

Williams Elementary School Family Handbook 2021-2022



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Message from the Principal

Dear Williams Families,

Welcome to the 2021-2022 school year! I am looking forward to working together during this new school year filled with a renewed sense of hope and purpose.

The staff at Williams strives to create an environment that gives every student the opportunity to engage in a high quality educational experience. We believe that this can be achieved through high expectations of student performance, behavior, and effort, combined with a strong partnership between home and school. We are committed to working collaboratively in order to provide engaging, rigorous and meaningful learning experiences.

Williams School is a community dedicated to creating a positive and nurturing environment for all students. It is my belief that open and ongoing communication between home and school is vital to the success of our students and school community. Working together, we will be able to have the greatest impact on our students' academic and social-emotional learning and growth.

The Williams School Family Handbook is designed to provide you and your child with answers about various aspects of our school. Included within the handbook are important guidelines, procedures and general information. I invite you to review the pages together as a family to help you and your child better understand the routines and expectations of Williams Elementary School.

I look forward to joining together to make this a successful school year. I continue to be both grateful and honored to be your principal and I thank you in advance for your support and commitment.

Sincerely,

Nicole Shepardson

Nicole Shepardson, Principal

(413) 448.9680

nshepardson@pittsfield.net

School Administration

Nicole Shepardson Principal nshepardson@pittsfield.net	Christine Bubriski Secretary cbubriski@pittsfield.net	Brenda Rosier Supervisory Paraprofessional brosier@pittsfield.net
School Adjustment Counselor	School Psychologist	Nadine Fox School Nurse nfox@pittsfield.net

Central Administration

Joseph Curtis Superintendent of Schools 499-9512	Deputy Superintendent 499-9510
Lovelyne Pierre Human Resources Director 499-9505	Kristen Behnke Budget and Finance Manager 499-9502
Judy Rush Curriculum Director 499-9523	Jennifer Stokes Special Education Director 499-9515

Williams Elementary School's
Business Partner is
Greylock Federal Credit Union



Information About Pittsfield Public Schools

Our handbook is designed to answer most of your questions. There is a wealth of information available in the Pittsfield Public Schools Handbook and on the Internet at www.pittsfield.net.

Williams Staff

Administrative Team	Special Education
Nicole Shepardson – Principal	Patty Paul- Resource K-5
Christine Bubriski – Secretary	Martine Walsh - Special Education Paraprofessional
Nadine Fox - School Nurse	Stuart Wood - Special Education Paraprofessional
Michelle Shepard - School Adjustment Counselor	
TBD - School Psychologist	Support Specialists
Meghan Sherwood - Instruction & Accountability Coordinator	Emily Cooper - Literacy Coach
	Sharon Gilmore - Academic Interventionist
	Samantha Farella – Reading Specialist
Kindergarten	Nicole Kosiorek - EL Teacher
Kim McNeil	
Nicole Virgilio	Classroom Specialists
JoAnn Sullivan	Lauren Sadowsky - Library
Grade 1	Rebecca Vanderstelt - Art
Colleen Wright	Tricia Porter - Science
Molly Biros	MaryJane LaFerriere - Language & Culture
Micaela Shove	Louise Brogan - Physical Education
Grade 2	Senta Broeder – Band Instructor
Tracy Conuel	Juliet Wright – Strings Instructor
Cassidy Moon	
Laura Groves	Related Service Providers
Grade 3	Mary Hynes Drumm - Speech Pathologist
Brendan Dillon	Colleen O'Brien - Occupational Therapy
Patrice Gamberoni	Stephanie Davis - Physical Therapy
Katherine Oliveira	Kathy Whelihan – Teacher of the Hearing Impaired
Grade 4	Lynn Shortis - Vision Specialist
Tiffany Baum	Paraprofessionals
Laura Spence	Kindergarten Paraprofessionals - Joyce Leibinger, Kathie Brown & Pat Zamora
Maryellen Hanley	Supervisory - Brenda Rosier, Susie Pupo & Tracey Gianacopoulos
Grade 5	Custodial Staff
Kim Abderhalden	Keith Williams – Head Custodian
Denise Cherry	Tyler Perry – Evening Custodian
Justin Kie-Burdick	
Cafeteria	
Marie Sutton – Head Cook	
Izabell Boc & Jodie Joyner - Kitchen Staff	School Colors: Blue/White Mascot: Bee

Vision/Mission Statement

Williams Elementary students will be ready to succeed in middle school. In reaching their potential, students will develop the necessary skills, learn the appropriate values, and acquire the habits vital to become responsible achievers, and well-rounded decision makers. Williams' students will be respectful, safe, and prepared as they enter secondary education.

