Grafton Middle School Student/Parent-Guardian Handbook 2021 - 2022



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School Information

Grafton Middle School 22 Providence Road Grafton, MA 01519 (508) 839-5420 (508) 839-8528 (Fax)

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Vision

Grafton Public Schools is an evolving and responsive community. We provide an interactive learning environment that ensures academic excellence and social responsibility. Our instructional programs foster personal integrity and critical thinking necessary for global citizenship. We empower our students to be active participants who thrive in an ever-changing world.

Mission Statement

The mission of Grafton Middle School is to prepare all students to be life-long learners and responsible citizens.

Guiding Beliefs

We believe education is the shared responsibility of students, school, home and community.

We believe investing in the education of our children benefits the community.

We believe all students love to learn and are capable of life-long learning.

We believe a balanced education develops a student intellectually, socially, physically, emotionally and creatively.

We believe all students are entitled to instructional excellence.

We believe students learn best in a safe, healthy, and supportive environment.

We believe students learn best when the are actively engaged in their own learning.

We believe mutual respect, personal dignity, and social responsibility are essential.

We believe education is key to responsible global citizenship.

School Structure & Curriculum

Grafton Middle School houses seventh and eighth graders. During this time of adolescence, students are experiencing great changes academically, emotionally and physically. It is a time when students must discover who they are as people, family members and citizens. In order to do this, students must explore and test their strengths, weaknesses, interests and talents. This is an especially exciting and challenging time of their lives.

Grafton Middle School is structured to support students as they mature toward who they will be in the future. Each of the grade levels is divided into two teaching teams, with six teachers: Math, Science, English, Social Studies, Spanish or French and Special Education. Students are grouped

heterogeneously and move through each of their classes, with the exception of Math, where they are grouped according to the placement criteria. Some classes are not purely teamed in an effort to ensure appropriate class sizes. In addition to the team subjects, students also have classes in Art, Music, Physical Education, Computers, Health and Technology Engineering and have a choice of Band, Chorus or Enrichment. For further information on the courses offered at GMS, please visit the Grafton Middle School website. All curricula are guided by the Massachusetts State Curriculum Frameworks.

General Information A - Z

<u>A</u>

Absences

When a student is absent for the day, parents should call the absence line (508) 839-5420 before 7:25am to provide notification of the absence. If the school is not notified, you will receive an automated call indicating that your child is absent from school and asking you to contact the school to verify the absence. If a student is absent for more than one day, parents may call the school before 9:00am to request assignments, which may be picked up after 2:00pm. It is suggested that parents call the school after 1:30pm to verify that homework has been sent to the office for pick-up. Please refer to School Committee Policy JE-R-1.

Adjustment Counselor

The School Adjustment Counselor provides mandated counseling services to students identified through an Individual Education Plan (IEP). In addition, the Adjustment Counselor is available to all students who may need to discuss academic difficulties, home situations or peer issues.

After School Activities

After school activities include a variety of intramural sports, competitive team sports, performing musical groups, yearbook, student council and special interest groups. Each fall a detailed list of after school offerings is sent home to parents in the Principal's Update and published on the school website. Most activities are held Tuesday through Thursday from 2:00pm - 2:45pm. School clubs and activities generally begin during and after the third week of September. Registration, tryouts and practices of interscholastic sports begin closer to the beginning of the playing season.

Alcohol/Drug Possession or Use by Students

School Committee Policy JICH states the following: "The Grafton Public Schools is committed to promoting the safety and general welfare of our students. A student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use or consume, possess, buy or sell, or give away any beverage containing alcohol; any tobacco product, including vapor/E-cigarettes; marijuana; steroids; or any controlled substance. The School Committee prohibits the use or consumption by students of alcohol, tobacco products, or drugs on school property, at any school function, or at any school sponsored event." See <u>School Committee Policy JICH</u> for greater detail.

Allergies

A number of students have allergies that may be potentially life-threatening. To help ensure the safety of all students we ask that students do not bring peanut products to school to share. This includes products made with peanut oil. See Grafton Public School's Protocol for Managing Life Threatening Allergies for more information.

