

RALPH C. MAHAR REGIONAL SCHOOL

STUDENT HANDBOOK



2021-2022

**HOME OF THE SENATORS
SERVING
NEW SALEM, ORANGE,
PETERSHAM, AND WENDELL**

Handbook policies and protocols apply to all middle and high school students
unless otherwise specified.

The Ralph C. Mahar Regional School was named after Senator Ralph C. Mahar, a resident of Orange, who served in the Massachusetts State Senate with great distinction. He was a tireless proponent of public education and a driving force in regionalizing school districts in Massachusetts.

I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

MAHAR ALMA MATER

Our Alma Mater now we praise
As voices high in song we raise,
A tribute to her destinies;
To all her future days
To brightest red and fairest blue
We lift our ears, our hopes to you,
May all your finest dreams come true
To great realities.

Words and music by Malcolm Hall-1957

“Wisdom and knowledge, as well as virtue, diffused generally among the body of the people, being necessary for the preservation of their rights and liberties; and as these depend on spreading the opportunities and advantages of education in the various parts of the country, and among the different orders of the people, it shall be the duty of legislatures and magistrates, in all future periods of this commonwealth, to cherish the interests of literature and the sciences, and all seminaries of them... public schools and grammar schools in the towns; to encourage private societies and public institutions, rewards and immunities, for the promotion of agriculture, arts, sciences, commerce, trades, manufactures, and a natural history of the country; to countenance and inculcate the principles of humanity and general benevolence, public and private charity, industry and frugality, honesty and punctuality in their dealings; sincerity, good humor, and all social affections, and generous sentiments, among the people.”

Massachusetts Constitution of 1780, CH V, SEC II

This handbook is reviewed annually by the School Council and voted upon by the School Committee. Any questions, concerns or improvements may be brought anytime to the School Council or the School Committee.

Mission Statement

The Ralph C. Mahar Regional School community will ensure teaching and learning take place in a safe, collaborative, and inclusive environment. We commit to working with families and community members to support the personal, academic, and career growth of every student. We believe that a challenging curriculum for all students and a culture that actively welcomes all learners will contribute to a more knowledgeable community and society. We believe that all students must be prepared with 21st century skills* and an understanding of the demands and challenges of an ever changing world.

Schoolwide Learning Expectations

Academic

Students will:

- Access, analyze, and utilize information effectively about themselves, others, and the world.
- Communicate effectively through various means.
- Solve problems effectively utilizing conventional and innovative ways and various types of reasoning.
- Work collaboratively in a variety of situations.

Civic

Students will:

- Demonstrate respect for themselves, others, and property.
- Demonstrate responsible membership in society.

Social

Students will:

- Practice informed decision making.
- Be responsive to diverse perspectives.

<p>*21 st Century Skills</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. creativity and innovation2. critical thinking3. problem solving4. collaboration5. effective communication- informed and appropriate6. access, analyze, and utilize information about themselves, others, and the world
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Mission approved by unanimous vote of the Ralph C. Mahar Regional School Committee on December 7, 2010.

****THE RUBRICS FOR THE SCHOOLWIDE LEARNING EXPECTATIONS ARE
LOCATED ON THE MAHAR WEBSITE www.rcmahar.org -CLICK ON PARENTS****

STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Ralph C. Mahar School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sexual orientation, national origin, sex, gender identity, disability, religion, marital status, pregnancy, or age in any of its policies, procedures, or practices, in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (pertaining to race, color, and national origin), Title VII (pertaining to employment), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (pertaining to sex), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (pertaining to disability), the Americans with Disabilities Act (pertaining to disability), and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (pertaining to age).

R.C. Mahar Title IX Coordinator and Contact Information:

Director of Special Services/R.C.Mahar Regional School

507 South Main St., P.O. Box, Orange, Ma. 01364 1-978-544-2542

EQUAL ACCESS

Both state and federal legislation govern schools in the Commonwealth regarding equal access: Massachusetts General Law 76 Section 5 (also known as Chapter 622), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title IX. Mahar works diligently to adhere to the highest standards of the laws.

The law (MGL Chapter 76, Section 5) reads: 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.

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

PROVISIONS FOR TRANSLATION **Ralph C. Mahar Regional School District** To the extent possible, the Ralph C. Mahar Regional School will provide oral or written translation for parents in their home language of important documents and oral or written translation in their home language for students for matters of counseling and guidance.

MAHAR MIDDLE SCHOOL

The faculty, staff and administration join in welcoming you to the Mahar Middle School. We at Mahar take pride in our educational program and in the school facilities. As educators, parents, students and members of the community, we will be working together as partners in the educational process.

The professionalism, dedication and enthusiasm of a highly qualified faculty contribute to a positive learning environment for students. The most successful educational experiences are built on strong commitments at school and positive adult support from home. Students who come to school prepared, show respect and take responsibility for their own learning will have successful middle school years at Ralph C. Mahar Regional.

Mahar Middle School Mission Statement

The Mahar Middle School will provide an environment that meets the developmental, educational and social needs that emerge through adolescence. In partnership with parents and the community, our program promotes responsibility, independence, self-esteem and self-confidence for the challenges of today and tomorrow.

Guiding Principles

We believe in:

Working collaboratively with dedication and knowledge to create exciting possibilities for all students.

Building a strong sense of community that actively cultivates respectful, supportive relationships among students, teachers, and parents to help all students reach their potential.

Creating an integrative, challenging and exploratory curriculum that is student-centered and taught in a nurturing, caring and structured setting.

Teaching study habits and the skills of communication, research, technology, problem-solving, critical thinking and social interaction in a manner that actively engages students in relevant learning experiences.

Providing guidance programs that support the social, emotional and academic needs of middle level students.

Providing a wide range of opportunities which emphasize maximum involvement, group unity, good sportsmanship and the well-being of students.

Incorporating cooperative learning experiences that cultivate an appreciation for an acceptance of the diversity among individuals.

Establishing networks of communication for the exchange of ideas and information and sharing experiences among staff and the community that will enhance student achievement and success.

*****THE ACTIVITY CALENDAR, SCHOOL CALENDAR,
MCAS TEST SCHEDULE & ROTATING SCHEDULE FOR
2021-2022 ARE LOCATED ON THE WEBSITE www.rcmahar.org
-CLICK ON PARENTS*****

Bell Schedule/Lunch Schedule/Delayed Openings

7:38 A.M.		Doors Open	
Block I	GH	7:45 A.M.	8:26 A.M.
		8:29 A.M.	9:12 A.M.
Block II:	CD	9:15 A.M.	9:56 A.M.
		9:59 A.M.	10:41 A.M.
Block III:	AB	10:44 A.M.	12:35 P.M.
		Lunch 1 (MS) 10:44 A.M. - 11:06 A.M. Lunch 2 (MS) 11:10 A.M. - 11:32 A.M. Lunch 3 (HS) 11:40 A.M. - 12:02 P.M. Lunch 4 (HS) 12:13 P.M. - 12:35 P.M.	
Block IV:	EF	12:39 P.M.	1:21 P.M.
		1:24 P.M.	2:05 P.M.

DELAYED OPENINGS

THERE ARE TWO TYPES:

1. WEATHER

2. STANDARDIZED TESTING (MCAS)

1. Weather Delay is normally 1-2 hours. Due to the fact that breakfast is not served on delayed opening days, the bus will pick you up at your bus stop 1 hour 15 minutes or 2 hours 15 minutes later than the normal pick up time. For example, if you were picked up at 7:00 A.M., then for a one-hour delay the bus will be there at 8:15 A.M., for a two-hour delay the bus will be there at 9:15 A.M. Classes will begin at 8:45 A.M. or 9:45 A.M.
2. Standardized Testing (MCAS) delayed opening days there is a 3 hour 10 minute delay. For example, if you are normally picked up at 7:00 A.M. the bus will pick you up at 10:10 A.M., if you are normally picked up at 7:15 A.M. the bus will pick you up at 10:25 A.M. Doors open at 10:40 A.M. and classes begin at 10:44 A.M.

If you have any questions with the bus schedule on delayed openings, please call the Swift River Bus Company the day before the delay if possible at 1-978-544-6443.

EARLY RELEASE DAYS:

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Professional Development Days for the 2021-2022 school year are as follows:

- September 22, 2021 (½ day for students)
- October 27, 2021 (½ day for students)
- December 15, 2021 (½ day for students)
- January 12, 2022 (½ day for students)
- February 15, 2022 (½ day for students)
- March 23, 2022 (½ day for students)
- April 27, 2022 (½ day for students)
- May 25, 2022 (½ day for students)

CANCELLATIONS:

Students are advised to visit the RC MAHAR FACEBOOK PAGE or watch the following TV STATIONS for any cancellations of school: Boston Channel 5 or 7 /Western Mass Channel 22 or 40

E-Learning/School Cancellations-In the event of inclement weather or for other reasons that may require school to be cancelled, the Superintendent may declare such days as “E- Learning”

days. On E-Learning days, students will not attend school on campus. Instead, students will engage in the learning process remotely by using their chrome books to access their class assignments via Google Classroom. Teachers will utilize Google Classroom as the platform of instruction and will be available during the day to collaborate with students through the Google Classroom platform, e-mail, or by other electronic means. On E-Learning days, students are strongly encouraged to actively communicate with their teachers in order to gain the most from the day's lessons. E-Learning days are considered to be a day of classroom instruction and E-Learning assignments are due the next class period.

II. ACADEMICS (Middle School)

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Seventh Grade Classes-Academic Opportunities

Humanities

Mathematics

General Science

Eighth Grade Classes-Academic Opportunities

Humanities

Mathematics

General Science

Unified Arts Courses-Grades 7-8

UA-Art, Keyboarding, Band, Chorus, Business, Woodworking Basics, Reading, Creative Writing, Physical Education, Health & Makerspace

GRADING SYSTEM

90-100 Excellent Work

80-89 Good Work

70-79 Fair Work

60-69 Poor Work-but passing

0-59 Failing

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY (Middle School)

A student who receives a quarterly grade of less than sixty percent (60%) in any subject for the 1st quarter, 2nd quarter, 3rd quarter or 2nd semester is ineligible to participate in any interscholastic activity and in many school activities during the subsequent quarter. Specifically, first quarter grades will determine eligibility for the second quarter, second quarter grades will determine eligibility for the third quarter; third quarter grades will determine eligibility for the fourth quarter and second semester grades will determine eligibility for the fall.

An ineligible student is permitted to attend practices and rehearsals for regularly scheduled events and activities with the approval of the coach, director or teacher in

charge. Ineligible students may attend meetings of clubs and organizations to which they belong, but they may not hold office during the period of ineligibility. The student may not, however, take part in public activities such as fundraisers, etc. The student may not miss school time, including after-school help and make-up sessions up to 3:00 P.M.

A student who is academically ineligible at the time of elections may still run for office in any class or organization. However, should the ineligible student win the election, he/she would not be allowed to serve unless he/she became eligible by the next quarter.

If a student is elected to an office in a class and then becomes ineligible, his or her position will be filled for one quarter by an appointee. The appointment will be made by a committee of the remaining class officers and the class advisor.

If the student remains ineligible for a second quarter, the appointee will become the permanent holder of that office.

The student returns to eligibility once he or she passes all subjects for the quarter.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY (High School)

A student who receives a quarterly grade of less than sixty percent (60) in any subject for the 1st quarter, 2nd quarter, 3rd quarter or 2nd semester is ineligible to participate in any interscholastic activity and in many school activities during the subsequent quarter. Specifically, the 1st quarter grades will determine eligibility for the 2nd quarter; 2nd quarter grades will determine eligibility for the 3rd quarter; 3rd quarter grades will determine eligibility for the 4th quarter and 2nd semester grades will determine eligibility for the fall. Credits earned through summer school, evening courses, etc. can be used to alter eligibility only if the course had been previously pursued and failed. The student must have earned twenty (20) credits during the previous year. An ineligible student is permitted to attend practices and rehearsals for regularly scheduled events and activities with the approval of the coach, director or teacher in charge. Ineligible students may attend meetings of clubs and organizations to which they belong, but they may not hold office during the period of ineligibility. The student may not, however, take part in public activities such as fundraisers, etc. The student may not miss school time, including after-school help and make-up sessions up to 3:00 P.M. A student who is academically ineligible at the time of elections may still run for office in any class or organization. However, should the ineligible student win the election, he/she would not be allowed to serve unless he/she became eligible by the next quarter.

If a student is elected to an office in a class and then becomes ineligible, his or her position will be filled for one quarter by an appointee. The appointment will be made by a committee of the remaining class officers and the class advisor. If the student remains ineligible for a second quarter, the appointee will become the permanent holder of that

office. Clubs and other organizations which function with a slate of officers are to amend their by-laws to provide for a situation where an officer becomes ineligible.

The student returns to eligibility once he or she passes all subjects for the quarter.

Official Dates for Declaring Ineligibility

The time and date for declaring ineligibility for the first marking term of the school year shall be the close of the first school day of that term.

A student with an incomplete in a previous year's course as of the close of school on this date shall be ineligible and will remain so until the incomplete is cleared and a passing grade is awarded.

The time and the date for declaring ineligibility for the 2nd, 3rd and 4th marking terms of the school year shall be the close of the school day on which report cards are issued.

A student with an incomplete in a course from the preceding term shall be ineligible only if the incomplete remains at the close of the school day on the 10th day after the end of the term. Such a student shall remain ineligible until the incomplete is cleared and a passing grade is awarded. Activities from which a student with a failing grade is excluded include: Holding office in any club, class or other school affiliated organization. Clubs and other organizations which function with a slate of officers are to amend their by-laws to provide for a situation where an officer becomes ineligible.

- (a) All school clubs- e.g. Fish' N Game, Key Club, etc.
- (b) Dramatics
- (c) Musicals, Cabaret, etc.
- (d) Guides, host/hostess at school activities and public events
- (e) Interscholastic Athletics *Refer to MIAA Rules 51 & 58
- (f) Cheerleaders
- (g) Queen/King Candidates, escorts
- (h) Local School Committee Representatives
- (i) Committees composed of teachers, parents and students-such as the School Council.
- (j) Assemblies, other than those which are classroom activities related to an area or unit of study.

MIAA Rule 51 and 58

i. Baseline Eligibility Requirement (MIAA rule 51)

For a student to practice with, or to represent an MIAA member school in athletic competition, the student must be duly enrolled in that school and meet all eligibility requirements. Additionally, the student must be a candidate for that school's diploma subject to the jurisdiction of that school's principal (i.e. the principal must have the authority to suspend the student from class(s), and under the supervision of that school principal (i.e. the principal must have control and knowledge of the student's daily attendance and achievement).

iv. Academic Requirements (MIAA Rule 58) and Mahar Regulations

58.1- A student must secure during the last marking period preceding the contest (i.e. second quarter marks and not semester grades determine third quarter eligibility) a passing grade in the equivalent of four traditional yearlong major English courses.

58.3- To be eligible for the fall marking period, students are required to have passed for the previous academic year the equivalent of four traditional yearlong major English courses.

58.4- Academic eligibility of all students shall be considered as official and determined only on the published date when the report cards for that ranking period are to be issued to the parents of all students within a particular class.

58.5- Incomplete grades may not be counted toward eligibility.

Activities from which a student with a failing grade is not excluded include:

- (a) Instrumental concerts (Middle School band students)
- (b) Choral concerts (Middle School choral students)
- (c) Science Fair (as exhibitors)
- (d) Class related field studies

An official roster of all students participating in all activities included under the ineligibility rule will be prepared by the Athletic Director, Coach, Director, or Teacher-in-charge as soon as possible prior to the beginning of practice sessions for any activity or seasonal sport.

A Failure, Incomplete and Ineligibility List will be prepared by the Student Information Manager and posted on the "Z Drive" for all faculty personnel at the conclusion of each marking period.

The parents or guardians of all ineligible students will be notified by letter by the Guidance Department. Included in the letter is a statement of the eligibility rule.

Dropped Courses

Students who drop a course later than two weeks prior to the close of a marking period will have the quarter grade determine eligibility for the subsequent quarter.

All teachers involved with extracurricular activities that are affected by the eligibility rule are responsible for checking the eligibility of each student.

Interscholastic team rosters will be checked for eligibility by the Administrative Assistant to the Principal then approved/denied by the Principal.

Transfer student's eligibility will be determined using Mahar standards; not the standards of the sending school.

FIFTY-FIVE RULE (55 Rule)

To raise a failing grade to 55%, the following rules apply: during the first 10 days of the second or fourth marking periods, a student who has failed the previous marking period of a course with a grade below 55% may arrange with the teacher to make up sufficient work to raise that grade to 55%. All make-up work done under this rule must be submitted within five weeks of the beginning of the marking period. This rule is in effect only for the first and third quarter.

HOMEWORK PHILOSOPHY (Middle School)

Middle school is the bridge between elementary and high school. Students not only learn curriculum content, but develop the independent organizational and time management skills necessary to succeed at the high school level. The middle school teachers and administrators at the Ralph C. Mahar Regional School believe that homework is an essential component of the middle school curriculum in that it is an extension of classroom lessons and gives students the opportunity to reinforce skills and allows them to further develop their organizational skills.

