

# Elementary Handbook 2020-2021



*for  
Parents, Students and Staff*

MELROSE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Handbook Translation Information

If you need this document translated, please contact your child's school.

### Portuguese

Se você precisa este documento traduzido, entre em contato com a escola do seu filho.

### French

Si vous avez besoin de traduire ce document, s'il vous plaît contacter l'école de votre enfant.

### Chinese

如果你需要这份文件翻译，请联系您的孩子的学校。

### Spanish

Si necesita este documento traducido, por favor comuníquese con la escuela de su hijo.

### Arabic

يرجى الاتصال بمدرسة طفلك/طفلتك، إذا كنت تحتاج /تحتاجين إلى ترجمة هذه الوثيقة إلى اللغة العربية

## Melrose Public Schools Administration

Julie Kukenberger.....Superintendent of Schools  
Leia DiLorenzo-Secor.....Director of Finance/Administrative Affairs  
Patricia White-Lambright.....Assistant Superintendent of Pupil Personnel Services  
Margaret Adams.....Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning  
Amy Jackson.....METCO Director

Jason Merrill.....High School Principal  
Cari Berman.....Assistant High School Principal  
Bryan Corrigan.....Assistant High School Principal

Zachary Best.....Middle School Principal  
Jamie Parsons.....Assistant Middle School Principal

Donna Rosso.....Franklin School Principal  
Nina Cullen-Hamzeh.....Hoover School Principal  
Milissa Churchill.....Horace Mann School Principal

Kristen St. George.....Lincoln School Principal  
Carol Weldin.....Lincoln School Assistant Principal

Mary Beth Maranto.....Roosevelt School Principal  
Venancia Cruz.....Roosevelt School Assistant Principal

Michael Tracy.....Winthrop School Principal  
Shamus Brady.....Winthrop Assistant Principal/Sped Coordinator

*Dear Parents and Guardians,*

*Welcome to the Melrose Public Schools. Our schools represent a place where talents are developed and recognized. We strive to help each child achieve his/her highest potential. We firmly believe that the process of education is both life long and team oriented. A high level of involvement and good communication between administrators, teachers, staff, parents and students is essential in reaching our goals.*

*This handbook serves as a guide which will be the cornerstone of communication as we work together. It is important that you understand our policies and procedures so that we can have a successful partnership. Please share the information contained in this handbook as appropriate with your child(ren).*

***To confirm that you have read and shared the handbook and the information therein with your child, please log into ASPEN and sign electronically.***

*We look forward to a successful school year!*

*Sincerely,*

*The Elementary Administrative Team*

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## Elementary School Contact Information

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Franklin School</b><br>16 Franklin Street<br>Main Office: 781.979.2260<br>Tardy/Absence Line: 781.979.2260 #1            | Administrative Assistant: Melissa Giamanco<br><a href="mailto:mgiamanco@melroseschools.com">mgiamanco@melroseschools.com</a><br>Nurse: 781.979.2115     |
| <b>Hoover School</b><br>37 Glendower Road<br>Main Office: 781.979.2180<br>Tardy/Absence Line: 781.979.2182                  | Administrative Assistant: Mara Nigrelli<br><a href="mailto:mnigrelli@melroseschools.com">mnigrelli@melroseschools.com</a><br><br>Nurse: 781.979.2183    |
| <b>Horace Mann School</b><br>40 Damon Avenue<br>Main Office: 781.979.2190<br>Tardy/Absence Line: 781.979.2192               | Administrative Assistant: Kathy Wright<br><a href="mailto:kwright@melroseschools.com">kwright@melroseschools.com</a><br><br>Nurse: 781.665.6865         |
| <b>Lincoln School</b><br>80 West Wyoming Avenue<br>Main Office: 781.979.2250<br>Tardy/Absence Line: 781.979.2255            | Administrative Assistant: Laurie Cruz<br><a href="mailto:lcruz@melroseschools.com">lcruz@melroseschools.com</a><br><br>Nurse: 781.979.2255              |
| <b>Roosevelt School</b><br>253 Vinton Street<br>Main Office: 781.979.2270 ext: 0<br>Tardy/Absence Line: 781.979.2270 ext. 2 | Administrative Assistant: Sarah Laxton<br><a href="mailto:Slaxton@melroseschools.com">Slaxton@melroseschools.com</a><br><br>Nurse: 781.979.2270 ext. 2  |
| <b>Winthrop School</b><br>162 First Street<br>Main Office: 781.979.2280<br>Tardy/Absence Line: 781.979.2282                 | Administrative Assistant: Peggy Sorrentino<br><a href="mailto:psorrentino@melroseschools.com">psorrentino@melroseschools.com</a><br>Nurse: 781.979.2282 |

## School Hours

Students are admitted entrance to the buildings at 7:58 A.M. and school begins at 8:03 A.M. Children arriving prior to 7:58 are prohibited entry unless they are registered for \*Early Bird or are attending a before school extra help session or extracurricular program. School specific information regarding morning entrance routines will be communicated by each individual elementary school. When the weather is inclement, students will not be allowed into the building prior to 7:53 A.M. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to remain on school property while students enter the building. However, due to security purposes, parents or guardians may not escort their child to his/her classroom.

The school day ends at 2:20 P.M. Parents/Guardians are required to pick up students promptly at the end of the day. Specific dismissal routines will be communicated by each individual elementary school. Children/adults are not permitted to return to classrooms for forgotten items without permission from the Main Office.

**Franklin School hours** for Kindergarten only are 8:30 A.M. to 2:47 P.M. Additional Franklin specific information can be found on the [Franklin School](#) webpage.

Children who need care beyond 2:20 should be enrolled in “Education Stations” who provide care from 2:20-6:00. After school care programs are tuition based.

Express Line is available 2:20-3:30. “Education Stations” will maintain the 4:30 Blue Line pick up and 6:00 Green Line pick up options for 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 days. For specific information regarding Education Stations, please see the following link: [Education Stations](#).

There may be times (extra-curricular activities, extra help session or disciplinary action) when having a student remain after school will be necessary or benefit him/her. Teachers will make arrangements ahead of time with parents to enable the child to remain after dismissal. In the case of disciplinary action, parents will be notified by the teacher or principal that the child will remain after school from 2:20-2:50 P.M. on that day. Transportation or pick up arrangements are the responsibility of the parent.

**Early Release Days** occur once a month. Dismissal is at 12:20 P.M. and lunch is served. There are four times a year, November 25th, Dec. 23rd, Feb. 12th and the last day of school, when school dismisses at 12:00 P.M. and lunch is NOT served. Please see the district calendar at the following link for specific dates: [20-21 Melrose School Calendar](#).

Parents/Guardians may register students to attend a tuition based Education Stations Enrichment Program from 12:20 – 2:20 P.M. on the above mentioned early release days (EXCEPT on 11/25 & the last day of school). Information regarding this program is available on the district website please see the following link: [Education Stations](#).

## **Pets on School Property**

Per a city ordinance, dogs are not permitted on school property during school hours, 8:00 A.M. – 6:00 P.M. Service animals (i.e. dogs) are the only exception.

## **Attendance Requirements**

Regular attendance in school is required by Massachusetts law (G.L. c.76, §2) for all persons between the ages of 6 and 16. It is the shared responsibility of each student, his or her family, and the school to ensure that the student attends school each day that he or she is not sick. Failure to attend school, except under extraordinary circumstances, will require school personnel in conjunction with the family to create a plan in order to minimize further absences. Students who have 7 or more unexcused absences in a trimester will require school personnel to seek assistance through court action and/or through the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families.

Per MA Law Chapter 76, Section 1, the school principal may excuse cases of necessary absence not exceeding 7 days or 14 half days in any period of six months.

Students who exceed 14 consecutive or cumulative absences in a school year, due to a medical condition, will be required to complete the Physician's Statement for Home and Hospital Education.

## **Excused & Unexcused Absence**

As stated above, students are expected to attend school every day. We are aware that there are valid reasons why a child may be absent from school. This is called an excused absence. Some reasons for an excused absence are:

- Child's illness or injury
- Family emergency
- Death of a family member
- Doctor or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled before or after school hours
- Religious holidays

*A phone call to the school's absence line, stating the reason for the absence, is required before 8:00 A.M. on the day of the absence.* At the discretion of the principal/school nurse, a doctor's note may be required when the absence is due to illness for re-entry to school. Children who are absent from school due to chronic or recurring illness or accident (14 + days) are eligible for home tutoring. Please contact your principal for more information.

An unexcused absence is when children are absent from school for reasons not allowed by school policy and/or Massachusetts Law. Examples of an unexcused absence include but are not limited to:

- A sick sibling

- Vacation/Travel (see “Non-Scheduled Vacation Policy” below)
- Sleeping late

Students who are absent 15 consecutive school days from school and the absence is deemed “unexcused” will be unenrolled from their elementary school (even if they have a date to return). Prior to the student’s return to school, they need to enroll with the district’s registrar. The School District cannot guarantee that they will be assigned to the same school in which they previously attended. Placement will be based on the space available at the time of enrollment.

### **Non-Scheduled Vacation Policy**

Parents should schedule vacations during natural breaks from school. If a vacation occurs resulting in missed school days teachers are not responsible to provide the student with missed work, tests, quizzes or homework before or after the absence. Any absence of this nature is highly discouraged and considered unexcused.

### **Tardy to School**

School starts promptly at 8:03 A.M. and students must be in class by that time. Students arriving after 8:03 must report to the Main Office. Franklin School kindergarten students who arrive after 8:30 must report to the Main Office. *Parents/Guardians will be contacted by the principal after the student reaches his/her sixth tardy in one trimester.* In extreme circumstances or instances it may require the school to solicit assistance from the court and/or through the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families.

### **Individual Early Dismissal**

If your child will be leaving during the school day, please send a note to the teacher indicating time of dismissal. Plan to sign your child out and meet him/her at the Main Office. A student returning to school after being dismissed must report to the Main Office with his/her parent.

### **Change in Dismissal Routine**

If your child’s normal dismissal (i.e. different person picking him/her up) routine is going to be altered on a particular day, please send an email to the teacher and administrative assistant.

### **School Cancellation & Delayed Opening**

During inclement weather the district consults with the Melrose Department of Public Works and Melrose Police and Fire on a decision to close schools for the day, delay the opening for an 1 hour, 90 minutes or 2 hours, or possibly dismiss early.

