

Groton-Dunstable Elementary Schools

Student Handbook

2021-2022



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Introduction Letter

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Groton-Dunstable Regional Schools!

We hope you will find this guide helpful in answering questions about general services and procedures in our elementary schools. If you have further questions, please contact the school office.

Information concerning curriculum at each grade level can be found on the district website. Other sources of information to watch for during the year include a monthly calendar of activities, a monthly lunch menu, and school newsletters.

Questions about classroom issues or procedures should be discussed directly with the teacher or teachers involved. If there should be any unresolved questions or problems, please consult the principal.

The elementary school years are certainly challenging and exciting. The home-school partnership is very important in providing a learning atmosphere where our children can work and be at their best. We are happy to welcome you and encourage you to be an active part of our community.

We look forward to working with you and your children.

Sincerely,

The Elementary School Principals

Section 1: Statement of Non-Discrimination

It is the policy of the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, or homelessness in its educational programs, activities, or employment policies as required by Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments, Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Also, students will not be excluded for reasons of marriage or pregnancy. Requests for information about these laws and/or grievance procedures should be directed to the Office of the Superintendent, Groton-Dunstable Regional School District, (978) 448-5505, ext. 200.

Section 2: Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct

Behavioral Expectations

School behavior policies and practices are designed to protect the safety, health, property, and personal rights of every member of the school community. The responsibility of maintaining a positive learning environment should be shared by parents, school personnel, and students. The home-school partnership is critical in all aspects of a child's educational journey.

All students are expected to follow the established behavioral guidelines, unless modifications are required due to a student's disability. Modifications, if needed, will be outlined in a child's Individual Educational Plan. Refer to your school's website or office for more information on school's behavioral expectations. For more information on disciplinary procedures including notification procedures and appeals, please see Section 13.

The following guidelines are common to all elementary schools:

Expectations in Instructional Areas

Guidelines for expectations will be established by the classroom teacher or other appropriate staff working with the students.

- Rules and regulations will consider the safety of the children in the classroom and the educational goals to be achieved.
- The teacher will discuss the specific classroom rules with the students.
- Classroom expectations will be posted clearly in all classrooms.

Expectations in Non-Instructional Areas

- Walk quietly in the halls, keeping to the right.

- Allow classes to exit from the classroom before attempting to enter that classroom.

Expectations in Cafeteria

- Talk quietly at the table.
- Obtain permission before leaving the cafeteria.
- Be respectful of others and use good table manners.
- Clean up at the completion of lunch.

Expectations On The Playground

- Stay within the designated boundaries.
- Obtain permission from the recess supervisor to reenter the building.
- Avoid rough play.
- Do not throw snowballs, sticks, rocks, or ice.
- Refrain from taking another person's possessions, including clothing.
- Use playground equipment safely and respectfully.
- Line up quickly and quietly when the signal is given. Wait in line quietly so that students can hear the directions from the recess supervisor.
- Include everyone and have fun!

Toys and Electronic Equipment

Toy weapons and similar toys are not allowed in school. Any toy brought from home can be distracting and disruptive to the educational process. Any toys brought from home are strictly the child's responsibility. We do not recommend sending your child with toys. The school will not be responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items. We appreciate your support on this issue.

We acknowledge that an increasing number of our students have access to personally owned electronic devices including but not limited to cell phones/smart phones, iPods, iPads and eReaders. Students and parents are responsible for adhering to our guidelines regarding personal technology. If a student is not responsible for following these guidelines, the device will be held in the school office until a parent is able to pick it up.

- Cell phones are to be turned off and stored in the student's backpack.
- No photos or videos of other students are to be taken with personal devices on school grounds or the bus.
- eReaders may be used with teacher permission.
- All other electronic devices of personal value should be left at home
- The school assumes no liability for the loss, theft, or damage of any personally owned electronic device.

Section 3: School Hours/Schedule

School Hours

Florence Roche Elementary

Phone: 978-448-6665
Fax/Absentee line: 978-448-3988

School hours: 8:55 to 3:20
Half day K hours: 8:55 - 12:15
Half day hours: 8:55- 12:15

Swallow Union Elementary

Phone: 978-649-7281
Fax/Absentee: 978-649-5078

School hours: 8:55-3:20
Half day K hours: 8:55 - 12:15
Half day hours: 8:55-12:15

Boutwell Preschool

Phone: 978-448-2297
Fax: 978-448-8459

School hours:
8:55 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
12:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Half-day hours: 8:55 - 11:30

Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures

Swallow Union - Drop off students in the back of the building between 8:45 and 8:55 AM. Pick Up students in the back of the building starting at 3:20.

Florence Roche - Drop off students at the front of the building between 8:45 and 8:55 AM. Pick Up students by parking in the main lot and walking up to the front entrance

beginning at 3:20 PM. A staff member will be present to dismiss students to their parent or guardian.

Boutwell- Drop off and pick up locations are assigned based on classroom at the front door on Hollis Street or behind the building where the parking lot is located. Adults are asked to stand at the door and wait with their child until a staff member brings the child into the building. Morning and full day drop off begins at 8:55; afternoon drop off at 12:25. Morning students are dismissed between 11:25-11:30; and full day and afternoon students are dismissed between 2:55-3:00.

School Closing Information

It is the policy of the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District to keep school in session unless road conditions are too hazardous for buses to travel safely. The opening of school may be delayed only when it is felt road conditions will improve. When it is necessary to cancel or delay the opening of school, an automated message will be sent to all staff and parents. Announcements may also be heard on the following radio/TV stations: Boston WBZ Channel 4, Dial 1030, Boston WHDH Channel 7, Dial 680, Boston WCVB Channel 5, The Boston Channel.com. Parents/guardians and students are encouraged to listen for the announcements.

Parents/guardians should also establish an emergency plan with their students, especially for early dismissals. Students should know where they should report to in the event there is an early dismissal and their adult is not home.

Preschool Tuition

For information on the full-day and half-day tuition rates for the 2021-2022 school year, please contact Boutwell, Tuition remains the same regardless of a child's attendance, closings for holidays, inclement weather, or any other closings beyond the school's control.

Kindergarten Tuition

Tuition rate for the 2021-2022 school year for Full Day Kindergarten will be \$5,000.00 Tuition remains the same regardless of a child's attendance, closings for holidays, inclement weather, or any other closings beyond the school's control.

Before and After School Program

The Groton Dunstable Extended Day Program was established to provide quality, before and after school care, in an atmosphere that was friendly and with supervision by a

caring staff. The program is sponsored by the Groton Dunstable Regional School District and is administered by the office of Community Schools and Services. The program is located in Groton, at the Peter Twomey Youth Center and Dunstable, at the Union Building. Students that are enrolled in the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District, from preschool to grade eight are eligible to attend. The Extended Day Program does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, sex, and religion or disability. Enrollment will be on a first come first served basis. This program is Chapter 766 supported and Handicapped accessible.

Early Start Program

KINDERGARTEN to GRADE 8 7:00 A.M. – 9:00 A.M.

The program is located in Groton, at the Florence Roche School cafeteria and Dunstable, in the Union Building. This program begins at 7:00 a.m. in the Florence Roche/Swallow Cafeterias and ends at 8:45 a.m. Breakfast and activities are provided. Children will be brought to the program by their parents but will be transported to their appropriate school for the start of the school day.

GRADES K to 4 from SCHOOL DISMISSAL to 5:00 or 6:00 P.M.

At the Extended Day Program, we recognize that older students desire more independence and we encourage them to make their own decisions about the use of their time while participating in this supervised program. With prior approval from parents and staff, students are encouraged to participate in after school activities. Our staff will help to facilitate their arrival at the Extended Day Program. Our staff also provides homework support. The Children will be divided into age appropriate groups. Students will be given the opportunity to choose from a variety of activities: arts and crafts, and outdoor play.

EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM

Stasia Twomey, Director

348 Main Street, P.O. Box 426

Groton, MA 01450

Phone: (978) 448-0398 PTYC (978) 649-4191 SU

FAX: (978) 448-1214

Tax ID # 042-432-094

Section 4: Attendance

Reasons for Absence

Students may be excused temporarily from school attendance for the following reasons:

1. Illness or quarantine.

2. Bereavement or serious illness in a family.
3. Weather so inclement as to endanger the health of the child.
4. For observance of major religious holidays.

A student may also be excused for other exceptional reasons with approval of the school administrator. Parents/guardians will provide a written explanation for the absence and tardiness of a student. This will be required in advance for types of absences where advance notice is possible.

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

Student Absence Notification Program

When students have missed 7 or more school days unexcused in a school year, the school principal or a designee, will make a reasonable effort to meet with the parent or guardian of a student who has 7 or more unexcused absences to develop action steps for student attendance. The action steps shall be developed jointly and agreed upon by the school principal, or a designee, the student and the student's parent or guardian and with input from other relevant school personnel and officials from relevant public safety, health and human service, housing and nonprofit agencies.

In accordance with M.G.L. Ch. 76, § 2, if a student is absent for seven (7) days or 14 half days within any period of six months, the school is required to take appropriate action. This may include: a meeting with administration and in some cases filing appropriate documentation with the Juvenile Court.

Section 5: Information and Communication

Home to School Communication

Parents/guardians should not feel communication is limited to the scheduled conference and/or progress report. They should feel free to contact the child's teacher at any time during the school year to discuss questions or concerns. Teachers may also request meetings with parents as the need arises.

Parents/guardians wishing to speak directly to the classroom teacher or other staff should contact the school office. Calls will be returned at the earliest opportunity.

Concerns/Questions

Parents/guardians are encouraged to contact the school directly when any problem, concern, or question arises. Questions concerning the student, other than routine matters or questions of a school-wide policy, should first be discussed with the teacher.

Parents/guardians who wish to visit the school or to meet with a student's teacher should telephone the school secretary so that she may coordinate the visit with the child and teacher's schedules. Involvement of the School Nurse or School Counselor can also be coordinated by the teacher. Teachers do not hold conferences during class time. School administrators and teachers aim to respond to parents' questions and concerns and resolve any problems as efficiently as possible. Parents/guardians should not hesitate to call as soon as a question or problem arises.

School to Home Communication

Open House/curriculum night events are held in the fall and are evenings just for parents. This is an opportunity to meet your child's teacher and learn about classroom expectations, procedures, and curriculum. Due to the limited amount of time provided, parents who have specific concerns about their child are asked to arrange a private meeting with the classroom teacher.

Student Information System

The SchoolBrains Community Portal is integrated into the District's SchoolBrains student information system. SchoolBrains is specially designed to provide an additional means of communication and sharing of information between parents/guardians, teachers, students, and administrators.

SchoolBrains Community Portal enables parents/guardians to view their child's attendance, schedule, and report card grades. Biographical information, such as telephone numbers, email and mailing addresses can be viewed and updates can be submitted online for approval.

The following is a summary of parent and student rights under Massachusetts state laws and regulations (603 CMR 23.00) pertaining to student records and the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA).

Student Record: The student record consists of the transcript and the temporary record, including all information and other materials regardless of physical form or characteristics concerning a student that are maintained by the school district and are organized on the basis of the student's name or in a way that such student may be individually identified, and that is kept by the public schools of the Commonwealth as defined under state law.

Parent/Guardian: A student's father or mother, or guardian, or person or agency legally authorized to act on behalf of the student in place of or in conjunction with the father, mother, or guardian. Any parent who by court order does not have physical custody of the student, is considered a non-custodial parent for purposes of M.G.L. c. 71, § 34H and 603 CMR 23.00. This includes parents who by court order do not reside with or supervise the student, even for short periods of time.

Eligible Student: A student who has reached fourteen (14) years of age or who has entered 9th grade. Upon reaching 18 years of age, the adult student may submit a written request to the principal or to the Superintendent of Schools to limit the rights of the parent(s) to request the amendment or release of the student record. Under Massachusetts law, however, a student cannot limit the right of the parent(s) to inspect the student record regardless of the Student's age. M.G.L. c. 71, § 34E.

Authorized School Personnel:

- (a) School administrators, teachers, counselors and other professionals who are employed by the school committee or who are providing services to the student under an agreement between the school committee and a service provider, and who are working directly with the student in an administrative, teaching counseling, and/or diagnostic capacity. Any such personnel who are not employed directly by the school committee shall have access only to the student record information that is required for them to perform their duties.
- (b) Administrative office staff and clerical personnel, including operators of data processing equipment or equipment that produces microfilm/microfiche, who are either employed by the school committee or are employed under a school committee service contract, and whose duties require them to have access to student records for purposes of processing information for the student record. Such personnel shall have access only to the student record information that is required for them to perform their duties.
- (c) The Evaluation Team which evaluates a student.

Confidentiality of Student Record

With few exceptions, no individuals or organizations other than the parent, eligible student, and school personnel working directly with the student may access information in the student record without the informed written consent of the parent or eligible student. For additional information regarding the release of student records to third parties, please see 603 CMR 23.07.

A Log of Access shall be included in the student record documenting the release of student records to individuals or entities other than authorized school personnel, the parent(s) and/or the eligible student.

Student Directory Information

GDRSD may release to third parties, without prior consent, a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major fields 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. Homelessness status is confidential and shall not constitute directory information. Parents and eligible students do, however, have the right to submit a written request that the student's directory information not be released without prior consent. Such written requests must be submitted to the Principal by October 1st.