Students who actively participate in class will have the prerequisite knowledge and ability to complete homework assignments. Homework is due on the following day unless otherwise specified. Each teacher will present his/her homework requirements and make-up policies to students in writing at the beginning of the year. Students will be asked to keep that information in their subject binders.

Teachers and the administration believe that parents are active participants in their child's education and they are encouraged to be in contact with teachers regarding homework and any other issues. We recognize that as a parent, you know your child better than anyone and active communication regarding concerns is encouraged so that the Mahar staff may best serve the educational needs of your child.

HONOR ROLL

Students who receive a grade of eighty percent (80%) or higher in each subject/class at the end of a quarter or a marking period are eligible for the Honor Roll. Students who receive a grade of ninety percent (90%) or higher- all A's- in all classes at the end of a marking period, will be placed on the High Honor Roll.

NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY ELIGIBILITY (Grades 8 and 9)

The National Junior Honor Society recognizes eighth and ninth graders who have demonstrated exemplary scholarship, leadership, service, character and citizenship. The academic requirement in addition to the five standards listed above is an 85% average for each of the four quarters in grade 7 and grade 8 to determine eligibility for induction in either grade 8 or grade 9. Continued membership is based on maintaining the five standards and not falling below 85% for more than one quarter after induction. Probation status is for one quarter during which the student must achieve the above eligibility qualifications. Failure to achieve the eligibility qualifications during the probation quarter will result in dismissal.

Membership is not automatic and potential inductees will need to fill out candidate forms which will be presented to the National Honor Society Faculty Council who will consider your qualifications.

NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY ELIGIBILITY (Grades 10, 11, and 12)

The National Honor Society honors tenth, eleventh and twelfth grade students who have demonstrated outstanding scholarship, leadership, service and character. To be considered for induction into the National Honor Society, all students must meet the 90.0% average requirement for the four previous consecutive quarters to be considered for induction. No particular levels of course work are required. Students can retain membership by maintaining a 90.0% average for each of our four quarters of the current academic year. Probation status is for one quarter during which the student must achieve the above eligibility qualifications. Failure to achieve the eligibility qualifications during the probation quarter will result in dismissal.

The Faculty Council selects a student for membership based on the above criteria. Once selected, students must maintain these minimum standards and continue to demonstrate the four qualities for which they have been honored.

Membership is not automatic and potential inductees will need to fill out an activities sheet which will be presented to the National Honor Society Faculty Council who will consider your qualifications.

RANK IN CLASS: (High School)

Course Levels

Credits and class rank:

Although all courses in grades 9 through 12 carry academic credit, and all credits count equally in meeting promotion and graduation requirements, credits do not count equally in determining class ranking. A weighted system is used in order to make allowance for the varying levels of difficulty among courses. In this system, courses at higher levels count more than courses at intermediate or lower levels in establishing class ranking. Your counselor can give you a more detailed explanation of the method by which class ranks are determined. To provide for individual differences, Mahar offers courses at three or four different levels. The level of the course is determined by the rigor of the course and its consideration as a college preparatory

course. Below is a listing of the value of a course based upon the level of the course and the grade received:

All AP courses are level 5. The College Board AP exam is a final requirement of all AP courses. The AP exam results will not affect the Mahar course grade. Students may choose not to submit their AP scores to colleges, but some colleges will grant credit or waive requirements for students who obtain a score of 3 or higher.

MARK	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
97-100	4.3	5.3	6.3	7.3	8.3
93-96	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0
90-92	3.7	4.7	5.7	6.7	7.7
87-89	3.3	4.3	5.3	6.3	7.3
83-86	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0
80-82	2.7	3.7	4.7	5.7	6.7
77-79	2.3	3.3	4.3	5.3	6.3
73-76	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0
70-72	1.7	2.7	3.7	4.7	5.7
67-69	1.3	2.3	3.3	4.3	5.3
63-66	1.0	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0
60-62	0.7	1.7	2.7	3.7	4.7
0-59	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

College Grade Point Average (High School)

All student transcripts will reflect a College Grade Point Average. In order to accommodate the needs of college admissions offices, this average was designed to weigh courses on a 4.3 scale. The scale mimics the system used by Massachusetts State Colleges when evaluating candidates. It only takes into account classes with a course weight of 3, 4, or 5. This essentially *excludes* non-college preparatory classes. In general, course levels are categorized by the following guidelines:

- °Level 5: Advanced Placement
- °Level 4: Advanced, Honors and Advanced Honors courses
- °Level 3: College Preparatory courses
- °Level 2: Comprehensive-Not Applicable in the College GPA
- °Level 1: All other courses-Not Applicable in the College GPA

COLLEGE GPA SCALE

97-100	N/A	---	N/A	---	4.3	---	4.8	---	5.3
93-96	N/A	---	N/A	---	4.0	---	4.5	---	5.0
90-92	N/A	---	N/A	---	3.7	---	4.2	---	4.7
87-89	N/A	---	N/A	---	3.3	---	3.8	---	4.3
83-86	N/A	N/A	---	3.0	---	3.5	---	4.0	---
80-82	N/A	N/A	---	2.7	---	3.2	---	3.7	---
77-79	N/A	---	N/A	---	2.3	---	2.8	---	3.3
73-76	N/A	---	N/A	---	2.0	---	2.5	---	3.0
70-72	N/A	N/A	---	1.7	---	2.2	---	2.7	---
67-69	N/A	N/A	---	1.3	---	1.8	---	2.3	---
63-66	N/A	N/A	---	1.0	---	1.5	---	2.0	---
60-62	N/A	N/A	---	0.7	---	1.2	---	1.7	---
0-59	N/A	N/A	---	0.0	---	0.0	---	0.0	---

REPORT CARDS

One week after the close of each quarter, your report card will be e-mailed home.

III. ATTENDANCE

ATTENDANCE- (MAHAR REGIONAL)

Attendance is required by law and by school committee policy. See ABSENCES, TARDY & DISMISSALS. At 7:38 A.M., students should enter the building and proceed to Advisory by 7:45 A.M. Grounds outside of the building are off-limits unless accompanied by a teacher. Also, once on school grounds, students must remain on school grounds unless formally dismissed by the main office.

ATTENDANCE- (Mass. Law)

School is compulsory for students under the age of sixteen. A student may be considered truant and court proceedings initiated when the student accumulates more than seven unexcused absences in a six-month period. (See MGL CH. 76, S.2 and S.5) Also, see the Mahar High School Attendance Policy.

CH. 76, Section 5. 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.

ABSENCES (Middle School)

When a student is absent from school, the administration requires a **phone call** to the office, located on the middle school side of the building, at 978-544-2542, dial option 1, then option 1, from a parent/guardian on the morning of the absence, **or a note** from a parent/guardian on the day he/she returns to school. Failure to provide a note or phone call for absences upon returning to school will result in an office detention. Notes or calls from a parent/guardian outside the above stated policy will not excuse his/her child from serving the assigned office detention.

Please Note: An automated system is on 24 hours per day, seven days per week for parental convenience in reporting student absences.

If a student is absent, if he/she arrives after 10:48 A.M. or is dismissed before 10:48 A.M. on the day of a school-sponsored function, including athletic events, the student may not attend that function unless approved by the Administration.

Make-up: If the student is absent, he/she is responsible for making up the work. After being informed by each teacher concerning the assignments and the work to be made up, and a schedule is arranged, the student must meet the make-up schedule in order to receive credit.

All make-up work must be completed to the satisfaction of the teacher within a specified amount of time. For each one (1) day of absence, students will be provided two (2) days to make up their academic work upon their return to school. For example: If a student was absent from school for three (3) days, he/she will have six (6) days from the day he/she returns to school to make-up academic work. Any work not made up within the specified amount of time will be assigned a grade of zero "0". In special circumstances, the administration may allow additional time.

Teachers will be available for after-school help and make-up work from 2:10-3:00 P.M. on Tuesdays & Wednesdays.

When a student will be absent from school for an extended period of time, the student will obtain the **"Notification of Request for Student Absence/Leave"** from the middle school office. The form should be completed and returned to the middle school office. The office will give a copy of the completed form to the student's guidance counselor.

ABSENCES (High School)

When a student is absent from school, the administration requires a **phone call** to the office, located on the middle school side of the building, at 1-978-544-2542, option 1, then option 1, from a parent/guardian on the morning of the absence, **or a note** from a parent/guardian on the day he/she returns to school. Failure to provide a note or phone call for absences upon returning to school will result in an office detention. Notes or calls from a parent/guardian outside of the above stated policy will not excuse his/her child from serving the assigned office detention.

Please Note: An automated system is on 24 hours per day, seven days per week for parental convenience in reporting student absences.

If a student is absent from class ten (10) times in a semester (five (5) times for every-other day classes), he/she will lose credit for that class, even though he/she may have earned a passing grade in that class. If a student misses more than fifteen (15) minutes of a class period, he/she will be considered absent. Cutting a class is considered a class absence and will result in disciplinary action. If a student violates this policy, he/she may need an additional course or courses to meet graduation requirements. (Less than 15 minutes is 1/2 an absence)

If a student has an acceptable, documented excuse such as an illness certified by a doctor, or a documented situation that made attendance impossible, he/she must submit the appropriate documentation to the school's office within ten (10) business days following his/her absence. Any documentation submitted later than ten (10) days following the student's absence will not be accepted.

A half-way point letter will be sent to the parent/guardian of a student who has been absent five (5) times from an every-day class, or three (3) times from an every-other-day class. The letter will include a warning of credit loss as well as an invitation to meet with the Guidance

Counselor. **Within five (5) days of the tenth (10th) consecutive absence from school, a withdrawal letter will be sent to the student and parent/guardian.**

If a student is absent or they arrive at school after 10:48 A.M., or is dismissed prior to 10:48 A.M. on the day of a school- sponsored function, including athletic events, the student may not attend that function unless approved by the administration.

Make-up: If the student is absent, he/she is responsible for making up the work. After being informed by each teacher concerning the assignments and the work to be made up, and a schedule is arranged, the student must meet the make-up schedule in order to receive credit.

All make-up work must be completed to the satisfaction of the teacher within a specified amount of time. For each one (1) day of absence, students will be provided two (2) days to make up their academic work upon their return to school. For example: If a student was absent from school for three (3) days, he/she will have six (6) days from the day he/she returns to school to make up academic work. Any work not made up within the specified amount of time will be assigned a grade of zero "0". In special circumstances, the administration may allow additional time.

Teachers will be available for after-school help and make-up work from 2:10 P.M. - 3:00 P.M. on Tuesdays & Wednesdays .

When a student will be absent from school for an extended period of time, the student will obtain the **"Notification of Request for Student Absence/Leave"** from the office. The form should be completed and returned to the office. The office will give a copy of the completed form to the student's guidance counselor.

TARDY

A reminder that the school day begins promptly at 7:45 A.M. Every effort should be made to avoid tardiness. Students arriving late to school must report to the appropriate office. Each quarter, a student may be late to school up to three (3) times before receiving an office detention. On the third tardy, a verbal warning is given to the student and a letter is sent home to the parent/guardian. On the fourth tardy, he/she will be assigned a one-hour office detention. On the fifth and any subsequent tardy, he/she will be assigned a two-hour office detention. Failure to serve a one- hour detention will result in a two-hour detention. Failure to serve a two-hour detention for violating the tardy policy will result in the student's name being placed on the "Obligations List" (Refer to Obligations). As a result, he/she will not be able to participate in any extracurricular activity until all owed detentions are served.

Notes from a parent/guardian will not excuse his/her child from serving the assigned office detention.

Students arriving late to any class during the school day, including first period, will be assigned a 1/2 class absence; fifteen (15) minutes or more of tardiness will constitute a class absence subject to the attendance policy.

DISMISSAL

If a student is sick during the day, he/she should ask the classroom teacher for a pass to the nurse. The nurse may dismiss or send the student back to class depending on the nurse's assessment of the illness.

If a student has a valid need for early dismissal, he/she is expected to bring a note from a parent or guardian that states the reason, the time to be dismissed, and who is to pick up the student. Bring the note to the office before 7:45. Any note submitted after 7:45 will require an administrator's approval.

In emergency circumstances, a parent or guardian may call the school to request a dismissal. Remember that dismissal counts as an absence in classes that are missed.

If a student is dismissed before 10:48 A.M. on the day of a school sponsored function, including athletic events, he/she may not attend that function unless approved by the administration.

If a student is involved in a specific activity which requires missing a class, (i.e. Student Council meetings) the student should inform the teacher, request that he/she be excused, pass in any assignment due and arrange to make up missed class work.

MAKE-UP WORK

There are various reasons why a student may miss school. STUDENTS are ALWAYS responsible for making up ALL missed work.

In physical education, all make-up work must be completed to the satisfaction of the teacher within a specified amount of time. For each one (1) day of absence, students will be provided two (2) days to make-up their academic work upon their return to school. For example: If a student was absent from school for three (3) days, he/she will have six (6) days from the day he/she returns to school to make-up academic work. Any work not made up within the specified amount of time will be assigned a grade of zero "0". In special circumstances, the administration may allow additional time.

Teachers will be available for after-school help and make-up work from 2:10 P.M. to 3:00 P.M. on Tuesdays & Wednesdays. If a student has difficulties in a class, he/she should get extra help right away. The student should schedule a time with the teacher that is convenient to clear up the difficulties.

IV. RULES & CONDUCT

ABUSIVE SPEECH

Vulgar or obscene language will not be tolerated. Continued use of this language will result in disciplinary action.

BICYCLES

The school assumes no responsibility for any loss or damage to a student's bicycle. It must be locked in the parking rack in the designated area at the middle school entrance. Students should be aware that the bicycle parking area is unsupervised.

BOOKS (TEXTBOOKS/LIBRARY BOOKS)

A student is expected to pay for any books he/she loses or damages. The student is responsible for books given to him/her during the year. All class issued books should be covered.

BULLYING

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

Definition of Bullying: "Bullying", the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the duration process or the orderly operation of a school. For the purposes of this section, bullying shall include cyber-bullying.

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

The school also recognizes that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming a target of bullying based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics such as:

race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have 1 or more of these characteristics.

Examples of bullying include but are not limited to:

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

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

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

References: National School Safety Center
 Maine Project Against Bullying
 The Wellesley College Center for Research on Women

Legal Reference: Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended
Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO Commission
 Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
 Board of Education 603 CMR 26:00

Cross Reference: AC Nondiscrimination
 ACAB Sexual Harassment
 JICFA-E Hazing

****See Mahar Harassment Policy- 1st Vote: February 2009 2nd Vote: March 2009***

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION

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

A. Reporting bullying or retaliation

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

At the beginning of each school year, the district will provide the school community, including administrators, staff, students and parents/guardians with notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the Principal (or designee), will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the district website, and in information about the Ralph C. Mahar School District Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan that is made available to parents/guardians.

Principal: Mr. Scott Hemlin

Tel #1-978-544-2542

Ralph C. Mahar Regional School, 507 South Main St., Orange, Ma. 01364

1. Reporting by staff: Staff members will immediately report to the Principal (or designee) when they witness or become aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to the Principal (or designee) does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with the school’s policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

2. Reporting by students, parents/guardians and others: The district expects students, parents/guardians and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the Principal (or designee). Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents/guardians and others may

request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member or with the Principal (or designee).

B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation

1. Safety: Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the Principal (or designee) will assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. There may be circumstances in which the Principal (or designee) contacts parents/guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations 603 CMR 49.00. Responses to promote safety could include: creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target; and altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target. The Principal (or designee) will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of, and after, the investigation as necessary.

2. The Principal (or designee) will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation of a student who has witnessed or reported bullying or retaliation, or provides information during an investigation. The confidentiality of students and witnesses reporting alleged acts of bullying will be maintained to the extent possible given the school’s obligation to investigate the matter.

C. Obligations to Notify Others:

1. Notice to parents/guardians: Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Principal (or designee) will promptly notify the parents/guardians of the target and the aggressor of the incident and discuss the planned response.

2. Notices to Another School or District: If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the Principal (or designee) first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the Principal (or designee) of the other school/s of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR.

3. Notices to Law Enforcement: At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the Principal (or designee) has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the Principal (or designee) will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency.

Training Active Bystanders

Training Active Bystanders (TAB) is a six-part curriculum created by Quabbin Mediation in collaboration with Ervin Staab, Ph.D. TAB presents bystanders with the competencies needed to take action when they witness something they feel is harmful, unfair, wrong or troubling. TAB provides a basis for understanding the power of bystanders and encourages students to take responsibility and act in the moment of need. TAB transforms those who take the training, the trainers and the community.