- 1 hour “delayed opening” start of school: 9:03 A.M. (9:30 A.M. Franklin K)
- 90 minute “delayed opening” start of school: 9:33 A.M. (10:00 A.M. Franklin K)
- 2 hour “delayed opening” start of school: 10:03 A.M. (10:30 A.M. Franklin K)

The Before School Program (**Early Bird**) will not operate on a “delayed opening.” Additionally, breakfast will not be served in schools that usually offer a breakfast program.

If school is delayed, an announcement is sent through the ConnectEd phone system and email and posted on the district website as an alert on the top of the page. An announcement is also made on the following radio and television stations: WBZ Radio 1030 AM and Channel 4 TV, WHDH Radio 850 AM and Channel 7 TV, and WEEI Radio 590 AM and Channel 5 TV. Local Melrose cable station MMTV posts no school/delays on Channels 3, 15, and 22 on the Comcast Network and Channels 37, 38, and 39 on the Verizon Network.

Although we have never dismissed students early, our plan will be to notify parents with an emergency call through ConnectEd. The Contact 1 and Contact 2 primary phone number and email address that you have provided will be used.

## **Lunch**

Students may either bring a lunch from home or purchase a school lunch. When bringing a lunch from home, it should be packed appropriately as refrigeration/microwaves are not available. Lunches from home may contain nuts or peanut ingredients. For students who have an identified nut allergy, a separate “peanut free” table is provided (see “Allergy Information” for more details. Franklin School is a “nut free” school.) When purchasing lunch or ala-carte item (milk), a debit system is used. Money must be prepaid or deposited into individual student accounts. Payments to your child’s account may be made online (see page 14 for details). Students who have a positive account balance can purchase any item(s). Students with a negative account balance will be allowed to purchase a meal for two (2) days. After two (2) days, if money is not deposited into the account, the selection will be limited until payment is received and the negative balance is paid. In an effort to prevent negative account balances, the Food Service Department will periodically send notices home to parents indicating low account balances.

Monthly lunch menus are posted in advance and available through the following link on the district website: [Nutrislice Menus | Melrose Public Schools](#). Students may qualify for a free or reduced lunch based on family income. You will need to apply to see if your family qualifies. The application is available on the Melrose Public Schools lunch menu page noted above. Select the “How to apply for the school meals program” option to obtain a digital copy. Paper copies are available in the school main office. This application must be completed annually.

## **Snack**

Students should bring a light, healthy, peanut/nut free snack including a drink to school.

## **Payment of Fees/Tuition**

The Melrose Public Schools is committed to providing programming to meet the needs of the students of Melrose and their families. As Education Stations and the Early Bird Program are 100% funded by tuition of the students who attend, timely payment is crucial to the efficient running of these programs. When enrolling your student in these programs you are agreeing to pay the fees associated therewith. If you do not make the required payments, the district will

work with families on payment plans as needed, but in the absence of good faith efforts or failure to pay after thirty days students will be withdrawn from the program. Students will not be able to enroll in any tuition based programs until payment is made, including any late fees associated with the account.

Melrose Public Schools offers the convenience of paying school fees/tuitions online by credit card or ACH (electronic payment from bank account). All information is secure and payments are executed using encryption. Melrose Public Schools does not store any checking account or credit card information. Online payment is available for: Lunch fees; Franklin Tuition and Stay & Play; Before School Care; Ed Stations; Elementary Music Lessons; Guidance Transcripts & Applications, Athletic Fees; and Field Trips. Please note that a convenience fee will be assessed by the online payment processor.

The fees are as follows:

- "Bank Account - Checking/Savings" also known as an electronic check or ACH transfer: A .25 fee will be applied for each ACH transaction. Your bank account and routing number are required at the time of payment.
- Credit Card: The minimum convenience fee for using a credit card for payments under \$100 will range from \$1 to approximately \$4. Charges totaling over \$100 will be approximately 3% of the fee amount. (Credit Card convenience fees are subject to change without notice). At this time, VISA has elected to not participate in this program

*Please note that you can also make payments by check, or money order made payable to Melrose Public Schools. **CASH PAYMENTS ARE NOT ACCEPTED.***

## Visitors/Volunteers

A visitor or volunteer is considered any person who enters the school other than a student or campus staff member. Anyone wanting access to our school must enter through the main doors and report immediately to the Main Office. Visitors and volunteers must sign in and obtain the appropriate identifying badge (either visitor or volunteer depending on role). This policy helps us ensure the safety and security of our school building. Visitors and volunteers should only be in the location of their designated activity. Entering classrooms and locations other than the ones designated by your role is prohibited. At the conclusion of your visit/volunteering, please stop by the Main Office to sign out. Districts are required to keep track of volunteer hours, which is another reason signing in and out is important.

Volunteers must register with the schools' centralized volunteer program – The Bridge School/Community Partnership. Registration forms can be obtained online at: [The Bridge](#) or from the Main Office. Any questions regarding "The Bridge" please contact the Coordinator of Volunteers, Lisa Lewis, at [llewis@melroseschools.com](mailto:llewis@melroseschools.com) or by calling 781-979-2299.

In accordance with Mass General Law Chapter 71, Section 38R, any current or prospective volunteer who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children must agree to a criminal

record (CORI) check. Information obtained will be confidential and will affect decisions about the placement of volunteers and field trip chaperones.

Confidentiality when working in a school setting is extremely important. All volunteers must sign a confidentiality agreement and successfully pass a CORI check. To ensure the privacy and safety of students and staff, information concerning both groups must not be discussed with anyone except the appropriate school personnel. Volunteers who are unable to maintain a professional stance regarding confidentiality or other unbecoming behavior will be asked to discontinue their volunteer work for the rest of the year. Volunteers are not permitted to take photographs of staff or students.

Volunteers who have access to the school's computers, networks, and Internet services are to use them for school-related purposes and performance of job duties. The school retains control, custody and supervision of all computers, networks, and Internet services owned or leased by the Melrose Public Schools. Volunteers have no expectation of privacy in their use of school computers, including e-mail messages and stored files. The School Committee's "Acceptable Use Policy" regarding school computers is available upon request.

## **Social Media**

Privacy restrictions mandate that group photos or photos of students other than your own child not be posted on social media without explicit permission of the parents of each child present in the photo.

## **Recess**

Due to time on learning requirements, recess is 20 minutes each day after lunch. Students in grades K-1 may take an additional 10 minute structured movement break in the morning at the discretion of the teacher.

Each school is responsible for assessing the safety and feasibility of outdoor recess. Melrose Public Schools will adhere to standardized weather conditions guidance as reported for the zip code 02176 at [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com). Principals and/or school staff should reconsider outside recess and provide a safe alternative when the "feels like" temperatures fall below 20 degrees, including the wind chill, or the temperature index "feels like" reaches 95 degrees or above.

## **Communication**

The primary form of all school communication is email. Some examples of such communications may include information related to educational topics, upcoming school or community events, or friendly reminders. Depending on the type of information, it may be generated by the principal, Main Office, PTO, or outside community group. If email communication poses a complication, please contact the Main Office to make other arrangements. Other sources of information are our school/district website as well as individual school Facebook pages. Additionally, teachers maintain Aspen website pages.

Information about access to individual teacher pages will be provided to parents at the start of the school year.

## **Emergency Response Drills**

Attending to the safety of our schools is of the greatest importance. In conjunction with our local officials, our response procedures are reviewed yearly so that we can make prompt, responsible decisions in the event of an emergency. Throughout the school year, students and staff practice fire, lock down, and off-site evacuation drills. In advance of a lock down and off site evacuation drill, parents/guardians will be notified.

## **METCO**

METCO Incorporated is a private, non-profit organization founded in 1966. Currently the program places 3,300 minority students from Boston communities into surrounding school districts. METCO Incorporated is funded through the Commonwealth of Massachusetts under the Racial Imbalance Act and is the nation's oldest voluntary school desegregation program. Email Amy Jackson, Director at [ajackson@melroseschools.com](mailto:ajackson@melroseschools.com) or call 781-979-2137 with any questions regarding the METCO program.

The Mission: The METCO mission is to provide Melrose and partnering communities with educational opportunities designed to enrich their academic, personal, and interpersonal experiences. It is our belief that the METCO experience should provide a strong academic foundation, as well as an opportunity for cultural, educational, ethnic, and racial diversity.

The Purpose:

- A. To provide the opportunity for an integrated public school education for children of color from racially unbalanced schools in Boston by placing them in suburban schools.
- B. To provide a new learning experience for suburban children.
- C. To provide closer understanding and cooperation between urban and suburban parents and other citizens in the Metropolitan Boston area.

## **Report Cards**

Standards-based performance reports for Grades 1-5 are distributed three times a year. The purpose is to provide information on a student's progress in all curriculum areas, social/emotional development, and work/study habits. Students in Grades K-5 are assessed on their ability to meet standards, which reflect state proficiency levels. Kindergarten reports are issued two times per year; once in January/February and once in June. Students who are on Individual Education Plans are issued progress reports on a schedule that typically coincides with the distribution of performance reports.

The most effective way to communicate about student progress is through a conference with the teacher. Teachers are available twice a year (fall and spring) for parent conferences. However, we urge you to maintain close contact with the school regarding your child's growth



and development. Feel free to contact your child's teacher at any time to set up an appointment.

## **Procedure for Discussing School Related Concerns**

We believe in a strong partnership between home and school. If you have concerns; however, please begin with your child's classroom teacher. If your concern is not resolved, please make an appointment with your building principal. Please see the following link to the "Melrose Chain of Communication" to help you determine who can help with discussing a school related concern: [Melrose Chain of Communication](#).

## **Multi-Tiered System of Support/Instructional Support Team**

The Instructional Support Team (IST), which is a function of general education, enables staff members to meet as a team to address the individual needs of children. A student may be discussed at IST because performance data and teacher observation indicates the student is struggling with an aspect of their learning or because the student is performing well above expected grade level benchmarks. At the classroom level, the purpose of the IST process is to identify where accommodation(s) in the classroom can provide intervention or enhancement that will benefit the student. Its primary outcome is to provide direction and guidance so that teachers can differentiate instruction. The District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) is a document that assists IST members in generating suggestions of classroom strategies. The DCAP is posted on line at: [District Curriculum Accommodation Plan](#).