Inspection of Student Record

Parents and/or eligible students have the right to inspect the student's permanent and temporary record. The record must be made available to the parent and/or eligible student within ten (10) calendar days of a request to access the student record, unless the parent and/or eligible student consents to an extension of this timeframe. If the parent and/or eligible student requests copies of the student records, the district may impose a charge for the actual reproduction cost of the records requested.

The Parents and/or eligible students have the right to meet with qualified school personnel and to have the contents of the student record interpreted. Parents and/or eligible students also have the right to have the student record inspected or interpreted by a third party of their choice at private expense.

Amendment of the Student Record

Parents and eligible students have the right to add relevant comments, information, or other written materials to the student record. If a parent or eligible student believe that adding information is not sufficient to explain, clarify or correct objectionable material in the student record, the parent and/or eligible student shall present the objection in writing and shall have the right to meet with the principal or a designee. Parents shall be notified of any request by an eligible student between 14 and 18 years of age to amend the student's student record.

Within one (1) school week of such a meeting or written request, the principal will issue a written decision on the request to amend the student record. Parents and eligible students shall have the right to appeal the principal's decision to the Superintendent of Schools. Parents and eligible students shall have the right to request a hearing before the School Committee if they disagree with the Superintendent's decision on any such appeal.

Transfer of Student Record

GDRSD will forward the student record of any student who seeks or intends to transfer to another public school or school district, upon request of the receiving school/school district. The written consent of the parent(s) and/or eligible student shall not be required prior to releasing records to the receiving school/school district.

Access by Non-Custodial Parent to Student Records

Unless there is a court order to the contrary, a non-custodial parent (parent without physical custody of the student) has the right, subject to certain procedures, to access his/her child's student record. A non-custodial parent who wishes to access the student record must submit a written request annually to the school principal. Upon receipt of such a request, the principal shall send written notification to the custodial parent by certified and first-class mail that the records and information will be provided to the non-custodial parent in twenty-one (21) calendar days unless the custodial parent

provides documentation of the non-custodial parent's ineligibility to access such information.

In all cases where school records are provided to a non-custodial parent, the electronic and postal address and other contact information for the custodial parent shall be removed from the records provided. Any such records provided to the non-custodial parent shall be marked to indicate that they may not be used to enroll the student in another school. Upon receipt of a court order that prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, § 34H, the school will notify the non-custodial parent that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial parent. M.G.L. c. 71, § 34H; 603 CMR 23.07.

Destruction of Records

While a student is enrolled in a school, the Principal or a designee may periodically review and destroy misleading, outdated, or irrelevant information contained in the temporary record provided. The District shall also destroy all documents contained in the student's temporary record within seven (7) years of the student's graduation, transfer or withdrawal from the school district. Prior to the destruction of temporary records, the parents and eligible student shall be notified in writing and provided with an opportunity to obtain a copy of any records to be destroyed. A copy of such notice shall be placed in the temporary record.

In accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 87, the score of any group intelligence test administered to a student enrolled in a public school shall be removed from the record of said student at the end of the school year in which such test was administered.

Complaints

A parent or eligible student has a right to file a complaint with the Student Privacy Policy Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20202-5920, 800-872-5327; or with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148, 781-338-3300.

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment Notice

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) affords parents certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

- A. *Consent* before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (DOE): political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent; mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family; sex behavior or attitudes; illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior; critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family

relationships; legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers; religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

- B. *Receive notice* and an opportunity to opt a student out of the following: any other protected information survey, regardless of funding; any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law; and activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.
- C. *Inspect*, upon request and before administration or use: protected information surveys of students; instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum. These rights transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under state law.

The District will/has develop(ed) and adopt(ed) policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The District will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. The District will also directly notify, such as through U.S. Mail or email, parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt their child out of participation of the specific activity or survey. The District will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the District has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys.

Specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement include: the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution; the administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by DOE; and any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above. Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Student Privacy Policy Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20202-5901

Section 6: Academic Standards and Requirements

Academic Integrity

It is the practice of the Groton-Dunstable Elementary Schools to facilitate honesty and integrity among the student body. Students must work to be successful in the classroom with each student's success based upon his/her own merit. To this end, academic misconduct of any kind is unacceptable.

Academic misconduct can be defined to include but not be limited to giving or receiving of unauthorized aid on examinations or in the preparation of reports or other assignments; knowingly misrepresenting the source of any academic work; unauthorized changing of grades; unauthorized use of school approvals or forging of signatures; plagiarizing of another's work; or otherwise acting dishonestly in the classroom.

Homework expectations

	Homework Expectations for Students	Homework Expectations for Parents/Guardians
Elementary School: Not to exceed 10 minutes/per grade/per night	<p>The focus of homework in elementary school is for students to build math fact fluency and grow as readers. Teachers may assign reading and/or math activities up to four nights a week.</p> <p>Special projects may be assigned but will be included in the nightly maximum.</p> <p>No homework will be assigned over school vacations or weekends.</p>	<p>Parents are encouraged to read with their children as the greatest benefit of homework in the elementary grades is parental involvement.</p> <p>Parents are encouraged to stop students if homework totals are being exceeded. If homework exceeds maximum totals for your child on a consistent basis, please communicate with the classroom teacher so adjustments can be made.</p>

Grade reporting

All parents/guardians are expected to attend the fall conference. Student progress is reported through conferences and standards-based report cards.

Field Trips

The bus rules and regulations apply to all school trips under the sponsorship of the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District. (See Rules for Students on School Buses) Field trips are designed to enhance the school curriculum as outlined by the Common Core State Standards. Students shall follow the instructions of teachers/chaperones during the trips.

Section 7: Extracurricular Activities

There are many enrichment activities that are provided after school through the Peter Twomey Youth Center. The District provides nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities in such a manner as is necessary to afford students with disabilities an equal opportunity for participation. Check the website for various programs offered throughout the year: <http://gdrsd.org/departments/twomey-youth-center/>

Section 8: Technology Policy

Empowered Digital Use

The School Committee recognizes the need for students to be prepared to contribute to and excel in a connected, global community. To that end, the district provides ongoing student instruction that develops digital citizenship skill sets for using technology as a tool. Information and communication technology are an integrated part of our curriculum across subjects and grades and are aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Please review two important School Committee Policies: **Empowered Digital Use** (Appendix B) and **Access to Digital Resources** (Appendix C).

If a parent does not want a student to appear in these types of activities, he/she must fill out **Digital Media Publication Acknowledgement Form** (Appendix D).

Section 9: School Lunch, Snack, and Recess Program

School Lunch

Free and Reduced Lunch

Please complete the Free & Reduced School Meals Application before the first day of school. We need a new application to be filled out every school year. If your household has qualified in the past or you think you may qualify this school year, please send completed applications to Patty St. Laurent, Food Service Director, 344 Main St., Groton, MA 01450 (Food Service Office Middle School South's main office).

Food Allergies

The Groton- Dunstable Food Service Department encourages open communication with parents and students regarding school nutrition. Families are invited to call the food service director or kitchen manager with any questions or concerns. We encourage parents and students with any food allergies or food-related medical concerns to schedule a time with our kitchen managers to read current food labels and recipes.

Meal Charge Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent meal procedures throughout the district. The Groton-Dunstable Regional School District ("GDRSD") recognizes that healthy, nutritious meals are an important component to student readiness and ability to learn.

In addition, 7 C.F.R. §210.10(a)(1) states "Schools must provide nutritious and well-balanced meals to all the children they serve." In accordance with this regulation, the GDRSD will not deny any student access to school lunch. However, 2 C.F.R. §300.10 2011, requires this to be written off as bad debt by statute, the district's Food Service department is a self-supporting fund that shall not have a negative balance at the close of a fiscal year. Unpaid charges place a financial strain on the Food Service department and on the district's operating budget.

The goals of this policy are:

- To establish a consistent district policy regarding charges and collection of charges.
- To encourage parent/guardian to assume the responsibility of meal payments and to promote self-responsibility of the student.

On a weekly basis, the Food Service Director will generate a charge balance report from the POS system. The Director will send an email to all parents/guardians requesting immediate payment.

Free and Reduced Lunch Students

Free Lunch Status Students will not be allowed to have a negative account balance. Free lunch status allows a child to receive a free meal every day. A la carte items are not part of the USDA program.

Reduced Lunch Status Students will be allowed to have a negative account balance up to a maximum dollar equivalent of three (3) full priced meals. Reduced lunch status allows a child to receive reduced priced meals at a reduced amount determined by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Nutrition, Health & Safety Programs.

All Other Students

All other students will be allowed to charge up to a maximum dollar equivalent of three (3) full priced meals. When the child reaches the maximum amount they will only be offered a designated menu alternate. Sample: Cheese sandwich + veggie sticks + fruit + milk. This designated menu alternate will be charged to the child's lunch account at the standard lunch rate. It will be reported as a meal to the state and federal school lunch authorities and thus will be eligible for reimbursement. Parents/Guardians are responsible for payment of these meals to the food service program. Once the child reaches the maximum meal charge, no a la carte items will be sold to the child and all transactions may become a cash basis transaction.

Methods of Payment

GDRSD can accept payment for meals upon purchase in the form of cash or check at the register, or via the school meal on-line payment system. Meals may be prepaid using any of these methods. Parents/Guardians are strongly encouraged to make payments on-line and to register for low balance alerts.

Any student whose account has a zero balance will be allowed to charge a reimbursable meal. This will result in a negative balance on the account until the balance is resolved. In no event will students at any grade level whose account is delinquent be allowed to charge a la carte items or second meal until the account is in good standing. "Good standing" for the purchase of a la carte items is defined as an account with a positive balance.

Collection Process

Checks Returned for Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF)

When a check is returned to the Treasurer's Office for "NSF", a letter will be sent to inform the parent(s). Payment for the NSF check must be in the form of cash, cashier's

check, or money order. Payment must be received within ten (10) days of the date of the letter. Any penalty fee will be made payable to the GDRSD and sent to the Business Office. The penalty fee and the amount of the check will be deducted from the child/children's lunch account immediately upon notice from the bank and the above-mentioned rules will take effect. Second requests will follow M.G.L. Chapter 93 Section 40A.

Balances Owed with No Response by Parent/Guardian

If a student's account is not in good standing at the end of the school year, the administration may take one or more of the following actions, unless or until the deficit balance is paid in full:

- Prohibit participation of the student in the program.
- Prohibit participation of student or students in the student's household from participating in any future fee-based program, extra-curricular activity, or non-curricular school activity; or until or unless outstanding balances are resolved.
- Referral to small claims court and/or District Attorney's Office.

A parent/guardian may call the Food Service Director to place a block on their child's account to prohibit the purchase of a la carte items. The Director of Business & Finance may instruct the Food Service Director to place a block on a student's account due to non-payment of district fees or other collection issues.

LEGAL REF: M.G.L. 44: 53E 1/2

CROSS REF: EFC, JQ

Snack

Snack time will be provided during the school day at the teacher's discretion. Parents are encouraged to provide a healthy snack from home. Please send in a small item that a child can eat in 5 to 10 minutes. You will be notified if your child's classroom is a nut-free environment.

Recess

All students present in school are expected to participate in outdoor recess. Outdoor recess is not scheduled during unusually cold or inclement weather. Please be sure that students are dressed properly for outdoor recess.

Section 10: Student Support Services

School Counseling Services

The School Counselors' goal is to provide services for all students in a nondiscriminatory manner. Counselors plan, organize and coordinate tiered supports and interventions. They establish strengths-based supports and skill development across social and emotional, behavioral and academic spaces. Counselors use data to provide supports systematically and to ensure students make effective progress towards intended goals and outcomes. Our counselors play a critical role in the development of culturally responsive family partnerships and community support across all tiers of social emotional, mental and behavioral health. They work alongside our educators, principals and district leaders in the creation and growth of systems and structures that allow all stakeholders to feel a sense of acceptance, belonging and community within the culture and climate of our classrooms, buildings and district.

Counseling and counseling materials free from bias and stereotypes:

To ensure that counseling and counseling materials are free from bias and stereotypes on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, and homelessness, all counselors:

1. encourage students to consider programs of study, courses, extracurricular activities, and occupational opportunities on the basis of individual interests, abilities, and skills;
2. examine testing materials for bias and counteract any found bias when administering tests and interpreting test results;
3. communicate effectively with ELs and students with disabilities and facilitate their access to all programs and services offered by the district;
4. ensure that ELs have the opportunity to receive support services, such as guidance and counseling, in a language that the student understands;
5. support students in educational and occupational pursuits that are nontraditional for their gender.

Health Services

All elementary schools have registered nurses present during the school day for consultation, assessing ill and injured students, administering medications and treatments, providing hearing vision and dental screenings, reviewing immunizations, universal precautions, and tracking height, weight, and BMI. For those students with Special Health Care Needs, the School Nurse will develop and have a parent/guardian sign a Health Care plan. This plan will be distributed to the student's teachers and training, if necessary, will be given to designated staff by the School Nurse. School nurses are members of the school's Student Support Teams, crisis intervention team,

and are involved in the special education referral process.

Universal precautions are used by all personnel for treating any student or staff member.

