is considered an important adjunct to classroom instruction. Regular homework assignments not only reinforce course content introduced by the classroom teacher but also provide opportunity for students to develop the ability to function independently. The frequency and complexity of homework assignments is expected to increase with grade level and with program level in the high school. However, it is expected that homework assignments will be a component of the student's education program commencing with grade 1.

Where students have more than one teacher as in team-taught or departmentalized organizations, provisions are to be made to coordinate individual teacher homework assignments so as to preclude excessive demands upon individual students.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to take an active interest in their students' academic progress and to feel free to communicate questions and concerns to teachers as needed. All teachers' emails are listed on their school websites' faculty directory pages; school websites can be found through the district site, www.pittsfield.net.

In addition, all parents and guardians of middle and high school students can keep up with their children's grades and attendance through the PowerSchool website, powerschool.pittsfield.net/parents. In September, all parents/guardians of secondary school students will receive a user id and password, which they can then use to enter the site and set up their own private password to view their student's progress. Teachers are required to post student grades electronically no later than ten (10) school days after the due date for the assignment or date of quiz, test, or examination; or by the due dates of progress reports or report cards, whichever is earlier. It should be understood that long-term, major projects and presentations may not be posted online within ten (10) school days but will be posted by the dates of progress reports or report cards if they are to be counted in the final average. In the event that the electronic grading system of the Pittsfield Public Schools is inoperable, the timelines referenced above will be extended. Parents/guardians are asked to respect the timelines referenced above and to direct any specific questions to their child's teacher and/or principal.

A. ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

POLICY

Where movement to the next grade is concerned, the following shall apply:

Retention at a grade level will be an acceptable course of action when it has been determined by the principal that passing to the next grade level would be detrimental to the educational progress of a student. In such cases, an educational plan will be developed for the student by the principal in collaboration with the teachers who will be delivering the instructional program in the next year. The educational plan cannot be a simple repetition of the entire grade but will address the specific needs of the retained student. Students moving to the next grade level who have demonstrated academic deficiencies will be scheduled appropriately to address their development needs.

REGULATIONS

The following regulations shall apply to situations wherein students at the elementary and middle school levels are performing significantly below their chronological peers and normal expectations for their grade:

1. Non-promotion is not a viable option in the following situations:
 - **At the kindergarten level**
It is not reasonable to require a student to repeat this grade since kindergarten attendance is not required.
 - **In any situation where the student had been previously retained**
It is unreasonable to impose non-promotion a second time if it was ineffective the first time.
Doing so would make the child two years older than his or her classmates.
2. The best protection against the disadvantages of non-promotion is early intervention. As soon during the school year as it becomes apparent that a student is having significant difficulty the teacher is to initiate with the principal a conference of building-level resources and the student's parent to develop a remediation plan for implementation during the remainder of that school year.
3. In recognition of the fact that retention is usually ineffective and often detrimental, when the school year is drawing to a close and a student is still performing significantly below grade expectations, the initial consideration should be what will be necessary in order for this child to be successful at the next grade level rather than whether the student should be non-promoted.
4. There are other means of providing additional time for the underperforming child to catch up than non-promotion. Summer school, learning academies, and extended day programs are options. In some cases, participation in summer programs is required to advance to the next grade level.
5. No student is to be retained in the absence of a specific individualized learning plan for the following year that is designed to enable the child to catch up. In other words, separation from one's chronological peers is expected to be a temporary situation.
6. When a student advances from one level to the next without having met all of the academic standards normally expected at the previous level, documentation of his/her performance level is to be specified to the receiving school.
7. Student achievement data including local and statewide assessments may be used in order to determine appropriate placement in academic courses.

B. HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Policy

All high school students are to acquire an equal number of credits as a requirement for graduation.

The number of credits required for graduation shall be adjusted periodically, subject to School Committee approval, so as to reflect program and course requirements as well as scheduling arrangements.

When courses differ substantially in their levels of academic challenge, differential weighting for computing grade point average shall be used as a means of assessing more fairly the academic achievement of students.

All students shall be required to fulfill course requirements for graduation as approved by the School Committee or mandated by state law.

Except for state mandated graduation requirements, the principal shall have authority to waive requirements for graduation in the senior year subject to review by the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee. The principal in consultation with the Superintendent of his/her designee may modify graduation and/or certification requirements based on recommendations of SPED teams or under other exceptional circumstances.

Regulations

Credit Requirements

1. All courses will receive one (1) credit per period per semester.
2. Students must acquire a minimum of 244 credits as a requirement for graduation.
3. All students are to be scheduled for a minimum of 64 credits per year.
4. Complete either Mass Core or PPS requirements for graduation.

What is MassCore?

The Massachusetts High School Program of Studies (MassCore) is intended to help our state's high school graduates arrive at college or the workplace well prepared and reduce the number of students taking remedial courses in college. MassCore recommends a comprehensive set of subject area courses and units as well as other learning opportunities to complete before graduating from high school.

The *recommended* program of studies includes: four years of English, four years of Math, three years of a lab-based Science, three years of history, two years of the same foreign language, one year of an arts program and five additional "core" courses such as business education, health, and/or technology. MassCore also includes additional learning opportunities including AP classes, dual enrollment, a senior project, online courses for high school or college credit, and service or work-based learning.

What is the difference between MassCore and the PPS requirements?

- Mass Core is the state recommended course of study for students and outlines the courses necessary to apply to and enroll in a Massachusetts university.
- PPS is the minimum required course of study in order for a student to graduate from Pittsfield Public Schools. It is strongly recommend that students attempt to take the course of study that follows the Mass Core model

Course Requirements

Students must pass the following courses as a requirement for graduation.

	MassCore Requirements		PPS Requirements	
	Academic	CTE		
			Academic/CTE	
English	4	4	4	
History	3	3	3	
Math	4	4	3	
Science	3	3	3	
Foreign Language	2	exempt	1/CTE-exempt	
PE	4	4	4	
Human Development	2	2	2	
Arts	1	exempt	0	

The Principal may waive up to a total of 10 credits of Language requirements when unusual circumstances occur due to scheduling conflicts, accommodation of transfer students, or a student's special educational needs (as defined by the student Individual Education Plan). Waiving of a requirement shall not reduce the total credits required for graduation.

Educational Proficiency Plans (EPP)

The purpose of the Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP) is to increase the likelihood that graduates of high schools in Massachusetts have the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in college and today's workforce. The plan is intended to help assist Massachusetts students by providing sufficient knowledge in mathematics and English language arts to matriculate at higher education institutions (remediation free) and be prepared for post secondary careers. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education requires an EPP be developed for each student who has not demonstrated proficiency in either English language arts or mathematics based on the performance level attained on the 10th grade MCAS.

Educational Proficiency Plans for each required content area (ELA and Math) shall include, at a minimum:

- A review of a student's strengths and weaknesses in the content area.
- The courses the student will be required to take and successfully complete in grades 11 and 12 that will move the student toward proficiency on the grade 10 curriculum framework standards as well as on grade 11 and 12 standards in English language arts or grade 11 and 12 grade span standards or Algebra II standards in mathematics.
- A description of the assessments the school will administer on at least an annual basis to determine whether the student is making progress toward proficiency, or has become proficient on the grade 10 standards. These assessments must include MCAS tests or other tests identified by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for this purpose.

A student achieving a scaled score 240 or higher on an MCAS test or a score determined by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education on another approved test will be deemed to have achieved proficiency in the subject area and to have fulfilled the Educational Proficiency Plan in that subject.

For students who have not achieved this score threshold, the principal or head of school (or his or her designee) will determine whether the student has fulfilled the Educational Proficiency Plan.