The Training Active Bystanders curriculum is an evidence-based curriculum that has been taught in Mahar's grade 7, 8 & 10 classrooms since 2006. The focus of the curriculum is to help students identify harm and bullying, what needs to happen to prevent it and how to intervene safely when they see harm happening. Some of these actions could include: recruiting allies, calling attention to the situation, making suggestions (to empower others), asking the person being harmed if they need help, and at times, tapping into the bystander's moral courage. In the words of a Mahar student, *"TAB has made me realize what can happen when others don't take action, or when you take action for other people. One person can make a difference."* Some of the skills and techniques practiced by Mahar students include:

Calling Attention: *"TAB has made me think about what I can do to improve people's lives and being an active bystander. I will tap into my moral courage by being determined to make a difference and being brave."*

Recruit Allies: *"Now I am more aware of how you could step in. You could tell a teacher or adult. Also you could just step in or get a group of people to step in and stop the fight."*

Offer Help: *"Now I won't just stand there. I will be an active bystander. I will help and try to figure out what happened and see if I can help in any way."*

Express Disapproval: *"TAB has changed my thinking about being a bystander by wanting to help. If I needed help, I would want them to do the same. I will tap into my moral courage by helping someone who needs it and by standing up for what I think is the better decision."*

Stop Negative Bystanders: *"TAB has changed my thinking about being an active bystander. Active bystanders help keep a community safe and I want to live in a safe community because unsafe is not good because you could get hurt."*

Support the Target: *"TAB has made me want to help targeted kids not be targeted. It will help me know how to stop kids from being bullied and when it's the right time to jump in and help the target."*

Information for Parents, Teachers and Members of the Mahar Community What can we say and do to support our students?

- Help students know who their family allies might be-parents, older siblings, cousins, etc. Allies are trusted people the student can come to if they see harm happening and need some advice or help with handling the situation.
- Help students know who their community allies might be-faith based person, a counselor, a policeman, others.
- Listen- students may just need to talk about something they are working out themselves.

- Practice what to say- students might feel more confident in speaking up if they have practiced what they are going to say several times.
- Help strategize what the “best thing to do” might be in a particular situation.
- Be open to discussing the “harm” they may see without judgment.
- Don’t ignore a situation.
- Have the will to help no matter what others think.
- Help the harm-doer change.
- Take action, one person can make a difference.
- Empathize with others.

Any questions regarding the TAB, Peer Mediation or Conflict Resolution Programs at Mahar should be directed to Student Services at (978)-544-2542.

CAFETERIA

The cafeteria opens at 7:23 A.M. The rest of the building opens at 7:38 A.M. for students to go to their lockers. Students should be in their Advisory class by 7:45 A.M.

Middle School Lunches: 7th 10:44 A.M. – 11:06 A.M. & 8th 11:10 A.M. – 11:32 A.M.

The Middle School Cafeteria rules are as follows: Walk to the cafeteria and enter on the right side of the hallway. Take the end of place in line-do not cut in line. Return your tray, dispose of trash and return to your seat. Bathroom and office phone privileges are available during the lunch period except for the last 5 minutes of the period, at which time you need to be seated for dismissal. Keep all food and drink inside the cafeteria.

High School Lunches will be 11:40 A.M.-12:02 P.M. or 12:13 P.M.-12:35 P.M. based on the students’ class schedules. The High School cafeteria rules are basic. Enter at a walk. Line up, don’t cut. The student should get his/her food, see the cashier at the end of the line, sit down and enjoy lunch. Table manners are in order. Return tray and dishes. Don’t leave rubbish behind. No food or drink is to be taken out of the cafeteria. Students need to ask permission to leave the cafeteria for any reason.

CELL PHONES (High School)

Cell phones may be used by high school students in between classes during passing time and during lunch only. It is expected that students who use their cell phones during approved times do so in an appropriate, responsible, and ethical manner. Students who misuse their cell phone during the school day or while at a school related event, may have their phone confiscated and/or receive disciplinary action. Although cell phone use is approved for high school students in between classes during passing time, the R.C. Mahar Regional School is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged electronic devices; the administration will not investigate the loss, theft or damage of any electronic device. (See additional information under Electronic Devices on page 28)

CELL PHONES (Middle School)

Middle school students are not allowed to use their cell phones at any time during the

school day (See additional information under Electronic Devices on page 28)

CLASS CUTS

If a student is suspected of cutting a class, the classroom teacher will submit a “Class Cut Form” to the Student Monitor by the end of that day. Upon verification of the class cut, a phone call will be made to the parent/guardian and he/she will be assigned to the “Center for Continued Engagement” for one full day.

COMPUTER NETWORK ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

See Internet Use

DISPLAY OF AFFECTION

We take pride in the behavior of our students. Holding hands is permitted, but public displays of affection (such as prolonged kissing or hugging) on school grounds are embarrassing to both students and adults. These actions are inappropriate for the school environment and individuals who persist in this type of behavior may receive disciplinary action.

DISRUPTION

Faculty and staff have responsibility for classroom management, directing movement in the halls, and in responding to any disruption or to disruptive students. Students are expected to be responsive to their direction and be respectful of their requests.

DRESS CODE

The Ralph C. Mahar Regional School reserves the right to prohibit clothing or manner of dress which constitutes a health or safety concern or is disruptive or distracting to the educational process. This dress code policy applies to all school related and school sponsored events.

PLEASE NOTE: HATS, HOODS, BANDANAS, DO-RAGS, SUNGLASSES ARE NOT PERMITTED TO BE WORN BY STUDENTS.

DRIVING

- Any student who drives to school, must register the vehicle with the Principal’s Administrative Assistant in the high school office.
- Only students with properly registered vehicles are allowed to park in the designated student parking area.
- Students are not permitted to park in faculty or visitor parking areas.
- Students must be aware that the number of student parking spots is limited and the administration does not guarantee that there will be sufficient student parking on a daily basis.
- The school takes no responsibility for vehicles parked on school property.
- Students are expected to follow all state, local, and school driving and parking laws and regulations in order to maintain his/her parking privilege.

- Students may not return to their vehicles during the school day without permission from the administration.
- Students who park a vehicle on school property must understand that the administration has the right to search the vehicle if there is reasonable suspicion to believe illegal drugs, alcohol, stolen property, or other contraband may be present in the vehicle.
- If a student drives to school and is tardy more than 3 times in a quarter, the student will lose the privilege to park on school grounds for the rest of the quarter or 2 weeks, whichever is greater.
- Parking on school grounds is a privilege. Failure to abide by aforementioned guidelines or handbook policies may result in revocation of said privilege at the discretion of the administration.

DRUGS & ALCOHOL

Request for Assistance

Any student who volunteers for help and has not been reported under the influence or in possession, may receive confidential assistance through Student Services. Any administrator or faculty member can refer any student who meets the above description to Student Services immediately, or the student can directly contact their counselor.

Drugs and Alcohol

Students shall not use, consume, possess, or be under the influence of any beverage containing alcohol, any controlled or illegal substance, mind altering substance, or any other substance for the purposes of obtaining a “high” or “low” reaction. This includes any substance that is believed by the student to be a controlled substance or illegal drug. This also includes any substance that a student represents to be a controlled substance or illegal drug. Possession includes items found in the locker assigned to the student, in vehicles, and any other place where deposited in school or on school property by the student.

Violation of the Drugs & Alcohol Policy will result in suspension up to 10 days coupled with drug and alcohol counseling, and may result in referral to the principal for expulsion, in accordance with the Ralph C. Mahar Regional School Committee Policies and Guidelines and the Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 37H.

Breathalyzer Policy

The R.C. Mahar Regional School District is committed to the promotion of healthful living and to the safety and well-being of its students and faculty. In order to ensure a safe environment for all students, faculty, and the community-at-large, the R.C. Mahar Regional School Committee authorizes the Principal and the Assistant Principal to administer breathalyzer tests to students or their guests while on school property or at a school-sponsored event.

The primary goal of utilizing a breathalyzer is to deter students from engaging in illicit activity that could potentially result in harmful or fatal consequences. The breathalyzer may be used by

either blanket testing every student at a school-sponsored event or when, upon determination by the principal or designee, there is reasonable suspicion to believe that a student may have consumed alcohol. To the extent possible, advance notice will be given to the attendees if a blanket test of all students is to be conducted at a school-sponsored event or prior to an event as a condition for entry. When conducting a blanket test, or when initially testing a student when there is reasonable suspicion to believe that student may have consumed alcohol, the breathalyzer will operate in “Passive Mode”. In this mode, the breathalyzer can detect alcohol in a person’s breath by the mere exhaling of breath into the device. If alcohol is detected, the student will be escorted to a private location and the student may be subjected to an additional breathalyzer test.

If a student tests positive for alcohol, the student’s parent or guardian will be notified and the student will be subject to discipline according to the R.C. Mahar drug and alcohol policy. Students who refuse to take a breathalyzer test will be considered to have been using alcohol and will be subject to discipline according to R.C. Mahar drug and alcohol policy. If the principal or designee is unable to contact the student’s parent or guardian at the time of the incident, then emergency personnel will be contacted to transport the student for their safety.

Drug-Related Paraphernalia

Possession of drug related paraphernalia is any paraphernalia related to the use of a controlled or illegal substance. Possession includes items found in the locker assigned to the student, in vehicles and where deposited in school or on school property by the student. Violation of the drug paraphernalia policy may result in a ***suspension of one (1) to ten (10) days***.

Distribution or Trafficking (Controlled or Illegal Substances)

The distribution of an alcoholic beverage or any controlled or illegal substance and personal prescriptions with appropriate practitioner’s prescription or any substance represented or believed to be a controlled or illegal substance is a violation of the drug and alcohol policy.

Violation of the distribution or trafficking will result in ***suspension and mandatory counseling, and may result in referral to the Principal for expulsion***, in accordance with the Ralph C. Mahar Regional School Committee Policies and Guideline and the Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 37H.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES/TOYS

Electronic Device Policy/Disclaimer

Electronic devices such as I-Pods, *cell phones, cameras and similar items are not allowed during the school day. If seen, they may be confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the day. On the second offense, the device will be confiscated and the item must be picked up by the parent or guardian. Third offense the device cannot come back to the school again. Subsequent violations of this policy may result in additional disciplinary consequences up to and including suspension from school.

Furthermore, the R.C. Mahar Regional School is not responsible for lost or stolen electronic devices and the administration will **not** investigate the loss or theft of any electronic device or other prohibited item. Toys include, but are not limited to, skateboards and scooters are not allowed during the school day. If seen, they will be confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the day. On the second offense, the “toy” will be confiscated and the item must be picked up by the parent or guardian. Subsequent violations of this policy may result in additional disciplinary consequences up to and including suspension from school.

* See Cell Phone Policy

EYE PROTECTION POLICY (Mass. Law)

GL 71 Section 55C Eye protective devices

Ch 71, S 55C Each teacher and pupil of any school, public or private, shall, while attending school classes in industrial art or vocational shops or laboratories in which caustic or explosive chemicals, hot liquids or solids, hot molten metals, or explosives are used or in which welding of any type, repair or servicing of vehicles, heat treatment or tempering of metals, or the milling, sawing, stamping or cutting of solid materials, or any similar dangerous process is taught, exposure to which may be a source of danger to the eyes, wear an industrial quality eye protective device, approved by the department of public health. Each visitor to any such classroom or laboratory shall also be required to wear such protective devices.

FIGHTING

Fighting is not allowed and will lead to automatic suspension. Students should find other ways to solve problems or to get their point across. Mediation is available, as well as other help in resolving a seemingly irreconcilable conflict.

FOOD AND BEVERAGES

All food and beverages must adhere to the 2019-2020 District Wellness Policy. Students will be allowed to consume beverages during the school day as long as they are contained in a reasonably sized, and covered, cup and/or bottle. The drinking of beverages in the classroom should not disrupt the learning environment, and is permitted at the discretion of the teacher. For health and safety reasons, it is expected that students do not share their beverages with others. Staff members and administrators reserve the right to inspect any student’s cup/bottle for contraband if a student is suspected of having a cup/bottle that contains a questionable substance. Students are also expected to dispose of beverage containers properly. Students who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action to be determined by the administration. As always, teachers have control over the learning environment within their classrooms. The teacher reserves the right to prohibit the consumption of beverages in the classroom if the class lesson may be negatively impacted.

Areas where water bottles are prohibited:

1. Computer labs and near computers in the classrooms
2. Science Labs
3. The Library

4. The Woodshop

FORGERY

If a student forges any note, pass, or school document that student will receive an office detention.

HALL PASSES/SIGNING IN AND OUT OF CLASS

Whenever students are in the hallways during class time, students are expected to have a signed pass from a teacher or other staff member. Students are also expected to sign out of the class when they leave and sign back in when they return. Students who abuse the sign out privilege and/or are out of class for an excessive amount of time may have their sign-out privileges suspended.

HARASSMENT POLICY

The Ralph C. Mahar Regional School endeavors to maintain an environment free from all forms of harassment and discrimination. All members of the school community are expected to act in an appropriate manner and to show respect for others. It should be understood that harassment of any sort is not tolerated. Laws add weight to this statement of policy. Any case of harassment connected with race, color, national origin, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, handicap, or unwanted sexual attention, or any action which creates a hostile environment, such as a threat, creates a legal liability for both the student or students and the school.

Students who feel that they have been subjected to harassment should immediately report the incident to a staff member. Harassment can result in a suspension or other disciplinary action.

Harassment Policy

The Ralph C. Mahar Regional School District recognizes that harassment and intimidation have a negative effect on school climate. Students who are intimidated and fearful cannot give the single-minded attention they need for success. Harassment can also lead to more serious violence. Every student has the right to an education and to be safe in and around school.

1. **Definition of Harassment.** Harassment is a pattern of abuse over time and involves a student being “picked on”. Harassment includes physical intimidation or assault; extortion; oral or written threats; teasing; putdowns; name calling; threatening looks; gestures, or actions; cruel rumors; false accusations; and social isolation.
2. **Harassment is Prohibited.** The Ralph C. Mahar Regional School District and staff shall not tolerate any harassment on District school grounds or at any activity on their school campus.
3. **Staff Intervention.** The District expects staff members who observe or become aware of an act of harassment to take immediate, appropriate steps to intervene-unless intervention would be a threat to staff member’s safety. If a staff member believes that

his/her intervention has not resolved the matter, or if the harassment persists, he/she shall report harassment to the school administration for further investigation.

4. *Students and Parents Shall Report Harassment.* The District expects students and parents who become aware of an act of harassment to report it to the school administration for further investigation. Any student who retaliates against another for reporting harassment may be subject to the consequences listed below in paragraph six.

5. *Investigation Procedures.* Upon learning about a harassment incident, the Principal or his/her designee shall contact the parents of both the aggressor and the victim, interview both students and thoroughly investigate the incident. This investigation may include interviews with students, parents and school staff; review of school records; and identification of parent and family issues.

6. *Consequences/Intervention.* Consequences for the students who harass others shall depend on the results of the investigation and may include counseling; a parent conference; detention; suspension and/or expulsion. Depending on the severity of the incident, the Principal may also take appropriate steps to ensure student safety. These may include implementing a safety plan; separating and supervising the students involved; providing staff support for students as necessary; reporting incidents to law enforcement if appropriate; and developing a supervision plan with the parents.

1st Vote: April 15, 2003 2nd Vote: May 6, 2003

HAZING

The practice of “hazing” is prohibited. Hazing shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. The Mahar District Committee has accepted ***Chapter 269 of the Massachusetts General Laws, Sections 17, 18 & 19.***

(See Hazing Policy)

Hazing Policy (Mass Law)

Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars.

Section 17: Hazing; organizing or participating; hazing defined

Section 17. Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing, as defined herein, shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or both such fine and imprisonment.

The term "hazing" as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which wilfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or

other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

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

Section 18: Failure to report hazing

Section 18. Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars.

Section 19: Copy of Secs. 17 to 19; issuance to students and student groups, teams and organizations; report

Section 19. Each institution of secondary education and each public and private institution of post secondary education shall issue to every student group, student team or student organization which is part of such institution or is recognized by the institution or permitted by the institution to use its name or facilities or is known by the institution to exist as an unaffiliated student group, student team or student organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen; provided, however, that an institution's compliance with this section's requirements that an institution issue copies of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations shall not constitute evidence of the institution's recognition or endorsement of said unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations.

Each such group, team or organization shall distribute a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to each of its members, plebes, pledges or applicants for membership. It shall be the duty of each such group, team or organization, acting through its designated officer, to deliver annually, to the institution an attested acknowledgement stating that such group, team or organization has received a copy of this section and said sections seventeen and eighteen, that each of its members, plebes, pledges, or applicants has received a copy of sections seventeen and eighteen, and that such group, team or organization understands and agrees to comply with the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post secondary education shall, at least annually, before or at the start of enrollment, deliver to each person who enrolls as a full time student in such institution a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post secondary education shall file, at least annually, a report with the board of higher education and in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education, certifying that such institution has complied with its responsibility to inform student groups, teams or organizations and to notify each full time student enrolled by it of the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen and also certifying that said institution has adopted a disciplinary policy with regard to the organizers and participants of hazing, and that such policy has been set forth with appropriate emphasis in the student handbook or similar means of communicating the institution's policies to its students. The board of higher education and, in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution which fails to make such report.