Communicable Diseases

These are treated using the guidelines from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health protocols. It is extremely important that you notify the School Nurse of your child's allergies and/or medical condition(s). A list of communicable diseases, which restrict school attendance, is available from the School Nurses. If clarification is needed, call the School Nurse. Students should not be in school if they have any of the following:

- A fever over 100° - must be fever free for 24 hours before re-entry
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Disruptive cough
- Rash of undetermined origin
- Suspected infection of the eyes, ears, nose, throat, skin or scalp
- Significant abdominal/chest pain
- Significant injury
- Head or eye injury
- Documented or suspected contagious disease until cleared for re-entry by the child's physician
- If an antibiotic has been prescribed for a contagious illness, the student must be on the medication for a full 24 hours before re-entry
- Open oozing sores which cannot be covered
- Difficulty breathing

Medical-Related Dismissal Policy

The School Nurse will determine those students who should be dismissed from school. If your student becomes ill in school, every attempt will be made to notify you. This is kept on file with the nurse. Notify the nurse if work numbers or home phone numbers change.

Medication Policy

Our school district's policy for the administration of medicine in school is as follows:

Before your student can receive any medication in school, you need to obtain a Consent Form from the School Nurse. Fill out the parental side of the form and take it to your child's physician (or nurse practitioner) to have the back of the form filled out and signed. Bring this form with no more than a thirty-day supply of the medicine in the ORIGINAL PHARMACY BOTTLE to the nurse's office. Your pharmacist can provide separate bottles for home and school. You need to bring in the medicine and pick it up

from the nurse's office. **FOR SAFETY PURPOSES, STUDENTS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO TRANSPORT MEDICINE TO AND FROM SCHOOL ON THE BUS.** With prior arrangements with the nurse, some students can carry their inhalers or epi-pens on the bus. The nurse cannot start any medicine until the forms have been completed and returned to the school.

If your child is to receive a short-term medicine (less than 10 doses), just fill out the parental permission side of the consent form. After 10 doses have been given during the school year, a doctor's written order is required for further administration of the medication. Please pick up all medicine upon completion. All medicine remaining in the nurse's office will be discarded on the last day of school.

THIS POLICY IS FOR ALL MEDICATIONS, PRESCRIPTION AS WELL AS OVER THE COUNTER. If there is a change in the dose, time or type of medication, new forms are required from you and the physician. If you have any questions, please call the nurse at your school.

Groton-Dunstable is registered with the Department of Public Health for the limited purpose of delegating medications to unlicensed, properly trained adults for students on field trips and special school events when the nurse is not available.

Administration of Epi-pen: The nurse is responsible for administering the care plan for students identified by their physician as having a life-threatening allergy. Appropriate personnel will be trained by the nurse to give the epi-pen. The list of those trained will be kept on file. You will need to submit to the nurse the medication form and specific instructions about the treatment for the allergy from the physician.

Immunization Requirements: Upon entry to school (i.e. kindergarten or transfer) you are required to submit to the building nurse a written, certified (signed by the physician) copy of the following required immunizations.

There are two situations in which students who are not appropriately immunized may be admitted to school:

1. A **medical exemption** is allowed if a physician submits documentation that an immunization is medically contraindicated; and
2. A **religious exemption** is allowed if a parent or guardian submits a written statement that immunizations conflict with their sincere religious beliefs.

Current Immunization Requirements for Kindergarten Entry

5 doses of diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTaP) vaccine;

4 doses of polio vaccine;

2 doses of measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine

3 doses of hepatitis B vaccine; and

1 dose of varicella (chickenpox) vaccine, unless a doctor's note verifying the student has already had chickenpox can be provided.

The only exception for exclusion of un-immunized or partially immunized children is in

the case of homeless children, whereby they cannot be denied entry to school if they do not have their immunization records.

Mandated Screenings Administered by the Nurse

- Hearing test – grades K-3 and special education referrals
- Vision test – grades K-4 and special education referrals

Letters referring the student to their doctor will be sent home for students who do not pass hearing or vision screening.

- Height, weight and BMI test – grades K-4
- Letters suggesting consultation with the pediatrician will be sent home for students whose BMI is below 5% or above 95%.
- Dental exams or screening are offered by the local Board of Health to grades K, 2, and 4. Cleaning and fluoride treatments are offered for grades 2 and 4.

Other Medical Documentation Required

A copy of a lead screening test done at any time must be submitted before kindergarten entry. A copy of your child's physical exam (given at age 5) is required for entry into kindergarten. A physical done at 4 years old is acceptable for initial entry, but it must be followed by submission of the 5 years physical within 6 months. Please note, however, that all immunizations and lead screening (if entering kindergarten) must be complete before kindergarten entry.

A copy of your student's 3rd grade physical is required.

Pediculosis (head lice)

It is important that you notify the building nurse if your student has lice in order to control a potential outbreak. Your child may come to school once a chemical treatment has been done and reported to the nurse and the child has been checked by the Nurse. If a chemical treatment has not been used, all nits (eggs) must be removed by the parents, and the child must be checked by the nurse before entry to school. If multiple students are found to be affected with lice, the nurse may institute more stringent policies.

Do not hesitate to call your building nurse if you have questions concerning your student's health.

Health and Wellness

Please refrain from bringing your pets to school as we have many students with severe allergies.

Mandatory Reporting

All professional staff are informed annually of their obligations to report cases of child abuse and neglect as specified in M.G.L. Chapter 119, § 51A-51F and M.G.L. Chapter 71, § 37L.

Students with Disabilities, Special Education

Some students with disabilities require specialized instruction and/or related services to enable the student to make effective progress in school. These services can include, but are not limited to, speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and specialized instruction.

Parents/guardians or school personnel may refer a student for an evaluation to determine eligibility for Special Education, if they suspect the student has a disability that is affecting their progress in school and the student may need specialized instruction or related services. Requests should be forwarded to the Student Services Office. Within five (5) school days of such a referral, a consent form authorizing an evaluation of the student's eligibility for special education services will be forwarded to the parent(s)/guardian(s). Upon receipt of consent or the consent of a student who has reached eighteen (18) years of age, an evaluation will be conducted and a Team meeting will be held to determine if the student is eligible for special education services pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and/or M.G.L. c. 71B. If the student is found eligible for special education services, the Team will develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) identifying the services determined necessary by the Team to provide the student with a free appropriate public education.

Individuals with Disabilities, Section 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504") is a federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education. Section 504 provides: "No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States . . . shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

A student with a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits a major life activity may, following an evaluation, be determined to be eligible for services or accommodations necessary to enable the student to benefit from school programming and instruction to the same extent as non-disabled students. Any such services will be documented in a Section 504 Accommodation Plan that is developed through the Section 504 Team process. To obtain additional information regarding Section 504 or to request an evaluation of a student's eligibility for Section 504 services or accommodations, please contact the Principal or the Director of Services Services.

The District 504 Coordinator is Jill Greene, Director of Student Services.

The Building 504 Coordinator for Boutwell is Maggie Ross Richardson, Early Childhood Coordinator.

The Building 504 Coordinator for Swallow Union is Peter Myerson, Principal.

The Building 504 Coordinator is Florence Roche is Laura Taylor, Assistant Principal.

Individuals who have complaints regarding the district's compliance with Section 504 may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education's, Office for Civil Rights, 5 Post Office Square, 8th Floor, Boston, MA 02118. For complaints or concerns related to the identification, evaluation, and placement of students with disabilities, parents or guardians may file a Request for Hearing with the Massachusetts Bureau of Special Education Appeals at 14 Summer Street, 4th Floor, Malden, MA 02148 or may access the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Problem Resolution System, 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148.

English Learners

The District complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI); the Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA); the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA); M.G.L. c. 71A; and 603 CMR 14.00, which afford legal protections to English Learners (ELs) and the parents/guardians of EL students. The District's compliance activities include, but are not limited to: following appropriate procedures to identify students who may be English Learners (ELs) and Former English Learners (FELS); providing sufficient language and academic supports to enable ELs to become English proficient and meet academic standards in a timely manner; addressing any language barriers that would prevent ELs from meaningful participation in their education; and ensuring meaningful communication with Limited English Proficient parents/guardians. For additional information, please contact the Office of the Assistant Superintendent of Schools.

Homeless Students

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act requires that schools immediately enroll homeless students in school, even if they do not have the documents usually required for enrollment, such as school records, medical records or proof of residency, as long as the student has been properly immunized. Information on lead screenings as well as immunization records may be transferred over the phone. Parents or Guardians intending to register students who are homeless should be aware of the following:

1. Homeless students have a right to either remain in their school of origin or to attend school where they are temporarily residing.

2. Children who move from a homeless situation into a permanent residence during the course of a school year have the right to stay in the school they were attending while they were temporarily homeless. If the child or youth continues his or her education in the school of origin but begins living in an area served by another school district, the school district of origin and the school district in which the homeless child or youth is living must agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child or youth with transportation to and from the school of origin. If the school districts cannot agree upon a method, the responsibility and costs for transportation are to be shared equally.
3. Students who chose to enroll in school where they are temporarily residing must be enrolled immediately, even if they do not bring the records usually required for enrollment with them. If a homeless student arrives without records, the school district's designated Homeless Education Liaison will assist the family and contact the previously attended school system to obtain the required records.
4. A child who is homeless and attending any school served by the local educational agency is eligible for Title I services and the Free and Reduced Lunch Program.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines “homeless children and youths” as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes—

- Children and youths who are:
 - sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as “doubled-up”);
 - living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
 - living in emergency or transitional shelters; or
 - abandoned in hospitals;
- Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

Additional information is available at: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/mv/>

The Homeless Liaison for the Groton Dunstable Regional School District is Jill Greene, Director of Student Services.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

The Groton-Dunstable Regional School District does not tolerate discrimination against students, parents, employees or the general public on the basis of sex. The Groton-Dunstable Regional School District is also committed to maintaining a school environment free of harassment based on sex, including harassment based on gender,

sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy or pregnancy status. The Groton-Dunstable Regional School District's policy of nondiscrimination extends to students, staff, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business; no person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in employment, admission to a public school of Groton-Dunstable Regional School District or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school on account of sex.

How to Report Sexual Harassment: Individuals are encouraged to report allegations of sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator(s) identified below or the Principal. Any report of sexual harassment, as defined under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, will be responded to promptly in accordance with the *District's Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedures*. Reports of discriminatory harassment not constituting sexual harassment as defined under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, will be initially addressed through the *District's Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure* (see appendix) and may, if dismissed under that procedure, be investigated in accordance with the *District's Civil Rights Grievance Procedures* (see appendix).

Upon receipt of a report of sexual harassment, the Title IX Coordinator will: (1) promptly and confidentially contact the complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures; (2) inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a Title IX Formal Complaint; (3) consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures; (4) if the school district does not provide the complainant with supportive measures, document the reasons why such response was reasonable; and (5) explain to the complainant the process for filing a Title IX Formal Complaint.

Inquiries about the application of Title IX may be directed to the District's Title IX Coordinator and/or the Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

The District's Title IX Coordinator: Jill Greene, Director of Student Services, Groton Dunstable Public School, 344 Main Street, Groton; jgreene@gdrsd.org; 978-448-5505.

Section 11: Safety and Security

Surveillance Cameras and Building Security

All elementary buildings have surveillance cameras in the entryways to the school. During the school day, all doors remain locked.

Buzzer System

After the start of school, all doors to the buildings are locked. All students, parents, teachers and visitors must be buzzed into the building through the front doors. In case of fire or other emergency, all building doors can be opened from the inside.

Visitor and Volunteer Policy

All visitors, including parents, must report to and register in the Main Office. All visitors will receive a visitor's badge prior to going elsewhere in the building.

All volunteers must have a completed CORI before volunteering. Individuals interested in volunteering, should obtain a CORI form from the school's main office.

Physical Restraint

The District complies with the requirements of Massachusetts regulations governing the use and reporting of physical restraint in schools. 603 CMR 46.00. Physical restraint is defined as direct physical contact that prevents or significantly restricts a student's freedom of movement. Physical restraint shall be considered an emergency procedure of last resort, and shall be prohibited except when a student's behavior poses a threat of assault, or imminent, serious physical harm to self or others, and the student is not responsive to verbal directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions, or such interventions are deemed to be inappropriate under the circumstances.

Transportation Policy

Student Conduct on Buses

The Groton-Dunstable Regional School Committee and its staff share with students and parents the responsibility for student safety during transportation to and from school. The authority for enforcing School Committee requirements of student conduct on buses will rest with the Principal.

To ensure the safety of all students who ride in buses, it may occasionally be necessary to revoke the privilege of transportation from a student who abuses this privilege. Parents of children whose behavior and misconduct on school buses endangers the

health, safety, and welfare of other riders will be notified that their children face the loss of transportation privileges in accordance with the Code of Conduct approved by the School Committee (from SC Policy: EEAEC (also JICC) - STUDENT CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES)

All buses are equipped with cameras and video footage can be reviewed.

Lockdown and Fire drills

As part of the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District's efforts to maintain a safe school environment, lockdown drills and fire drills will be conducted periodically throughout the school year.

Section 12: Bullying

Bullying and retaliation are strictly prohibited in Groton-Dunstable Public Schools. We recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, pregnant or parenting status, physical appearance, or disability, or by association with a person who is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. The District will identify specific steps to take to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment and teasing.