If, after a variety of instructional interventions and differentiation strategies, the data indicate that more information about the student is necessary, the IST will refer the child for an evaluation to determine other options, including special education.

## **Pupil Personnel Services**

The Department of Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) offers a broad range of diagnostic services and programs for students in the Melrose Public Schools whose learning challenges cannot be addressed through the general education program alone.

As outlined above, the building based Instructional Support Team (IST) collaborates to address individual needs of students. Most often the interventions recommended by the team help to resolve concerns. In some cases, however, it is deemed appropriate by the school staff and/or the child's parents to refer the child for further evaluation by the Department of Pupil Personnel Services. We also accept direct parent referrals although we strongly encourage parents to work collaboratively with the school staff in submitting a referral. The evaluations performed as a result of the referral address the areas of need defined by those who know the child best: the school staff and the parents. Evaluations may include educational testing, psychological testing, speech and language testing, or other testing based on areas of need.

At the conclusion of the evaluation, parents and school staff will meet together to discuss the testing results and determine whether or not special learning needs exist. If it is determined that they do exist, a discussion will take place around what program modifications or adaptations need to be developed, and what consultative and/or direct services need to be implemented in order to address the child's needs and help that child maximize his/her potential to learn.

Our goal is to offer services that meet students' needs while putting the least restrictions on the students' schools experience. Services may include in classroom and small group pull-out. The objective is to keep a student with his/her peers, participating in a standards-based education to the greatest degree possible.

If you think your child may have a disability that is interfering with his/her/their progress at school, talk to your child's teacher and principal. They will assist you in facilitating a resolution to your concerns, either at the building level or by referring your child to the Instructional Support Team.

The Special Education Program at our schools has been designed so as to comply with G.L. c. 71B and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA-04), every student must be given an adequate and appropriate education with special services and special programs when needed. A full range of programs are available to provide assistance to children who may be experiencing difficulties in school. An Individual Education Plan (I.E.P.), signed by the parent/guardian, is required for service delivery. Specialists are actively involved in diagnosing and prescribing individual student needs, sharing instructional materials/techniques with classroom teachers, and providing consultation to teachers and parents. Support services provided by trained specialists may include academic support, speech/language therapy, counseling services, and occupational or physical therapy.

## **Registration**

Parents will be required to provide the following documents at the time of registration:

- Original Birth Certificate with seal (copy will be made and the original returned)
- Acceptable proof of current residency (copy will be made the original returned).

Prior to entry into school, parents will also be required to submit immunization information.

## **Age Requirements**

Students entering Kindergarten must be 5 years old by September 1<sup>st</sup>. Students entering First Grade must be 6 years old by September 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **Change of Address (within Melrose)**

Should a student's residence change within the City of Melrose and a parent needs to request a change of address; appropriate proof of residency is required. Please contact your child's school for more information.

## Transfer Policies

### Transfers to Another Community

Parents should notify their child's teacher and the Main Office when they become aware that they will be withdrawing their child from school. Under 603 CMR 23.07 (4) (g), consent is no longer required to forward a transferring student's records. Parents will complete a Transfer Slip (obtained at the Main Office) indicating the name and address of the new school. The Main Office will mail the student's records to the receiving school.

### In-District Student Transfer Policy

Please contact your student's principal or the Parent Information Center (781.979.2000) for information regarding the in-district transfer policy.

## City of Melrose Health and Wellness Policy

Over the past several years, the Melrose Public School system has worked to create a safer and healthier environment for our students. The city's Health and Wellness Policy states that we will take measures to address healthy eating habits, as well as food allergies. There has been an increase in students with life-threatening food allergies. **All food coming in for classroom snack must be nut-free.** Students are not allowed to share food with each other. When a celebration includes a "treat" parents/guardians will supply their child with their own individual food. The lunchroom has a designated nut free area. Therefore, there are no food restrictions in the lunchroom.

The Health and Wellness Policy states that the schools must, "Uniformly minimize the amount of cake, cupcakes, etc. being brought into school by encouraging families to bring in nonfood treats while also addressing life-threatening food-allergy concerns." Therefore, we have also eliminated the distribution of food being brought in for birthdays/celebrations.

## Emergency Contact Information

At the beginning of each school year parents are asked to provide emergency information for each of their children. This information is vitally important for the wellbeing of the child. In the event of illness or injury, the parent will be notified and asked to provide transportation home. Two emergency numbers are requested in case of the parent's absence from home. Please keep this information updated in the school office.

Confidential health information is also required for the school nurse. This gives the nurse valuable information such as previous illnesses your child might have had, diseases or conditions, medications taken by the child, emergency contacts, health insurance provider names and primary care physician information. One Confidential Health Form is required for each child each academic year at all grade levels.

## Emergency Health Care

The school nurse is able to administer first aid as it relates to the immediate and temporary care given in case of an accident or sudden illness. There are times when a child becomes ill at school and parents are not able to provide transportation. If a responsible person is at home, the nurse, the principal or secretary may, at their discretion and with parent's permission, arrange for dismissal and/or transportation home. Please contact the school immediately if there is a change in the care provider or if you will be away on vacation. It is imperative that you make arrangements for whoever will assume care should an emergency arise. A sick/injured child cannot be kept at school. Careful planning in advance can prevent a very difficult situation.

Children should not come to school if they appear to be ill. In keeping with health regulations, we request you keep your child home if he/she/they has a severe cold, constant coughing or sneezing, or an undiagnosed rash. Additionally, students should be free from vomiting and/or diarrhea for at least 24 hours before returning to school. If they have been prescribed an antibiotic for a bacterial infection they must have taken it for at least a full 24 hours before returning to school. **Children should be fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen.**

## Medications

- Parents are urged to give medication(s) at home before or after school whenever possible. It is our policy to have all medications administered by the School Nurse. Medications are kept in a locked cabinet in the Health Office with the exception of inhalers and Epipens.
- All medications brought from home to the school should be delivered to the School Nurse by a parent or other designated adult. The medication must be in a pharmacy-labeled container with the child's name, the name of the medication, the dosage, and frequency of administration. Both the parent and the prescribing physician must sign consent forms for administration in school. For short-term medication such as antibiotics, parents must sign consent, but the pharmacy-labeled bottle or package will take the place of the physician's order.
- All non-prescription medicine must be delivered to the nurse by an adult in its original packaging with the child's name labeled on it and with dosage instructions. The parent must sign a consent form for use in school.
- All Health Offices have access to a nebulizer machine. If your child is in need of this service please contact your School Nurse.

- All reasonable accommodations are met in regard to sending medication on field trips. If accommodations cannot be made safely, the parent/guardian will be asked to give the medication or to make other arrangements.
- Acetaminophen is available as needed to all students in grades Pre-K – 12 during regular school hours administered by the School Nurse. Parents may indicate permission for as-needed medications on the Confidential Health Form submitted at the beginning of each school year. No as-needed medications will be given without parental consent. If the child has a fever, the parent will be notified that dismissal from school is necessary.

## Immunizations and Physicals

All children entering Preschool must have an up to date physical and immunization form on file with the School Nurse **before the first day of school**. Preschool state immunization requirements are: 3 doses Hepatitis B, 4 doses DTaP, 3 doses Polio, 1-2 doses MMR, and 1-2 doses Varicella or a physician-documented history of the disease.

All children entering Kindergarten must have a five-year physical and record of immunization on file with the School Nurse **before the first day of school**. If you registered your child for Kindergarten with a five-year physical and updated immunizations, no further action is required. If your child has a five-year physical and/or updated immunizations after Kindergarten registration has taken place, please mail the updated information to the school your child will be attending, to the attention of the School Nurse. Kindergarten state immunization requirements are: 3 doses Hepatitis B, 5 doses DTaP, 4 doses Polio, 2 doses MMR, and 2 doses Varicella, or physician-documented history of the disease.

An up to date physical and immunization form is required from any Grade 1 student who did not attend Kindergarten, or any child transferring from another school system before their first day of school, unless school records are transferred with the child demonstrating an adequate health appraisal in the school year of transfer.

If your child is not up to date with their immunizations at any grade level they will be excluded from school, unless they have a medical or religious exemption, or are progressing through a physician documented catch-up series of vaccines. All state requirements are subject to change according to Mass. Gen. Laws and DPH requirements. Up to date physicals and immunization forms are recommended for grades 3, 7 and 10. Please send all forms to the School Nurse.

Any student who does not have a primary care provider or health insurance should contact their School Nurse immediately for assistance. The Children's Medical Security Plan provides health insurance for all students up to the age of 19 who are Massachusetts residents.

## Communicable Diseases

If a child contracts a communicable disease, that child will be excluded from school. If the illness is found at school the school nurse will assess the student regarding his/her condition

and determine the need for exclusion. The nurse will then contact the parents to remove the child from school. Students will be readmitted to school according to the criteria for the specific illness found in the School Health Manual. A note from the student's primary care provider may be required at the discretion of the school nurse/principal upon re-entry. Examples of excludable illnesses are: Chicken pox, conjunctivitis, impetigo, measles, mumps, meningococcal illness, scabies, strep throat and ringworm.

Any child with a temperature of 100.0 or higher will be excluded from school and should not return until he/she has been **fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication such as Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen**. Students should be **free from vomiting and/or diarrhea for at least 24 hours before returning to school**.

Pediculosis (head lice): Upon discovery of lice or nits, the student's parents will be contacted and next steps will be discussed. Head lice are not a health hazard or a sign of poor hygiene and are not responsible for the spread of any disease. Therefore, students will not be excluded from school. While undergoing treatment for lice, the student must check-in with the nurse upon entering school. The parent should be prepared to have a conversation regarding the treatment used, the number and viability of any remaining nits, and the ability to diagnose a re-infestation. For more information please see: [Fact Sheets on Infectious Diseases](#).

## School Site Council

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 provides for a comprehensive strengthening of local school system leadership for school improvement. The school-based planning responsibilities of school councils form the foundation for a more focused, responsive and accountable system of serving our students. The councils are an advisory vehicle for involving more parents and teachers in school decision-making and for strengthening the bonds between schools and the communities they serve. Site Council representatives are elected and serve for term lengths determined by each school. Elections are held at the start of every school year as needed. Interested staff and parents/guardians should contact their school principal.