Arrival and Dismissal

School is open for student arrival at 7:00am. In the morning, buses are scheduled to arrive at GMS on or before 7:10am. When students arrive, they must enter the building through the auditorium entrance and report to the auditorium/cafeteria. At 7:15am, students report to their lockers or first block class. First period class begins at 7:25am.

School dismisses at 1:50pm. Students exit through both the main exit and the auditorium exit based on day and grade. Bus riders report directly to their buses. Students who are being picked up follow the sidewalk to the Parent Pick Up area. Students who are walking home are expected to leave school grounds upon dismissal.

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Band

Students enrolled in band will meet three periods out of a six day rotation. Students are expected to bring their band instrument to school on the day band is scheduled. Band is a commitment that students are expected to keep for the year. This includes attending the band concerts in the evening.

Bathroom Procedure

Students are asked to use the bathroom between classes. In the case of an emergency, students must get permission from the teacher to leave the room and sign out prior to leaving the room. Students need a pass each time they leave a classroom.

Bicycles

Owners should provide locks to secure their bicycles to the rack located in the front of the school. Bicycles are to be ridden only on hard topped surfaces and not in the bus or parent pick up and drop off areas. It is recommended that students wear a helmet when riding their bicycles to and from school.

Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (BVT)

BVT is fully accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. It is regulated by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and is part of the Massachusetts network of regional vocational high schools. Students interested in attending BVT must follow the application process and meet the requirements. Additional information is available on our website.

Bullying

If a student is bullied, it is important to let an adult know so that the adult may intervene. Students and community members are encouraged to report bullying. Bullying reports can be made anonymously on the school website, in person by meeting with a school administrator, by email or by phone. *Please refer to School Committee Policy JICD*.

Bus Pass

All students riding the bus must have a valid bus pass. Bus pass fees are assessed each year with a family cap, unless a student qualifies for free or reduced lunch, in which case the fee is waived. Students who do not have a valid bus pass will not be allowed to ride the bus. Parents may send an email to businfor@graftonps.org if they have any questions about the bus pass.

Please refer to School Committee Policy EEAD.

Bus Conduct

Students must obey the rules of the bus as outlined in the school committee policy. Students who do not ride respectfully risk losing bus privileges and are subject to disciplinary action.

Please refer to School Committee Policy EEAEC, School Committee Policy EEAEC-R.

C

Cell Phones and Electronic Devices

Students must keep cell phones and other electronic devices in a secure location during the school day. Cell phones and electronic devices should not be visible during classes or in the hallway. In some cases students may be invited to use their cell phone or electronic device in class.

Please refer to School Committee Policy JICJ.

Change of address/Phone/Contact Information

Please notify the Grafton Middle School Main Office in writing of any changes to information on file. Please keep demographic information up to date on PowerSchool.

Chromebooks

Each student is assigned a chromebook that he/she will utilize and care for during his/her tenure at middle school. If a student experiences an issue with the chromebook, please contact techsupport@grafton.k12.ma.us.

Class Trips

Class trips are used to continue the educational process and learning experiences outside the walls of the school. Students on class trips must abide by school rules at all times. In accordance with School Committee Policy JK-R2, a student who is suspended may be excluded from school-related activities at the discretion of the Principal or Assistant Principal (dances, field trips, etc.) until the next marking period. Also, if a student faces disciplinary action leading to suspension prior to the departure date, he or she will not be able to attend the trip and all funds will be forfeited.

CRA (formerly CHINS)

CRA stands for Child Requiring Assistance. The administration may request the assistance of the Juvenile Court when a student is habitually absent from school or constantly fails to follow school rules. Families will be notified when a CRA petition is requested.

Chorus

Students enrolled in chorus will meet three periods out of a six day rotation. Chorus is a commitment that students are expected to keep for the year. This includes attending each of the evening band and chorus concerts.

D

Dress Code

Our goal is to maintain an appropriate school environment that is not affected negatively by clothing or grooming choices that cause safety issues, distractions or embarrassment. Student dress is a matter of personal pride as well as an indication of respect for the learning environment. While clothing styles will change over time, we provide the following guidelines for dressing as a student at Grafton Middle School:

Clothing that excessively reveals the back, buttocks, stomach, torso or breasts is not to be worn.
 This includes short skirts and shorts that display a bare midsection, shirts that are low cut or show cleavage, pants below the waist and see-through clothes.