"Bullying" is 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 education process or the orderly operation of a school. For the purposes of this section, bullying shall include cyber-bullying.

"Cyber-bullying", bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant

messages or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying shall also include (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

Acts of bullying, which includes acts of cyberbullying, are prohibited:

- On school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school--related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school district or school; and
- At a location, activity, function, or program that is not school--related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Who is Involved with Bullying

- "Perpetrator", a student or 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 who engages in bullying or retaliation.
- "Victim", a student against whom bullying or retaliation has been perpetrated.
- "Bystander", those who witness the bullying.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited. GDRSD will investigate bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation incidents in a fair, timely, and thorough manner while being mindful of personal privacy rights and the stigma that a student may incur from being labeled in some way or another. Verified incidents of bullying, in all its forms, will be dealt with firmly. Dispositions will begin with education and, when deemed necessary, will move to progressively sterner measures.

Reporting Bullying, Cyberbullying or Retaliation

Reports of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member will be recorded in writing. A school or district staff member shall immediately report to the principal or to the principal's designee any instance of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation he/she becomes aware of or witnesses.

All bullying referrals will be evaluated and/or investigated. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously without disclosing the aggressor. Each school will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community.

Reporting by Staff

As staff members become aware of or witness conduct that may be regarded as bullying or retaliation, he/she shall respond to the incident and report it to the designated school personnel per district policies.

Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others

In an effort to keep its students safe, the GDRSD believes it is the responsibility of students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student, to report it to designated school personnel as soon as possible. Reports that are made anonymously will be investigated before any contact is made with the aggressor or the target.

A student who knowingly makes a false allegation of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action as determined by the Principal or his/her designee.

Responding to a Report of Bullying, Cyberbullying or Retaliation

Safety

Once an initial report of bullying or retaliation has been brought to the attention of school personnel, the designated school personnel will take appropriate action(s) to maintain a sense of safety for all parties involved in the report, including the target, the aggressor and the reporting party (if it is a student). Once designated school personnel have made a determination regarding the validity of the report, additional steps and modifications will be made to keep students safe.

In creating a safety plan, appropriate accommodations may be indicated to limit the interaction between the target and the aggressor throughout the course of the school day. This would include but is not limited to, the classroom setting, the cafeteria, recess and school bus seating assignment.

The Principal or his/her designee will implement safeguards to ensure that all students involved in the incident are protected during the course of the investigation process. All students will be reminded by the Principal or his/her designee that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Obligations to Notify Others

Notice to Parents or Guardians. Once an assessment of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation has been made and been deemed valid, the Principal or his/her designee will immediately inform the parent(s) or guardian of the target and the aggressor of the

incident. At this time, parents/guardians will also be informed of the investigation and disciplinary procedures that may follow. There may be incidents where parents are notified prior to the investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.

Notice 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 his/her 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 49.00.

Notice to Law Enforcement. At any point after receiving and/or investigating a report of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation, if the Principal or the principal's designee determines that criminal charges may be warranted, the principal will notify the local law enforcement agency of said incident. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency.

If an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the principal or the principal's designee will contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has reasonable evidence to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

Investigation

The Principal or his/her designee will promptly investigate all reports of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.

During the investigation, the Principal or his/her designee will interview students, staff, witnesses and parents or guardians. The Principal or his/her designee will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and all witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action. Interviews will be conducted by the Principal or his/her designee, in consultation with the school counselor. To the extent practicable, the Principal or his/her designee will maintain confidentiality throughout the investigative process and will maintain a written record of the investigation.

Determinations

If the incident is verified to be bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation, an immediate meeting will be arranged by the school official with the aggressor and the aggressor's parents or guardians. In the meeting, it will be made clear to both the aggressor and the aggressor's parents or guardians that bullying, cyberbullying and/or retaliation will not be tolerated in the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District. A meeting may also take place with the target and target's parents or guardians.

Depending on the level of the incident, local authorities may be informed of such incident(s) and the school will follow the recommendation from local authorities in resolving the continued behavior of the aggressor.

Upon completion of an investigation of bullying, the parents of the alleged target and aggressor shall be notified in writing of the determination of the Principal, or designee, regarding a complaint of bullying that is investigated. Said written determination shall inform the target of the target's right to access the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Problem Resolution System if the target believes that the investigation and/or determination was not conducted in accordance with applicable laws and the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

Responses to Bullying

Bullying behavior can take many forms and can vary dramatically in its level of seriousness and what impact it has on the target and other students. Accordingly, there is no one prescribed response to verified acts of bullying. While conduct that rises to the level of "bullying," as defined in this Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, will generally warrant disciplinary action against the aggressor, whether and to what extent disciplinary actions are imposed (e.g., detention, suspension, etc.) is a matter for the professional discretion of the Principal or his/her designee. No disciplinary action will be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous complaint. District administrators will integrate a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. The needs and safety of the target will also be considered as part of restoring resolution to the bullying matter.

Verified acts of bullying shall result in intervention by the building Principal or his/her designee and will address the acts of the aggressor and the needs of the target and assure the sanction against bullying behavior is enforced with the goal that the bullying behavior will cease and desist. The expectations and consequences for non-compliance will be documented in a Bullying/Cyberbullying Contract Agreement for the aggressor, and must be signed by the aggressor and his/her parents or guardians.

The aggressor may be required to meet with a school counselor in an effort to learn about the dangers and life consequences of bullying and how it may affect the aggressor, bystanders and the target. During these sessions, the aggressor will work on his/her social skills development and be taught how to promote self-control and empathy. The Principal or his/her designee will also meet with the target and the target's parents/guardians, to go over a Safety Plan which documents actions to ensure safety for the target.

The following are possible interventions for bullying incidents:

Non-disciplinary Interventions may include

- Meeting with parents/guardians to engage parental support
- Counseling
- Increased supervision and monitoring of student to observe and intervene in bullying situations

- Peer Mentoring
- Life Skills Groups
- Role Playing Activities
- Research Projects
- Skill-building lessons in courtesy, tolerance, assertiveness, and conflict management.

Disciplinary Interventions may include detention, in school suspension, out of school suspension, community service, and/or judiciary committee.

The Principal or his/her designee will make determinations regarding how to integrate the target back into the school environment and whether adjustments need to be made to ensure his/ her safety (i.e., increased staff supervision, classroom seating changes, bus changes, etc.).

Following a verified incident of bullying, the Principal or his/her designee will meet with the target to ensure that he/she is safe and to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct. If so, the Principal or his/her designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement additional supportive measures immediately. Where an eligible student with a disability is found to have engaged in or to have been the target of bullying, the student's IEP or Section 504 Team shall be convened to consider the impact of such bullying upon the student's educational services and the need for additional services or support to enable the student to avoid further bullying.

Section 13: Harassment

The Groton-Dunstable Regional School District strictly prohibits discrimination and/or harassment on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy or parenting status or homelessness and will promptly investigate and respond to all complaints of discriminatory harassment in accordance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations. M.G.L. c. 76, § 5.

Any individual who witnesses, becomes aware of, or believes that they have been subjected to harassment or discrimination on the basis race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy or parenting status or homelessness should immediately contact the building Principal or Director of Student Services.

Retaliation against any individual who has filed a harassment complaint or assisted or participated in a harassment investigation or proceeding, is strictly prohibited. A student who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including long-term suspension from school.

The Groton-Dunstable Regional School District strictly prohibits discrimination and/or harassment on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin,

sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy or parenting status or homelessness and will promptly investigate and respond to all complaints of discriminatory harassment in accordance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations. M.G.L. c. 76, § 5.

Any individual who witnesses, becomes aware of, or believes that they have been subjected to harassment or discrimination on the basis race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy or parenting status or homelessness should immediately contact the building Principal.

Retaliation against any individual who has filed a harassment complaint or assisted or participated in a harassment investigation or proceeding, is strictly prohibited. A student who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including long-term suspension from school.

Section 14: Student Conduct and Discipline

Student Discipline Guidelines

Good behavior and classroom discipline are imperative if learning is to take place. The purpose of Groton Dunstable Policies and Standards for Behavior is to ensure a safe and orderly environment for everyone. These rules are in effect for all students.

Students, parents and teachers should be aware that the school administration reserves the right to impose greater or lesser consequences for violations of school rules based upon individual consideration of the facts and circumstances of any disciplinary violation found to have occurred. Administrators will be the final arbitrator in all disciplinary actions. When more than one response is available, the school administrator will use the most appropriate choice according to the severity of the offense(s) and all other factors involved in the incident.

Disciplinary Due Process

All students will be provided with due process prior to the imposition of an in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension or expulsion except where circumstances necessitate the student's emergency removal from school grounds for up to two (2) school days. Emergency removals will be conducted in compliance with 603 CMR 53.07.

Definitions

Expulsion: the removal of a student from the school premises and/or regular classroom activities for more than ninety (90) consecutive school days, indefinitely, or permanently, as permitted under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or 37H1/2.

In-School Suspension: the removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises, for no more than (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions during the school year. * *Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not constitute a suspension.*

Long-Term Suspension: 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.

Written Notice: Written correspondence sent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to the address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent.

Principal: The primary administrator of the school or the Principal's designee for disciplinary purposes.

Suspension Procedures

In-School Suspension: Prior to the imposition of an In-School Suspension, the student will be informed of the disciplinary offense and provided with an opportunity to respond. If the Principal determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the Principal will provide oral notice to the student and to the student's parent(s) of the length of the In-School Suspension and will make reasonable efforts to meet with the parent(s). On or before the day of the In-School Suspension, the Principal will deliver written notice to the parent(s) of the basis for and length of the in-school suspension and inviting the parent(s) to meet to discuss the student's behavior if such a meeting has not already occurred. A student has the right to appeal an in-school suspension only to the extent that it will result in the student's in-school suspension for more than ten (10) school days in a school year.

Out-of-School Suspension: In the case of disciplinary offenses **not** involving: a) possession of a dangerous weapon; b) possession of a controlled substance; c) assault on a member of the educational staff; or d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, the student and parent(s) will be given oral and written notice of the disciplinary offense with which the student is charged and of their opportunity to participate in a hearing prior to the imposition of an out-of-school suspension. Written notice of the date and time for the hearing will be provided in English and in the primary language of the Student's home and will identify the disciplinary offense with which the student has been charged, the basis for the charge, the potential length of the student's suspension, and shall inform the parent and student of the right to interpreter services if necessary to participate in the hearing. Student's and/or parents do not have the right to representation by an attorney at a short-term suspension hearing. Where a student may be subject to a Long-Term Suspension, however, the Principal will notify the student and parent(s) of the student's right to legal representation (at private expense), the right to present and examine witnesses at the hearing, the right to review

the student record and documents that may be relied upon by the Principal, and the right to request that the hearing be audiotaped.

For disciplinary offenses involving a) possession of a dangerous weapon; b) possession of a controlled substance; c) assault on a member of the educational staff; or d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, the student will be given oral notice of the violation with which the student is charged and an opportunity to respond thereto, prior to the Principal's imposition of a short-term suspension or an interim suspension of ten (10) consecutive days or less pending formal proceedings. Upon imposition of an interim suspension of ten (10) consecutive days or less pending further disciplinary proceedings, the student and parents will be provided with written notice of the suspension and the date and time of any formal disciplinary proceedings.

Principal's Hearings

Short-Term Suspension: At the Principal's hearing, the student and parents (if participating) may dispute the charge(s) against the student and present information, including mitigating facts, for the principal's consideration in determining consequences for the student. **Long-Term Suspension:** In addition to the rights afforded a student in a short-term suspension hearing, the student will have the following rights:

- the right to be represented by an attorney or advocate at the student's/parent's expense;
- the right 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
- the right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident;
- the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;
- the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the Principal, and to receive a copy of the audio recording upon request.

Principal's Decision

Based on the evidence presented at the hearing, the Principal will determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense and the remedy or consequences to be imposed. The Principal shall exercise discretion in deciding the consequence for the offense and, in cases not involving possession of a controlled substance, a weapon, an assault on staff or felony charges, shall avoid using long-term suspension from school as a consequence until alternatives have been tried. If the Principal decides to suspend or expel the student, written notice of the Principal's decision will be sent to the student and parents in English and the primary language of the home identifying the disciplinary offense, the factual basis for the Principal's decision, the beginning and end dates of the suspension or expulsion, and the process for appeal. The Principal will also notify the student and parent of the student's opportunity to make academic progress during the period of removal from school in accordance with M.G.L. c. 76, § 21. Prior to suspending a student in grades K-3 from school, the Principal will send a copy of the

written determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons for imposing an out-of-school suspension, whether short-term or long-term, before the suspension takes effect.

Appeals

A student shall not have a right to appeal any suspension that will result in the Student's suspension in or out of school for ten cumulative days or less in a school year. A student's long-term suspension by the Principal in accordance with M.G.L. c.71 § 37H may be appealed in writing to the Superintendent of Schools within ten (10) calendar days from the effective date of the long-term suspension. For suspensions or expulsions imposed pursuant to M.G.L. c.71 § 37H1/2, the student shall have five (5) school days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the superintendent. For suspensions or expulsions imposed pursuant to M.G.L. c.71, §37H3/4, the Student shall have five (5) calendar days from the effective date of the suspension imposed by the Principal to appeal but shall be granted an extension of seven (7) calendar days upon request.