Williams Daily Schedule

8:15 - 8:30 a.m. - Breakfast arrivals at the cafeteria door on the side circle driveway

8:30 a.m. - All other students arrive. There is no supervision prior to 8:30 a.m.

8:35 a.m. - Bell rings to enter the building

8:45 a.m. - Instructional day begins

8:45 a.m. - Marks Tardy. All students must be in their class by 8:45 a.m.

2:40 p.m. - No student dismissals after this time

3:15 p.m. - Walker Dismissals followed by Bus and Car Pick-Ups

Arrival Procedures

- Kindergarten and First Grade line up on the front sidewalk
- Grades 2, 3, and 4 line up on the basketball court
- Grade 5 lines up on the front sidewalk to the right of the Library

Parking in the school parking lots is prohibited as staff needs to access these lots.

Handicapped spaces are reserved for those that have the right. Please do not use them during arrival and dismissal.

Dismissal Procedures

Dismissal of Walkers: Walkers are dismissed from the front doors of the school. Walkers heading towards Doreen Street, will exit the school near the front parking lot and take a right towards Doreen Street. Walkers heading toward Bushey and Williams Street, will exit towards the left of the school down the first driveway and take a left. Staff members will escort walkers to the end of each driveway. Parents waiting to meet their children can wait at the end of the identified driveway (Left-Williams/Right-Doreen).

The Front SIDEWALK and ENTRANCE is reserved for Williams Students and Staff only. The basketball courts are not open to play until dismissal is over. The front playground is available to children that are supervised by family; otherwise we expect all students and families to be exiting the school grounds at dismissal.

Bus Dismissal followed by Car Pick-Ups is at 3:15 p.m. Cars are not allowed to enter for car pick-ups until waved into the driveway and all walkers and busses have exited. Busses will exit through the main entrance.

Car pick-ups will exit through the main and Library doors at the main entrance, and students will be called when cars are identified. If you need to buckle your child, please pull up along the front parking lot to do so. **Please DO NOT pass cars during car pick-up or drop off.**

Same plan for half-day dismissals at 11:35.

Bicycles: Students who ride their bikes to and from school are expected to follow safe bicycle riding practices, **wear helmets** (It is the law in Massachusetts for children under 12 to wear helmets.), and to park and lock their bicycles upon arrival at school. Students are to walk their bike on school property.

Entry, Exit, Transition, Bathroom, Breakfast, Lunch Plan

[Please Click Here for a Detailed Entry, Exit, Breakfast, Lunch Plan for the 2021-2022 School Year](#)

Absences & Attendance

Coming to school every day is essential to learning. It's also important that your child get to school on time each day.

If your child is absent from school, we ask that a parent or guardian call the school before school starts (448-9680) to inform us of the absence. We will need the following information (which may be left on the school's answering machine if the absence is called in before the office is open):

- Child's name
- Child's teacher
- The reason for the absence

Please note that the absence will be recorded as "excused" only if the reason for absence is:

- Illness or injury that prevents the student from coming to school. A health care provider, school nurse, or parent/guardian must verify the illness or injury.
- Death in the family (parent, sibling, grandparent, aunt, uncle, cousin) or other significant personal family crisis
- Medical or psychological tests during the school day. The parent/guardian must show evidence (such as a note from a health center) that the tests could not be scheduled after school.
- Specified Religious Holidays
- Required Court Appearances
- Other extraordinary situations approved by the school principal

You must bring in a note after each day your child is absent. The note must include: the date absent, the reason for the absence, a phone number where a parent or guardian can be reached, and the parent or guardian's signature.