### *What is a school council?*

A school council is a representative, school building-based committee composed of the principal, parents, teachers, community members and, at the secondary level, students, which each school is required to establish.

### *What are the main areas of responsibility for school council?*

The law outlines four major areas of responsibility for councils. School councils are to assist principals in:

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

## Field Trips

Field trips are a voluntary extension of classroom activities and serve to enrich the curriculum. All students who do NOT choose to participate in a field trip must still attend school. A student, whose behavior in the days prior to a field trip is deemed unsafe for the field trip, may be required to remain at school, at the discretion of the principal. A supplementary lesson will be provided. The Code of Conduct that is applicable within the school also applies to field trips. Students participating in field trips must submit a signed, "Parent Consent and Release from Liability Agreement Form" for each trip.

Chaperones are vital to the success of a field trip. The student/teacher ratio normally does not exceed 10-1. All chaperones must be registered with The Bridge Volunteer organization which requires a CORI and acknowledgement of the Confidentiality Agreement.

We appreciate it when parents take time from their busy day to assist us with these activities. *Listed below are some guidelines for chaperones.* Classroom teachers may have other requests in addition to the following.

- Review the list of students you have been assigned
- Stay with students you have been assigned for the entire duration of the trip
- Sit with students on the bus (not with other parents)
- Avoid confrontations with students. Ask a teacher for assistance if someone is not listening to you
- Inform the teacher of anything that happened which should not have happened. The teacher will determine what action, if any, should be taken
- Report any serious problems to the teacher and administrator
- Injured students should be taken to the teacher or person in charge of first aid
- Chaperones are not allowed to bring guests on the bus
- Chaperones should take a headcount several times throughout the trip. Teachers are required to take a headcount before the bus departs

### Field Trips - Student Participation and Behavior

- Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with disabilities to allow them to participate in field trips.
- A student may not be allowed to participate in a field trip if he/she is serving a suspension, expulsion, or other form of exclusion from school due to violations of the school district's code of conduct and/or school-based rules at the time of the field trip.
- A parent/guardian meeting will be convened at the discretion of the building principal to develop a course of action to ensure successful participation of the student on the field trip, whose behavior in school is such that overnight trips would prove to be of extreme challenge to the safety and well-being of students and staff.
- Students are subject to the authority of the staff and chaperones at all times during a field trip.
- Student safety is of the utmost concern on any field trip.

- Students participating in a field trip are expected to take part in all planned group activities unless excused by a staff member.
- All students must leave and return with the group on all field trips unless the student is leaving or returning with his/her own parent/guardian, or the student's parent/guardian has signed a written waiver granting permission for the student to leave or return from the field trip by himself/herself.
- Students participating in a field trip are expected to conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to the circumstances of the trip, including but not limited to adhering to general school rules and codes of conduct, as well as any rules that have been established for the trip.
- In the event that a student fails to meet these expectations, the school staff may contact the student's parents. The teacher will have the authority to send the student home, following notification to the student's parent or guardian or emergency contact if the parent/guardian cannot be reached.
- The student's parent/guardian will be responsible for any additional expense incurred as a result of the decision to send a student home earlier than the scheduled return date or time due to the student's unacceptable conduct. Students may also be disciplined in accordance with the school's code of conduct.
- Students and their parents/guardians will be held responsible for any damage done to hotels, rental properties, real property or personal property by the student during a field trip. Parents/guardians must agree to pay for any damage that may be done by their son/daughter and/or aid school officials in collecting money necessary to do so.

## **Instrumental Music Program**

Instrument lessons are offered to students in grades 3-5 through our Fine Arts Department. Lessons are fee based, scheduled once a week and are conducted during the school day. Therefore, please be aware that your child will miss part of his/her typical school day when the lesson is scheduled. The rental of the instrument and music book is an additional cost. Please see the following link for more information: [Elementary Instrumental Lessons](#).

## **Library**

Each school has a parent run library for students and staff. Books should be returned in good condition. Payment for lost books or irreparable damage to books will be the responsibility of the parent.

## **Technology Responsible User Agreement**

*Philosophy:* It is the goal of Melrose Public Schools to facilitate and promote the ethical, responsible, and educational use of classroom technologies. Through access to technology, students have the opportunity to learn about and explore a wide variety of digital resources that connect them to local and global communities. As 21st century learners, students will advocate and practice safe and legal use of information and technology while modeling leadership in a connected world.



## **Privacy and Information Security**

All Melrose students are provided with a personal Google account and its suite of online productivity and educational applications. It is the expectations of Melrose Public Schools that students will use these tools in a positive manner and take a proactive approach to the security of personal information. Students should recognize that information security begins with responsible individual behaviors; including, but not limited to, a secure password, signing out of any and all devices, and exercising caution when viewing personal information. Within reason, freedom of speech and access to information will be honored and all accommodations will be made to ensure the availability of necessary scholarly information and resources.

The Melrose Public Schools Code of Conduct applies to all digital interactions on the school network. As such, students are subject to the behavioral expectations included therein in addition to a prohibition on the online-specific actions outlined below:

- Any attempts to gain access to other student or teacher accounts
- Using another student's account or posing as anyone other than yourself in an online environment
- Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures
- Unauthorized access or use of another's folders, work, or files
- Damaging school-owned devices, systems, or networks
- Intentionally wasting or monopolizing limited network resources

## **Digital Citizenship**

In the 21st century, students will need a constantly evolving set of abilities that rely on a core set of digital literacy skills. Melrose Public Schools students are expected to recognize human, cultural, and societal issues related to use of technology and act within our evolving understanding of each. In addition, students will practice both legal and ethical behavior in a connected environment while adhering to the same behavioral expectations as all traditional school environments.

Students will be expected to:

- Advocate and practice safe, legal, and responsible use of information
- Recognize and respect established legal frameworks regarding age restrictions on various forms of digital and social media
- Demonstrate a willingness and ability to collaborate both in and out of school
- Recognize the expectation for originality and proper attribution that results from unfettered access to the totality of human scholarship. Online cheating is still cheating.

We recognize that students may be authorized, by parents/guardians, to bring to school electronic devices such as cell phones and smart watches. The expectation for students is that these and all types of electronics remain in a student's backpack and are not used during the school day. Any unauthorized, improper, or illegal use of personal devices while in school will be treated as a disciplinary matter.

## **Homework**

### **Rationale and Purpose of Homework**

The purpose of homework is to provide reinforcement and practice skills that should be able to be completed independently. Homework may also serve as a means for families to learn more about students' classroom work and the curriculum.

The most important element of homework in elementary school is reading. The goal of reading homework is to foster a love of reading. While sometimes specific reading assignments may be given, most of the time students are allowed to read whatever material or genre he or she enjoys. The teacher may recommend a certain number of minutes that students in that grade are assigned to read, but, of course, extra reading is encouraged and applauded.

There are several types of homework assignments teachers may assign over the course of a year:

- Practice homework helps students' master skills and reinforces in-class learning. Completing math problems on IXL is an example of this type of homework.
- Preparation assignments prepare students for an upcoming lesson or quiz. Reading a chapter in preparation for discussion, pretests, and surveys are examples of preparation homework.
- Extension homework helps students take what they learn in class and connect it with real life. It requires students to transfer specific skills and concepts to new situations. Journal writing and conducting experiments at home are examples of extension homework.
- Creative homework helps students integrate multiple concepts and promotes the development of critical thinking and problem solving skills. This type of homework often takes the form of open-ended questions and long term projects that allow students a choice.

### **Guidelines**

Students are expected to work towards the goal of homework completion. At times, however, not every student may be able to complete assignments for various reasons. Parents and families should communicate with the teacher when the student finds homework challenging or disruptive to home life. Expectations can and should be modified to meet student and family's individual needs.

Homework does not need to be completed in one sitting. For example, students might complete reading for pleasure before going to bed while having completed math homework right after school.

| Grade                        | Time   | Homework May Consist of  |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| Kindergarten-<br>First Grade | Recommended 20-30 minutes of reading does not have to be consecutive<br>Primary Focus: Reading   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student reads, is read aloud to, or talking about books.</li> </ul>   |
| 2nd-3rd grade                | Recommended 30-45 minutes total; which includes 20-30 minutes of reading<br><br>Primary Focus: Reading and Practice Homework   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20-30 minutes of consecutive reading where the student reads independently or with someone else. However, it should meet the needs of the student and families</li> <li>• Fifteen minutes of IXL or other math practice</li> <li>• Some other extensions and creative projects may be assigned.</li> </ul>  |
| 4th-5th Grade                | Recommended 40-50 minutes a night total; (not to exceed 60 minutes) which includes 20-30 minutes of reading<br><br>Primary Focus: Reading, Independent Practice, Extension, Creative | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20-30 minutes of consecutive reading where the student reads independently or with someone else. However, it should meet the needs of the student and families</li> <li>• Fifteen minutes of IXL or other math practice</li> <li>• Long term projects as assigned</li> <li>• Students may be asked to study materials to support upcoming class assessments.</li> </ul> |

## Testing and Assessment

Evaluation of students through standardized achievement tests or required state assessments are conducted periodically. Parents will be notified of the dates, results, and educational impact. Throughout the school year, students will also participate in benchmark tests to assess their acquisition of reading and math skills. Data from these assessments is used to inform classroom instruction and provide necessary intervention and differentiation. Teachers will share with parents their individual student scores. District and school wide aggregate data for state assessments is available on each school's website under "Data Dashboard."

## Promotion and Retention Policy

Nothing in the following procedures for promotion or grade placement should be construed to restrict the appropriate placement of children for educational, emotional, or social adjustment when in the judgment of the principal, after consultation with the teacher, a higher or lower grade placement would be to an individual child's advantage. Report cards should reflect accurately the achievement levels in the subject areas, and any special grade placements or transfers of children will be so noted on report cards and permanent record cards and signed by the principal.

Decisions on promotion shall be made by the teacher for students in grades 1-5. If a student is retained, notification will be made to parents by the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday in June.

When making decisions regarding promotion and retention, all phases of a child's development will be considered. Major criteria taken into consideration are:

1. Academic achievement based on sufficient data demonstrating lack of attainment of grade level material and overall poor performance in reading and/or math
2. Chronological age
3. Cognitive maturity
4. Social maturity
5. Emotional maturity
6. Physical development.