MAHAR HAZING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

On behalf of _____, I certify that _____
(name of student group, team or organization) has received a copy of M.G.L. Chapter 269, Sections 17-19, an Act Prohibiting the Practice of hazing, and has distributed a copy of the law to its members, plebes, pledges and applicants for memberships; and that
_____ (name of student group, team or organization) understands and agrees to comply with the law.

Signature: _____
(Designated Officer)

Date: _____

Signature: _____
(Name of student group, team or organization)

Date: _____

Signature: _____
(Witness)

Date: _____

HORSEPLAY

Horseplay is not tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action.

INTERNET- RECORDING & POSTING VIDEO PICTURES TO SOCIAL MEDIA

With the increasing use of video and social media, students must be aware that when they take pictures and/or record video and post the recordings to social media, they are ultimately responsible for the content of the material and the response the recording/posting may create. Any student who photos/records an event that takes place during the school day or during a school related event and/or shares or posts the recording to social media, will be held accountable for the effect the photo, video, sharing, or posting may have on the school's climate. If such photos, videos or postings create a disruption to the school environment, the student may receive disciplinary action up to and including the suspension from school.

INTERNET USE- Technology Responsible Use Guidelines (TRUG) **Replaces the Electronic Resources Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)**

The TRUG provides parents/guardians, students, and staff with a statement of purpose and explanation of the use of technology within the learning community. This procedure is reinforced by practice, responsible use guidelines and is required to be read before accessing the technology devices, digital resources, and network infrastructure. Students, parents/guardians and all staff members must also read and sign the accompanying statement of responsibilities.

These guidelines are based on the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and its four guiding principles of: respect, privacy, sharing and safety. These guidelines are appropriate for

all technology users and we encourage parents to follow these guidelines in their own homes.

Orange Elementary, Petersham and Ralph C. Mahar Districts (OES/PCS/RCM) provide access to electronic resources that promote educational excellence, sharing of information, innovative instruction, and online communication to enhance today's learners' ability to live and work in the 21st century. Online communication constitutes but is not limited to email, Internet, blogging and any use of network resources. OES/PCS/RCM electronic resources include, but are not limited to all hardware, software, data, communication devices, printers, servers, filtered Internet access, and local and wide area networks.

Online communication is critical for today's learners to apply 21st Century Skills and employs tools such as interactive websites, blogs, video conferencing, podcasts, which offer authentic opportunities for students to express and share information. To keep students safe and comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), the TRUG is put in place and updated to accommodate for the many educational and global changes to date. This TRUG is written for all those who use electronic devices in our schools. These electronic devices may be used for classroom blogs, student emails, podcast projects, interactive websites, and any other occasion by students, teachers, and staff or community members.

The following is a statement of rules and guidelines for the responsible use of electronic devices. These are provided to help understand what is responsible behavior with the use of technology? While these rules and guidelines detail responsible use of electronic information resources anywhere, these are rules and guidelines under which all members of the OES/PCS/RCM community (students and staff) will be held accountable.

USAGE GUIDELINE

OES/PCS/RCM provide students and staff access to various electronic resources including a wide range of educational materials through Internet and computer online services.

Content Filtering-

The OES/PCS/RCM Schools use software designed to block access to certain sites and filter content as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, 47 U.S.C. S254 (CIPA). The OES/PCS/RCM Schools are aware that not all inappropriate information can be filtered and the district will make an effort to correct any known gaps in the filtering of information without unduly inhibiting the educational use of age appropriate content by staff and students. Users will inform Teachers and Administrators of any inadvertent access to inappropriate material, in order that there is appropriate modification of the filtering profile. OES/PCS/RCM Schools educate students about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking web sites and in chat rooms and cyberbullying awareness and response.

Student Safety-

Do not send any message that includes personal information such as: home address, personal phone numbers and/or last name for yourself or any other person. Likewise, the staff is not permitted to post this information to public domains (i.e. class web page or Internet). Student pictures and/or work may only be included on district/school/classroom websites with

parent/guardian permission and without identifying captions unless the site is password protected.

Extended Safety PK-6-

Teachers of students in grades PK-2 will access appropriate websites for their students. Students in grades 3-6 may not attempt to access any Internet resource without the prior consent and supervision of staff.

Password Protection-

Passwords are provided for each user's personal use only and are, therefore, confidential. Never share your password, steal or use another person's password. If you suspect that someone has discovered your password, you should change it immediately and notify your teacher or administrator who in turn will notify the network administrator or the technology director. As words are easily hacked, when establishing a password one should keep in mind that strong passwords consist of a combination of upper and lowercase letters, numbers and symbols.

Privacy-

E-mail is no more private than a postcard. Students and staff need to know that files stored on school computers are not private. Network and Internet access is provided as a tool for educational purposes only. The District has the right to monitor, inspect, copy, review and store at any time and without prior notice any and all usage of the computer network and Internet access including transmitted and received information. All information files are the property of the District and no user shall have any expectation of privacy regarding such files. Federal Law requires that all email sent and received be stored for a period of "seven years".

Online Etiquette-

Follow the guidelines of responsible behaviors within the school handbook. Use appropriate language and graphics. Swearing, vulgarities, suggestive, obscene, belligerent, harassing, threatening or abusive language of any kind is not acceptable. Do not use school online access to make, distribute, or redistribute, cyber bullying, obscene material or material which is based on slurs or stereotypes relating to race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender identity or sexual orientation.

Messaging-

Teachers may incorporate: email, blogs, podcasts, video conferencing, online collaborations, electronic devices, IMing, texting, social media, Virtual Learning Environments and other forms of direct electronic communications or Web 2.0 applications for educational purposes. Although teachers monitor student online activity, it is the direct responsibility of the user to comply with this TRUG.

Web 2.0 Tools-

Uses of blogs, podcasts, or other Web 2.0 tools are considered an extension of the classroom. Whether at home or in school, any speech that is considered inappropriate in the classroom is

also inappropriate in all uses of blogs, podcasts, or other Web 2.0 tools. Students using blogs, podcasts or other Web 2.0 tools are expected to act safely and responsibly by keeping all personal information out of their posts. Comments made on school related blogs should follow the rules of online etiquette detailed above and will be monitored by school personnel. If inappropriate, they will be deleted. Never link to web sites from a blog without reading the entire article to make sure it is appropriate for a school setting.

Student Emails to Staff-

Students are encouraged to email staff concerning school-related content and questions. However, there will be no requirement or expectation for staff to answer student email outside of their regular work day, although they certainly may if they choose. For example, an unanswered email to a teacher would not excuse a student from turning in an assignment.

General Email and On-Line Chat Guidelines-

Below is a general summary of guidelines related to email and form of on-line chat or instant messages:

Email and on-line chat is to be used for school-related communication.

Do not send harassing emails or instant messages or content.

Do not send offensive email or instant messages or content.

Do not send spam email or instant messages or content.

Do not send email or instant messages containing a virus or other malicious content.

Do not send or read email or instant messages at inappropriate times, such as during class instruction.

Do not send email or instant messages to share test answers or promote cheating in any way.

Do not use the account of another person.

Plagiarism/Copyright/Licensing-

Plagiarism is the act of using someone else's words or ideas as your own. Students are required to give proper credit to all Internet sources used in academic assignments, whether quoted or summarized. This includes all forms of media on the Internet, such as graphics, movies, music, and text. Plagiarism of Internet resources will be treated in the same manner as any other incidences of plagiarism, as stated in the school handbook. In addition, all students and faculty must adhere to the copyright laws of the United States (P.L. 94-553) and the Congressional Guidelines that delineate it regarding software, authorship, and copying information. All students and faculty should also adhere to the Creative Commons licenses where the author/artist denotes what media may be shared, remixed, or reused.

Proxies-

The use of anonymous proxies to get around content filtering is strictly prohibited and is a direct violation of this agreement.

Illegal Activity-

Use of any electronic devices for any illegal activity is prohibited. Illegal activities include, but are not limited to: (a) tampering with computer hardware or software, (b) software piracy, (c) unauthorized entry into computers and files (hacking), (d) knowledgeable vandalism or destruction of equipment, (e) deletion of computer files belonging to someone other than oneself, (f) uploading or creating of computer viruses, (g) distribution of obscene or pornographic materials, (h) sexting and (i) cyber bullying.

Such activity is considered a crime under state and federal law. Users must be aware that any illegal action carried out over the Internet will be reported to law enforcement officials for possible prosecution. Please be advised, it is a federal offense (felony) to break into any security system. Financial and legal consequences of such actions are the responsibility of the user (staff, guests, and student) and student's parent or guardian.

Social Media-

In accordance with OES/PCS/RCM school district policies, the use of social media sites as a method for staff to push information out to students, parents, and community members is allowed. Below are **examples** of minimum information required for faculty to provide to building Principals and/or their designees (i.e., IT department).

Twitter:

- Must submit username and page URL to Principal.
- Account needs to be created with your district email address.
- Cannot follow student accounts.

Facebook:

- Must be a business page where users can only "Like" the page.
- Account needs to be created with your district email address.
- Must submit page URL to the Principal.
- Cannot become friends with students.

Google+:

- Account needs to be created with your district email address.
- Can only follow student accounts created with their district email address.

TERMS OF AGREEMENT

The OES/PCS/RCM Schools reserve the right to deny, revoke or suspend specific user privileges and/or take other disciplinary action, up to and including suspension, expulsion (students), or dismissal (staff) for violations of these Guidelines. The Districts will advise appropriate law enforcement agencies of illegal activities conducted through the OES/PCS/RCM Internet connection. The Districts also will cooperate fully with local, state, and /or federal officials in any investigation related to any illegal activities conducted through the network. The school districts and its representatives are not responsible for the actions of the users or the information they access.

LOCKERS

The school owns lockers which it lends to students for their use in the classroom halls as well as in the locker rooms for physical education. The school does not guarantee the security of the lockers. Keep the locker locked at all times. Do not bring items of value to school. DO NOT SHARE LOCKERS.

MEDICINE

See: STUDENT SERVICES, MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT and/or OVER THE COUNTER DRUGS

OBLIGATIONS: STUDENT OBLIGATION POLICY

Any outstanding student obligations will be reported to the Principal's office using the Student Obligation Sheet at the completion of each semester course, year-long course or sports season. A student cannot participate in any extra-curricular (school) activity, be it a sport, club, dance or any other school sponsored activity until such time as his/her obligation is cleared.

OFFICE

Anytime a staff member directs a student to the office, he/she must go. Once in the office, the student will be given the opportunity to explain the problem that he/she is experiencing. ***Failure to report to the office may result in suspension.***

OVER THE COUNTER DRUGS

Use or possession of over the counter drugs is a violation of Mahar's Medication Policy. Only the school nurse may give medication at school (See Medical and Health Department).

Examples of over the counter drugs include Tylenol (acetaminophen), aspirin, Motrin, Advil (ibuprofen), decongestants, vitamins, dietary supplements, herbal supplements, nasal sprays and personal prescriptions with the appropriate practitioner's prescription. Possession includes items found in the locker assigned to the student and where deposited in school or on school property by the student. Violation of over the counter drugs policy may result in a suspension or other disciplinary action. Multiple infractions of this policy may lead to more severe disciplinary measures.

Over the Counter Drugs- Distribution or Trafficking

The distribution of over the counter drugs such as Tylenol (acetaminophen), aspirin, Motrin, Advil (ibuprofen), decongestants, vitamins, dietary supplements, herbal supplements, nasal sprays is a violation of the drug and alcohol policy. Violation of the distribution or trafficking will result in suspension in accordance with the Ralph C. Mahar Regional School Committee Policies and Guidelines.

PLAGIARISM & CHEATING

Plagiarism is the use of another person's writing, words, or ideas and presenting them as your own. Cheating is the use of dishonest methods to achieve a goal. Students who plagiarize or cheat, in whole or part, will have their parents contacted by the teacher and the student will face disciplinary and academic action.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is not tolerated at Mahar. If a student feels harassed, he/she should see a teacher, nurse, guidance counselor, or administrator and ask for help. Ask for the legal form on which a complaint of sexual harassment is to be reported.

Sexual Harassment Policy Guidelines for Recognizing and Dealing with Sexual Harassment

I. The Policy

A. It is the policy of the Ralph C. Mahar Regional School District to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from sexual harassment. No student or employee of this District shall be subjected to sexual harassment.

B. It shall be a violation of this policy for any member of the Ralph C. Mahar Regional School student body to harass another member of the student body or staff or for any staff member to harass another staff member or student through conduct or communication of a sexual nature as defined in Section II.

C. The Principal shall be responsible for promoting understanding and acceptance of, and assuring compliance with, state and federal laws and school board policy and procedures governing sexual harassment.

D. Violations of this policy or procedure will be cause for disciplinary action.

II. Definition

Sexual harassment is UNWANTED sexual attention from peers, subordinates, supervisors or anyone the victim may interact with in order to fulfill job or school duties, where the victim's responses may be restrained by fear or reprisals. The range of behaviors include, but is not limited to: verbal comments, subtle pressure for sexual activity, pinching, patting and other forms of unwanted touching, as well as rape or attempted rape.

III. Legal Aspect

Court cases have found sexual harassment in the workplace to be a violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964. This is the law which protects workers in school. Students are protected from sexual harassment under the Provisions of Title IX as courts have found sexual harassment to be a form of sex discrimination. If sexual harassment involves a minor student in a school setting, it can also be considered a criminal offense under laws relating to child abuse.

IV. Effects on the Victim

The victim may be in school infrequently in order to avoid the harassment (more days absent). The victim's enjoyment of and pride in work is often undermined or destroyed because the victim is forced to spend time and energy fending off humiliating sexual advances. There can also be physical and psychological effects similar to those experienced by rape victims. Professional counseling may be necessary.

Guidance Procedures

If you have reason to believe you are a victim of sexual harassment, the following procedures and policies have been established to protect your individual rights.

1. Report the incident to the Principal, School Nurse or School Counselor immediately. Your identity will be held in the strictest confidence.
2. If informal solutions do not remedy the situation, a formal written complaint should be filed with the Principal and/or School Nurse.
3. Within five working days of the receipt of a formal complaint, an Investigation Committee comprised of the Principal, the School Nurse, and the School Psychologist will meet to investigate the complaint. The Superintendent may designate alternates when appropriate to the Investigation Committee. The written complaint will be acted upon swiftly and will receive a thorough investigation of all-pertinent facts and allegations. The identities and circumstances concerning the incident(s) will be kept among the parties involved in the investigation. A violation of this trust by any party involved in the process will subject the violator of the trust to a recommendation to the Superintendent for disciplinary action. Action will range from verbal and written warning to suspension without pay, or to exclusion and dismissal, depending upon the extent to which confidentiality was breached.
4. The investigation is to be completed within twenty-one working days of the first meeting. The investigation committee will determine if just cause exists for the imposition of disciplinary action against the offender and recommend to the Superintendent a course of action. The severity of the recommendation will depend on the seriousness of the offense and will range from verbal and written warning to suspension without pay, or to exclusion and dismissal. The Investigation Committee will direct the offending party in writing to terminate immediately any further action(s) against the victim that could be construed as sexual harassment and/or reprisal(s) for bringing the initial complaint. Ignoring this written directive of the Investigation Committee will only provide a basis for the implementation of more severe disciplinary action.
5. If the victim does not agree with the finding of the Investigation Committee, the finding may be appealed to the Superintendent within ten working days. Upon receipt of the appeal, the Superintendent will provide a written decision within ten working days to the victim.
6. If the victim is not satisfied by the decision of the Superintendent, a written appeal may be submitted to the School Committee within ten working days. Upon receipt of the appeal, the School Committee will provide a hearing and will issue a written decision within ten working days to the victim.

Retaliation:

Retaliation in any form against any person who has filed a complaint regarding sexual harassment is forbidden. If it occurs, it would be considered grounds for removal from the educational setting for a student or dismissal of staff.

TEACHER REFERRAL

On some occasions, matters of student behavior may be referred to the administration. The administration will seek solutions from a variety of options to assist the student. Options might

include meeting with the student, parent, contact, referral to other support personnel, as well as actions such as detention or suspension. Incidents of fighting, assault, drug or alcohol use/possession, tobacco use, or weapon possession will result in suspension and/or exclusion. Other infractions such as cutting classes, not serving detentions, using profanity toward a staff member and other incidents might also get you suspended.

THEFT

Thefts should be reported to a teacher or to the office as soon as possible. Students caught stealing will be suspended and/or reported to the police.