We encourage families to schedule dental, physical, and other appointments during non-school hours, whenever possible. The scheduling of family vacations during times when school is in session is discouraged and will be marked as an unexcused absence. Teachers are not required to prepare work for students who miss school because of a family vacation.

Students are expected to make up all work missed during their absence. They should check with their teachers on the day they come back to school to find out what work is to be made up.

Unexcused Absences:

Here are a few examples of absences that are unexcused, even if the parent/guardian sends in a note:

- Repetitive and chronic absence due to illness or injury. In these cases, the parent/guardian must submit a letter from a health care provider verifying that the student was too sick or injured to go to school
- Student needed to babysit
- Family vacation

- Extension of a religious or cultural holiday beyond the designated day or days.

Whenever possible, parents should check with the principal before allowing a child to miss school if they are not sure the absence will be excused. The school does not have to help a student makeup work due to unexcused absences.

After five days of unexcused absences during the school year, your family may be required to attend a conference with the principal to discuss the issues affecting attendance and to make a plan for improved attendance.

Tardiness

A student is tardy if he/she arrives at school late (after 8:45 a.m.), without an excused reason. In cases of patterns of regular or excessive tardiness, the child's parent/guardian will be required to attend a meeting with school administration or designee.

Dismissal (Early)

Every effort is made to minimize classroom disruption. Please help us with the following guidelines:

If your child needs to be dismissed before 2:40, a note must be sent into school in the morning. **No child will be allowed to be dismissed after 2:40 p.m.** All dismissals must occur before 2:40 p.m. The end of the day is a hectic time for teachers and students.

(Please refer to the Pittsfield Public Schools Policy Handbook (STU -6) for a more detailed list of excused and unexcused absences and for elaboration on all Pittsfield Public Schools attendance policies.)

Academics

Williams administration, faculty, and support staff know how important it is for your child to grow in reading and mathematics. In fact, successful learning of basic early literacy and math skills at a young age is probably the most important factor in a child's learning.

These skills are routinely monitored for progress. Formal reports called Benchmarking will be sent home three times a year in grades K-5, ELA blocks vary in length per grade level but generally are 120 minutes and Mathematics is between 60-90 minutes.

Instruction is always guided by the Massachusetts Standards and supported through various instructional programs.

Reading and Literacy

HMH Into Reading is our core reading program - providing instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension and writing. All students receive instruction in the core program. Into Reading also provides support for tiered small group instruction - advanced instruction, on-grade level instruction and strategic instruction.

Each grade level encourages nightly recreational reading to promote oral reading fluency and comprehension.

The reading fluency of all Williams students is assessed three times per year. Families are mailed the results of these assessments along with suggestions to improve student fluency and comprehension.

Literacy instruction will be supported by our Literacy Coach, Emily Cooper.

Mathematics

Williams Elementary School utilizes GO Math! by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt for mathematics instruction. This math program builds a strong sense of numbers in the primary grades that helps the students achieve greater success in algebra and geometry later on. Students are encouraged to investigate and explore math while explaining their thinking. Many strategies are incorporated so that students learn different ways to solve problems. GO Math! allows children to develop deep conceptual understanding, and then practice, apply, and discuss what they know with skill and confidence.

All students will attend a 45 minute Specialist class each day. Specialist blocks include: Physical Education, Language & Culture, Art, Library, and Science. **(Students MUST have sneakers to participate in Physical Education)**

Instrumental Music Program

Instrumental music classes are offered to third, fourth and fifth graders. Students may choose from strings, woodwinds, brass or percussion. If your child does not own his/her own instrument, they may be rented locally or through School Department approved vendors. At the beginning of each school year, notices will be sent home regarding where and when you can rent instruments.

Canvas Learning Management System

In an effort to organize and manage student learning activities and various tasks, students will have a Canvas account. Canvas is a learning management system that allows students one place where they can access their materials, messages, grades, etc. For more information:

[Click Here for Accessing Information on Canvas for Remote Learning](#)

After School Activities

Students participating in school activities such as PTO events, dances, concerts and athletics must attend the equivalent of 4.5 hours in order to be eligible to participate in relevant after school, weekend, or vacation events. Parents may appeal emergency cases to the school principal.