Academic Progress

Any student who is serving an in-school suspension, short-term suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion shall have the opportunity to earn credits, as applicable, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of the student's removal from the classroom or school. Any student who is expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days, whether in school or out of school, shall have an opportunity to receive education services and make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, in accordance with the school's Education Services Plan. M.G.L. c. 76 §21.

Emergency Removal

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 student may be removed from school on an emergency basis and without prior written notice of a hearing at which the parents may be present. Such an emergency removal shall be temporary and shall not exceed two school days following the day of the emergency removal.

Upon determining that a student requires removal from school on an emergency basis, the Principal will orally notify the student and the student's parent(s) of the emergency removal and the reasons therefore and of a hearing to be conducted prior to the conclusion of the second school day following the student's emergency removal. The Principal will then provide written notice to the parent(s) and student of the emergency removal and of the hearing to be conducted within two (2) school days. Such written

notice will inform the student of the student's rights at said hearing depending on whether the student may be subject to short-term or long-term suspension from school.

For additional information, please see Appendices - Massachusetts Laws – Student Conduct and Behavior.

Discipline and Students with Disabilities

The following procedures apply to the suspension of students with disabilities when suspensions exceed 10 consecutive school days or when the student is, as a result of a pattern of disciplinary removal resulting in the student's suspension in excess of ten (10) cumulative school days in the school year, subject to a disciplinary change in placement.

- Prior to a suspension that would result in a disciplinary change in placement of a student with a disability, building administrators, the parents and relevant members of the student's IEP or Section 504 Team will convene to determine whether the violation for which the student is subject to a disciplinary change in placement was caused by or directly and substantially related to the student's disability or was the direct result of a failure to implement the student's IEP or Section 504 Plan.

If the Team determines that the behavior is NOT a manifestation of the student's disability, the student may be disciplined in accordance with the policies and procedures applicable to all students except that students eligible for special education services shall be entitled to a free appropriate public education as of the eleventh (11th) day of disciplinary exclusion in the school year. Where a student's conduct is found not to be a manifestation of the student's disability, a functional behavior assessment may be conducted where appropriate and with the written consent of a parent.

If the team determines that the behavior IS a manifestation of the student's disability, the student will not be suspended or expelled for the violation found to be a manifestation of his/her disability although the Student may be subject to a forty-five (45) school day unilateral removal for certain offenses. Upon determination that a student's conduct was a manifestation of the student's disability, the Student's IEP or Section 504 Team will conduct a review of the student's behavior intervention plan, if any, and/or will conduct a functional behavior assessment of the student with the written consent of the student's parent.

Regardless of the manifestation determination, the school district may place the student in an interim alternative setting (as determined by the Team) up to forty-five (45) school days if:

1. The student is in possession of a dangerous weapon on school grounds or at

- school-sponsored events;
- 2. The student is in possession of or using illegal drugs on school grounds or at school-sponsored events;
- 3. The student engaged in solicitation of a controlled substance on school grounds or at school-sponsored events; or
- 4. The student inflicted serious bodily injury to another at school or at school-sponsored events.

The interim alternative setting must enable the student to participate in the general curriculum, progress toward the goals in the IEP, and receive the special education and related services contained in the student's IEP. The interim alternative setting must also provide services and modifications designed to address the behavior giving rise to the removal and to prevent the behavior from reoccurring.

At the conclusion of the forty-five (45) school day period, *the student shall be returned to his/her previous placement* unless the parent (or student if 18+) consents to an extension of the interim alternative setting or an Order is obtained from the Bureau of Special Education Appeal authorizing the student's continued removal.

If the conduct does not involve a dangerous weapon, controlled substance, or serious bodily injury, the school may remove the student to an interim alternative setting for 45 days only: 1) with parental consent *or* 2) by obtaining authorization from a court or the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA).

Appeals

A parent or adult student shall have the right to appeal the Team's determination, the imposition of a disciplinary change in placement, and the student's placement in an interim alternative educational setting by filing a request for Hearing with the Massachusetts Bureau of Special Education Appeals, 14 Summer Street, 4th Floor, Malden, MA 02148. The student will remain in the disciplinary placement imposed by school authorities pending a decision on the appeal or until the expiration of the disciplinary sanction, whichever comes first.

Searches of Students and Student Belongings

A search of a student will only be performed, and seizure of a student's belongings will only take place, if there exists reasonable suspicion that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school. The search will be conducted in a manner reasonably related to its objectives and will not be excessively intrusive in light of the age and sex of the student and the nature of the infraction. Whenever a personal search is deemed necessary, the student shall be advised of the reason for the search prior to the search being conducted. Searches of student may extend to articles of clothing such as pockets and outer garments and items such as pocketbooks, lunch bags, book bags, athletic bags, or backpacks.

A search of a student or a student's property may be conducted at school or at any school sponsored event on or off of school grounds or during the transportation to and from school or school-sponsored events.

Appendix A - Massachusetts Laws relative to Student Conduct and Behavior

II. M.G.L. c.71, § 37H – Possession of Drugs, Weapons and Assaults of School Staff

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, 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 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 representation, 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).

(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.

(E) When a student is expelled under the provisions of this section, no school or school district within the commonwealth shall be required to admit such student or to provide educational services to said student. If said student does apply for admission to another school or school district, the superintendent of the school district to which the application is made may request and shall receive from the superintendent of the school expelling said student a written statement of the reasons for said expulsion.

II. M.G.L. c.71, § 37H1/2 – Felony Charges

(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 substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive 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 right to appeal and the process for appealing such suspension; provided, however, that such suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal 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 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 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 shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the suspension.

(2) Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication 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 substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and reasons for such expulsion prior to such expulsion taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his 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 five 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 decisions shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the expulsion.

Any school district that suspends or expels a student under this section shall continue to provide educational services to the student during the period of suspension or expulsion, under section 21 of chapter 76. If the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student under an education service plan, under section 21 of chapter 76.

III. M.G.L. c.71, § 37H3/4.

(a) This section shall govern the suspension and expulsion of students enrolled in a public school in the commonwealth who are not charged with a violation of subsections (a) or (b) of section 37H or with a felony under section 37H1/2.

(b) Any principal, headmaster, superintendent or other person acting as a decision-maker at a student meeting or hearing, when deciding the consequences for the student, shall exercise discretion; consider ways to re-engage the student in the learning process; and avoid using expulsion as a consequence until other remedies and consequences have been employed.

(c) For any suspension or expulsion under this section, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled, or a designee, shall provide, to the student and to the parent or guardian of the student, notice of the charges and the reason for the suspension or expulsion in English and in the primary language spoken in the home of the student. The student shall receive the written notification and shall have the opportunity to meet with the principal or headmaster, or a designee, to discuss the charges and reasons for the suspension or expulsion prior to the suspension or expulsion taking effect. The principal or headmaster, or a designee, shall ensure that the parent or guardian of the student is included in the meeting, provided that such meeting may take place without the parent or guardian only if the principal or headmaster, or a designee, can document reasonable efforts to include the parent or guardian in that meeting. The department shall promulgate rules and regulations that address a principal's duties under this subsection and procedures for including parents in student exclusion meetings, hearings or interviews under this subsection.

(d) If a decision is made to suspend or expel the student after the meeting, the principal or headmaster, or a designee, shall update the notification for the suspension or expulsion to reflect the meeting with the student. If a student has been suspended or expelled for more than 10 school days for a single infraction or for more than 10 school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year, the student and the parent or guardian of the student shall also receive, at the time of the suspension or expulsion decision, written notification of a right to appeal and the process for appealing the suspension or expulsion in English and in the primary language spoken in the home of the student; provided, however, that the suspension or expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing. The principal or headmaster or a designee shall notify the superintendent in writing, including, but not limited to, by electronic means, of any out-of-school suspension imposed on a student enrolled in kindergarten through grade 3 prior to such suspension taking effect. That notification shall describe the student's alleged misconduct and the reasons for suspending the student out-of-school. For the purposes of this section, the term "out-of-school suspension" shall mean a disciplinary action imposed by school officials to remove a student from participation in school activities for 1 day or more.

(e) A student who has been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 school days for a single infraction or for more than 10 school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year shall have the right to appeal the suspension or expulsion to the superintendent. The student or a parent or guardian of the student shall notify the superintendent in writing of a request for an appeal not later than 5 calendar days following the effective date of the suspension or expulsion; provided, that a student and a parent or guardian of the student may request, and if so requested, shall be granted an extension of up to 7 calendar days. The superintendent or a designee shall hold a hearing with the student and the parent or guardian of the student within 3 school days of the student's request for an appeal; provided that a student or a parent or guardian of the student may request and, if so requested, shall be granted an extension of up to 7

calendar days; provided further, that the superintendent, or a designee, may proceed with a hearing without a parent or guardian of the student if the superintendent, or a designee, makes a good faith effort to include the parent or guardian. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony, cross-examine witnesses and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal in writing within 5 calendar days of the hearing. That decision shall be the final decision of the school district with regard to the suspension or expulsion.

(f) No student shall be suspended or expelled from a school or school district for a time period that exceeds 90 school days, beginning the first day the student is removed from an assigned school building.

IV. M.G.L. c.76, §21 – Academic Progress for Students Suspended or Expelled

Principals and headmasters shall ensure that students who are suspended from school for 10 or fewer consecutive days, whether in or out of school, shall have an opportunity to make academic progress during the period of suspension, to make up assignments and earn credits missed including, but not limited to, homework, quizzes, exams, papers and projects missed. Principals shall develop a school-wide education service plan for all students who are expelled or suspended from school for more than 10 consecutive school days, whether in or out of school. Principals shall ensure these students have an opportunity to make academic progress during the period of suspension or expulsion, to make up assignments and earn credits missed, including, but not limited to, homework, quizzes, exams, papers and projects missed. Education service plans may include, but are not limited to, tutoring, alternative placement, Saturday school, and online or distance learning. In developing the education service plan, principals may seek the cooperation or input of relevant health and human service, housing and nonprofit agencies, education collaboratives, and other service providers. Any school or school district that expels a student or suspends a student for more than 10 consecutive school days shall provide the student and the parent or guardian of the student with a list of alternative educational services. Upon selection of an alternative educational service by the student and the student's parent or guardian, the school or school district shall facilitate and verify enrollment in the service. Students exempt from attending school under section 1 of chapter 76 shall not be subject to this section.

V. M.G.L. c.71, §37L – Reporting of Incidents Involving Weapons / Transfer Student Records

Section 37L. The school committee of each city, town or regional school district shall inform teachers, administrators, and other professional staff of reporting requirements for child abuse and neglect under section 51A of chapter 119 and the reporting requirements for fires under section 2A of chapter 148. In addition, any school department personnel shall report in writing to their immediate supervisor an incident involving a student's possession or use of a dangerous weapon on school premises at any time.

Supervisors who receive such a weapon report shall file it with the superintendent of said school, who shall file copies of said weapon report with the local chief of police, the department of children and families, the office of student services or its equivalent in any school district, and the local school committee. Said superintendent, police chief, and representative from the department of children and families, together with a representative from the office of student services or its equivalent, shall arrange an

assessment of the student involved in said weapon report. Said student shall be referred to a counseling program; provided, however, that said counseling shall be in accordance with acceptable standards as set forth by the board of education. Upon completion of a counseling session, a follow-up assessment shall be made of said student by those involved in the initial assessment.

A student transferring into a local system must provide the new school system with a complete school record of the entering student. Said record shall include, but not be limited to, any incidents involving suspension or violation of criminal acts or any incident reports in which such student was charged with any suspended act.

VI. M.G.L. c. 269, § 17. Crime of Hazing: Definition: Penalty

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 willfully 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. Added by St. 1985, c. 536; amended by St. 1987, c. 665.

M.G.L. c. 269, § 18. Duty to Report Hazing

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. Added by St. 1985, c. 536; amended by St. 1987, c. 665.

M.G.L. c. 269, § 19. Hazing Statutes to be Provided:

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 section 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 regents of higher education and in the case of secondary schools, 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 regents 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. Added by St. 1985, c. 536; amended by St. 1987, c. 665.

Appendix B - Empowered Digital Use Policy

(Policy IJNDB) The School Committee recognizes the need for students to be prepared to contribute to and excel in a connected, global community. To that end, the district provides ongoing student instruction that develops digital citizenship skill sets for using technology as a tool. Information and communication technology are an integrated part of our curriculum across subjects and grades in developmentally appropriate ways and are aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and standards, including seeking knowledge and understanding; thinking critically and solving problems; listening, communicating, and interacting effectively; and engaging and competing in a global environment.

The Superintendent or designee shall implement, monitor, and evaluate the district's system/network for instructional and administrative purposes.

All users shall acknowledge that they understand that using digital devices, whether personal or school owned, and the school district network is a privilege and when using them in accordance with School District guidelines they will retain that privilege.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement administrative guidelines, regulations, procedures, and user agreements, consistent with law and policy, which shall include but not be limited to the following:

- Digital devices, software, and networks shall be used in school for educational purposes and activities.
- An individual's personal information (including home/mobile phone numbers, mailing addresses, and passwords) and that of others shall be kept private.
- Individuals will show respect for themselves and others when using technology, including social media.
- Users shall give acknowledgement to others for their ideas and work.
- Users shall report inappropriate use of technology immediately.