TOBACCO/VAPING

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has established tobacco free zones and prohibits the use of tobacco in public schools. The Act prohibits the use of tobacco products within school buildings, the school facilities, on school grounds, on school busses by any individual, including school personnel, or at any school-sponsored event. The school's policy also prohibits the use or possession of electronic cigarettes including but not limited to vapes, e-cigarettes, and Juuls. The penalties for students who violate this policy are as follows:

Smoking/Vaping

First Offense:

- \$100.00 fine. (Student's name is added to the obligation list immediately upon issuance of the fine. The student is unable to participate in any extracurricular activities until the fine is paid and the student's name is removed from the obligation list.)
- The \$100.00 fine can be reduced to \$50.00 upon successful completion of the anti-smoking/vaping program.
- Up to 3 days of In-School Suspension
- Parent/guardian notification
- Smoking/vaping products will be confiscated by the administration
- MIAA/Athletic eligibility penalty

Second Offense:

- \$100.00 fine. (Student's name is added to the obligation list immediately upon issuance of the fine. The student is unable to participate in any extracurricular activities until the fine is paid and the student's name is removed from the obligation list.)
- 1 day of Out-of-School Suspension
- Parent/guardian notification
- Smoking/vaping products will be confiscated by the administration
- MIAA/Athletic eligibility penalty

Third Offense (and all subsequent offenses):

- \$100.00 fine. (Student's name is added to the obligation list immediately upon issuance of the fine. The student is unable to participate in any extracurricular activities until the fine is paid and the student's name is removed from the obligation list.)
- 3 days of Out-of-School Suspension
- Parent/guardian notification
- Smoking/vaping products will be confiscated by the administration
- MIAA/Athletic eligibility penalty

Possession of Tobacco/Vaping Materials (Possession of tobacco/vaping paraphernalia including but not limited to: cigarettes, cigars, smokeless tobacco, electronic cigarettes, vape pens, Juuls, vaping liquid, liquid nicotine, or dissolvable tobacco)

First Offense:

- \$50.00 fine. (Student's name is added to the obligation list immediately upon issuance of the fine. The student is unable to participate in any extracurricular activities until the fine is paid and the student's name is removed from the obligation list.)
- Parent/guardian notification
- 1 day of In-School-Suspension
- Smoking/vaping products will be confiscated by the administration

Second Offense:

- \$50.00 fine. (Student's name is added to the obligation list immediately upon issuance of the fine. The student is unable to participate in any extracurricular activities until the fine is paid and the student's name is removed from the obligation list.)
- Parent/guardian notification
- 2 days of In-School-Suspension
- Smoking/vaping products will be confiscated by the administration

Third Offense (and all subsequent offenses):

- \$50.00 fine. (Student's name is added to the obligation list immediately upon issuance of the fine. The student is unable to participate in any extracurricular activities until the fine is paid and the student's name is removed from the obligation list.)
- Parent/guardian notification
- 1 day of Out-of-School Suspension
- Smoking/vaping products will be confiscated by the administration

VANDALISM

Vandalism is not tolerated. Anyone damaging the school will be asked to pay restitution and or be suspended.

VISITORS

All visitors must report to the middle school office or high-school office to sign-in.

WANDERING

Students are expected to be in class or appropriately using a hall pass during the school day. Students who abuse the time away from the class and are “wandering” the building will be subject to disciplinary action.

WEAPONS

A student bringing a weapon to school will be suspended and possibly expelled. Students are afforded due process as outlined in Goss. V. Lopez.

V. DISCIPLINE

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT- (Mass. Law)

Chapter 71: Section 37G Corporal Punishment of pupils prohibited; use of physical restraint; regulations

Section 37G.

- (a) The power of the school committee or of any teacher or any other employee or agent of the school committee to maintain discipline upon school property shall not include the right to inflict corporal punishment upon any pupil.
- (b) The provisions of this section shall not preclude any member of the school committee or any teacher or any employee or agent of the school committee from using such reasonable force as is necessary to protect pupils, other persons and themselves from an assault by a pupil. When such an assault has occurred, the principal shall file a detailed report of such with the school committee.
- (c) The board of education shall promulgate regulations regarding the use of physical restraint for students. Such regulations shall not preclude any teacher or employee or agent of the school from using reasonable force to protect pupils, other persons and themselves from an assault by a pupil as set forth above in section.

Restraint

Such regulations shall require training of all personnel authorized to administer any forms of restraint. Such regulations shall provide for procedures for notification to the department and to the parents.

****See the Orange Elementary, Petersham Center & RC Mahar Regional Schools Physical Restraint Procedures located on the website @ www.rcmahar.org Click on Students/Click on Handbook.****

DETENTION

Office detention letters will not be sent home when a student receives an office detention. A copy of the detention notice will be given to the student indicating the date the detention was earned, the date the detention is to be served and the infraction. In order to provide students an opportunity to arrange for transportation home, students may elect to serve their detention on the day it is issued or the following school day. Students will not receive reminders the day of their detention. Detention is held Tuesday through Thursday from 2:10-3:00 P.M. for one-hour detentions and from 2:10 P.M.-4:00 P.M. for two-hour detentions. Students who fail to serve a one-hour detention will be assigned a two-hour detention. Students who fail to serve a two-hour detention will be assigned to the “Center for Continued Engagement” for one full day, put on the obligation list or possibly suspended depending on the infraction.

It is the responsibility of the student to arrange for transportation home. It is expected that students leave the building immediately following the conclusion of their detention and not remain unsupervised on school property.

SUSPENSION

Disciplinary removal for at least half the school day from the students regularly scheduled school activities whether in school or out of school.

Suspension & Expulsion (Mass Law) Chapter 71, Sections 37H, 37H1/2, and 37H3/4.

The Superintendent of every school district shall publish the district’s policies pertaining to the conduct of teachers and students. Said policies shall prohibit the use of any tobacco products within the school buildings, the school facilities or on the school grounds or on school buses by any individual, including school personnel. Copies of these policies shall be provided to any person upon request and without cost by the Principal of every school within the district.

Each school district’s policies pertaining to the conduct of the students shall include the following disciplinary proceedings, including procedures assuring due process, standards and procedures for suspension and expulsion of students; procedures pertaining to discipline of students with special needs; standards and procedures to assure school building security and safety of students and school personnel, and the disciplinary measures to be taken in cases involving the possession or use of illegal substances or weapons, the use of force, vandalism, or violation of other students’ civil rights. Codes of discipline, as well as procedures used to develop such codes shall be filed with the Department of Education for informational purposes only.

In each school building containing the grades nine to twelve, inclusive, the Principal, in consultation with the School Council, shall prepare and distribute to each student a Student Handbook setting forth the rules pertaining to the conduct of students. The School Council shall review the Student Handbook each spring to consider changes in disciplinary policy to take effect in September of the following school year, but may consider policy changes at any time. The annual review shall cover all areas of the student conduct, including but not limited to those

outlined in this section.

Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, all student handbooks shall contain the following provisions:

Section 37H

- (a) Any student who is found on school premises or at school sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to a gun or a knife, or a controlled substance as defined in Chapter ninety-four C including but not limited to marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the Principal.
- (b) Any student who assaults a Principal, Assistant Principal, Teacher, Teacher's Aide, or other educational staff on school premises or at school sponsored or school related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the Principal.
- (c) Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have a representative, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the Principal. After said hearing, a Principal may, in his discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the Principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b). (Chapter 51 of the Acts of 1994, approved July 1, 1994, effective September 29, 1994.)
- (d) Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the Superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the Superintendent of his appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the Superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.

(This section was amended by Chapter 380 of the Acts of 1993 on January 4, 1994.)

Section 37H 1/2

Notwithstanding the provisions of section eighty-four and sections sixteen and seventeen of chapter seventy-six;

- (1) Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony or upon the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the Principal, or Headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may suspend such student for a period of time determined appropriate by said Principal or Headmaster if said Principal or Headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantially detrimental effect on general welfare of the school. The student shall receive a written notification of the charges and the reasons for such suspension prior to such suspension taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his/her right to appeal and the process for appealing such suspension; provided,

however, that such suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal a hearing conducted by the Superintendent.

The student shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the Superintendent. The student shall notify the Superintendent in writing of his/her request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the suspension. The Superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the student's request for an appeal. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his/her behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The Superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the Principal or Headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The Superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such a decision shall be final for the city, town, or regional school district with regard to the suspension.

(2) Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjunction or admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony delinquency, the Principal or Headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may expel said student if such Principal or Headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantially detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall also receive written notification of his/her right to appeal and the process for appealing such expulsion; provided however, that the expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the Superintendent.

The student shall have the right to appeal the expulsion to the Superintendent. The student shall notify the Superintendent, in writing, of his request for an appeal no later than ten calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion. The Superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The Superintendent shall have the authority to overturn, or alter the decision of the Principal; or Headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The Superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision on the appeal shall be within five calendar days of the hearing. Such a decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the expulsion.

(This section was added by Chapter 380 of the Acts of 1993 on January 4, 1994.)

The Department of Education and the Department of Youth Services shall, pursuant to a study and recommendations conducted by the Mass Jobs Council, assure that an educational opportunity is provided for a student whose admission to a school or right to educational services is regulated by the provisions of this act. Said study shall contain a statistical analysis of the number of students who have been expelled and the services that are now provided, and recommendations for the provision of education to expelled

students in the future. Said study shall be completed within five months and shall be submitted to the house and senate clerk and the house and senate chairman of the joint committee on education, arts, and humanities.

DUE PROCESS FOR SUSPENSIONS:

NOTICE OF PROPOSED SUSPENSION- Chapter 222

Except in the case of an emergency removal or disciplinary offense defined under M.G.L. c. 71, §§37H or 37H1/2, or an in-school suspension as defined by 603 CMR 53.02(6), the school shall provide the student and parent/guardian with written and oral notice of the proposed out-of-school suspension, an opportunity to be heard at a hearing, and the opportunity to participate at the hearing. Notice shall set forth in plain language:

- a) the disciplinary offense;
- b) the basis for the charge;
- c) the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension;
- d) the opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the principal concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and for the parent/guardian to attend the hearing;
- e) the date, time, and location of the hearing;
- f) the right of the student and student's parent/guardian to interpreter services at the hearing, if needed to participate;

The principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent/guardian orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. In order to conduct a hearing without the parent/guardian present, the principal must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent/guardian. Reasonable effort is presumed if the principal sent written notice and documented at least two attempts to contact the parent/guardian in the manner specified by the parent/guardian for emergency situations.

All written communications regarding notice of proposed suspension shall be either by hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to address provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by the principal and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate.

SHORT-TERM SUSPENSIONS: HEARING AND PRINCIPAL DETERMINATION

A short-term suspension is the removal of the student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten (10) consecutive days or less. Out-of-school short-term suspensions which do not cumulatively over the course of the school year exceed ten (10) days of suspension shall be conducted in accordance with this section.

Principal Hearing.

The purpose of the hearing with the principal is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to

dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student has committed the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts. A parent/guardian present at the hearing shall have the opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances.

Based on the available information, including mitigating circumstances, the principal will make a determination whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequence. The principal will provide notification in writing of his/her determination in the form of an update to the student and parent/guardian, and provide reasons for the determination. If the student is suspended, the principal shall inform the parent/guardian of the type and duration of the suspension, and shall provide an opportunity for the student to make up assignments and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal.

If the student is in grades pre-k through 3, the principal shall send his/her determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons prior to imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the short-term suspension takes effect.

All written communications regarding the hearing and principal determination shall be either hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to the address provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by the principal and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate.

LONG-TERM SUSPENSIONS: HEARING AND PRINCIPAL DETERMINATION

A long-term suspension is the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. The purpose of the hearing with the principal is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student has committed the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the principal will consider in determining whether alternatives to suspension such as loss of privileges, detention, an apology, a student contract, restitution, and/or probation are appropriate.

Additionally, the student shall have the following additional rights:

- i. In advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not;
- ii. the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's and or parent's/guardian's expense;

- iii. the right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so; and
- iv. the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;
- v. the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the principal. All participants shall be informed that the hearing is being recorded by audio. A copy of the audio recording will be provided to the student or parent/guardian upon request.

Based on the evidence submitted at the hearing the principal shall make a determination as to whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension (the use of evidence-based strategies and programs, such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive interventions and supports) what remedy or consequence will be imposed. If the principal decides to impose a long-term suspension, the written determination shall:

- i. Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing;
- ii. Set out key facts and conclusions reached by the principal;
- iii. Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school;
- iv. Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive a specific list of education services to make academic progress during removal, and the contact information of a school member who can provide more detailed information.
- v. Inform the student of the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent or his/her designee (only if a long-term suspension has been imposed) within five (5) calendar days, which may be extended by parent/guardian request in writing an additional seven (7) calendar days.

The long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the superintendent decides to reverse the principal's determination on appeal.

If the student is in grades pre-k through grade 3, the principal shall send his/her determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons prior to imposing an out-of-school suspension, whether short-term or long-term, before the suspension takes effect.

All written communications regarding the hearing and principal determination shall be either hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to the provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by the principal and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or by other means of communication where appropriate.

APPEAL OF LONG-TERM SUSPENSION

A student who is placed on a long-term suspension shall have the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent if properly and timely filed. A good faith effort shall be made to

include the parent/guardian at the hearing. The appeal shall be held within three (3) school days of the appeal, unless the student or parent/guardian requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days, which the superintendent shall grant.

The student and parent/guardian shall have the same rights afforded at the long-term suspension principal hearing. Within five (5) calendar days of the hearing the superintendent shall issue his/her written decision which meets the criteria required of the principal's determination. If the superintendent determines the student committed the disciplinary offense, the superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than that of the principal. The superintendent's decision shall be final.

EMERGENCY REMOVAL

A student may be temporarily removed prior to notice and hearing when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school and, in the principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption. The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days, following the day of the emergency removal.

Emergency removal of a student will not occur until adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transport.

During the emergency removal the principal shall make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and student's parent/guardian of the emergency removal and the reason for the emergency removal. The principal shall also provide the due process requirements of written notice for suspensions and provide for a hearing which meets the due process requirements of a long-term suspension within the two (2) school day time period, unless an extension of time for the hearing is otherwise agreed to by the principal, student, and parent/guardian.

A decision shall be rendered orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day. The decision shall meet all of the due process requirements of a principal's determination in a long-term suspension.

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION UNDER 603 CMR 53:02(6) & 603 CMR 53.10

In-school suspension is defined as the removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not the school premises, for not more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions over the course of the school year.

A principal may impose an in-school suspension as defined above according to the following procedures:

The principal shall inform the student of the disciplinary offense charged and the basis for the charge, and provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the

circumstances surrounding the alleged incident. If the principal determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the principal shall inform the student of the length of the student's in-school suspension, which shall not exceed ten (10) days, cumulatively or consecutively, in a school year.

On the same day as the in-school suspension decision, the principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding that the student committed the infraction, and the length of the in-school suspension. The principal shall also invite the parent to a meeting to discuss the student's academic performance and behavior, strategies for student engagement, and possible responses to the behavior. Such a meeting shall be scheduled on the day of the suspension if possible, and if not, as soon thereafter as possible. If the principal is unable to reach the parent after making and documenting at least two (2) attempts to do so, such attempts shall constitute reasonable efforts for purposes of orally informing the parent of the in-school suspension.

The principal shall send written notice to the student and parent about the in-school suspension, including the reason and the length of the in-school suspension, and inviting the parent to a meeting with the principal for the purpose set forth above, if such a meeting has not already occurred. The principal shall deliver such notice on the day of the suspension by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or by another method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent.

SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION FOR DISCIPLINARY OFFENSES UNDER M.G.L. 71 §§37H and 37H1/2 The due process notification and hearing requirements in the preceding sections do not apply to the following disciplinary offenses:

Possession of a dangerous weapon, possession of a controlled substance, or assault of staff A student may be subject to expulsion if found in possession of a dangerous weapon, possession of a controlled substance, or the student assaults a member of educational staff, and the principal determines the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

The principal shall notify the student and parent(s) guardian(s) in writing of the opportunity for a hearing, and the right to have representation at the hearing, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses. After said hearing, a principal may, in his discretion, decide to levy a suspension rather than expulsion. A student expelled for such an infraction shall have the right to appeal the decision to the superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten (10) days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of his/her appeal. The student has the right to counsel at the hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student was guilty of the alleged offense.

Felony complaint or issuance of felony delinquency complaint

Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony, or the issuance of

a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the principal may suspend a student for a period of time determined appropriate by the principal if the principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

The principal shall notify the student in writing of the charges, the reasons for the suspension (prior to such suspension taking effect), and the right to appeal. The principal will also provide the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) the process for appealing the suspension to the superintendent. The request for appeal must be made in writing within five (5) calendar days.

The hearing shall be held within three (3) days of the request. The suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing before the superintendent. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony, and the right to counsel. The Superintendent has the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal. The Superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days of the hearing.

Felony conviction or adjudication/admission in court of guilt for a felony or felony delinquency

The principal may expel a student convicted of a felony, or has an adjudication or admission of guilt regarding a felony, if the principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

The student shall receive written notification of the charges and reasons for the proposed expulsion. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal the decision to the superintendent, as well as the appeal process. The expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent in writing of his/her request for an appeal of the decision no later than five (5) calendar days following the date of the expulsion. The superintendent hearing shall be held with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) within three (3) calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent has the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days of the hearing.

Any student expelled from school for such an offense shall be afforded an opportunity to receive educational services and make academic progress.