Allergies~Severe and Life Threatening Allergy Policy

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

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

Bullying Prevention & Intervention Plan

PITTSFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS PROHIBITION OF BULLYING, CYBER-BULLYING AND RETALIATION:

Bullying, including cyber-bullying, and retaliation as defined in this Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (BPIP), is not acceptable conduct and is prohibited within the Pittsfield Public Schools. Bullying of any type has no place in a school setting. The Pittsfield Public Schools leadership and staff will strive to maintain learning and working environments that support positive personal relationships between students and between students and staff and are free of bullying. Any student who engages in conduct that constitutes bullying shall be subject to disciplinary consequences up to and including suspension or expulsion in accordance with state law, district policy and student handbooks. In addition to disciplinary consequences, a student engaging in bullying behavior will also receive other interventions intended to build increased competence in relationship-building and other necessary social emotional learning skills.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, witnesses bullying or has reliable information about an incident of bullying is also prohibited.

Any form of bullying is prohibited:

- *in any school building and on all school grounds*
- *in district provided virtual learning environments and learning management systems*
- *on property immediately adjacent to school grounds*
- *at a bus stop or on a school bus or any other school sanctioned transportation, such as another vehicle whether owned, leased, or used by the school district*
- *at a school-sponsored or school related activity, function or program whether it takes place on or off school grounds*
- *through the use of technology or an electronic device that is owned, leased or used by the school district or school*
- *at any program or location that is not school-related, or through the use of personal technology or electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the school district, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the target, infringes on the rights of the target at school, or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school*

As the District's Anti-Bullying Policy (STU-80) states, it is not the District's intent to prohibit students from expressing their ideas, including ideas that may offend the sensibilities of others, or from engaging in civil debate. However, the District does not condone and will take both disciplinary and remedial action in response to conduct that creates a hostile environment and interferes with students' opportunity to learn.

III. DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS:

The following language and definitions are applied throughout this BPIP and are to be used consistently within the Pittsfield Public Schools in relation to incidents of bullying/cyber-bullying:

A. Bullying: *The repeated use by one or more students or a member of a school staff of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property; places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property; creates a hostile environment at school for the target, infringes on the rights of the target at school; or materially and substantially disrupts the education*

process or the orderly operation of a school. Bullying includes cyber-bullying. (Reference M.G.L. c.71, s. 37O)

B. Cyber-bullying: Cyber-bullying is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages and Internet postings, including, but not limited to blogs, websites, and social networking. (Reference M.G.L. c.71, s. 37O)

C. Retaliation: Any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment directed against a student or staff member who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

D. Aggressor: A student or staff member who engages in bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliatory behavior. (The use of the term aggressor varies from the term “bully” in the Act to Prevent Bullying, yet is being used in the plan under the guidance of the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.)

E. Target: A student against whom bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation is directed.

F. Hostile Environment: A situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the student’s education. (Reference M.G.L. c.71, 37O)

G. Staff: School staff is defined as including, but not limited to, educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity and paraprofessionals.

Students with Possible Increased Vulnerability: The plan recognizes that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming a target of bullying or harassment based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have 1 or more of these characteristics.

REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION

A. Reporting Bullying or Retaliation

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others and may be in oral or written form. Reports made by a staff member must be submitted in writing by the person making the report. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members can be written on the same reporting form or may be made anonymously. Oral or anonymous reports made by a parent and/or student shall be scribed by a staff member in circumstances where a written report was not submitted. Also, a web based system will allow users to file anonymous reports electronically. Click here for a copy of the [Suspected Bullying Reporting and Determination Form-2](#)

Use of a “Suspected Bullying Reporting and Determination Form” (see Appendix B) is required as a condition of making a report. The school or district will:

- Annually provide information on how to access the [Suspected Bullying Reporting and Determination Form](#)

posted on the website or from their child's school building.