- Armbands/wristbands with metallic spikes, points or studs, multiple safety pins, wallet chains, or any other items that could be deemed dangerous are not permitted.
- Footwear is to be worn at all times. Footwear that is a safety hazard will not be allowed, including slippers.
- Wearing hats or head covering in the building, except for a medical or religious purpose, is not allowed.
- Coats or heavy jackets are not to be worn in the classroom and should be stored in the student's assigned locker.
- Clothing with offensive language, promoting the use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or other illegal or violent activities is not to be worn.
- Clothing considered to represent gang affiliation is prohibited.
- For special events, such as Spirit Week, students are permitted to wear hair spray and face paint, but it must be applied at home. For safety reasons, face paint should not be applied near the eyes.

Dropping Off Item(s) Procedure

Items brought in during the day for students should be left in the main office. Items should be clearly marked with the student's name and grade. Students will be called to the office to pick up items at lunch and prior to dismissal. Students will not be called during instructional time, as it is a disruption to learning. Exceptions will be made for medication and glasses only.

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Early Dismissal

For early dismissal, students should bring a written request to the office in the morning and get a dismissal pass. Students will show the teacher the pass for dismissal and report to the office to wait for parent pickup. Parents must come into the office, identify themselves, and sign out the student on the sign out sheet. For safety purposes, parents may be asked to show identification.

Elevator Use

Students who have a medical condition that necessitates the use of the elevator and who also have a doctor's note may use the elevator. Students must have an elevator pass from the GMS Nurse and ride the elevator with a friend at all times.

F

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance is available for families who are unable to pay for student activities and field trips. Please contact the Nurse, Assistant Principal or Principal for more information.

Field Trips

Teachers may plan field trips to enhance their curriculum throughout the year. Notification and permission slips are sent home with students in advance of a trip. Permission slips MUST be returned in order for students to participate. No student will be excluded from a trip due to financial reasons. There may be behavioral requirements for students to attend a trip.

Fire Drills

A fire drill procedure sign is located in every room of the school building. Fire drill procedures are reviewed and rehearsed periodically throughout the year. Students and teachers will evacuate the building, according to these directions, quickly and silently. Safety is dependent upon the orderly evacuation of all.

G

Grading

Report card grades are made up of several components, including tests, quizzes, homework, projects and class participation.

A+ = 97-100	C+ = 77-79	
A = 93-96	C = 73-76	
A- = 90-92	C- = 70-72	
B+ = 87-89	D+ = 67-69	
B = 83-86	D = 63-66	
B- = 80-82	D- = 60-62	F = 0.59

Gum/Candy/Drinks

Gum, candy and drinks are not allowed outside of the cafeteria, as it can destroy school property. Students may carry a water bottle with water only during the day. To remain hydrated, it is recommended that students bring a water bottle from home that they may refill with our filtered water during the school day.

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Homework

Students will be assigned homework according to the Grafton School Committee Policy. If a student is having difficulty completing a homework assignment, parents are encouraged to contact the teacher directly. If a student continues to struggle with homework, parents are encouraged to contact administration to discuss strategies for homework completion.

Please refer to School Committee Policy IKB.

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Immunizations

Our school nurse enforces the schedule of immunizations issued by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. At the middle school level, the target year is grade seven. Prior to enrolling in seventh grade, the students must be immunized and documentation must be sent to the school nurse before the start of school in August. Students without documentation will be excluded from school until immunized.

Internet Use

All students are required to sign the Acceptable Use Policy at the start of the school year. Please refer School Committee Policy IJNDB.

L

Lockers

Locker assignments and use is optional. All students may be assigned a lock and locker at the beginning of each school year. Students may store their books, school supplies, backpacks and coats in their locker. Students are responsible for proper care of their locker.

Lost and Found

Lost items should be reported to the office. Lost and found boxes are located in the cafeteria and main office. Valuables found will be kept in the main office.