SE #46 Procedures for Suspension of Students with Disabilities

DISCIPLINING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (Mass. Law)

Generally, students with special needs are expected to adhere to the same discipline regulations as non-special needs students. At the same time, legislation has been enacted to provide procedural safeguards to students with disabilities.

School personnel can remove (suspend) a child with a disability for short periods of time as

long as the removal does not constitute a change in placement. A change of placement occurs if the removal is for more than 10 consecutive school days or the child is subjected to a series of removals that constitute a pattern because they cumulate to more than 10 school days in a school year, and because such factors such as length of each removal, the total amount of time the child is removed and the proximity of the removals to one another.

School personnel may order, to the extent removal would be applied to children without disabilities, the removal of a child with a disability from the child's current placement for not more than 10 consecutive school days for any violation of school rules and additional removals of not more than 10 consecutive school days in that same school year for separate incidents of misconduct (as long as those removals do not constitute a change of placement).

When a suspension constitutes a change in placement of a student with disabilities, District personnel, the parent, and other relevant members of the team as determined by the parent and the District, will convene a behavior manifestation determination meeting within 10 days of the decision to suspend to review all relevant information in the student's file, including the IEP, teacher observations, any relevant information from the parents to determine whether the behavior the behavior was caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the disability or was the direction result of the Districts failure to implement the IEP.

If District personnel, the parent and other relevant members of the Team determine that the behavior is NOT a manifestation of the disability, then the suspension or expulsion may go forward consistent with policies applied to any student without disabilities, except, after a child with a disability has been removed for more than 10 school days in the same school year, the District must provide services to enable the student, although in another setting, to continue to participate in the general education curriculum and to progress toward IEP goals. In addition, the LEA must conduct as appropriate a functional behavioral assessment and implement a behavioral intervention plan for the child. If the child already has a behavioral intervention plan, the IEP team shall meet to review the plan and its implementation and modify as necessary.

School personnel may order a change of a placement of a child with a disability to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting for not more than 45 days if the child carries a weapon to school or a school function or possesses or uses illegal drugs or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school or a school function. A hearing officer may order a change to an interim setting for not more than 45 days if the LEA demonstrates that maintaining the current placement is likely to result in injury to the child or others. If an action is contemplated regarding a 45 day removal or other action that constitutes a change of placement the parents must be notified and provided procedural safeguards notice not later than the date on which the decision to take action is made.

Immediately, if possible, but in no case later than 10 school days after the date on which the decision to take that action is made, a review must be conducted of the relationship between the child's disability and the behavior subject to the disciplinary action (manifestation determination).

If the child's parent disagrees with the manifestation determination, the parent may request a hearing to appeal. The State or local educational agency shall arrange for an expedited hearing before a hearing officer. If a parent requests a hearing or an appeal to challenge an interim alternative educational setting or the manifestation determination, the child must remain in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the time period provided (45 days), whichever occurs first unless the parent and

local educational agency agree otherwise.

If District personnel, the parent and other relevant members of the Team determine that the behavior is a manifestation of the disability, the Team completes a functional behavioral assessment and a behavioral intervention plan if it has not already done so. If a behavioral intervention plan is already in place, the IEP Team reviews and modifies it as necessary to address the behavior. The student returns to the original placement, except when the student has been placed in an interim alternative educational setting (if the behavior involved illegal drugs, weapons or the infliction of serious bodily injury on another person while in school or at a school function) unless the parents and District agree otherwise or a hearing officer orders a new placement.

Chapter 766, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1997 Amendments), and case law such as *Honig vs. Doe*, affect disciplining students with special needs. The Massachusetts Department of Education and Legislature have also made recent changes to Special Education laws and regulations (effective September 2000).

The section above is only an attempt to highlight applicable laws and regulations and is not meant to replace the actual documents.

The reader should refer to the actual documents for the full text.
(Federal Register Vol. 64, No. 48, March 1999 S. 300.519- S 300.529).

For a discipline flow chart,
see:http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/IDEA2004/spr_meetings/disc_chart.doc

Our responsibility is to maintain a safe, secure environment for everyone in the school. Any behavior which jeopardizes any individual or the well-being of the school as a whole will not be tolerated. Students are to remain conscious at all times about their actions, behaviors, language and the impact of these things on others.

Discipline is an important part of every student's education. Civility and mutual respect between teachers and students and between students is a primary goal at Mahar.

Breaking rules such as fighting, stealing and showing disrespect for staff and other students will not be tolerated. The students involved in these types of incidents can expect severe disciplinary response from suspension to possibly expulsion from school.

SE #46 Description of the Continuum of IAES Options

These following interim alternative educational settings (IAES) utilized by the District are designed to allow the student to continue progress in the regular curriculum, to meet the goals and benchmarks written in the current IEP and to allow students to receive services and modifications designed to help the student address problem behavior.

SE #47 Students not yet determined to be Eligible for Special Education

Ralph C. Mahar Regional School District: Student Discipline under IDEA If the District does not have prior knowledge that a student is a student with a disability prior to taking disciplinary measures against the student, the student may be subject to the same disciplinary measures as applied to children without disabilities who engage in comparable behavior.

Students may assert IDEA protection if the District had "prior knowledge" that the student had a disability before the behavior incident.

Prior knowledge is defined by the District as follows:

- A parent has expressed concern in writing to school personnel that the student is in need of special education and related services (not 504).
- A parent has requested an evaluation in writing.
- The behavior or performance of the student demonstrates a need for special education.
- The teacher or other school personnel have expressed concern about the student's behavior or performance to the special education director or to other school personnel involved in the special education referral process.

IDEA protection is not asserted by the District if any of the circumstance listed below have occurred:

District exceptions to prior knowledge:

- If the District has proposed an evaluation on a student and the parent has not consented to the evaluation.
- The parent has previously refused special education services for the student.
- An evaluation has occurred that resulted in a determination of ineligibility.

No Prior Knowledge:

If the District had no knowledge that a child had a disability prior to taking disciplinary measures, the District can change the placement to the extent it changes the placement of non-disabled children. However, if an evaluation is requested while the student is being disciplined the Ralph C. Mahar Regional School District will place the child in an educational placement pending the results of an expedited evaluation.

Disciplining Students with 504 Plans

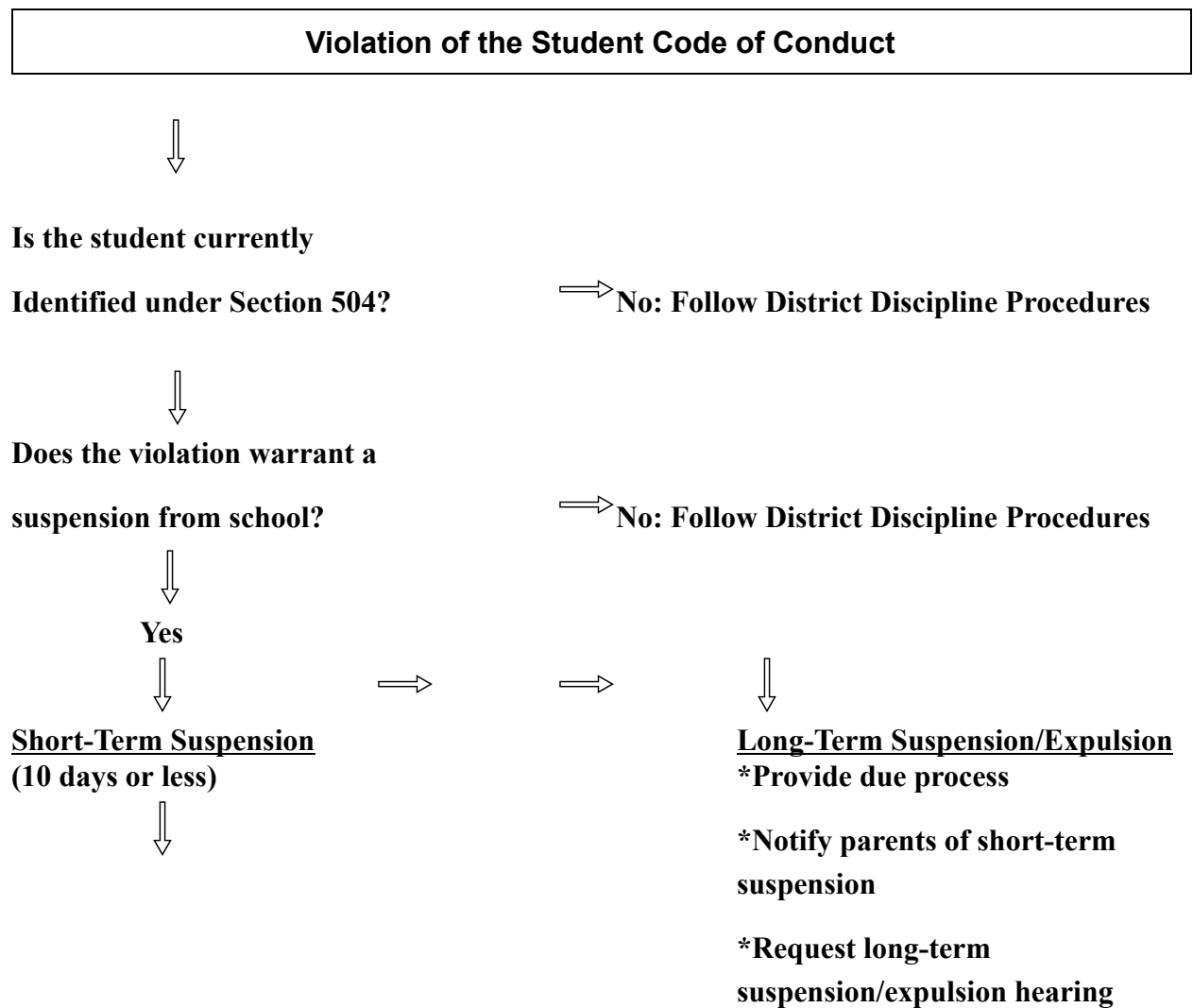
1. Disciplinary procedures for students under 504 and the ADA are similar to those under IDEA.
2. Under IDEA, 504 and the ADA, all students are entitled to oral or written notice of charges and the opportunity to tell their side before suspensions of 10 days or less, and a formal hearing before a suspension of more than 10 days.
3. Expulsion or suspensions of 10 or more days are considered a *change of placement* and require procedural requirements of IDEA or 504/ADA.
4. A *manifest determination* must be made before suspending or expelling a student under IDEA or 504/ADA for more than 10 days; a manifestation determination is not required for a suspension of less than 10 days (unless this results in a cumulative suspension of more than 10 days).
5. Suspensions of less than 10 days are permissible but cannot set a pattern (school officials should review appropriateness of the placement if cumulative time is more than 10 days).
6. If a *manifest determination* shows no relationship between the behavior and disability, then the student may be disciplined as any other student.
7. If a *manifest determination* shows that there is a relationship between the behavior and disability, then the student may NOT be expelled or suspended; the school should consider the appropriateness of the current program and consider appropriate changes.
8. Special Education students who are expelled must continue to receive a FAPE; 504 students do not have to be provided with FAPE during expulsion or suspension for behavior not related to the disability.
9. Students currently engaged in drug or alcohol abuse are not protected under Section 504.

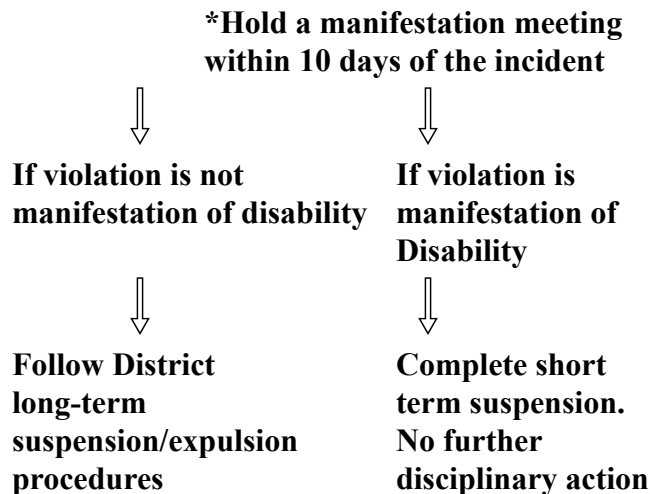
From: Smith, T.E.C. (2004). Section 504, the ADA, and public schools: A handbook for

Disciplining a 504 Disabled Student

What is the discipline process for a 504 disabled student?

Section 504 disabled students are subject to the same disciplinary action as a non-disabled student, provided that the student's behavior is not a manifestation of his or her qualifying disability. A 504 Team must conduct a manifestation determination whenever a disabled student is subject to out-of-school suspension for 10 consecutive school days or more. If the 504 Team concludes that the violation is a manifestation of the student's qualifying disability, the discipline process must end and the 504 Team should review the 504 Plan to determine if changes are appropriate. If the violation is not a manifestation, the student is subject to the same disciplinary action that any non-disabled student would receive for the same.





IAES for Long-Term Placement CAPS Education Collaborative

CAPS works with the District to tailor programs for students needing both long-term and short-term placements. These requests include exclusions, long-term suspensions, IAES placements for students involved with weapons or drugs and other interim placements needed by the District. Requests are handled on a case-by-case basis and are adapted to the needs of the student and the District.

IAES for Short-Term Placement

CAPS Education Collaborative: Described under long-term placements

The District hires highly qualified teachers/tutors to offer academic support to maintain continuity of the student's educational program. The following are the Districts *specific settings for Short-Term Removal*.

Orange Public Library 49 East Main St., Orange, Ma.

DUE PROCESS

Due process is the protection of rights. All students are entitled to full consideration and protection under law- particularly concerning suspension and expulsion. The due process procedure assures that every aggrieved student receives oral or written notification of any charges and a fair hearing and judgment.

GUN FREE SCHOOL ZONE (Mass. Law)

Whoever not being a law enforcement officer, and notwithstanding any license obtained by him under the provisions of chapter one hundred and forty, carries on his person a firearm as hereinafter defined, loaded or unloaded, in any building or on the grounds of any secondary school, college, or university without the written authorization of the board or officer in charge of such secondary school, college, or university shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars or by imprisonment for not more than one year, or both. For the purpose of this paragraph, "firearm" shall mean any pistol, revolver, rifle or smooth bore arm from which a shot, bullet, or pellet can be discharged by whatever means.

Whoever, except as provided by law, carries on his person, or carries on his person or

under his control in a vehicle, any stiletto, dagger, or a device or case which enables a knife with a locking blade to be drawn at a locked position, any ballistic knife, or any knife with a detachable blade capable of being propelled by any mechanism, dirk knife, any knife having a double-edged blade, or a switch knife, or any knife having an automatic spring release device by which the blade is released from the handle, having a blade over one and one-half inches, or slingshot, blowgun, blackjack, metallic knuckles or knuckles of any substance which could be put to the same use with the same or similar effect as metallic knuckles, nanchaku, zoobow, also known as klackers or kung fu sticks, or any similar weapon consisting of two sticks of wood, plastic or metal connected at one end by a length of rope, chain, wire, or leather, a shuriken or any similar pointed starlike object intended to injure a person when thrown, or any armband, made with leather which has metallic spikes, points or studs or any similar device made from any other substance or a cestui or similar material weighted with metal or other substance and worn on the hand, or a manrikigusari or similar length chain having weighted ends; or whoever, when arrested upon a warrant for an alleged crime, or when arrested while committing a breach or disturbance of the public peace, is armed with or has on his person, or has on his person or under his control in a vehicle, a billy or other dangerous weapon other than those herein mentioned and those mentioned in paragraph (a), shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than two and one-half years nor more than five years in the state prison, or for not less than six months nor more than two and one-half years in a jail or house of correction, except that, if the court finds that the defendant has not been previously convicted of a felony, he may be punished by a fine of not more than fifty dollars or by imprisonment for not more than two and one-half years in a jail or house of correction.

Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the Principal.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH ORANGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

BEHAVIOR	SCHOOL RESPONSE	INTERACTION W/POLICE
Student voluntarily confides a drug or alcohol problem to a teacher	Teacher will consult the School Nurse or Counselor <u>and</u> the Principal or Dean of Students to decide action on the referral	None
School official has reasonable cause to suspect that student is under the influence of alcohol or drugs	Principal or Dean of Students will be notified. In-school counseling will be arranged and parents will be notified.	Informal notification by the school of the action taken.

Student is found to be or admits to being under the influence of drugs/alcohol but none is found.	In accordance with the Memorandum the Principal or Dean of Students will suspend the student for a ten day period. Parents will be notified and a clinical evaluation by an outside agency will be necessary if the student wishes to make up his work for credit. A repeat offender may be referred to the Superintendent of Schools for action.	Formal notification by the school of the action taken.
Student found to be in possession of alcohol drugs.	Same as above	Immediate notification by school. Criminal action will be initiated.
Student found to be selling or distributing drugs	Same as above. In addition, the student may be recommended to the Superintendent and School Committee for expulsion.	Immediate notification by school. Criminal action will be initiated.