- *The Suspected Bullying Reporting and Determination Form will be made available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents or guardians.*
- *Annually, the school or district will provide the school community, including administrators, educators and other staff, students and parents or guardians with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation as parts of district and school handbooks. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the principal or designee, will be included in these handbooks, on the school and district website, and in information made available to parents or guardians.*

B. Reporting by Staff

Every school or district staff member, including but not limited to, central office administrators, building principals and administrators, school adjustment counselors and school psychologists, teachers and related service providers, paraprofessional staff, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodial staff, bus drivers, athletic coaches and extracurricular advisors is required to monitor and address student behavior and to intervene when unkind behavior occurs. This includes immediately ensuring that any need for student safety in the present moment is restored. Concern about any bullying or retaliatory conduct must also be reported as soon as possible to the principal or the administrator designated to investigate suspected bullying behavior.

In addition, if any adult suspects that a student is being targeted and bullied, they are required to fill out the district suspected bullying determination form and submit it to the building administrator. As the person who has witnessed the behavior it is most effective if that staff member makes contact with the family of the target and the aggressor to give the clearest description of the bullying behavior and the steps planned to take to promote respectful behavior in your classroom.

The requirement to report to the principal or designee does not limit the authority and the responsibility of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school or district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

C. Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians and Others

The school or district asks 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 the principal or administrative designee. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Anonymous reports can be made from a link on the district website. [Suspected Bullying Reporting and Determination Form-2](#). Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report or may report orally. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member or with the principal or designee. A student who knowingly makes a false allegation of bullying or retaliation shall also be subject to disciplinary action.

D. Responding to a Report of Bullying or Retaliation

Safety First

Before fully investigating allegations of bullying or retaliation, the staff member, principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but are not limited to, creating a personal

safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target; and altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target. The principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The staff member, principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting the following persons from bullying or retaliation: a student/staff member who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student/staff member who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student/staff member who provides information during an investigation, or a student/staff member who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

Notification Requirements

Notice to Parents or Guardians: Upon investigation and determination that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor and will review response protocols. There may be circumstances in which the principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any 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 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 a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, 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 designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

In making this determination, the principal will, consistent with the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and in compliance with school or district policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer or another member of the Pittsfield Police Department in the absence of a school resource officer and/or other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.

Investigation

The following provides general guidelines for responding to a report of bullying or retaliation. Note that the guidelines should be modified as necessary to respond appropriately to the individual complaint.

Pre-Investigation: Before fully investigating allegations of bullying or retaliation, school personnel will assess the level of need and take immediate steps to support the alleged target and/or protect the alleged target from further potential incidents of concern. If the initial report is to or by a staff member, the staff member will

complete an initial review of the situation and intervene as necessary. The staff member will make a referral to the principal or administrative designee if further administrative investigation is needed.

Investigation: The investigator will seek to determine the basis of the complaint, gather information from the complainant, including such matters as what specifically happened, who committed the alleged acts, who was present or may have information about the events, when the events occurred and where the events occurred.

The principal or designee will promptly investigate all reports of bullying 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 designee will interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The principal or designee will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and could result in disciplinary and restorative actions in alignment with the Student Code of Conduct, Character, and Support.

The principal or administrative designee and other staff members, as determined by the principal or administrative designee, may conduct interviews. To the extent practical, given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the principal or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The principal, designee and any other interviewers will maintain a written record of the investigation. Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with school or district policies and procedures for other investigations. If necessary, the principal or designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

Determinations: The principal or designee will make a determination based upon the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or designee will take steps to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted from participating in school or from school activities. The principal or designee will, one, determine what remedial action is required, if any, and, two, determine what response and/or disciplinary or restorative actions are necessary as guided by the Student Code of Conduct, Character, and Support.

Depending upon the circumstances, the principal or designee may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's or aggressor's parents or guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development and/or mental health interventions.

The principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor orally about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. All notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal or designee cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken with other students unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

Responses to Bullying

Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-Building

Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the school principal or designee will decide upon a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior and restore/repair relationships. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O(d)(v). Some skill-building approaches that the principal or designee may consider include:

- *Offering individualized skill-building or restorative sessions;*
- *Providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students in consultation with guidance and/or school adjustment counselors and other appropriate school personnel;*
- *Implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral interventions and supports to help students understand prosocial ways to achieve their goals;*
- *Meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home;*
- *Developing individual behavior plans to include a focus on specific social skill development; and*
- *Making a referral for counseling or other mental health services for targets, aggressors and family members.*

Taking Disciplinary Action

If the principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of information gathered through investigation by the principal or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the BPIP and with the district and school's Code of Conduct, Character and Support. Discipline up to and including suspension and expulsion may be applied by the school principal. All suspensions or expulsions are subject to review by the Superintendent and his/her designee with the student and parents afforded full due process rights.