Lunch

Students have the choice of purchasing lunch from the cafeteria or bringing lunch from home. It is the responsibility of the students to clean up their lunch table and the floor around it. Students should not throw food or purposely leave a mess in the cafeteria.

The GMS Lunch Program allows parents to prepay their child's lunch account so that students do not need to carry money to school. Go to the My School Bucks online site to prepay your child's lunch. The prepay option also allows parents to limit their child's spending on snacks. All checks must be made payable to Grafton Hot Lunch Program. In the event a student forgets his/her lunch money, students will be allowed to charge up to \$15 with the expectations that the charge will be repaid as soon as possible.

A free or reduced lunch is available to families who qualify. The free or reduced price means are based on Federal Standards determined by the family size and maximum gross income of the family. An application form must be filled out each year to determine eligibility.

M

MCAS

Each spring all students participate in MCAS testing. These statewide tests measure student performance based on standards for content, knowledge and skills, as outlined in the Massachusetts State Curriculum Frameworks. Student results are reported in performance levels (Advanced, Proficient, Needs Improvement and Warning) based on criteria-referenced testing, as well as growth percentiles. The tests include a variety of questions: multiple choice and open response. Students in grade 7 take the English Language Arts Reading Comprehension and Mathematics tests. While students in grade 8 take the English Language Arts Reading Comprehension, Mathematics and Science, Technology & Engineering tests. All MCAS tests are taken online unless otherwise stipulated per IEP language.

Medication

Students may not have or take medication in school except under the supervision of the nurse. In order to dispense medication, the nurse requires written permission from a parent and physician orders. The medication must be in the original container and be delivered to the school by an adult. Students must have a consent form on file in order to take any over the counter medications, such as ibuprofen. See School Committee Policy JLCD-E and School Committee Policy JLCD-E1.

N

Newsletter

A parent newsletter is emailed home weekly. Parents must register for the listserv by visiting the Grafton Public Schools website at graftonps.org, choosing the <u>Parent link and Alert Solutions 2</u>. Parents must register only once, as the lists follow the students from school to school.

Nurse

There is one full time nurse at Grafton Middle School available to students during the school day. The nurse provides first aid to injuries, intervention for chronic health problems, referrals to physicians and health professionals, and acts as a liaison for community health concerns. The nurse oversees the yearly health screenings for vision and hearing, height and weight, and posture. Concerns are communicated

with parents. The nurse maintains a medical record for every student at GMS. It is important to update this file annually.

The school nurse is a member of the GMS Crisis Team and the GMS Student Support Team. She works closely with administration, faculty, parents/guardians and students to ensure a healthy and safe school environment.

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Office Hours

The Grafton Middle School Main Office is open 7:00am - 3:00pm. There is one full time and one part time secretary to respond to the needs of the parents, students and staff.

Open House

In September, parents have the opportunity to meet the Principal, Assistant Principal and teachers during the annual Open House event. During the evening parents meet with teams of teachers to discuss general information regarding curriculum, procedures and special events. This time is not designated for individual student questions. Parent-Teacher conferences will be held later in the fall for discussions regarding individual students.

P

Parental Concerns

Parents are encouraged to call or email their child's teacher to discuss any concerns regarding academic performance or specific behaviors or incidents within the classroom. If problems arise that are not resolved through communicating with the classroom teacher, parents should contact the Principal or Assistant Principal by email or phone. Parents may call the school directly at 508-839-5420 or email any staff member using the following format:

Last name followed by the first initial@grafton.k12.ma.us

(e.g. kurposkar@grafton.k12.ma.us for Roseanne Kurposka)

Please check the Grafton Middle School website for a complete listing of staff email addresses.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher Conferences occur once during the school year, generally in the late fall. Appointments, which are required, are scheduled on a first come, first serve basis. Parents are encouraged to register for the Principal Update email, as information regarding conference registration will be conveyed through the update. Parents are also encouraged to contact their child's teachers directly to schedule an appointment at any time during the school year if they have concerns about their child's academic performance.

Personal Property & Valuables

Students are assigned a locker with a lock for personal use throughout the school year. Students should store their personal property and valuables in their locked locker. For safety reasons, It is recommended that students leave valuable items at home.