We further agree to cooperate whenever possible in all training and prevention programs relating to drugs or alcohol that might involve students or school personnel and police personnel. A cooperative effort in all areas is essential if there is to be a clear understanding of the expectations we have of each other and the legal implications of our actions.

SEARCHES

The storage, on one's person, in one's belongings or in school property, of contraband such as, but not limited to, illegal substances or articles or any item prohibited by district policy or building rules, is strictly forbidden. Violations will result in confiscation of such materials. The student in violation will be subject to disciplinary action. When an administrator or designee has reason to believe that contraband as described above is being stored on one's person or in one's possessions, he/she may conduct a personal search appropriate to the nature of the potential violation. Lockers, desks, computers, books and other items issued to students by the district for their temporary use, remain the property of the school. As such, students should have no expectation of privacy as it relates to their use. School property may be randomly inspected without notice by school administrators or designees to ensure cleanliness, safety and adherence to federal, state and local laws and regulations. School property may also be searched when an administrator or designee has reason to believe that contraband, as described above, may be stored within.

Canine Search

The R. C. Mahar Regional School is a drug-free school. The guidelines for student conduct and discipline have been adopted to create and maintain an optimal learning environment as well as protect students from the irresponsible behavior of others. A common method of detecting marijuana or other illegal drugs or contraband is the use of trained canines. To ensure the safety and security of all students and faculty in the school or on school grounds, the R.C. Mahar Regional School reserves the right to conduct random canine searches of any area within the school or on school grounds. These areas include but are not limited to lockers, hallways, classrooms and bathrooms. It should be noted that the United States Supreme Court has determined that dogs sniff the air of a common area (an area where no one has an

expectation of privacy). Canine searches are seen as non-intrusive since there is no expectation of privacy in the air around objects. Drug-sniffing dogs only explore what is within “plain smell.”

Protocol for canine searches:

Prior to a canine search, the Principal or designee will make an announcement over the P.A. for teachers to “Secure All Doors and Continue Instruction”. Once the hallways are confirmed to be clear of students, the canines with their trained handlers will enter the building and begin the search of designated areas. The Principal or designee will accompany each officer throughout the duration of the search. Classrooms designated for search will be selected by a random process. Prior to canines and their handlers entering a classroom, the Principal or designee will clear the classroom of students. The students and teacher will be instructed to stand and move into the adjacent classroom, leaving all personal belongings behind. Personal belongings include but are not limited to coats, jackets, backpacks, purses, and book bags. Also note, any vehicle parked on school property is considered a personal belonging and may be subject to search.

Once the classroom is clear of students, the canines with their handlers will enter the room and conduct the search. Once the search is complete and the canines have left the room, the students will be allowed to return to the room at a time the Principal or designee deems appropriate.

Once the search is complete, the canines along with their handlers will exit the building. At the appropriate time, the Principal or designee will make the announcement over the P.A. that “Secure All Doors and Continue Instruction Has Ended.”

Protocol if a canine alerts to drugs or contraband. To be conducted prior to terminating “Secure all doors and continue instruction”:

Student Locker:

1. The locker number will be noted.
2. After the canine search is complete and the canines along with their handlers have left the building, an administrator along with an accompanying staff member will conduct a more thorough search of the locker.
3. Following the search of the locker, the student to which the locker is assigned will be located and escorted by the Principal or designee, along with their personal belongings, to the office.
4. Once in the office, an administrator with an accompanying staff member will question and search the student along with their personal belongings for drugs or contraband.
5. If no drugs or contraband are found, the student will be allowed to return to class. The Principal or another administrator will contact the student’s parents/guardians by the end of the day to explain the procedure that occurred.
6. If drugs or contraband are found, the student will be disciplined according to R.C. Mahar’s drug and alcohol policy.

Personal belongings:

1. The items in question will be immediately brought to the office by an administrator.
2. As discreetly as possible, the student to which the items belong will be located and escorted to the office by the Principal or designee.
3. Once in the office, an administrator along with an accompanying staff member will

question and search the student along with their personal belongings for drugs or contraband.

4. Following the search of the student's personal belongings, the student's locker will also be searched by an administrator and accompanying staff member.

5. If not drugs or contraband are found, the student will be allowed to return to class. The Principal or another administrator will contact the student's parents/guardians by the end of the day to explain the procedure that occurred.

6. If drugs or contraband are found, the student will be disciplined according to R.C. Mahar's drug and alcohol policy.

Search and Seizure Policy (Mass. Law)

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that under the Fourth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, searches of students by school officials need not adhere to the strict standard of "probable cause" imposed upon law enforcement officers.

Rather, the legality of such searches will depend upon the "reasonableness" of the search in light of all the circumstances. There must be reasonable grounds to believe that the search will reveal a violation of school rules or produce evidence of unlawful activity.

The standard for the reasonableness of a search and seizure applied by Massachusetts and almost all other states is outlined in a U.S. Supreme Court Case, *New Jersey V.S. T.L.O.*, 1985:

A teacher at a New Jersey high school found two girls smoking in the bathroom in violation of school rules. She brought them to the assistant dean of students; office where one of the girls admitted to smoking in the bathroom. However, the other girl denied even being a smoker. The assistant dean of students then asked the latter girl to come to his private office where he opened her purse and found a pack of cigarettes. As he reached for them he noticed rolling papers and decided to thoroughly search the entire purse. He found marijuana, a pipe, empty plastic bags, a substantial number of one-dollar bills and a list of "people who owe me money." The matter was then turned over to the police. A juvenile court hearing was held and the girl was adjudged delinquent. She appealed the juvenile court's determination, contending that her constitutional rights had been violated by the search of her purse. She argued that the evidence against her should therefore have been excluded from the juvenile court proceeding. The Supreme Court held that the search did not violate the Fourth Amendment prohibition against unreasonable search and seizure. Stated the Court: "The legality of a search of a student should depend simply on the reasonableness, under all the circumstances, of the search." Two considerations are relevant in determining the reasonableness of a search. First, the search must be justified initially by a reasonable suspicion. Second, the scope and conduct of the search must be reasonably related to the circumstances which gave rise to the search, and school officials must take into account the student's age, sex and the nature of the offense. The Court upheld the search of the student in this case because the initial search for cigarettes was supported by reasonable suspicion. The discovery of rolling papers then justified the further searching of the purse since such papers are commonly used to roll marijuana cigarettes. The "reasonableness" standard was met by

school officials in these circumstances and thus the evidence against the girl was properly obtained.

STUDENT RIGHTS

State law guarantees that no student may be excluded or discriminated against in any school program because of race, gender, color, religion, national origin, handicap or sexual orientation.

Students may express opinions in classes, through speech and symbols such as arm bands, buttons, etc., so long as expression does not cause disruption; also, through student newspapers, the Student Council and other meetings. Students may petition the administration at any time; they may assemble peacefully on school property; they may distribute written opinions during regularly scheduled school hours so long as the distribution is not disruptive to the educational process. The Student Council, the Student Advisory Committee and the School Council are important avenues for student expression; all have direct access to the administration and are represented in School Committee meetings.

A student who feels his or her rights have been ignored or denied should first try to talk out the problem with the administrator, teacher, coach, or club advisor involved. If the problem is not solved, parents or guardians should set up a conference with the individual staff member or administrator, and if necessary, further conferences with the Superintendent and School Committee. Legal action is a last resort if the student is still dissatisfied.

Center for Continued Engagement (CCE)

The Center for Continued Engagement is an alternative to in-school and out-of-school suspension where students can learn new behaviors and maintain continuity in their education. The goal of the Center for Continued Engagement is to provide a positive and constructive atmosphere in which students are assisted in becoming responsible, successful, and productive members of the school community.

Students who are assigned to the CCE are subject to the same eligibility restrictions as students who receive an out-of-school suspension. (Refer to **Suspension** in this handbook).

SUSPENSION

A student may receive suspension for any behavior that threatens or interferes with the rights of an individual or the school community as a whole. The following is a broad list of offenses that may result in suspension and possibly expulsion.

1. Being under the influence of unauthorized drugs or other substances and/or possession of drug paraphernalia in school, on school property, or at any school sponsored activity.
2. Use, possession, or being under the influence of an alcoholic beverage in school, on school property or at any school sponsored activity.
3. Any action which is deemed to have been a threat, or to be a threat, to the health, safety or welfare of other students or school employees.
4. Possession of a weapon in school, on school property, at any school sponsored activity

or a public conveyance providing transportation to and from a school or school sponsored activity.

5. Fighting.

6. Obscene conduct or language that is threatening and unsafe.

7. Vandalism of any nature, including defacing, damaging, or destroying school property or the property of any school employee, student or visitor on school grounds.

8. Refusal to leave school or school property upon direction.

9. Any use of tobacco products by a student is prohibited in school buildings, on school buses and on school property.

10. The use of any racial, ethnic, religious, sexual and/or sexual orientation slurs that are threatening and unsafe.

If a student serves an Out of School Suspension on the last day of school before a weekend (Friday), holiday break, in service, etc., the student will not be permitted to participate in any school activity until he/she has been readmitted to school. For example, a student would not be allowed to participate in any scheduled contest or practice during winter break if the student served an Out of School Suspension on the last day of school before the break began.

Another example, a student would not be able to participate in a practice or contest on Saturday if the student served an Out of School Suspension on Friday. This is consistent with MIAA policy.

VI. SCHOOL & STUDENT SERVICES

ACCOMMODATION PLANS (504)

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Acts of 1973 is a civil rights law which prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities. Any child identified as being disabled will be guaranteed reasonable accommodations to promote educational growth in the regular classroom environment. Information concerning 504 Accommodation Plans is available through your child's Guidance Counselor located at the Ralph C. Mahar Regional School in Student Services.

The processes for referral and administration of a special needs evaluation and resulting program are included in the laws listed above and in part in the Mahar Faculty Handbook.

CO-CURRICULAR

A wide variety of sports and activities are available; every effort is made to give full opportunity to all students. Students are encouraged to explore these activities to find those which suit you.

Elections: Student Council, Team Officers and Mediators

Activities: Science Fairs, Concerts, National Junior Honor Society, National Honor Society; Many clubs like Key Club, Ski Club, SADD, etc.

Sports: Cross Country, Football, Volleyball, Soccer, Basketball, Golf, Track, Baseball, Field Hockey, Wrestling, Softball, and E-Sports.

All students are encouraged to participate in co-curricular activities.

DANCE GUIDELINES

1. Mahar students 9-12 will be allowed to sign up one guest in advance, and no later than 2 days before the event, with the advisor of the sponsoring organization from 2:00-3:00 P.M. The guest must be a grade 9-12 student and currently enrolled in another school. All guests must be approved by the administration in order to attend the dance.
2. Tickets for guests must be purchased from the advisor no later than 2 days before the event. (grades 9-12)
3. The Mahar student will accompany the guest that he/she signed up for. (grades 9-12)
4. All people who are not Mahar students and who are not properly signed up as guests will be refused admittance or will be removed from the dance at any point during the evening. No money will be refunded. (grades 9-12)
5. High School Dances will run from 7:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M. Middle School Dances will run from 6:30 P.M. to 8:30 P.M.
6. High School Dances: Students will not be allowed to enter the dance after 8:00 P.M. without prior approval from the administration. Middle School Dances: Students will not be allowed to enter the dance after 7:00 P.M. without prior approval from the administration.
7. Students attending the dance must adhere to the school dress code policy.
8. Homecoming Dance- Alumni will not be permitted to attend the Homecoming Dance.

EXCHANGE STUDENTS POLICY

It is the intent of the Ralph C. Mahar Regional School District to participate in programs which sponsor foreign exchange students. These programs offer valuable experiences for students through their cultural interaction.

Exchange students must be part of a formal program wherein their selection is based upon selected criteria and a screening process. To be considered for placement at Mahar, a student must be at least minimally proficient in English- as defined in part by the Naturalization and Immigration Regulations- so as not to place a burden upon the students, staff and financial support of the school.

An evaluation of the potential student must be completed by the administration in a timely fashion. Students and organizations should be cognizant that advance notice must be given to the school. Students will not be admitted without prior evaluation and approval by the Administration.

1st Vote: October 7, 1986

2nd Vote: November 4, 1986

FIELD TRIPS (FIELD STUDIES)

These trips are an extension of the curriculum and all students are expected to attend. While many field studies require students to pay some portion of expenses, arrangements may be made to cover these expenses. Other trips which are approved may be sponsored by clubs and organizations.

GUARDIANSHIP-ALTERNATE HOME ARRANGEMENTS

Parents must inform the school office of alternate custodial arrangements. A letter or note, dated must give the name and telephone/address of the person who will be responsible for a student during the absence of parents, together with the length of time involved and any other information needed for the safety of the student.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT POLICY

An international student is defined by the Ralph C. Mahar Regional School District for the purpose of this policy as a student who does not participate in a reciprocal exchange program, who is a resident of another country, whose parents reside in that country, and who temporarily resides in the Ralph C. Mahar Regional School District. The number of international students to be accepted in each upcoming school year will be voted by the school committee before June of that year.

LIBRARY SERVICES

We encourage students to use the library media center. It is normally open from 7:45 A.M. until 2:05 P.M. Monday through Friday. However, these times could vary from time to time. Please learn your student ID number. The library is computerized and books will be checked out using your student ID number. Students are to leave book bags at the front of the library. Library rules of conduct are in effect at all times; abuse of the library privileges or interfering with the rights of others may lead to loss of library privileges.

MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT

A full time nurse is on duty throughout the school day. The nurse will provide first aid and will coordinate emergency medical services, if needed, as well as manage the school health program. Students are required to have physical exams, vision/hearing/posture/BMI screening (**M.G.L. c.71 ss.57 and related regulations 105 CMR 200.000**) and other kinds of health services at various points in their school careers. State laws govern required immunizations (**M.G.L. c. 76 ss. 15 and related regulations, 105 CMR 200.000, 105 CMR 220.000**) and the nurse is obligated to exclude any student from school who is not in compliance. The one exception to policies for exclusion for unimmunized or partially immunized children is in the case of homeless children in public schools (**McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001**). A medical exemption is allowed if a health care provider submits documentation to school that an immunization is medically contraindicated; or a religious exemption is allowed if a parent submits a signed statement to school stating that immunizations are contrary to his/her sincere religious beliefs. Philosophical exemptions are not allowed by law in Massachusetts, even if signed by a physician. *Please note that students who are not immunized (including those with medical and religious exemptions) may be subject to exclusion from school if there is exposure to certain communicable childhood diseases, as specified in **105 CMR 300.000**.

M.G.L. c. 76 ss. 15

Section 15. No child shall, except as hereinafter provided, be admitted to school except upon presentation of a physician's certificate that the child has been successfully immunized against

diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, measles and poliomyelitis and such other communicable diseases as may be specified from time to time by the Department of Public Health.

A child shall be admitted to school upon certification by a physician that he has personally examined such child and that in his opinion the physical condition of the child is such that his health would be endangered by such vaccination or by any of such immunizations. Such certification shall be submitted at the beginning of each school year to the physician in charge of the school health program. If the physician in charge of the school health program does not agree with the opinion of the child's physician, the matter shall be referred to the department of public health, whose decision will be final.

In the absence of an emergency or epidemic of disease declared by the department of public health, no child whose parent or guardian states in writing that vaccination or immunization conflicts with his sincere religious beliefs shall be required to present said physician's certificate in order to be admitted to school.

There are additional requirements for immunization against mumps, rubella, hepatitis B and varicella as specified in Department of Public Health regulations (**105 CMR 220.000**).

Requirements apply to all students including individuals from another country attending or visiting classes or educational programs as part of an academic visitation or exchange program. Requirements apply to all students, even if over 18 years of age.

Grades 7 – 12†

In ungraded classrooms, Grade 7 requirements apply to all students ≥ 12 years.

Tdap	1 dose; and history of DTaP primary series or age appropriate catch-up vaccination. Tdap given at ≥ 7 years may be counted, but a dose at age 11-12 is recommended if Tdap was given earlier as part of a catch-up schedule. Td or Tdap should be given if it has been ≥ 10 years since last Tdap
Polio	4 doses; fourth dose must be given on or after the 4 th birthday and ≥ 6 months after the previous dose, or a fifth dose is required. 3 doses are acceptable if the third dose is given on or after the 4 th birthday and ≥ 6 months after the previous dose
Hepatitis B	3 doses; laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable. 2 doses of Heplisav-B given on or after 18 years of age are acceptable
MMR	2 doses; first dose must be given on or after the 1 st birthday and second dose must be given ≥ 28 days after first dose; laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable
Varicella	2 doses; first dose must be given on or after the 1 st birthday and second dose must be given ≥ 28 days after first dose; a reliable history of chickenpox* or laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable

NEW – Meningococcal Requirements

Grade 7	1 dose ; 1 dose MenACWY (formerly MCV4) required. Meningococcal B vaccine is not required and does not meet this requirement.
Grade 11 [‡]	2 doses ; second dose MenACWY (formerly MCV4) must be given on or after the 16th birthday and ≥ 8 weeks after the previous dose. 1 dose is acceptable if it was given on or after the 16th birthday. Meningococcal B vaccine is not required and does not meet this requirement.