If the principal or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action.

Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) and state laws regarding student discipline. A manifest determination will be completed to determine the connection between a student's bullying behavior and his/her disability. As necessary, a special education team will be reconvened to review the student's IEP.

Students with disabilities are known to be considered to be a vulnerable population for both being bullied and, in some disability categories, for engaging in bullying behavior. The risk for this will be reviewed at all IEP initial, reevaluation and annual meetings as part of the IEP process to determine appropriate interventions, both universal for all students and individualized.

Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

The principal or designee will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others as well.

Supportive services will be assessed and offered to the target. These services may include safety planning, school adjustment counselor services and mental health referral, as well as, increased use of Tier 1 classroom strategies that promote safe and supportive learning environments.

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the principal or designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures or other responses are needed. If so, the principal or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

Nicole Shepardson, Principal and the School Adjustment Counselor are tasked with conducting bullying prevention investigations.

Bus Transportation

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

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

Misconduct on School Vehicles

If a student endangers his or her own safety or the safety of others while on a school bus or van, the principal or designee may deny school provided transportation to the student. Buses are equipped with video cameras and/or audio equipment. The principal or designee may use the video and/or audiotape as evidence of a student's misbehavior. Transportation may be denied. In all cases, the principal or designee must inform the parent before keeping the student off the bus. The student is expected to come to school on the days when he or she is not allowed on the bus unless the student has also been suspended from school. Specific details can be found in the regulations and policy STU31.

GENERAL RULES FOR AVAILABILITY

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

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

When parents/guardians register their child for school, they will be told if their child is eligible for transportation. If the child is eligible, they will receive a notice in the mail with the bus stop location, time of pickup and drop off, and bus number. Information regarding this policy may be obtained at the Transportation Office by telephoning **499-9525** or on the Pittsfield Public Schools website. See District Policy for more information.

Cafeteria~Breakfast and Lunch

Williams Elementary School will be participating in Community Eligibility Provision. Under Community Eligibility Provision only full meals can be considered as a no charge meal.

- Each student may receive one free breakfast and one free lunch per school day.
- Students who wish to buy 1 or 2 food items or an additional meal must have funds at hand: either cash or sufficient positive balance on their meal account.
- No charging of additional meals or food items will be allowed.
- Parents can access www.myschoolbucks.com to fund meal accounts.

Cafeteria Expectations

- Enter and leave the cafeteria quietly.
- Follow the rules that are posted in the cafeteria.
- Remain in line in your assigned spot.
- Get an adult's permission before leaving the cafeteria
- Help to keep all tables and floor areas clean.
- Food remains in the cafeteria.
- Only the restrooms next to the cafeteria are to be used during lunch.
- Lunch is a great time to spend time with your friends. Help us to make this time enjoyable and safe for everyone by using "inside voices" and showing that you have good manners.
- School lunch menus are sent home each month.
- Allergy tables are available in the cafeteria for anyone who has a nut allergy. Please do not sit at the table if you do not have an allergy.
- For safety reasons, we request that if students bring beverages to school, they transport them in non-breakable containers.
- The District Allergy Policy does not permit food in any classrooms. "Food Zones" are labeled accordingly. Everyone must wash their hands after eating.

Breakfast and lunch will be provided to all students at no charge. As always, students are welcome to bring lunch from home. **Students who consistently have difficulty following rules may be asked to sit at a different table, or may be assigned to eat in a designated area. All students may be assigned to specific tables or seats at lunch if this is determined necessary for reasonable behavior expectations and lunchroom management.**

Lunch & Recess Schedule

Grade	Lunch	Recess
Pre-K	11:00-11:30	11:30-12:00
Kindergarten & Grade 1	11:30-12:00	12:00-12:30
Grade 2 & Grade 3	12:00-12:30	12:30-1:00
Grade 4	12:30-1:00	12:00-12:30
Grade 5	12:45-1:15	12:15-12:45

Cancellation/Emergency Closings/Delays Dismissals

If school must be closed early or opened late for any reason, if buses are delayed, or if school is closed, your family will receive a phone call from our ConnectEd messenger service. It is very important that we always have the correct phone number in our records. Local radio stations also announce school closings.