Progress of students with Individual Education Plans (IEP) will be measured in accordance with the student's Educational Plan as it pertains to the above criteria and the specific goals and objectives of the plan, which are determined by the special education team.

## **Classroom Placements**

Classroom placement is determined by the current team of grade level teachers and other staff members such as the principal and special education personnel. Many factors are taken into account when creating class lists. A considerable effort is made to balance gender, interpersonal dynamics and most importantly, learning profiles of students and their needs.

The ASPEN portal will be open in late August for families to access their child's assigned classroom teacher.

## **Code of Conduct**

The following code of conduct has been prepared to help all stakeholders understand the disciplinary philosophy, policies, and practices of the Melrose Public Schools. A collective and joint approach to supporting all students academically and behaviorally is essential to any successful school culture. To that end, each elementary school is in varying stages of implementing a school-wide approach that builds a proactive framework for creating and sustaining a safe and effective elementary school environment. In our schools an emphasis is

placed on prevention of problem behavior and the development of prosocial skills. Ultimately, the goal is to increase the capacity of our schools to educate and support all students.

### **Conduct Expectations**

It is expected that all adults and children who are on school property: the playground, bathrooms, hallways, gymnasium, all purpose room/cafeteria, classrooms, abutting field and adjacent sidewalks at any time (during operating school hours, before/after school, at a school sponsored event) conduct themselves in a polite, respectful manner. Under no circumstances will physical altercations, the use of profanity or obscene gestures, acts of sexual behavior, bullying, harassment or vandalism (act that defaces playground structure, school building or damages property) be tolerated. Individuals found violating any of the above rules will be held accountable for their actions (community service appropriate to the offense, suspension and/or expulsion) and when necessary punished to the fullest extent of the law. These rules are intended to ensure a safe, respectful relationship among all members of our community.

### **Weapons**

Possession or use of dangerous weapons, firearms, knives, razor blades, clubs, explosives, mace, or possession of a dangerous object of no reasonable use to the student at school such as a mock gun, brass knuckles, or a sharpened stick on a person/persons at school or school-sponsored events is prohibited. In addition, school department personnel shall report in writing to their immediate supervisor an incident involving a student's possession or use of a dangerous weapon on school premises at any time. Supervisors who receive such a weapon report shall file it with the Superintendent, who shall file copies of said weapon report with the local chief of police, the department of children and families, the District's office of student services, and the School Committee. M.G.L. c.71, §37L.

### **Personal Property**

Children are expected to respect the property of others. Theft or damage to school or an individual's property may result in required restitution.

### **Personal Injury**

A student shall not intentionally do bodily injury to any person or threaten any person with or without any object that can reasonably be considered a weapon:

- A. On the school grounds, during and immediately before or immediately after school hours.
- B. On the school grounds at any other time when the school is being used by a school group.
- C. Off the school grounds at any school activity, function, or event.
- D. On the way to and from school.

### **Dress Code**

In accordance with Massachusetts State Law, there is an expectation that students dress in keeping with reasonable standards of safety, health, and cleanliness so as not to detract from the educational process. We expect students to dress in a manner that is appropriate for school, a place of work, and study.

All students should keep the following dress code guidelines in mind:

- Torn, ragged or dirty pants and/or shirts are inappropriate
- Bare midriffs are inappropriate
- Shirts, buttons, etc. which are obscene and/or suggestive, pornographic, racist, or sexist that cause substantial disorder or disruption within the school, are inappropriate and banned
- Hats will not be worn indoors
- *Flip flops may not be worn in school.*

If a student is wearing inappropriate clothing in school, parents will be notified of the requirement to bring an appropriate change of clothes to school.

### **Substance Abuse**

Our schools have been designated drug and tobacco free zones according to the law. Any infraction can carry the maximum legal consequence at the discretion of the principal. Students will not possess, use, transmit or be under the influence of any drug (with the exception of those medications administered under doctor's orders by the school nurse), alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind. All employees, visitors, and students are not permitted to smoke, use, or possess tobacco products on school property, in the school building, on school buses, or at school sponsored events. Any student who violates this expectation in regard to tobacco a letter will be sent to the parent/guardian outlining the violation and future plan of action to address the use of tobacco on school property.

### **Melrose Elementary Behavior Expectations**

Melrose Public School's core values are Respect, Responsibility, and Safety. The way in which we teach these core values is by embedding elements of "Social Emotional Learning" (SEL) into our schools. SEL involves the processes through which students and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. Through each school's specific positive behavior intervention system (PBIS), we explicitly teach children what core SEL values and behaviors look like in every setting in our schools (classrooms, hallways, playground, lunch, etc). The staff is an integral role in reinforcing behavior and is invested in supporting all students.

The ultimate decision about whether a specific action breaks our school code rests with the staff member, and ultimately with the Principal. Consequences will be applied based on the frequency and severity of the action(s) at the discretion of the Principal or the Principal's designee. Following is a general outline of the behaviors that may result in disciplinary consequences.

Minor behaviors may often be addressed by the classroom teacher or school personnel, until such behaviors become major, become a safety issue, or interfere with the learning of one's

self or of others. When such behaviors create these conditions, school administrators rely on a spiral of logical consequences to help end unwanted or unsafe behaviors.

### **Type of Problem: Minor**

Examples: Throwing another's ball out of a game, problem with taking turns or sharing.

Component of Consequences:

- Investigation; listening to involved parties
- Problem solving discussion with staff member and/or administrator
- Rule associated with behavior was identified and options for better choice(s) were discussed
- Apology and solution agreed upon.

*\*\*\*Parents/Guardians not usually contacted*

### **Type of Problem: Major**

Examples: Repeated minor problems, major fight, theft, physical assault of adult, defiance of adult direction, significant dangerous behavior (attempting to leave school, throwing or knocking over furniture), inappropriate touching, repeated lying, and bullying.

Component of Consequences:

- Investigation; listening to involved parties
- Problem solving discussion with staff member and/or administrator
- Rule associated with behavior was identified and options for better choice(s) were discussed
- Parents/Guardians contacted
- Apology and solution agreed upon
- Where appropriate, educators will use restorative practices in lieu of or in addition to consequences listed below. Restorative practices may include restorative chats, restorative circles, apologies, community service, restitution, and educational programming.

| <b>Physical and Emotional Safety Descriptors</b> |                 |   |
|--|-----------------|---|
| <b>Behavior</b>                                  | <b>Severity</b> | <b>Descriptor</b>   |
| <b>Physical Contact</b>                          | <b>MINOR</b>    | Student engages in non-serious, but inappropriate physical contact. Student touches another student or gets in another student's space without permission and in such a manner that makes the other student uncomfortable.  |
|  | <b>MAJOR</b>    | Student engages in actions involving serious physical contact where injury may occur, such as hitting, punching, hitting with an object, kicking, hair pulling. Student touches another person's private areas or displays own private areas.                             |
| <b>Lying/ Cheating</b>                           | <b>MINOR</b>    | Always a MAJOR offense.   |
|  | <b>MAJOR</b>    | Student delivers message that is untrue and/or deliberately violates rules.   |
| <b>Classroom Disruptions</b>                     | <b>MINOR</b>    | Student engages in low-intensity, but inappropriate, disruption   |
|  | <b>MAJOR</b>    | Student engages in sustained or high intensity disruption. Behavior causing an interruption in a class activity. Disruption includes sustained loud talk, yelling, or screaming; noise with materials; horseplay or roughhousing; and/or sustained out-of- seat behavior. |
| <b>Inappropriate Language</b>                    | <b>MINOR</b>    | Student delivers low-intensity verbal messages/gestures that include swearing, name calling, or use of words in an inappropriate way.   |
|  | <b>MAJOR</b>    | Student delivers abusive, profane verbal messages/gestures that include swearing, name calling, or use of words in an inappropriate way and directed at others.   |
| <b>Vandalism/ Property Misuse</b>                | <b>MINOR</b>    | Student engages in low-intensity misuse of property.  |
|  | <b>MAJOR</b>    | Student engages in an activity that results in damage, disfigurement, or destruction of property.   |
| <b>Defiance, Disrespect, Non-Compliance</b>      | <b>MINOR</b>    | Student engages in brief or low-intensity failure to respond to adult requests (for verbal disrespect, see Inappropriate language).   |



|                             |              |  |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--|
|                             | <b>MAJOR</b> | Student engages in sustained (or high-intensity) failure to respond to adult requests (for verbal disrespect, see Inappropriate Language).                               |
| <b>Technology Violation</b> | <b>MINOR</b> | Student engages in non-serious, but inappropriate use of cell phone, computer, camera, or other technology device.   |
|                             | <b>MAJOR</b> | Student engages in serious and inappropriate use of cell phone, computer, or other technology equipment.   |
| <b>Theft</b>                | <b>MINOR</b> | Always a MAJOR offense.  |
|                             | <b>MAJOR</b> | Student is in possession of, having passed on, or being responsible for removing someone else's property or has signed a person's name without that person's permission. |

For specific information regarding **Bullying/Harassment** please see:

[\*\*Bullying Prevention and Intervention.\*\*](#)

## **Disciplinary Code of Action**

**Level 1** - Unacceptable behavior in violation of school policy. Behavior is dealt with by staff members.

**Level 2** - Continued behavior in violation of school policy previously dealt with by staff members with little effect. Staff refers student to the building administrator. Parents will be notified and appropriate interventions will be put in place.

**Level 3** - Behavior requires immediate administrative referral. Parents will be notified and appropriate interventions will be put in place.

**Level 4** - Severity of behavior requires immediate consideration for suspension (one day or greater depending on the severity of the behavior) or expulsion based upon the regulations established by the School Committee.

*The severity of the infraction will determine the appropriate level of intervention.*

Offenses that may trigger review for possible suspension/expulsion from the school or school district include (Level 4):

- Damage to school/private property; theft of school/private property or attempt thereof
- Use of profanity, abusive language, obscene gestures, or other speech which creates any disruption or disorder within the school
- Violation of other's civil rights
- Bullying, harassment, or retaliation that creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the victim's rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operations of the school
- Severe physical aggression, acts, threats, or assault
- Acts of a violent nature

- Aggressive behavior of a sexual nature
- Leaving or attempting to leave school grounds without permission
- Setting off smoke detectors or fire alarms without just cause
- Use of tobacco in any form
- Use, possession, or being under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind. (Any prescription drug should be turned over to the school administrator or school nurse in accordance with school and public health policy.)
- Possession or transmission of any firearm, knife, explosive, incendiary device or other dangerous object appropriate to these categories
- Assault of a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide, volunteer, visitor, or other school staff on school premises or at school sponsored/related events, including athletic games.