Pictures & Videos

All students will have their picture taken at the start of the school year for their photo identification. Additionally, pictures and videos may be taken throughout the year during class activities, projects, school-wide assemblies, and for the GMS Memory Book. These pictures may be submitted to the local

newspapers for publication or posted on the school website. Parental permission for student picture publication is requested at the start of each school year.

PowerSchool Access

All students and parents are given a secure username and password to access their child's grades and assignments through PowerSchool. It is recommended that parents review their child's academic performance with their child on a regular basis. Parents can access PowerSchool by visiting https://grafton.powerschool.com/public/. Parents should contact the main office if the username or password has been misplaced or does not work.

Preparation for Class

All students are expected to arrive at class on time and prepared. Individual teachers will communicate their expectations to students. However, all students should come to class with their chromebook, writing instrument and completed homework each day.

Promotion and Retention

Grafton Middle School adheres to the district policy of promotion and retention. In general, students are placed in the grade level to which they best fit academically, socially and emotionally. See School Committee Policy IKE-R.

Psychologist

The School Psychologist provides educational and psychological information to staff and families regarding student performance. The psychologist is responsible for testing, observation, consultation and report writing.

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Report Cards

Report cards are issued online quarterly and at the end of the school year. However, parents can access their child's grades at any point during the school year through PowerSchool https://grafton.powerschool.com/public/

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School Closings

When school is cancelled, the Superintendent will make use of several methods for communicating with families: The district website www.graftonps.org, Alert Solutions email, local television and radio stations.

School Advisory Council

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act requires schools to have a School Council composed of the Principal, teachers, parents, a community representative, and in some cases, students. The council meets throughout the school year to create the Grafton Middle School Improvement Plan.

Schoology

All courses are on Schoology, our learning management system. Each course includes coursework, resources and homework. Your child's Schoology calendar will reflect all assignments and upcoming assessments. This tool will serve as your child's agenda. Students may access their course via their Schoology student portal. Parents may also access their child's Schoology information via the Schoology Parent Portal.

Student Support Team

The Student Support Team (SST) is composed of an administrator, nurse, school adjustment counselor, school psychologist, special education team chairperson and teachers. The SST meets weekly to discuss and develop plans for struggling students.

Summer Reading

Students are asked to read throughout the summer. The summer reading selection and review sheet can be found on the school website http://www.graftonps.org/Domain/9.

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Tardiness

Students are expected to arrive at school and in classes on time, and consequences may be given for excessive tardies. If a student is tardy to school, they are required to check in at the main office to get a pass for class. Parents are encouraged to help students arrive at school on time. Classes begin each morning at 7:25am.

Teacher Communication

Teachers may be reached in any of the following ways:

- By email: last name followed by first initial@grafton.k12.ma.us
- By phone: Main office 508-839-5420
- By sending in a note with your child

Team Structure

Each grade within GMS is divided into two teams. Students are "on team" for the majority of the day, with the exception of their Related Arts and Band/Chorus/Enrichment periods. Foreign Language and Math may be exceptions as well.

Telephone Use & Messages

Students are allowed to use the office phone to call home before school, at lunch, and after school. Additionally, the office will relay urgent messages to students as appropriate. Students are encouraged to make after school plans before leaving home in the morning to avoid disruptions to their academic day.

Textbooks

Textbooks are distributed at the start of the school year. Students are expected to cover their textbook and keep them in good condition. Students must return their textbooks at the end of the school year. Costs will be assessed for lost or damaged books.

<u>V</u>

Vacations

School vacations are published in the school calendar. Parents are asked to support their student's academic progress by scheduling vacations during these times when school is not in session. If a student must miss school due to a family vacation, the absence is considered unexcused and students are responsible for making up missed work upon their return. Teachers are not required to provide students with work prior to their return.

Visitors

All visitors must enter the building through the main entrance and report to the main office. Visitors must sign in and wear a badge while in the building. Students not enrolled at GMS are not permitted to visit

GMS during the school day. Students wishing to visit former teachers may do so after 2:00pm and with the permission of the teacher.

Volunteers

Anyone interested in volunteering at GMS should contact the Principal to inquire about and coordinate volunteer times and opportunities.