Cell Phones

Cell phones are prohibited to be carried by students during the instructional day, or used during the day. Cell phones must be kept in the office or in backpacks. Williams School is NOT responsible for lost or stolen cell phones.

Code of Conduct & Expectations

Please refer to the district [Code of Conduct Character and Support](#).

School-wide Positive Behavior Support

School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions & Support (PBIS) is a district-wide approach that is implemented in all Pittsfield Public Schools. The approach is based on building proactive multi-level behavioral supports that include defining, teaching, modeling, practicing, but most of all, acknowledging appropriate student behavior in order to create a positive school culture.

Williams follows the 3 B's and has adopted the Wizard Bee as their PBIS symbol and school mascot.

Be Respectful, Be Prepared, Be Safe






It is the expectation that we create a positive school climate where students can be successful both socially and academically by having a supportive environment where expectations are clear and behaviors are managed in a positive and proactive way.

Social and behavioral skills need to be taught explicitly to all children just as academics need to be taught. The expectations we chose for Williams form the foundation for the school-wide positive behavior interventions & support plan at our school.

We celebrate with monthly school-wide assemblies and students are recognized for meeting expectations. Buzz awards are bingo chips that students receive as a form of acknowledgement if they are observed following the expectations. The chip paired with verbal feedback is an instant reinforcement and recognition for

showing the desired behavior. For every 25 bingo chips, students earn a sticker which they add their name to and it is included on the main hallway bulletin board.

Expectations	School-Wide Routines/Settings				
	Playground	Cafeteria	Hallways	Assemblies	Classroom
Be Prepared 	Follow directions the first time Line up carefully and quietly Be responsible with equipment Remember personal belongings Listen for the whistle to line up	Follow directions the first time Remember your lunch order or your lunch from home Remember to get everything the first time in the lunch line (napkins, spoons, etc.)	Follow directions the first time Be on time and ready to travel	Follow directions the first time Sit quickly and quietly in your designated spots Be on time Be ready and looking for quiet signal	Follow directions the first time Follow classroom routines Have your materials ready Be ready to learn
Be Safe 	Walk on the wood chips, blacktop and equipment Keep hands and feet to yourself Find an adult if someone is hurt	Stay seated until dismissed Keep hands, feet and all objects to yourself Respond to quiet signal (bell, hand clap, lights) Push in chair Line up carefully and quietly Wash hands after returning to your classroom	Hold the door for others Hands at your sides Smile to greet others	Sit on bottoms (“Criss Cross Applesauce”) Keep hands and feet to yourself Stay seated until dismissed	Stay in your personal space Walk Use materials and equipment appropriately
Be Respectful 	Take turns on the equipment Include everyone in play Use a calm tone of voice to solve problems Take care of your playground	Clean up after yourself, making sure to check the table and floor Say please and thank you Make friendly table talk Voice level 1 or 2	Walk inside the building on the right hand side Keep your hands and feet to yourself Go directly to your destination Voice level 0 or 1	Be an active listener Voice level 0, 1 or 2	Take care of classroom supplies and materials Work cooperatively Be an active listener Show kindness to others Voice level 0, 1 or 2

Dress Code

Below you will find the official dress code guidelines for all Pittsfield Public Schools. We believe they are

reasonable and reflect a common sense approach to what is/is not appropriate for the school setting.

We are particularly concerned with t-shirts, which might be inappropriate for school: Spring/Summer clothing that expose midriffs or might be too short (shorts/skirts). We also need to remind you that for safety reasons, no sweatshirts/sweaters, shirts or jackets should have string cord closures, which can be caught on playground equipment putting your child in a potentially dangerous situation. Please review the information provided and assist us in promoting appropriate dress with the students. Thank you so much for your cooperation!