These procedures shall be reviewed annually by district administration together with students and teachers and shall provide a springboard for teaching and learning around topics such as internet safety, digital citizenship, and ethical use of technology.

Appendix C - Access to Digital Resources Policy Acknowledgment

(Policy IJND) The Committee supports the right of students, employees, and community members to have reasonable access to various information formats and believes it is incumbent upon users to utilize this privilege in an appropriate manner.

Safety Procedures and Guidelines

The Superintendent in conjunction with the Director of Technology & Digital Learning shall develop and implement appropriate procedures to provide guidance for access to digital resources. Guidelines shall address teacher supervision of student computer or tablet use, ethical use of digital resources and issues of privacy versus administrative review of electronic files and communications. In addition, guidelines shall prohibit utilization of digital resources for prohibited or illegal activities and for the use of other programs with the potential of damaging or destroying programs or data.

Internet safety measures shall be implemented that effectively address the following:

- Controlling access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet as defined by the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA);
- Safety and security of minors when they are using e-mail, instant messaging applications, and other forms of direct electronic communications;
- Preventing unauthorized access, including hacking, viruses, and other unlawful activities by minors online;
- Unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal information regarding minors.

The Groton-Dunstable Regional School District shall provide reasonable public notice to address and communicate its Internet safety measures.

Empowered Digital Use

All students and faculty must agree to our Empowered Digital Use Policy through acknowledgement and acceptance of the Middle School Handbook prior to the student or staff member being granted independent access to digital resources and district networks. The required form, which specifies guidelines for using digital resources and district networks, must be signed by the parent or legal guardian of minor students (those under 18 years of age) and also by the student. This document shall be kept on file as a legal, binding document. In order to modify or rescind the agreement, the student's parent/guardian (or the student who is at least 18 years old) must provide the Director of Technology & Digital Learning with a written request.

Employee Use

Employees shall use district email, district devices, and district networks only for purposes directly related to educational and instructional purposes.

Community Use

On recommendation of the Superintendent in conjunction with the Director of Technology & Digital Learning, the district shall determine when and which computer equipment, software, and information access systems will be available to the community. All guests will be prompted to, and must accept our district's Empowered Digital Use Policy before accessing our district network.

Disregard of Rules and Responsibility for Damages

Individuals who refuse to sign required Empowered Digital Use documents or who violate District rules governing the use of District technology or networks shall be subject to loss or restriction of the privilege of using equipment, software, information access systems, and network.

Individuals shall reimburse the district for repair or replacement of District property lost, stolen, damaged, or vandalized while under their care.

Appendix D - Digital Media Publication Acknowledgement

(Policy IJNDC) The Groton-Dunstable Regional School District ("GDRSD") has adopted a district-wide web page in addition to other Internet based content and social media forums, which may include, but is not limited to, the district webpage, student digital portfolios, newsletters, blogs, or parent open house events. GDRSD maintains these web sources for educational purposes only, in furtherance of the educational mission of the GDRSD. All published works must relate to GDRSD's educational mission.

Supervision and Approval of Web Pages

The Superintendent (or his/her designee) may select the person or persons responsible for overseeing the GDRSD's web pages and maintaining the web pages in a manner consistent with this policy and the GDRSD's Access to Digital Resources Policy.

Staff members are encouraged to publish digital media content related to teaching and learning occurring in their classrooms. Staff members may not publish or link to nonprofessional and/or unapproved educational web pages as part of the GDRSD web site. The Superintendent (or his/her designee) retains the right to remove web pages they determine to be nonprofessional and/or unapproved educational.

Student or staff work (e.g. photos, videos, voice, likeness, quotes, written material, musical pieces and graphic or other artwork) may be published on the GDRSD web pages, as detailed below. The process of publishing work online to a global audience prepares students to become effective and responsible digital citizens with control over their learning and digital footprint.

Content Standards

All digital media works are expected to be accurate, grammatically correct and free of spelling errors. Student work may deviate from this standard depending upon the age and grade level of the student or when showing growth in learning. Digital media should be well organized and professional in appearance. Digital media artifacts should contain original or Creative Commons resources, unless written permission to display such material has been obtained from the owner and the owner is credited on the digital media artifact.

Safety Precautions

A. In general

Identifying information about students, such last names, personal phone numbers or home addresses, will not be published. First names or first names and the first letter of the student's last name may be used where appropriate outside of special circumstances, (e.g. The Groton Herald, sports recognitions, drama production, etc.).

B. Student photographs & videos

Student photographs and videos will be published unless parent or guardian has

submitted the opt out form.

C. Student work

Student work, e.g. photos, videos, voice, likeness, quotes, written material, musical pieces, and graphic or other artwork, may be published unless parent or guardian has submitted the opt out form.

D. Staff photographs, identifying information and work

- Photographs of staff members, accompanied by the staff member's full name, may be published only with the staff member's written or verbal consent.
- Staff work, e.g. voice, likeness, quotes, written material, musical pieces and graphic or other artwork, may be published only with the staff member's written or verbal consent.

Digital Media Publication Opt-Out Form

*Only complete this form if you **DO NOT** want your child to participate in the Digital Media Publication Policy.*

Student's School

Grade

Student Name

Parent Name

Parent Signature

Date

Appendix E

Groton Dunstable Regional School District Civil Rights Grievance Procedure

The Groton-Dunstable Regional School District is committed to maintaining school environments free of discrimination, harassment or retaliation based on race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age or disability.

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

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

Non-Applicability of This Procedure to Title IX Sexual Harassment Allegations

The *Civil Rights Grievance Procedure* shall not apply to reports of sexual harassment as defined under Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972 and its implementing regulations (“Title IX”) effective August of 2020.

Allegations of conduct that could, if proven, meet the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX shall be addressed through the District’s *Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedures*. Similarly, allegations of conduct that meet the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX, and simultaneously meet the definitions of sexual harassment under Title VII (employees), M.G.L. c. 151B (employees), and/or M.G.L. c. 151C (students), will also be addressed through the *Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedures*.

Allegations of conduct that do not meet the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX, but could, if proven, meet the definition(s) of sexual harassment under Title VII (employees), M.G.L. c. 151B (employees), and/or M.G.L. c. 151C (students), will be addressed through the *Civil Rights Grievance Procedure*.

Definitions

For the purposes of this procedure:

- A. “Discrimination” means discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, age, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or religion by which an individual is excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity of the school district.
- B. “Harassment” means unwelcome conduct on the basis of race, age, color, national origin, disability, or religion that is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive to create or contribute to a hostile environment for the individual at school. Harassment may include insults, name-calling, off color jokes, threats, comments, innuendoes, notes, display of pictures or symbols, gestures or other conduct which rises to the level of a hostile environment. A hostile environment is one which unreasonably interfered with an individual’s participation in, denied the individual the benefits of, or otherwise subjected the individual to discrimination under any program or activity of the District.

- a. Non-Title IX Sexual Harassment

M.G.L. c. 151B, § 1 - the term “sexual harassment” is defined as sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: (a) submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or as a basis for employment decisions; (b) such advances, requests or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive work environment. Discrimination on the basis of sex shall include, but not be limited to, sexual harassment.

M.G.L. c. 151C, § 1 - the term “sexual harassment” is defined as sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: (a)) submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the provision of the benefits, privileges or placement services or as a basis for the evaluation of academic achievement; or (b) such advances, requests or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s education by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive educational environment.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 - Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when: (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; (2)

submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. A hostile environment on the basis of sex is created when the conduct is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of employment.

When determining whether an environment is hostile, the District shall consider the context, nature, frequency, and location of the incidents as well as the credibility of witnesses and the identity, number and relationships of the persons involved. The District must consider whether the alleged harassment was sufficient to have created such an environment for a reasonable person of the same age, gender, and experience as the Complainant, and under similar circumstances. Conduct does not constitute harassment where the incident occurs off-campus at a non-school sponsored activity and does not create a hostile environment at school for the victim.

- C. Retaliation: retaliatory acts against any individual who exercises his or her rights under the civil rights statutes covered by this procedure or the sexual harassment procedure are considered to be discrimination and are unlawful. Individuals are prohibited from coercing, intimidating, threatening, or interfering with an individual because the individual exercised any right granted or protected under this procedure and/or the Title IX Sexual Harassment Procedures.
- D. Complainant: An individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute discrimination, harassment, or retaliation under this procedure. Parents and/or legal guardians of a complainant are not considered a complainant but may file formal complaints on behalf of a minor child and act on behalf of the minor child in any civil rights matter.
- E. Party or Parties: The complainant and/or respondent.
- F. Principal: The Principal or Principal's designee.
- G. Respondent: An individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute discrimination, harassment, or retaliation under this procedure.

How to make a complaint

Any student or employee who believes that he/she has been discriminated against or harassed should report their concern promptly to the Principal. Students may also report incidents of

harassing conduct to a teacher, administrator, or guidance counselor. Any complaint received by a school personnel shall be promptly reported to the Principal or Civil Rights Coordinator. Students or employees who are unsure whether discrimination, harassment, or retaliation has occurred are encouraged to discuss the situation with the Principal. There may be instances where another third-party, who has not experienced but is aware of the occurrence of prohibited conduct, may bring a complaint under this procedure. In such circumstances, that person is referred to as the “reporter.”

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

- E. Formal Process: A formal complaint shall state (if known to the reporter or Complainant) the name(s) of the persons involved and witnesses to the conduct, describe the conduct, and identify, to the extent possible, the dates and locations of the conduct. The complaint shall be signed and dated by the reporter and/or Complainant. Complaints will be investigated promptly and equitably by the Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal. Investigations may be initiated whenever warranted, in the absence of a formal complaint, or after a formal complaint has been withdrawn.
- F. Initial Assessments: The Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal will make an initial assessment following a complaint. Based on that assessment, the Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal may: (a) if the conduct, even if substantiated, would not constitute harassment, discrimination or retaliation, dismiss the complaint; (b) if the alleged conduct (or complaint) could not, even if true, constitute discrimination, harassment or retaliation, but is within the scope of another procedure, the Civil Rights Coordinator shall refer the matter to the appropriate personnel; (c) if the Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal concludes that it is possible to resolve the complaint in a prompt, fair and adequate manner through an informal process involving and with the consent of both parties, the Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal may seek to do so in accordance with Section D, above; or (d) if the alleged conduct, if substantiated, would constitute discrimination, harassment or retaliation, the Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal will initiate an investigation. The Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal may also identify and initiate any interim measures. See Section G.
- G. Interim Measures: The District will provide prompt and reasonable interim measures during the pendency of the investigation, if appropriate, to support and protect the safety of the parties, the educational environment, and the District and/or school community; to deter retaliation; and to preserve the integrity of the investigation and resolution process. Any interim measures will be monitored to ensure they are effective based on the evolving needs of the parties. Violations of the restrictions imposed by interim measures could be considered a violation of school rules and may be considered in determining whether discrimination, harassment or retaliation has occurred.
- H. Timeframes: The District will seek to complete any investigation within twenty (20) school days after receipt of a complaint and provide the written notice of the outcome of the investigation within twenty-five (25) school days. The investigator may impose reasonable timeframes on all parties to facilitate the timely completion of the investigation. The investigator may extend the investigation period beyond the time

period identified due to extenuating circumstances, including but not limited to availability and cooperation of witnesses, complexity of the investigation, school vacation periods, and the involvement of law enforcement and other outside agency investigations. If a complaint or report of discrimination, harassment or retaliation is received within three (3) weeks of the end of the academic school year, the investigator will attempt to complete the investigation by the end of the school year. In the event that the investigation extends beyond the last day of school, the District will make reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within the above-referenced time frame, but may extend the investigation period to account for the availability of witnesses during the summer vacation period. If the investigator extends the investigation, he or she will notify the Complainant and Respondent of the extension. A report to the law enforcement will not automatically delay an investigation; however, a request from law enforcement to delay the investigation may require a temporary suspension of an investigation, and the District will promptly resume its investigation upon being advised that law enforcement's evidence gathering is completed.

- I. Under the formal resolution procedure, the complaint will be investigated by the Principal, Civil Rights Coordinator or other individual designated by the Principal or Civil Rights Coordinator who has responsibility for seeking and gathering evidence relative to the investigation. A formal complaint against an employee who holds a supervisory position shall be investigated by a person who is not subject to that supervisor's authority. During the formal resolution procedure:
 1. The Complainant shall be provided with an opportunity to be heard and have the opportunity to identify witnesses and other relevant evidence to the investigator.
 2. The Respondent will be provided with an opportunity to be heard as part of the investigation including the opportunity to provide relevant information and identify witnesses for the investigator's consideration.
 3. The privacy rights of the parties shall be maintained in accordance with applicable state and federal laws.
 4. The investigator will keep a written record of the investigation process.
 5. The investigation will be completed within twenty (20) school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.
 6. The notification of the outcome of the investigation, including, if appropriate, a description of the remedies taken, will be provided to the parties within twenty-five (25) school days of the receipt of the complaint, unless extended for good cause.
 7. Nothing in this Procedure will preclude the investigator, in his or her discretion, from completing the investigation sooner than the time period described above.