Guide to Mutual Respect

As a community, Grafton Middle School strives to maintain a positive learning environment for ALL students. To reach that goal, each group (staff, faculty, and students) within the school community is expected to follow four basic behavioral guidelines:

- 1. Respect yourself.
- 2. Respect others as you would respect yourself.
- 3. Respect the physical environment of the school.
- 4. Respect the learning environment of the school.

The following delineates the three categories within which offenses fall:

Level	Examples of Behavior	Typical Consequences
Level 1 Classroom Management or minor building-wide offenses	 Tardy to class or school Minor disruptions to class or in the hallway Unprepared for class Lack of academic work production and/or failure to complete/turn in homework Electronic device violation 	 Informal conference with a teacher or administrator Reflective writing assignment and/or plan to remedy the issue Lunch Detention/Working Lunch After School Detention Friday Academy
Level 2 More serious offenses that jeopardize the positive learning environment	 Disruption of the learning environment Teasing/inappropriate joking Defying authority Cheating, plagiarizing, forging a signature Falsely reporting an incident Truancy from class or school without permission Violating the Technology Acceptable Use Policy Repeated and/or flagrant Level 1 violation 	 After School Detention Friday Academy In-School Suspension
Level 3 Offenses that may be illegal in nature and could result in involving the Grafton Police Department or the Juvenile Court System	 Bullying/Harassment (MGL, Chapter 71, Section 370) Stealing, destroying property, defacing property Fighting, threatening violence, acting violently (MGL, Ch 71: Section 37H) Possessing a weapon (MGL, Ch 	 Friday Academy In-School Suspension Out-Of-School Suspension Expulsion

71:Section 37H)

- Possessing, using, and/or being under the influence of tobacco, alcohol, dangerous substances, or illegal drugs (MGL, Ch 71:Section 37H ½)
- Possession, consumption, use, selling, buying, giving away e-cigarettes/vaping devices
- Threatening and/or assaulting school personnel
- Repeated and/or flagrant Level 2 violations

Please refer to School Committee Policy JK-R

Behavioral Interventions and Supports

Classroom Disciplinary Procedure for Distracting/Disruptive Behavior:

1st Offense: Step 1--Whole class reminder

Step 2--Prompt from the teacher directed to specific student(s)

Step 3--Refocus Activity

Step 4--If student returns and repeats inappropriate behavior, teacher issues

Teacher Detention (1:50pm-2:10pm---Date scheduled by teacher)

Step 5--Teacher contacts parent/guardian by email or phone regarding Teacher

Detention

2nd offense: Exhibits Distracting/Disruptive Behavior Again or Student Skips Teacher Detention:

Step 1--Teacher sends completed discipline form ("Student Referral Form for Administrative Action")

Step 2--Office Detention issued by administration. 1hr (1:50-2:50) Tuesday through Thursday

Step 3--Administration contacts parent/guardian by email or phone regarding office detention

3rd offense: Exhibits Distracting/Disruptive Behavior Again or Student Skips Office Detention:

Step 1--Friday Detention issued by administration 1hr 30 min (1:50-3:20) Fridays

Step 2--Administration contacts parent/guardian by email or phone regarding Friday detention

4th offense: Exhibits Distracting/Disruptive Behavior Again or Student Skips Friday Detention:

Step 1--In School Suspension issued by administration based on severity of incident and/or ongoing distracting/disruptive behaviors

Step 2--Email, hand to or mail home to parent/guardian suspension letter detailing inappropriate behavior

If, at any time, behavior is deemed serious by administration, using categories in The Guide to Mutual Respect, student will be issued an In-School Suspension, Out of School Suspension, or Expulsion with possible Court Action, following protocols cited in GPS School Committee Policy (JK-R2), which is in alignment with Chapter 222 of the MA Gen. Laws. Administration contacts parent/guardian and either emails, hands to or mails home parent/guardian suspension letter detailing discipline offense(s) and consequence

School Committee Policies

Our school committee policies can be found on the Grafton Public School website or by clicking here.

School committee policies are reviewed and renewed on not only an annual basis, but a monthly basis as needed.