§ Address questions about enforcement with your legal counsel. School requirements are enforced at the local level.

†Medical exemptions (statement from a physician stating that a vaccine is medically contraindicated for a student) and religious exemptions (statement from a student, or parent/guardian if the student is <18 years of age, stating that a vaccine is against sincerely held religious beliefs) should be renewed annually at the start of the school year.

* A reliable history of chickenpox includes a diagnosis of chickenpox, or interpretation of parent/guardian description of chickenpox, by a physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or designee.

‡ Students who are 15 years old in grade 11 are in compliance until they turn 16 years old.

M.G.L. 71 54B, DPH 105 CMR 210.00: THE ADMINISTRATION OF PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Ideally, all medication should be given at home. Only the school nurse may give medication at school. If the physician feels it is absolutely necessary for the student to receive medication during school hours, the school nurse must receive the following:

1. A signed and dated note from the parent.
2. A signed and dated order from the health care provider licensed to prescribe (prescribed orders are to be renewed and submitted every school year).
3. The medication must be in a container appropriately labeled by a pharmacy or physician; only a 30 days supply of medication can be kept at school; containers can be sent home for a refill.
4. Students are not allowed to carry any medication (neither prescription nor over the counter) with them during school hours. The only exceptions to this rule are: inhalers, Epi-Pens, insulin (along with a glucometer), and digestive salts/enzymes (medication for Cystic Fibrosis), provided the necessary paperwork has been filed with the nurse and the student agrees to not share the medication with another student; also the parent, student and school nurse determine the student is capable of self-administering the medication and are in agreement with the procedures of documenting medication use effectiveness and compliance with student's health care plan. These medications (inhalers, epinephrine, digestive enzymes/salts, insulin/diabetes care management) are to be readily accessible to the student as directed by federal and state laws.

Sickness: Should I send my child to school?

Too Sick For School: In order to prevent the spread of illness and to protect the health and well-being of our students, the following is recommended:

Fever: Fevers are generally signs of infection. Your child's temperature should be less than 100 degrees for 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medications such as Tylenol or Motrin, before they can return to school.

Stomach Ache, Vomiting, Diarrhea: A child with vomiting and/or diarrhea should be kept

at home until their symptoms have resolved for approximately 12 hours, and the child has demonstrated they can keep down food and liquid.

Cold Symptoms, Cough, Sore Throat: Your child may attend school if their symptoms are not associated with a fever. They should also be free from significant discomfort from their cold symptoms so they are able to participate in their schoolwork. If your child has symptoms of a persistent cough, or thick, yellow or green nasal discharge, which lasts longer than a week, or he or she complains of an earache, you may want to consult your doctor for possible treatment. If your child has been diagnosed with strep throat, they may return to school after being on antibiotics for 24 hours, to assure that their infection will not be contagious to others.

Annual Screenings: In accordance with Massachusetts Department of Public Health, annual screenings are to occur every school year.

Postural Screening- Students in grades 7, 8, & 9 have their posture/spine checked for abnormal curves called scoliosis and kyphosis. In order for the screening to occur the shirt must be removed. Girls are asked to wear a sports bra or bathing suit top. Each student is screened privately. If there appears to be a curve, a letter of notification will be sent home so that the student can be checked by his/her doctor. Parents/guardians must supply written notice to have their child excluded from the screening AND provide a doctor note indicating findings from the doctor's postural screening of the student.

Body Mass Index Screening- Students in grades 7 & 10 have their height and weight measured to calculate their Body Mass Index (BMI). In order for the screening to occur shoes must be removed, pockets must be emptied and heavy outer garments such as sweaters or sweatshirts must be removed. Each student is screened privately. The BMI Percentile is calculated from the data and a parent may request the BMI results from the school nurse. Health Care Provider interaction is encouraged if the student is underweight or overweight. Parents/guardians must supply written notice to have their child excluded from the screening.

Hearing and Vision Screening- Students in grades 8 & 10 have their hearing and vision tested. If a student is unable to meet state standards a notification letter will be mailed home. All of the annual screenings, postural, BMI, hearing & vision, are used as a tool to determine potential health problems.

None of the screenings are diagnostic exams.

ADVISORY BLOCK

Each school year, we will be utilizing a formal, on-going program through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations. This adult will foster personalization and reduce the sense of anonymity felt by many students. Students will attend the advisory block each day from 7:45 a.m. – 7:58 a.m.

PEER MEDIATION

The goal of the Mahar Peer Mediation Program is to help create a safe, non-judgmental and

confidential environment that is conducive to effective and productive communication and to foster peaceful solutions to conflict. Mediation is voluntary. Student mediators have completed special training where they learned skills to help facilitate peer to peer conflict resolution. Student mediators do not give advice but help students discover solutions that will work for them in a balanced and realistic way.

Types of conflicts that are most often referred to peer mediators from students and staff involve disputes such as misunderstandings caused by rumors, disagreements, bias, boyfriend/girlfriend tensions, fighting and threats. Recognizing that students are competent to take part in the resolution of their own disputes encourages student growth and skills in listening, understanding, respect, critical thinking and problem solving that are basic to all learning.

The guidance counselors can help arrange a peer mediation. Not all disputes are appropriate for peer mediation. Situations that involve severe violence or illegal activities may not be suited for a student-mediated process and are handled by school staff.

RECORDS

Records of a student's school progress consist of the transcript of his/her marks, the temporary record of important information and other material which might identify the student. All are kept secure by the Principal; no one but the student, parent or guardian or authorized school personnel may have access to them. A request to see records shall be honored within ten (10) school days. If a student gives permission to a third party, he/she may limit the parts of the records to be made available.

A student eighteen years of age or older may limit access of parent(s) or guardians. The student transcript will be kept for sixty years, and the temporary record no more than five years after graduation, transfer or withdrawal from the school.

Student Records State Regulations (Mass. Law)

These regulations are promulgated to insure parents' and students' rights of confidentiality, inspection, amendment, and destruction of student records and to assist the local school system in adhering to the law.

- 1.1 These rights shall be the rights of the student upon reaching 14 years of age or upon entering the 9th grade, whichever comes first.
- 1.2 If the student is under the age of 14 and has not yet entered the 9th grade, these rights shall devolve to his/her parents.
- 1.3 If the student is from 14 to 17 years of age or has entered the ninth grade, both the student and his/her parent or either one acting alone shall exercise these rights.
- 1.4 If the student is 18 years of age or older, he/she alone may exercise these rights. The various terms as used in these regulations are defined below:
- 2.5 The student record shall consist of the transcript and the temporary record, including all information concerning a student (computer tapes, microfilm, microfiche, or any other materials regardless of physical form or characteristics), that is organized on the basis of the form.
- 2.6 The temporary record shall consist of all the information in the student's record which is not contained in the transcript. This information clearly shall be of importance to the educational process. Such information may include standardized test results, class rank (when

applicable); school sponsored extracurricular activities, and evaluations by teachers, counselors, and other school staff.

8.0 Amending the Student Record.

8.1 The eligible student and his/her parent or either one, as applicable under the rules in Section 1 of these regulations, shall have the right to add information, comments, data or any other relevant written material to the student record.

8.2 The eligible student and his/her parent or either one, as applicable under the rules of Section 1 of these regulations, shall have the right to request deletion or amendment of any information which was inserted into that record by a Chapter 766 Evaluation Team. Such information inserted by the team shall not be subject to such a request until after the acceptance of the Educational Plan, or, if the Educational Plan is rejected, after the completion of the special education appeal process.

Access by Third Parties (Mass. Law)

Except for the provision of **603 CMR 23.07 (4)(a) through 23.07 (4)(h)**, no third party shall have access to information in or from a student record without the specific, informed, written consent of the eligible student or the parent. When granting consent, the eligible student or parent shall have the right to designate which parts of the student record shall be released to the third party. A copy of such consent shall be retained by the eligible student or parent and a duplicate placed in the temporary record. Except for information described in **603 CMR 23.07 (4)(a)**, personally identifiable information from a student record shall only be released to a third party on the condition that he/she will not permit any other third party to have access to such information without the written consent of the eligible student or parent. A school may release a student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance, weight and height of members of athletic teams, class, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, degrees, honors and awards, and post-high school plans without the consent of the eligible student or parent; provided that the school gives public notice of the types of information it may release under this provision and allows eligible students and parents a reasonable time after such notice to request that this information not included in the routine information letter required under **603 CMR 23.10**. As of 1998 there is a new law in **Massachusetts, Chapter 285**, which requires schools to obtain certain documentation from non-custodial parents who request information regarding their child. In order to honor your request for copies of report cards and other information to be mailed to you, the school must now ask you to provide the following:

1. A written request signed by you, asking that copies of the student's records be mailed to you. A written request must be provided every year.
2. A certified copy of the custody agreement* must be provided only in the first year in which the request is made.
3. An affidavit from you certifying that the custody judgment or order remains in effect and that no temporary or permanent court order has been issued which would change anything in the custody agreement which you have attached to your request.

Upon receipt of these materials it will take approximately 25 days to process your request. The school is required to notify the custodial parent that the information requested will be provided to the noncustodial parent after 21 days "unless the custodial parent provides to the Principal of the

school documentation of any court order which prohibits contact with the child or prohibits the distribution of the requested information.” **Chapter 285 of the Acts of 1998** specifies the following documentation be provided: “the probate court’s order or judgment relative to the custody of the child, indicating that the requesting parent has not sought and been denied shared legal custody as defined in section 31 of chapter 208 based on a threat to the safety of the child or the custodial parent and is entitled to unsupervised visitation with his child, or a certified copy of an order by a probate and family court judge specifically ordering that this information be made available to the requesting parent which certifies on its face that it is being made after a review of the records, if any, of the judgment of custody and the criminal history of the petitioner, that provision of the requested information has not been determined to pose a safety risk for the custodial parent or to any child in the custodial parent’s custody and that it is in the best interest of the child that such information be provided to the petitioner.”

SPECIAL EDUCATION (Mass. Law)

The Ralph C. Mahar Regional School District is governed by both federal and state laws regarding the education of students with special needs.

(See IDEA (formerly PL 94-142) CH. 766 and Section 504)

STUDENT ACTIVITY ACCOUNTS

Student funds may be raised to finance the activities of authorized student organizations. Student activity funds are considered a part of the total fiscal operation of the District and are subject to policies established by the School Committee and the Office of the Superintendent. The funds shall be managed in accordance with sound business practices, which include accepted budgetary and accounting practices.

In compliance with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 47 the School Committee:

1. Authorize the Principal to accept money for recognized student activity organizations, which currently exist, or as from time to time may be revised.
2. Authorize the Ralph C. Mahar Regional school district Treasurer to establish and maintain a Student Activity Agency Account(s) which is to be audited as part of the district’s annual audit. The interest that is earned on such accounts shall be maintained in the Agency Account and distributed annually among the Student Activity Checking Accounts as directed by the regulations established by School Committee policy.
3. Authorize Student Activity Checking Accounts for use by the Principals with specific maximum balances established for each school by School Committee policy.
4. Directs Principal to provide the Treasurer with a bond in an amount agreeable to the Treasurer. For accounts with limits that exceed \$25,000.00, the Massachusetts Department of Education recommends that districts consider an audit conducted by an outside accounting firm every two to three years.

1st Vote: May 1, 2007 *Voted to approve the policy in one vote

STUDENT SERVICES/GUIDANCE

The Guidance Department's primary purpose is to help students solve their problems, make wise and intelligent plans about their school programs and help plan for their future. The guidance counselors are available from 7:40 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. Tuesday and Wednesday, and 7:40 A.M. to 2:05 P.M. Thursday and Friday; students and parents may make appointments to meet at appropriate times.

TECHNOLOGY

Under the supervision of teachers and staff, students have access to computers, printers, scanners, etc. All equipment should be treated with care and respect. The Mahar Computer Policy stipulates Internet access guidelines.

STUDENT HANDBOOK
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
2021-2022

We, the undersigned parent(s)/guardian(s) and student _____
(Name of Student)
(Please Print)

Grade _____ have received and will read, or have read to us, the **2021-2022**

RALPH C. MAHAR REGIONAL SCHOOL STUDENT HANDBOOK

(Signed) _____
Student

(Signed) _____
Parent/Guardian

(Signed) _____
Parent/Guardian

Date: _____

Note: If the student lives with both parents, both parents are asked to sign the above statement. If the student lives with only one parent or guardian, only one is expected to sign. The student is also expected to sign the statement.

INDEX

Academics	08	Exchange Student Policy	65
Absences	16	Eye Protection Policy	28
Abusive Speech	19	Field Trips	65
Academic Eligibility	08	Fifty-Five Rule	11
Accommodation Plans (504)	64	Fighting	28
----	--	Food & Beverages	29
Acknowledgement Form	73	Forgery	29
----	--	Fundraising	72
Advisory Block	69	Grading System	08
Alma Mater	02	Guardianship	65
Attendance	15	Gun Free Zone	58
----	--	Hall Passes	29
Attendance (Mass Law)	15	Hallway Procedures	29
Bell Schedule	06	Harassment	29
Bicycles	19	Hazing	30
Books	19	Homework Philosophy	12
Bullying	19	Honor Roll	12
----	--	Horseplay	33
Cafeteria	24	International Student Policy	66
Calendar (Mahar) * Website	--	Internet Policy	34
Cancellations	07	----	--
Canine Searches	60	Library Services	66
Cell Phones	25	Lockers	38
Class Cuts	25	Lunch	06
Co-Curricular Activities	64	Make-up Work	18
Corporal Punishment	44	MCAS Test Schedule* Website	--
Dance Guidelines	64	Medical & Health Dept	66
Delayed Openings/Early Release	07	Medicine	38
Detention	43	Mission Statement	03
Discipline	43	MOU with Police	59
Discipline Appeal Hearing Procedure	49	MS Guiding Principle	05
Disciplining Students-Special Needs	53	----	--
Dismissal	18	NJHS/NHS	13
Display of Affection	25	----	--
Disruption	25	Obligations	38
Dress Code	25	Office	38
Drugs & Alcohol	26	Over the Counter Drugs	39
Due Process	58	Peer Mediation	69
Electronic Devices/Toys	27	Plagiarism & Cheating	39
Equal Access	04	Rank in Class	13

Records	70	
Report Cards	15	
Rotating Schedule	*Website	--
Rubrics for Schoolwide Learning		--
	*Website	--
Searches	60	
Sexual Harassment	39	
Special Education (Mass Law)	71	
Statement of Non-Discrimination	04	
Student Activity Accounts	2	
Student Driving	26	
Student Rights	62	
Student Services/Guidance	71	
(Center for Continued Engagement)		
(FKA The Success Center)	63	
Suspension	63	
Tardy	18	
Teacher Referral	40	
Technology	72	
Theft	41	
Third Party Access	71	
Tobacco	41	
Translation Provisions	04	
Vandalism	43	
Vaping	41	
Visitors	43	
Wandering	43	
Weapons	43	
Wellness Policy	*Website	

**Ralph C. Mahar Regional School
507 South Main St., P.O. Box 680
Orange, Ma. 01364-0680
DIRECTORY**

Superintendent Dr. Elizabeth Zielinski

**Superintendent
Office**

Phone 978-544-2920

Fax 978-544-8383

Special Education Office

Phone 978-544-2535

Fax 978-544-2506

Student Services

Phone 978-544-2542

Fax 978-544-5844

Website: rcmahar.org

School operating hours are from 7:00 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. Monday – Friday

After normal operating hours you may leave a message on the general mailbox or dial the three digit extension for an individual voicemail box.

Mahar Regional School

Phone 978-544-2542

Fax 978-544-5844

Principal's/ Offices	Option 1	Athletic Director Ext 232
Special Education Office	Option 3	Student Services Ext 250
Guidance/Student Services	Option 4	<u>Counselors:</u>
Nurse's Office	Option 5	Cheri Hoyle Ext 253
Director of Athletics	Option 6	Caitlin McKenna Ext 256
Superintendent	Option 7	Amy Mahaney Ext 252
Food Services	Option 8	Kristin Hesse Ext 255
Maintenance Dept	Option 9	School Nurse Ext 220

***Faculty and staff can also be contacted via email at any time by going to our website: www.rcmahar.org and clicking the "Faculty and Staff" tab on the home page. ***

School Committee Members

**Peter Cross-Orange
Patrick Davis-Orange
Sharon Gilmore-Orange
Carla Halpern-New Salem
Shannon Johnson-Orange
Sunday Lefebvre-Orange
Lynn Peredina-Petersham
Maryanne Reynolds-Petersham
Patricia Smith-Orange**

School Council Members

Administration:

Principal Scott Hemlin

Assistant Principal Leslie Moody

Representatives

Grade 7- Jennifer Susen

Grade 8- Eliza Graton

Grade 9- Jennifer Gariepy

Grade 10- Jennifer Gariepy

Grade 11- Christine Mullen

Grade 12- Sue Apteker

Teacher Representative

Ian Bashaw

Unit C Representative

Karrie Hammond

Student Council Rep

Megan Ward