- J. Standard of Proof: The investigation shall made factual findings based on a preponderance of the evidence standard.
- K. If the investigator determines that discrimination, harassment or retaliation has occurred, the District shall take steps to eliminate the discriminatory or harassing environment, which shall include but not be limited to:
1. Identifying what steps are necessary to prevent recurrence of any discriminatory behavior, including but not limited to harassment or retaliation, and to correct its discriminatory effects if appropriate; and
 2. Informing the Complainant and Respondent of the results of the investigation (in accordance with applicable state and federal privacy laws) in accordance with the above timelines.

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

- L. Appeal: If the Complainant or the Respondent is dissatisfied with the results of the investigation, an appeal may be made to the Superintendent or designee within seven (7) calendar days after receiving notice of the outcome of the investigation, except for circumstances in which the Respondent is subject to long-term suspension as a result of a finding of discrimination, harassment or retaliation. In such an instance, the appeal rights of the Respondent will be provided in a manner consistent with the disciplinary due process requirements applicable to the circumstances (e.g., M.G.L. c. 71, 37H, 37H ½ or 37H ¾). Appeals must be made in writing (email is sufficient) to the Superintendent, Groton-Dunstable Regional School District, 344 Main Street, Groton, Massachusetts 01450. The Superintendent will decide the appeal within thirty (30) calendar days of the date of receipt of the written appeal.
- M. Identification of Civil Rights Coordinator for complaints of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation under this procedure is:

Jill Greene, Director of Student Services, jgreene@gdrsd.org, 978-448-5505

N. Employment Agency Information: federal employment discrimination enforcement agencies is as follows: 1) Federal - United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC); John F. Kennedy Federal Building; 15 New Sudbury Street, Room 475; Boston, MA 02203-0506; 1-800-669-4000; EEOC Boston Area Office Website: <https://www.eeoc.gov/field-office/boston/location>; 2) State: Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD); Boston Headquarters; One Ashburton Place; Sixth Floor, Room 601; Boston, MA 02108; (617)-994-6000; MCAD Website <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-commission-against-discrimination>.

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

Groton Dunstable Regional School District

Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedures

OVERVIEW

The Groton-Dunstable Regional School District is committed to maintaining school environments free of sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment in any form or for any reason is prohibited. This includes sexual harassment by administrators, personnel, students, vendors, and other individuals in school or at school related events.

The District does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs or activities and is required by Title IX not to discriminate on the basis of sex. Such non-discrimination also extends to admissions and the employment application process. Retaliation against any individual who has brought sexual harassment to the attention of school officials, or against an individual who has participated, or refused to participate, in the investigation thereof is unlawful and will not be tolerated by the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District.

SCOPE

The Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedures have been developed in accordance with the revised Title IX regulations, 34 CFR Part 106, effective August 14, 2020, which established a new definition of sexual harassment under Title IX and which mandate specific procedures for responding to and investigating allegations of sexual harassment under Title IX.

The Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedures apply only to allegations of sexual harassment under Title IX, which includes harassment based on sex, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity, and is defined in the Definitions section below.

The Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedures apply to conduct that occurs within the United States in an education program or activity of the District, regardless of whether such District program or activity is conducted on or off school grounds. A District education program or activity includes locations, events, or circumstances over which the District exercised substantial control over both the respondent and the context in which the sexual harassment occurred.

Allegations of conduct that meet the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX will be addressed through the Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedures. Allegations of conduct that meet the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX, and simultaneously meet the definitions of sexual harassment under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (employees), M.G.L. c. 151B (employees), and/or M.G.L. c. 151C (students), will also be addressed through the Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedures.

Allegations of conduct that do not meet the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX, but could, if proven, meet the definition(s) of sexual harassment under Title VII (employees),

M.G.L. c. 151B (employees), and/or M.G.L. c. 151C (students), will be addressed through the District's Civil Rights Grievance Procedures. (See exception under Section II, Part 4, Step 4 below). The definitions of sexual harassment under Title VII, M.G.L. c. 151B, and M.G.L. c. 151C are set out in the Civil Rights Grievance Procedures.

Refer to The District's Civil Rights Grievance Procedures.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The District will keep the identity of complainants, respondents, and witnesses confidential, except as permitted by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), as otherwise required by law, and/or as necessary to carry out this Procedure.

DEFINITIONS

Complainant: An individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment under Title IX. Parents and/or legal guardians of a complainant are not considered a complainant but may file a Formal Complaint on behalf of a minor child and act on behalf of the minor child in any Title IX matter. For the purpose of this procedure the terms "complainant" and "alleged victim" shall have the same meaning.

Formal Complaint: A document or electronic submission filed by a complainant, that contains the complainant's physical or digital signature or otherwise indicates that the complainant is the person filing the Formal Complaint, or a document signed by the Title IX coordinator, that:

- (1) alleges sexual harassment against a respondent; and
- (2) requests that the District investigate the allegation of sexual harassment.

At the time of filing a Formal Complaint, the complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in the District's education program or activity with which the Formal Complaint is being filed.

Sexual Harassment: Under Title IX, the term "sexual harassment" includes three (3) types of misconduct based on sex:

- (1) any instance of quid pro quo harassment by a school employee;
- (2) unwelcome conduct on the basis of sex, including unwelcome conduct based on sex stereotyping or on the basis of traditional notions of masculinity and femininity, that is sufficiently severe and pervasive and objectively offensive conduct, effectively denying a person equal educational access; or
- (3) any instance of sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking as defined below.

Sexual Assault: An offense that meets the definition of rape, fondling, incest, or statutory rape as used in the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting system and set out below:

- **Rape:** The penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.
- **Fondling:** The touching of the private body parts of another person for the purpose of sexual gratification, without the consent of the victim,

including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her age or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental incapacity. In Massachusetts, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 265, § 13B, a child under the age of 14 is incapable of giving consent to indecent touching.

- Incest: Sexual intercourse between persons who are related to each other within the degrees wherein marriage is prohibited by law.
- Statutory Rape: Sexual intercourse with a person who is under the statutory age of consent. In Massachusetts, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 265, § 23, the statutory age of consent is 16 years of age.

For the purposes of the definition of sexual assault, the term “consent” shall be defined in a manner consistent with Massachusetts laws.

Dating Violence: Violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim. The existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on the reporting party’s statement and with consideration of the length of the relationship, the type of relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship. For the purposes of this definition, dating violence includes, but is not limited to, sexual or physical abuse or the threat of such abuse. Dating violence does not include acts covered under the definition of domestic violence.

Domestic Violence: A felony or misdemeanor crime of violence committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim; by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common; by a person who is cohabitating with, or has cohabitated with, the victim as a spouse or intimate partner; by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction in which the crime of violence occurred; by any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person’s acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction in which the crime of violence occurred.

Stalking: Engaging in a “course of conduct” directed at a specific person that would cause a “reasonable person” to fear for the person’s safety or the safety of others or suffer “substantial emotional distress.”

For the purposes of this definition:

“Course of conduct” means two or more acts, including, but not limited to, acts in which the stalker directly, indirectly, or through third parties, by any action, method, device, or means, follows, monitors, observes, surveils, threatens, or communicates to or about a person, or interferes with a person’s property.

“Reasonable person” means a reasonable person under similar circumstances and with similar identities to the victim.

“Substantial emotional distress” means significant mental suffering or anguish that may, but does not necessarily, require medical or other professional treatment or counseling.

Party or Parties: The complainant and/or respondent.

Principal: The Principal or Principal’s designee.

Respondent: An individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

Superintendent: The Superintendent or Superintendent's designee.

Supportive Measures: Individualized services reasonably available that are non-punitive, non-disciplinary, and not unreasonably burdensome to the Complainant or Respondent, while designed to ensure equal educational access, protect safety, and/or deter sexual harassment. Supportive Measures may be offered before or after the filing of a Formal Complaint or where no Formal Complaint has been filed. Supportive measures are individualized services reasonably available that are non-punitive, non-disciplinary, and not unreasonably burdensome to the other party, while designed to ensure equal educational access, protect safety, and/or deter sexual harassment. Supportive measures available to complainants and respondents include, but are not limited to: counseling; extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments; modifications of work or class schedules; campus escort services; mutual restrictions on contact between the parties; changes in work locations; leaves of absence; increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the building and/or campus; and other similar measures. Violations of the restrictions imposed by supportive measures may be considered a violation of school rules and may also be considered in determining whether sexual harassment has occurred.

Title IX Coordinator: Employee(s) designated by the District to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title IX.

I. REPORTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

- A. Who May Report Sexual Harassment: Anyone may report an allegation of sexual harassment.
- B. How to Report Sexual Harassment: Individuals are encouraged to report allegations of sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator or the Principal, but any District employee who receives a report of sexual harassment will respond to the report as outlined below.
- C. Internal Reporting: Any District employee who receives a report of sexual harassment shall respond by promptly informing the Principal or Title IX Coordinator of the report. Any District employee who observes sexual harassment of a student should intervene to stop the conduct and shall promptly inform the Principal or Title IX Coordinator of the incident. If a report involves an allegation against the Principal or Title IX Coordinator, the District employee shall instead report the allegation to the Superintendent.

Any Principal who receives a report of sexual harassment shall promptly inform the relevant Title IX Coordinator of the report.
- D. District's Response to Report: The District will respond to all reports of sexual harassment promptly and equitably, and in a manner consistent with this Procedure

and any other relevant District procedures and policies. Upon receipt of a report, the Title IX Coordinator shall:

- (1) Promptly and confidentially contact the complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures;
- (2) Inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a Title IX Formal Complaint;
- (3) Consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures;
- (4) If the District does not provide the complainant with supportive measures, document the reasons why such response was reasonable; and
- (5) Explain to the complainant the process for filing a Title IX Formal Complaint. Only the filing of a Title IX Formal Complaint will trigger the Title IX Formal Complaint grievance process, outlined in Section II.

II. FILING A TITLE IX FORMAL COMPLAINT

Only the filing of a Title IX Formal Complaint will trigger the Title IX Formal Complaint grievance process, outlined below.

- A. Who may file a Title IX Formal Complaint: Although anyone may report sexual harassment, only a complainant or a Title IX Coordinator may file a Title IX Formal Complaint. If a complainant chooses not to file a Formal Complaint, the complainant's choice to not initiate an investigation will generally be respected, unless the Title IX Coordinator determines that signing a Formal Complaint to initiate an investigation over the wishes of the complainant is not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances. The Title IX Coordinator will take into account concerns articulated by the parties, the best interests of the community, fairness to all concerned, and the District's legal obligations under applicable state and federal laws. Where the Title IX Coordinator signs the Formal Complaint, the Title IX Coordinator is not a complainant or a party during the grievance process and must comply with the requirement to be free from conflicts or bias.
- B. Processing of a Title IX Formal Complaint: Title IX Formal Complaints will be investigated promptly and equitably by the Title IX Coordinator or designee, as follows:

Step 1: Title IX Formal Complaint is filed:

- (1) A Formal Complaint shall state (if known to the reporter or alleged victim) the name(s) of the persons involved, witnesses to the conduct, if any, a description of the conduct, and to the extent possible, the dates and locations of the conduct. A Formal Complaint will not be dismissed solely because it was not completely filled out or it was filled out incorrectly.

- (2) A Formal Complaint may be filed at any time, including during non-business hours. Formal Complaints submitted outside of normal business hours will be deemed received on the following school working day.
- (3) At the time of the filing of the Formal Complaint, the alleged victim must be participating in or attempting to participate in the education program or activity of the school with which the Formal Complaint is filed.
- (4) A Formal Complaint may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator in person, by mail, or by electronic mail, by using the contact information for the Title IX Coordinator listed in this procedure, and by any additional method designated by the school.
- (5) Consolidation of Formal Complaints: Schools may consolidate Formal Complaints where the allegations arise out of the same facts.
- (6) Consideration of the use of the Informal Resolution Process with the consent of the parties. See Section II(D).
- (7) Throughout this process, there shall be a presumption that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process.

Step 2: Consider Supportive Measures for both the complainant and the respondent: Once a Formal Complaint is filed, the Title IX Coordinator will ensure that supportive measures are considered for both parties. See Section I(D).

Step 3: Written Notice of Allegations: Upon receipt of a Formal Complaint, the District shall send written notice of the allegations, including the identity of the parties, to both the complainant and the respondent, if their identities are known. The written notice must include: (1) a statement prohibiting knowingly submitting false information; (2) sufficient details known at the time to allow the respondent the opportunity to respond to the allegations; (3) a statement that the respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct; (4) that a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process; (5) that the parties may have an advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney; and (6) that the parties/advisors may inspect and review evidence in accordance with this procedure. If, in the course of the investigation, the District decides to investigate allegations of sexual harassment that are not included in the initial written notice of allegations, the District shall provide notice of the additional allegations to the parties whose identities are known.

Step 4: Consider Whether Dismissal of Formal Complaint Warranted: Some Formal Complaints will be subject to mandatory or discretionary dismissal under Title IX.

- (1) Mandatory Dismissal of Formal Complaint: The Title IX Coordinator shall dismiss a Formal Complaint under Title IX when the conduct alleged:
 - a. even if proved, would not meet the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX;
 - b. did not occur in an education program or activity of the District; or
 - c. did not occur against a person in the United States.