The suspension of a student from school is a severe disciplinary measure. It is reserved for instances of repeated offenses and/or blatant disregard for school rules in the form of behavior that has the potential to cause serious injury to members of the school community or major disruption of the educational process at the school. Therefore, when reasonable efforts to provide positive remedies are ineffective, suspension remains the right of the school and will be instituted in accordance with appropriate due process. Please see the following section regarding a student's suspension from school as outlined by: Chapter 222 of the Acts of 2012 and the Disciplinary Due Process.

## **Chapter 222**

DISCIPLINARY DUE PROCESS of the Acts of 2012; 603 CMR 53.00

Nothing in 603 CMR 53.00 shall prevent a school administrator from conducting an investigation, including student interviews, of a school-related disciplinary incident.

### **1) Short Term Disciplinary Sanctions:**

Prior to the imposition of any disciplinary sanction that may result in a student's suspension from school for ten (10) consecutive school days or less, (other than those suspensions under M.G.L. c. §§ 37H and 37H 1/2) the student will be given oral notice of the offense with which he/she is charged and an opportunity to respond. In the event the principal determines that the student will be suspended from school, the student and parent/guardian must first receive notification by telephone (or in person) and in writing of the charges; the reasons for the suspension or exclusion; the opportunity to meet with the principal or designee to discuss the charges; and the reasons for the suspension or exclusion taking effect. The student will have the opportunity to make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make continued academic progress.

### **2) Long Term Disciplinary Sanctions:**

Prior to the imposition of any disciplinary sanction that might result in the student's suspension for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or expulsion, the

parent(s)/guardian(s) will be given written notice of a hearing at which they may be represented by an attorney at their expense and may examine and present witnesses and documentary evidence.

Following this hearing, the decision maker (principal) will issue a written decision. The written decision shall inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) and student of the student's right to receive education services, such as the opportunity to earn credits, make up assignments, tests, papers and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of his or her removal from the classroom or school. This notice shall be provided in English and the primary language spoken in the student's home if other than English, and the notice shall include the school's Education Service Plan, which provides a list of the specific education services that are available during the student's removal from school and contact information for school personnel who will be able to provide information about accessing such services.

The parent(s)/guardian(s) will have the right to appeal any decision imposing a long-term exclusion from school. Where the student is excluded in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71 §37H, the student shall have ten (10) days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the superintendent of schools. For exclusions imposed pursuant to M.G.L. c.71 §37H1/2 and M.G.L. c.71, 37H 3/4, the student shall have five (5) days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the superintendent. For exclusions imposed by the School Committee in accordance with M.G.L. c.76 §17, the student shall have the right to file a written request for reconsideration by the committee within ten (10) days of the effective date of the exclusion. Pending the outcome of any such appeal, the disciplinary sanction imposed shall remain in effect. M.G.L. c. 76 §17, M.G.L. c. 71 §37H, M.G.L. c. 71 §37H1/2. M.G.L. c.71, §37H 3/4.

### **3) Students with Disabilities:**

Students who have been identified as students with disabilities in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or who the school has reason to believe might be eligible for special education services are entitled to additional procedural protections when a disciplinary exclusion is considered. Prior to the imposition of any disciplinary sanction that would result in a change in placement; the student's Team will meet to determine whether the student's conduct was a manifestation of the student's disability. If the Team determines that the conduct was a manifestation of the student's disability they shall review any existing behavior plan or, if no such behavior plan exists, conduct a functional behavioral assessment. In many cases, a student with a disability will be entitled to services identified by the student's Team as necessary to provide the student with a free appropriate public education during periods of disciplinary exclusion exceeding ten (10) school days in a given year. For additional information regarding the rights of students with disabilities in the context of school discipline please contact the Melrose Public Schools Assistant Superintendent for PPS or the building principal.

#### **4) Expedited Evaluations:**

- A. If prior to the disciplinary action, the district has knowledge that the student may be a student with a disability, then all protections will be available to the student until and unless the student is subsequently determined not to be eligible.
- B. If the district has no reason to consider the student disabled, and the parent requests an evaluation subsequent to the disciplinary action, the district must have procedures consistent with federal requirements to conduct an expedited evaluation to determine eligibility.
- C. If the student is found eligible, then he/she receives all procedural protections subsequent to the finding of eligibility.

### **Record Regulations**

The State Board of Education Regulations apply to all information kept by a School Committee on a student in a manner such that he or she may be individually identified. The regulations divide the record into sections: the transcript and the temporary record. Please note: The general provisions of parent/student rights (603 CMR 23.00) are now available in brochure form and can be obtained from the building principal or at the office of Pupil Personnel Services. Listed below are six items that come under the broader category of Student Record Regulations.

#### **Transcript**

The transcript includes only the maximum information necessary to reflect the student's educational progress. This information includes the name, address, course, titles, grades, credits and grade level completed. The transcript is kept by the school system for at least sixty years after the student leaves the system.

#### **Temporary Record**

The temporary record contains the majority of the information maintained by the school about the student. This may include such things as: standardized test results, class rank, school sponsored extracurricular activities, and evaluations and comments by teachers, counselors, and other persons as well as other similar information. The student may take the temporary record at the end of the senior year or it is destroyed within five years after the student leaves the system.

#### **Inspection of Records**

A parent or a student who has entered the ninth grade or is at least 14 years old has the right to inspect all portions of the student record upon request. The record must be made available to the parent or student no later than two days after the request unless the parent or student consents to a delay. Parents and students have the right to receive copies of any part of the record, although a reasonable fee may be charged for the cost of duplicating the materials. Finally, the parent and student may request to have parts of the record interpreted by a qualified professional of the school or may invite anyone else of their choosing to inspect or interpret the record with them.

## **Confidentiality of Records & Access to Student Records by Third Parties**

Ordinarily, student record information may not be disclosed to third parties without the written permission of the parent or eligible student. State and Federal law, however, provide that student records may be released without such consent in certain circumstances, including the following:

- To authorized school personnel who have a legitimate need for such information in the performance of their duties (for example, administrators, teachers, counselors, nurses, and clerical staff, to the extent necessary, to enable them to do their jobs)
- To a person or company to whom the school district has outsourced services or functions for which it otherwise would use its own employees (for example, an auditor, attorney, medical consultant or therapist)
- Upon request, to officials in the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families, the Department of Youth Services, judicial officials and probation officers under the provisions of M.G.L. c. 119, Sections 51B, 57, 69 and 69A respectively
- Upon receipt of a court order or lawfully issued subpoena
- To appropriate parties when the release of such information is necessary to protect the health or safety of a person (for example, the local police department and local health officials).

## **Amendment of Records**

The parent and student have the right to add relevant comments, information, or other written materials to the student record. In addition, the parent and student have the right to request that information in the record be amended or deleted. The parent and student have the right to a conference with the school principal to make their objections known. Within a week after the conference, the principal must render a decision in writing. If the parent and student are not satisfied with the decision, the regulations contain provisions through which the decision may be appealed to higher authorities in the school system.

## **Destruction of Records**

The regulations require that certain parts of the student record, such as the temporary record, be destroyed a certain period of time after the student leaves the 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 any such information may be destroyed, the parent and student must be notified and have an opportunity to receive a copy of any of the information before its destruction.

## **Public Record Law**

As a result of the Public Records Law, professional information relating to public employees and members of licensed professions, including public school teachers and administrators, is a public record under the state public records law G.L. c.4, s.7. Under this law, any person, whether or not s/he has a child in school, is entitled to ask for and receive the following professional information in regard to staff members: name, certification/licensure status, and degrees earned, including field of study and the institution that awarded the degree/s. Parents must put their request in writing to the building principal. Principals will respond in writing

within 10 business days. The public records law specifically exempts from disclosure employees' personnel and medical files and any other individual data the disclosure of which may constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

### **Health Records**

Records of a school-based health clinic are subject to medical, not student, record regulations. Health records are confidential and must be issued separately from school nurse to school nurse when a student transfers. Special protection exists for certain health information (AIDS, HIV, etc.). A health care provider cannot disclose any information with respect to the same without specific, informed, written consent. Physician's records are confidential and may not be released to any third party without written consent.

### **Rights of Families Regarding Student Records**

To facilitate the educational process and to provide students with appropriate instructional and related services, the Melrose Public Schools collects and maintains certain information regarding students and their families, including information of a confidential nature. The Massachusetts Student Records regulations and the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) provide that parents (including legal guardians), eligible students, and school officials are entitled to have access to such information, but protect such private information from disclosure to most third parties without the prior consent of a parent or eligible student. Relevant provisions of the laws and regulations are summarized below. Questions concerning student records that are not addressed in this Handbook should be directed to the Principal.

### **Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan**

Bullying is defined by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O. It can be direct or indirect and can have serious emotional and/or physical effects on its victims. Bullying is a continuum of behavior by one or more students or by a member of the school staff that involves the attempt to gain power and dominance over another. Typically, bullying is repeated over time. It may involve physical aggression such as fighting, shoving, kicking, and other such acts. It may also involve verbal and/or emotional aggression such as name-calling or more indirect acts such as spreading rumors, deliberate social isolation, and/or other such acts.

Aggressive behavior will not be tolerated at Melrose Public Schools. In order to prevent bullying or aggressive behavior in its earliest stages, there will be consequences for observable acts of aggressive behavior regardless of intent. Besides having the potential to cause harm, aggressive behavior is inappropriate in school.

Melrose Public Schools has a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan as required by law that prohibits bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. Provisions of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan mandate that all school employees are required to report immediately any instance of bullying or retaliation that they witness or become aware of to the principal or

assistant principal who shall promptly conduct an investigation. If the principal(s) determines bullying has occurred: 1) The Melrose Police Department and/or School Resource Officer will be notified if the principal believes criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator. 2) The principal(s) will take appropriate disciplinary action. 3) The principal(s) will notify parents or guardians of the victim. 4) The principal(s) will notify parents or guardians of the perpetrator and provide them with the action taken to prevent further acts of bullying. Parents or guardians who wish to file a claim/concern or seek assistance outside of the district may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Office of Public School Monitoring. That information can be found at: [Office of Public School Monitoring](#). Individuals may call 781-338-3700.

Bullying is prohibited on school grounds, property adjacent to school grounds, at school-sponsored events or school-related events. Bullying that does not take place on school grounds is also prohibited when such bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the victim's rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operations of the school. Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, and/or witnesses or has reliable information is also prohibited.

Parents (both the victim's parents and the aggressor's parents) will be notified. Consequences for the infraction of aggressive behavior and/or bullying are listed in the "MPS Behavior Expectations Rubric". The Melrose Public School's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan can be found on the District's website at: [Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan](#).

## **Physical Restraint**

In rare cases, schools may need to physically restrain children to protect a student and/or member of the school community from imminent, serious, physical harm - 603 CMR 46.00. Physical restraint should be used only in emergency situations with extreme caution after other less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate. The principal and parent(s) or guardian(s) will receive notification if physical restraint has occurred. Further, in cases where a student threatens the safety of self or others, the school may require a risk assessment by a qualified professional before allowing the student to continue in school.

## **Statement of Non-Discrimination**

The faculty and staff of Melrose Public Schools are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment in which high expectations are held for all. All members of our community should be able to feel safe and to expect that their person, property and opinions will be respected. As such, all members of our school community are expected to contribute to an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. This handbook is intended to explain to students their individual rights and responsibilities to themselves and their community. School should be a setting where respect for rules and common decency are accepted by all as the necessary structure for both learning and community, and where those in authority strive to strike a balance between individual rights and the general good.

## **Student Rights:**

### **I. Right To An Equal Education**

#### **A. Non-Discrimination Policy:**

State and federal laws prohibit discrimination in education (see MA G.L. c. 622 and c. 282). In the Melrose Public Schools, we do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, sex, gender identity, homelessness, religion, national origin, disability or sexual orientation with regard to admission, access to programs or activities, or employment opportunities.

In the Melrose Public Schools:

- No individual shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefit of, or subjected to discrimination, or subjected to harassment in any program or activity of the school because of such student's race, color, age, sex, gender identity, homelessness, religion, national origin, disability or sexual orientation (i.e., protected status)
- English language learners have the right to counseling and course information in a language they understand.
- Families of English language learners have a right to school information in a language and/or way they understand.
- School staff will arrange for interpreters for conferences or meetings related to the education of their child.

Melrose Public Schools has identified Amy Lindquist, Assistant City Solicitor for School and Labor, as the district's Civil Rights Officer. She may be reached at: 781-462-3235.

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973;
- Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990;
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;
- Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972;
- Age Act.

### **II. Discrimination and Harassment Grievance Procedures**

The Melrose Public Schools is committed to maintaining school environments free of discrimination and harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age or disability. Harassment or discrimination by administrators, teachers, certified and support personnel, students, vendors and other individuals at school or at school-sponsored events is unlawful and is strictly prohibited.

#### **Definitions**

For the purposes of this procedure:

- A. "Discrimination" means discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, age, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or religion by which an individual is excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity of the school district.



B. “Harassment” means unwelcome conduct on the basis of race, age, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or religion that is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive to create a hostile environment for the individual at school. Harassment may include insults, name-calling, off color jokes, threats, comments, innuendoes, notes, display of pictures or symbols, gestures, or other conduct which rises to the level of a hostile environment.

C. “Sexual Harassment” means unwelcome, sexually offensive or gender-based conduct which is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive to create a hostile environment for the individual at school. Additionally, under M.G.L. c. 151C, § 1, the term “sexual harassment” may also include, but is not limited to, sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:— (i) submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the provision of the benefits, privileges or placement services or as a basis for the evaluation of academic achievement; or (ii) such advances, requests or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s education by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive educational environment.

When determining whether an environment is hostile as referenced in paragraphs B and C, the school district examines the context, nature, frequency, and location of the incidents, as well as the identity, number and relationships of the persons involved. The school district must consider whether the alleged harassment was sufficient to have created such an environment for a reasonable person of the same age, gender, and experience as the alleged victim, and under similar circumstances.

### **Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation Prohibited**

Harassment and discrimination in any form or for any reason is prohibited. This includes harassment or discrimination by administrators, certified and support personnel, students, vendors and other individuals in school or at school related events. Retaliation against any individual who has brought harassment or discrimination to the attention of school officials or who has cooperated in an investigation of a complaint under this procedure is unlawful and will not be tolerated by the Melrose Public Schools.

Persons who engage in harassment, discrimination or retaliation may be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to reprimand, suspension, termination/expulsion or other sanctions as determined by the school district administration, subject to applicable procedural requirements.

For the purpose of this Procedure, the term “Principal” shall mean “Principal or designee.”

### **How to make a complaint**

The individual who experienced alleged discrimination or harassment will be referred to as the “alleged victim.” The individual who is alleged to have engaged in harassment or discrimination will be referred to as the “alleged offender.” When the alleged victim and the alleged offender

are discussed collectively, they will be referred to as “the parties” and may be referred to as a “party.” There may be instances where another person, who has not experienced but is aware of the occurrence of prohibited conduct, may bring a complaint under this Procedure, and that person is referred to as the “reporter.” In those limited circumstances, the District will determine which of the protections provided to the alleged victim under the Procedure are also applicable to the reporter.

Any student or employee who believes that he/she has been discriminated against or harassed should report their concern promptly to the Principal. Students may also report incidents of harassing conduct to a teacher, administrator or other District official. Any complaint received by a school personnel should be promptly reported to the Principal or Civil Rights Coordinator. If the Principal receives the report, he or she will notify the Civil Rights Coordinator of the Complaint. Students or employees who are unsure whether discrimination or harassment has occurred are encouraged to discuss the situation with the Principal.

- A. Any District employee who observes discrimination or harassment must report the incident to the Principal or Civil Rights Coordinator, identified below. A failure to do so may result in remedial or corrective action. Any District employee who observes a discrimination or harassment against a student should intervene to stop the harassment. Upon receipt of a report of discrimination or harassment, the Principal shall promptly inform the relevant Civil Rights Coordinator of the report. If the report involves an accusation against the Principal or Civil Rights Coordinator, the employee shall report the incident to the Superintendent or designee.
- B. Anonymous Reports: Alleged victims and reporters should be aware that although the District will often be able to maintain confidentiality of reporting persons, the District may sometimes be required to take actions to protect the safety of the school community that may result in the identity of the reporting person being disclosed (to the police, for example). When reporters or alleged victims seek to remain anonymous or have their identities kept confidential, they will be informed that honoring such a request may limit the ability of the District to respond fully to any reported event, including discipline against an alleged offender, that the retaliation against individuals who report discrimination or harassment is prohibited.
- C. Informal Reports: Individuals may wish to file a formal complaint of discrimination or harassment, or to report informally (i.e., without initiating a formal complaint). Such informal reports may be made to the Principal or Civil Rights Coordinator. The District shall inform anyone making an informal report that he or she may initiate a formal complaint at any time, regardless of what steps are being or have been taken in response to an informal report.
- D. Informal Process: If the District concludes that it is possible to resolve a matter, whether after formal complaint or an informal report, in a prompt, fair and adequate manner through an informal process involving and with the consent of the alleged victim and alleged offender, the District may seek to do so. The informal process is voluntary and the alleged victim and/or alleged offender may terminate or decline any informal

process at any time, without penalty. No person reporting that he or she has been sexually assaulted will be asked to work out the problem directly with the individual alleged to be harassing him or her.

- E. Formal Process: A formal complaint shall state (if known to the reporter or alleged victim) the name(s) of the persons involved and witnesses to the conduct, describe the conduct, identify, to the extent possible, the dates and locations of the conduct. The complaint shall be signed and dated by the reporter and/or alleged victim. Complaints will be investigated promptly and equitably by the Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal. Investigations may be initiated whenever warranted, in the absence of a formal complaint, or after a formal complaint has been withdrawn. Where an alleged victim specifically requests that a complaint not be investigated, an investigation may be initiated if the Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal determines that the facts warrant an investigation. The Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal will take into account concerns articulated by the parties, the best interests of the community, fairness to all concerned, and the District's legal obligations under applicable state and federal laws.
- F. Initial Assessments: The Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal will make an initial assessment following a complaint. Based on that assessment, the Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal may act as follows: (a) if the conduct, even if substantiated, would not constitute harassment or discrimination, the Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal may dismiss the complaint; (b) if the alleged conduct (or complaint) is could not, even if true, constitute discrimination or harassment, but is within the scope of another procedure, the Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal may refer the matter to the appropriate personnel; (c) if the Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal concludes that it is possible to resolve the complaint in a prompt, fair and adequate manner through an informal process involving and with the consent of both parties, the Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal may seek to do so in accordance with Section D, above; or (d) if the alleged conduct, if substantiated, would constitute discrimination or harassment, the Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal will initiate an investigation. The Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal may also identify and initiate any interim measures (see Section G, below).
- G. Interim Measures: The District will provide prompt and reasonable interim measures, if appropriate, to support and protect the safety of the parties, the educational environment, and the District and/or school community; to deter retaliation; and to preserve the integrity of the investigation and resolution process. Upon receipt of a complaint, the Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal will identify whether reasonable interim measures are appropriate. Interim measures may be provided regardless of whether a formal complaint is filed. Interim measures may include: (1) access to counseling services; (2) changes to class schedules; (3) no contact orders (administrative remedy designed to curtail or bar contact or communications among individuals); and (4) any measures consistent with law and the District's educational mission that can be used to achieve the goals of this Procedure. Interim measures should be designed in a fair manner to meet the goal stated in this section and so as to minimize the impact on all affected, including the alleged victim and alleged offender. Requests for interim

measures should be directed to the Principal or Civil Rights Coordinator. As stated above, the Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal will identify whether reasonable interim measures are appropriate regardless of whether or not such measures are requested. Violations of the restrictions imposed by interim measures could be considered a violation of school rules and may be considered in determining whether discrimination or harassment has occurred.