- (2) Discretionary Dismissal of Formal Complaint: The Title IX Coordinator may dismiss a Formal Complaint or allegations therein for purposes of Title IX at any time if:
 - a. the complainant informs the Title IX Coordinator in writing that the complainant desires to withdraw the Formal Complaint or allegations;
 - b. the respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by the District; or
 - c. specific circumstances prevent the District from gathering sufficient evidence to make a determination.
- (3) The Title IX Coordinator must provide the parties with written notice of any dismissal of a Formal Complaint and the reasons for the dismissal.
- (4) Dismissal of a Formal Complaint for purposes of Title IX shall not preclude the District from addressing the allegations under any other relevant District policies or procedure(s), including but not limited to, the Civil Rights Grievance Procedures, the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, the Student Code of Conduct, and/or a collective bargaining contract, nor will it preclude the District from addressing the allegations pursuant to the grievance process set out in Section II of this Procedure. The Title IX Coordinator shall have the discretion to make any such referrals and proceed as appropriate in regard to the allegations.

Step 5: Initial Investigation: All Formal Complaints will be investigated by the Title IX Coordinator or other individual designated to serve as the investigator by the Title IX Coordinator. The investigator shall be responsible for seeking and gathering evidence relative to the investigation. Any Formal Complaint against an employee who holds a supervisory position shall be investigated by a person who is not subject to that supervisor's authority. During the Formal Complaint resolution process:

- (1) Standard of Proof: The investigator shall make factual findings based on a preponderance of the evidence standard.
- (2) The burden for gathering evidence and the burden of proof remains on the District, not on the parties.
- (3) The District shall provide equal opportunity for the parties to present fact and expert witnesses and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence.
- (4) The District shall not restrict the ability of the parties to discuss the allegations or gather evidence (e.g., no "gag" orders).
- (5) Each party may have one (1) advisor of their own selection and at their own expense participate in this grievance process. In the case of a student under the age of 18, this advisor may be in addition to the student's parents/guardians. Any restrictions on the participation of an advisor will be applied equally to each party. The advisor may, but is not required to, be an attorney. Any evidence received by an advisor in this process is subject to confidentiality and may be used only for the purpose of the grievance process. Advisors are prohibited from disseminating or disclosing such evidence outside of the grievance process.
- (6) The District shall send prior written notice to the parties of any investigative interviews, meetings, or hearings in which their participation is invited or expected.

- (7) Privacy of Medical Treatment and Mental Health Treatment Records: The District may not access or use either the complainant's or the respondent's medical, psychological, or similar treatment records unless the District obtains the party's written consent to do so.
- (8) The investigator may impose reasonable timeframes on all parties as required to facilitate the timely completion of the investigation. The investigator may extend any of the timeframes beyond the time periods identified in this procedure for good cause. If a complaint or report of sexual harassment is received within three (3) weeks of the end of the academic school year, the investigator will attempt to complete the investigation by the end of the school year. In the event that the investigation extends beyond the last day of school, the District will make reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within the above-referenced time frame, but may extend the investigation period to account for the unavailability of witnesses while school is not in session. If the investigator extends the investigation, the investigator will notify the parties of the extension and the reasons therefore in writing.

Step 6: Opportunity for Parties to Respond to Evidence: The District must send the parties, and their advisor(s) (if they have one) evidence directly related to the allegation, in electronic format or hard copy. Parties shall be afforded ten (10) calendar days to inspect, review and respond to the evidence. The District shall not require, allow, rely upon, or otherwise use evidence that constitutes information protected from disclosure by a legally recognized privilege, unless it has been waived by the holder of the privilege.

- (1) Prior to providing evidence to the parties, the investigator may redact confidential information that is not directly related to the allegations or that is otherwise barred from use under Title IX or by privilege (e.g., treatment records), the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and/or 603 CMR 23.00. Information that is directly related to the investigation, and that is not expressly barred from disclosure under Title IX (e.g., treatment records), the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, and/or 603 CMR 23.00, must be made available for review by both parties.
- (2) The parties and their advisors shall be prohibited from dissemination of any of the evidence for any purpose not directly related to this grievance procedure.

Step 7: Completion of the Investigative Report: The District must send the parties, and their advisor, an Investigative Report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence but does not reach any conclusions regarding responsibility, in electronic format or hard copy, within twenty-five (25) school days of receipt of the Formal Complaint, unless otherwise extended for good cause. A copy of the Investigative Report will also be sent to the decision-maker.

Step 8: Parties' Opportunity to Respond to Investigative Report: The District shall provide each party ten (10) calendar days for the parties to respond to the investigative report. The Investigative Report will notify the parties of the opportunity to submit to the decision-maker directed questions of the other party and/or any witness within that same ten (10) calendar days. (See Step 9).

Step 9: Directed Written Questions from the Parties: After the Investigative Report has been sent to the parties, but prior to reaching a determination regarding responsibility, the decision-maker shall afford both the complainant and the respondent the opportunity to submit to the decision-maker written, relevant questions of the other party or any witness, provide the party with the other party's and/or witness's written responses to said written questions, and allow for additional, limited follow-up questions from each party in writing. Questions that seek disclosure of information protected under a legally recognized privilege, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, and/or 603 CMR 23.00 shall not be permitted, unless the person holding the privilege has waived the privilege.

- (1) The complainant shall be protected from answering questions about the complainant's prior sexual behavior unless offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the alleged misconduct or offered to prove the complainant's consent to the conduct under investigation.
- (2) Upon receipt of the Investigative Report, each party shall have ten (10) calendar days to submit directed relevant questions to the decision-maker in writing.
 - a. All questions must be posed in a respectful manner (e.g., without profanity and without attacking a person's character or motivations).
 - b. Questions that are not relevant will be excluded, and the decision-maker shall explain to the party posing the question the reason(s) for excluding any question.
- (3) Upon receipt of the directed questions from the District, each party and witness shall have five (5) calendar days to respond to those questions in writing.¹
- (4) After receipt of the answers by the parties, any follow-up questions by the parties shall be submitted to the decision-maker in writing within three (3) calendar days, and those follow-up questions shall be responded to in writing within three (3) calendar days of receipt.
- (5) Each party will be provided a copy of the other party's or witness's written answers.

Step 10: Determination of Responsibility/Findings of Fact by the Decision-Maker:

- (1) The decision-maker shall issue a written determination regarding responsibility with a description of the procedural steps taken, findings of fact, conclusions about whether the alleged conduct occurred, rationale for the result as to each allegation, the range of disciplinary sanctions to which the respondent may be subject, whether remedies will be provided to the complainant, and procedures and bases for appeal. The decision-maker's written determination shall not be completed by the Title IX Coordinator or the investigator.
- (2) Standard of Proof: The decision-maker shall make factual findings based on a preponderance of the evidence standard.
- (3) The decision-maker's findings shall be based on an objective review of all relevant evidence, inculpatory and exculpatory, and avoid credibility determinations based on a person's status as a complainant, respondent, or witness.

¹ The parent or guardian may act on behalf of the party in drafting questions and submitting written answers. In the case of young children, reasonable accommodation based on disability, and/or other good cause, either party and/or any witness may request and have their oral responses reduced to writing by the investigator or Title IX Coordinator.

- (4) The decision-maker shall not draw inferences about the determination of responsibility based solely on a party's failure or refusal to answer questions.
 - (5) The written determination must be sent simultaneously to both parties.
 - (6) This determination shall be sent within twenty (20) school days of the issuance of the investigative report unless an extension is agreed upon by the parties or if the process is otherwise reasonably delayed. Except where the parties have agreed to an extension of the timeline or where the process is otherwise reasonably delayed, the written determination shall be issued within sixty (60) school days of receipt of the Formal Complaint.
- B. Remedies: If the decision-maker determines that sexual harassment has occurred, the District administration shall take steps to eliminate the harassing environment, which may include but not be limited to providing remedies to a complainant that are designed to restore or preserve the complainant's equal access to the District's education programs and/or activities. These remedies may be the same individualized services as the supportive measures outlined in Section I(D) above and/or may consist of alternative interventions and/or punitive or disciplinary sanctions that burden the respondent.
- C. Discipline: Persons who engage in sexual harassment or retaliation may be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, reprimand, suspension, termination, expulsion (if applicable under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H ½), or other sanctions as determined by the District administration, subject to applicable procedural requirements.
- (1) Although the respondent may, in accordance with Title IX, be subject to emergency removal at any time, the respondent may not be subject to disciplinary sanctions for the misconduct defined under this procedure until after this grievance process has been completed.
- D. Informal Process: Only after a Formal Complaint is filed may the District opt to offer and facilitate informal resolution options, such as mediation or restorative justice. Both parties must give voluntary, informed, written consent to attempt any offered informal resolution. Any informal resolution under this procedure will be facilitated by trained personnel.
- (1) The informal resolution process is not available to resolve allegations that an employee sexually harassed a student.
 - (2) The informal process is voluntary, and the alleged victim and/or respondent may terminate or decline any informal process at any time and resume the Formal Complaint grievance process.
 - (3) The informal process shall not exceed thirty (30) calendar days.

Participation in the informal process will stay the timelines of the Formal Complaint process.

- E. Emergency Removal under Title IX: The District may remove a respondent on an emergency basis at any time provided that the District: (1) undertakes an individualized safety and risk analysis; (2) determines that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual arising from the allegations of sexual harassment justifies removal and that there is no alternative to the respondent's emergency removal to

mitigate the threat presented; and (3) provides the respondent with notice and the opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal.

- F. **Anonymous Reports:** The District may be on notice of an allegation of sexual harassment through receipt of an anonymous report. In cases of anonymous reports, the District's obligation is to respond in a manner that is not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances. If the anonymous reporter is the complainant and they request confidentiality, the District can and should offer supportive measures to the extent consistent with maintaining the request for confidentiality. If an anonymous report is received without a disclosure of the complainant's identity, the District will be unable to provide the complainant supportive measures in response to that report. The District may in conformance with applicable state laws and regulations be required to report sexual harassment identified in an anonymous complaint to state and/or local authorities such as the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families in conformance with state statutes and regulations and/or take actions to protect the safety of the school community (contacting the police, for example) that may result in the identity of the reporting person being disclosed. Although the District shall respond to anonymous reports of sexual harassment in accordance with this Procedure, a Formal Complaint cannot be filed anonymously.
- G. **Appeals:** The complainant or respondent may appeal from a determination regarding responsibility and/or from the District's dismissal of a Formal Complaint or any allegations therein, only on the following bases:
- (1) procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
 - (2) newly discovered evidence that could affect the outcome of the matter; and/or
 - (3) Title IX personnel had a conflict of interest or bias that affected the outcome of the matter.

An appeal may be made to the Superintendent or designee within five (5) calendar days after receiving the determination of responsibility or dismissal. The Superintendent will decide the appeal no later than thirty (30) calendar days of the date of receipt of the written appeal. In cases in which it has been determined that a respondent student is subject to long-term suspension as a result of a finding of sexual harassment in accordance with this procedure, the respondent may elect to exercise their appeal under the disciplinary due process requirements applicable to the circumstances (e.g., M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H, 37H ½ or 37H ¾) in place of this appellate procedure. Appeals must be made in writing (email is sufficient) to the Superintendent, Groton-Dunstable Regional School District, 344 Main Street, Groton, Massachusetts 01450.

The Title IX Formal Complaint grievance process is deemed complete when either the time period for appeal has lapsed or upon the issuance of the Superintendent's decision on a timely filed appeal.

- H. **Recordkeeping:** Records related to this Procedure will be maintained for a period of seven (7) years.

- I. Employment Agencies: The contact information for state and federal employment discrimination enforcement agencies is as follows: 1) Federal - United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC); John F. Kennedy Federal Building; 15 New Sudbury Street, Room 475; Boston, MA 02203-0506; 1-800-669-4000; EEOC Boston Area Office Website: <https://www.eeoc.gov/field-office/boston/location>; 2) State: Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD); Boston Headquarters; One Ashburton Place; Sixth Floor, Room 601; Boston, MA 02108; (617)-994-6000; MCAD Website <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-commission-against-discrimination>.
- J. Identification of key personnel involved in Title IX process for reports and/or Formal Complaints of sexual harassment:
- Title IX Coordinator: Jill Greene, Director of Student Services, jgreene@gdrsd.org, 978-448-5505
 - Investigator(s): Assistant Principal or Title IX Coordinator's Designee
If the Principal is the investigator, they cannot then serve as the decision maker.
 - Decision-maker: Principal or Principal's designee.
Neither the Investigator nor the Title IX Coordinator can serve in this role.
 - Appeal Officer: Superintendent Laura Chesseon, lchesseon@gdrsd.org, 978-448-5505, or Designee.
 - Informal Resolution Facilitator: Jill Greene, Director of Student Services, jgreene@gdrsd.org, 978-448-5505, or Designee
The Title IX Coordinator may serve in this role so long as she is free from bias/conflict.

The District will notify students, employees, applicants for admission or employment, parents and legal guardians of students, and unions of the name, title, office address, email address and telephone number of the Title IX Coordinator. This information will be prominently displayed on the District's website.

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