- H. Leniency on Other Procedure or Rule Violations: To encourage reports of discrimination or harassment, the District may at any point in an investigation offer leniency with respect to violations of other District or school policies that may come to light as a result of such reports, depending on the circumstances.
- I. Timeframes: The District will seek to complete any investigation within twenty (20) school days after receipt of a complaint. The investigator may impose reasonable timeframes on all parties to allow the timely completion of the investigation. The investigator may extend the investigation period beyond the time period identified above because of extenuating circumstances, including but not limited to availability and cooperation of witnesses, complexity of the investigation, school vacation periods, and the involvement of law enforcement and other outside agency investigations. If a complaint or report of discrimination or harassment is received after June 1 of a given school year, the investigator will attempt to complete the investigation by the end of the school year. In the event that the investigation extends beyond the last day of school, the District will make reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within the above-referenced time frame, but may extend the investigation period to account for the availability of witnesses during the summer vacation period. If the investigator extends the investigation, he or she will notify the alleged victim of the extension. Although cooperation with law enforcement may require temporary suspensions of an investigation, the District will promptly resume its investigation upon being advised that law enforcement's evidence gathering is completed. If appropriate, the District will continue to provide appropriate interim measures throughout the investigation, including during any suspension or extension of the investigation.
- J. Under the formal resolution procedure, the complaint will be investigated by the Principal, Civil Rights Coordinator or other individual designated by the Principal or Civil Rights Coordinator. Any formal complaint about an employee who holds a supervisory position shall be investigated by a person who is not subject to that supervisor's authority. During the formal resolution procedure:
  - 1. The alleged victim shall be provided with an opportunity to be heard and have the opportunity to identify witnesses and other relevant evidence to the investigator.
  - 2. The alleged offender will be provided with an opportunity to be heard as part of the investigation including the opportunity to provide relevant information and identify witnesses for the investigator's consideration.
  - 3. The privacy rights of the parties shall be maintained in accordance with applicable state and federal laws.

4. The investigator will keep a written record of the investigation process.
  5. The investigation will be completed within twenty (20) school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.
  6. The notification of the outcome of the investigation, including a description of the remedies taken, will be provided to the parties within twenty-five (25) school days of the receipt of the complaint
  7. Nothing in this Procedure will preclude the investigator, in his or her discretion, from completing the investigation sooner than the time period described above.
- K. Standard of Proof: The investigation shall made factual findings based on a preponderance of the evidence standard.
- L. If the investigator determines that discrimination or harassment has occurred, the school district administration shall take steps to eliminate the discriminatory or harassing environment, which shall include but is not limited to:
1. Identifying what steps are necessary to prevent recurrence of any discriminatory behavior, including but not limited to harassment, and to correct its discriminatory effects if appropriate; and
  2. Informing the alleged victim and alleged offender of the results of the investigation (in accordance with applicable state and federal privacy laws) in accordance with the above timelines.

The school district administration may also refer the offender for disciplinary procedures to be conducted in accordance with federal and state law. Nothing in the Procedure shall be interpreted as limiting or prohibiting the District's ability to take appropriate disciplinary action against the offender in accordance with the applicable code(s) of conduct or employment contracts or policies, where appropriate, prior to completion of the investigation, in accordance with the due process rights of employees and students, as applicable.

- M. Appeal: If the alleged victim or the accused is dissatisfied with the results of the investigation, an appeal may be made to the Superintendent or designee within seven (7) calendars days after receiving notice of the outcome of the investigation, except for the accused in cases in which the accused is subject to long-term suspension as a result of a finding of discrimination or harassment. In such an instance, the appeal rights of the accused will be provided in a manner consistent with the relevant disciplinary due process requirements applicable to the circumstances (e.g., M.G.L. c. 71, 37H, 37H ½ or 37H ¾). Appeals must be made in writing to the Superintendent, Melrose Public Schools, 360 Lynn Fells Parkway, Melrose, Massachusetts 02176. The Superintendent will decide the appeal within thirty (30) calendar days of the date of receipt of the written appeal.
- N. Identification of Civil Rights Coordinator:  
 Amy Lindquist  
 Assistant City Solicitor for School and Labor  
 360 Lynn Fells Parkway

Legal Ref: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; the Age Act; M.G.L. c. 151B and c. 151C; and M.G.L. c. 76, § 5; SC Policy JICFB, Bullying Prevention; SC Policy AC, Nondiscrimination.

Harassment may constitute child abuse under Massachusetts law (G.L. c.119, §51A) and/or a violation of criminal law. Melrose Public Schools will comply with Massachusetts law in reporting suspected cases of child abuse, including those involving sexual harassment, to the Department of Children and Families and/or the Department of Children and Families and/or the Melrose Police.

## **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act**

Section 504 is an act, which prohibits discrimination against persons with a handicap in any program receiving federal financial assistance. The Act defines a person with a handicap as anyone who:

1. Has a mental or physical impairment, which substantially limits one or more major life activities (such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working)
2. Has a record of such an impairment or is regarded as having such impairment.

In order to fulfill its obligation under Section 504, the Melrose Public Schools recognizes its responsibility to avoid discrimination in policies and practices regarding its personnel and students. No discrimination against any person with a handicap will knowingly be permitted in any of the programs and practices in the Melrose Public Schools.

The Melrose Public School district has specific responsibilities under this Act, which include the responsibility to identify, evaluate, and afford access to appropriate educational services if the student is determined to be eligible under Section 504. If the parent or guardian disagrees with the determination made by the professional staff of the Melrose Public Schools, he/she has the right to a hearing with an impartial hearing officer.

## **Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity Statement**

An Act Relative to Gender Identity (Chapter 199 of the Acts of 2011), which became effective on July 1, 2012, amended several Massachusetts statutes prohibiting discrimination on the basis of specified categories to include discrimination on the basis of gender identity. Among the statutes amended is G.L. c. 76, § 5, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity against students who enroll in or attend the public schools. G.L. c. 76, §5 now reads as follows: Every person shall have a right to attend the public schools of the town where he actually resides, subject to the following section. No School Committee is required to enroll a person who does not actually reside in the town unless said enrollment is authorized by law or by the School Committee. Any person who violates or assists in the violation of this provision may be

required to remit full restitution to the town of the improperly-attended public schools. No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.

## **PPRA Notice and Consent/Opt-Out for Specific Activities**

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), 20 U.S.C. § 1232h, requires the Melrose Public Schools to notify you and obtain consent or allow you to opt your child out of participating in certain school activities. These activities include a student survey, analysis, or evaluation that concerns one or more of the following eight areas (“protected information surveys”):

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student’s family;
3. Sexual behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

The Melrose Public Schools will provide parents, within a reasonable period of time prior to the administration of the surveys and activities, notification of the surveys and activities and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out, as well as an opportunity to review the surveys. (Please note that this notice and opt-out transfers from parents to any student who is eighteen years old or an emancipated minor under State law. If the school does not receive notification that a parent wishes to opt their child out of participation in the survey, passive parental consent for participation will be assumed.)

## **Sexual Education Policy**

Melrose Public Schools affords parents/guardians the flexibility to exempt their fifth grade son/daughter from any portion of any course that teaches or involves human sexuality education or human sexuality issues. Prior to these topics being taught, parents/guardians will receive a letter stating the anticipated time frame. In order to exempt your child from any portion of any class that pertains to these issues, the parent/guardian must provide written notification to the school principal. Please note, no student so exempted shall be penalized by reason of such exemption. Every reasonable effort will be made to help support the educational needs of the student. To the extent practicable, curriculum materials will be available for review.

## **Holiday and/or Cultural Events Celebrations Policy**

The Melrose Public Schools recognizes that, “Holidays are a time to promote greater understanding and tolerance among students of different traditions while respecting and

adhering to the First Amendment's prohibition against school-sponsored endorsement or promotion of religious beliefs of any kind."

Diverse holiday and/or cultural event celebrations or assemblies should:

- Advance a child's knowledge of society's rich cultural and religious heritage
- Focus on several different religions or holidays
- Express the diversity of beliefs and customs
- Never promote one religion over another.

Religious music:

- Must not dominate or be the focus of a holiday concert
- Should not be limited to a particular holiday or religious denomination.

Classroom decorations:

- Should only reflect those symbols that have come to have a secular meaning (e.g., snowflakes, candles, dreidels, Christmas trees, Star of David, star and crescent). Crosses and nativity scenes must not be displayed.

At no time should one holiday or religion be discussed exclusively. Throughout the course of the year, there should be a balanced discussion of different religions, cultures and holidays as they occur. Children should not be expected to be the authorities on their particular religion or holiday celebration.

## **Patriotic Ceremonies**

Certain rights and privileges pertaining to patriotic ceremonies are afforded by the First Amendment. A student may decline to participate in the salute to the flag, the Pledge of Allegiance, and the singing of the National Anthem. The school may not force the student to leave the room or otherwise punish the student. Students who choose to refrain from participation have a responsibility to respect the rights and interest of others who do wish to participate in the ceremony. The student may refuse to perform the ceremony in a manner that will not disrupt the ceremony for other persons.

## **Gifts for Teachers/Staff**

In accordance with M.G.L. c. 268, the State Ethics Commission prohibits any public employees, including teachers, from accepting gifts worth \$50 or more that are given to them because of the position they hold, or because of some action they could take or have taken in their position.

Teachers and other public employees may accept gifts that are worth less than \$50, but they have to disclose in writing the fact that they have done so if, based on the circumstances, a reasonable person would think that the teacher might unduly show favor to the giver or the giver's child because of the gift. G.L. c. 268A, § 23(b)(3).



A teacher who is offered an end-of-the-year gift worth \$50 or more should not accept it, unless it is a permissible class gift. The Commission created an exemption in its regulations at 930 CMR 5.08(14) to permit parents and students of a class, acting together, give a gift worth up to \$150 to a teacher, provided that the gift is identified only as being from the class, and the names of the givers and the amounts are not given to the teacher. A single class gift worth up to \$150, or several class gifts during the school year with a total value up to \$150, may be given. A teacher may not accept any other gift from someone who has contributed to a class gift. Therefore, if an individual gift is offered, before accepting it, the teacher must confirm that the giver did not contribute to the class gift.

A gift given to a teacher to use solely in the classroom or to buy classroom supplies is not considered a gift to the teacher personally, and is, therefore, not subject to the \$50 limit on personal gifts to teachers. Parents may give to the classroom or the school in accordance with the rules of the school district. A teacher who receives such a gift must keep receipts documenting that the money was used for classroom supplies. Please see the following link for more information: [Chapter 268A](#)