A committee of parents, teachers, administrators, and students for Pittsfield Public Schools drew up the following dress code:

- The bottom of the top overlaps the top of the bottoms.
- Sleeveless shirts and tops are acceptable, but thin straps and halter tops are not.
- Spandex and Lycra are acceptable only when worn over or under less revealing articles of clothing.
- Obscene, vulgar, racist, sexist or other offensive pictures, words, or slogans are prohibited.
- Clothing is to be clean and neat.
- Hemlines of skirts or shorts must fall below fingertips when arms are relaxed at sides.
- Shoes/sandals must be worn at all times.
- Hats (caps, berets, scarves) of a non-religious nature may not be worn in the school.
- Undergarments should not be visible.
- Any other dress that distracts, disrupts, intimidates or provokes can be deemed inappropriate by the principal or designee.

Discipline of Special Needs Students (Special Needs Includes both Special Education and Section 504 Students)

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in this handbook.

Procedure: Procedures for suspension of students with disabilities when suspensions exceed 10 consecutive school days or a pattern has developed for suspensions exceeding 10 cumulative days; responsibilities of the Team; responsibilities of the district

1. A suspension of longer than 10 consecutive days or a series of suspensions that are shorter than 10 consecutive days but constitute a pattern are considered to represent a change in placement
2. When a suspension constitutes a change in placement of a student with disabilities, district personnel, the parent, and other relevant members of the Team, as determined by the parent and the district, convene within 10 days of the decision to suspend to review all relevant information in the student's file, including the IEP, any teacher observations, and any relevant information from the parents, to determine whether the behavior was caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the disability or was the direct result of the district's failure to implement the IEP—"a manifestation determination."
3. If district personnel, the parent, and other relevant members of the Team determine that the behavior is NOT a manifestation of the disability, then the suspension or expulsion may go forward consistent with policies applied to any student without disabilities, except that the district must still offer:
 - a. a. services to enable the student, although in another setting, to continue to participate in the general education curriculum and to progress toward IEP goals; and

- b. as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention services and modifications, to address the behavior so that it does not recur.
4. Interim alternative educational setting. Regardless of the manifestation determination, the district may place the student in an interim alternative educational setting (as determined by the Team) for up to 45 school days
 - a. on its own authority if the behavior involves weapons or illegal drugs or another controlled substance or the infliction of serious bodily injury on another person while at school or a school function or, considered case by case, unique circumstances; or
 - b. on the authority of a hearing officer if the officer orders the alternative placement after the district provides evidence that the student is “substantially likely” to injure him/herself or others.
 - c. Characteristics In either case, the interim alternative education setting enables the student to continue in the general curriculum and to continue receiving services identified on the IEP, and provides services to address the problem behavior.
5. If district personnel, the parent, and other relevant members of the Team determine that the behavior IS a manifestation of the disability, then the Team completes a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention plan if it has not already done so. If a behavioral intervention plan is already in place, the Team reviews and modifies it, as necessary, to address the behavior. Except when he or she has been placed in an interim alternative educational setting in accordance with part 4, the student returns to the original placement unless the parents and district agree otherwise or the hearing officer orders a new placement.
6. Not later than the date of the decision to take disciplinary action, the school district notifies the parents of that decision and provides them with the written notice of procedural safeguards. If the parent chooses to appeal or the school district requests a hearing because it believes that maintaining the student’s current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others, the student remains in the disciplinary placement, if any, until the decision of the hearing officer or the end of the time period for the disciplinary action, whichever comes first, unless the parent and the school district agree otherwise.

State Requirements Federal Requirements 34 CFR 300.530-537

For a discipline flow chart, see:

http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/IDEA2004/spr_meetings/disc_chart.doc.

EMAIL

Email is an efficient means for communication and is a wonderful tool for general information and quick answers. **Confidentiality is always a priority and therefore email may not always be the most appropriate method of communication for certain situations.** You may always call to speak with a Williams staff member employee or he/she may choose to respond with a phone call.

All staff members have a PPS email account. Most email addresses follow this format: the first initial of their first name, last name @pittsfield.net; ex., nshepardson@pittsfield.net. Staff is asked to check their emails daily and respond to parent questions within a timely manner.

Williams School is committed to open and ongoing communication with families and the community. Email is an efficient means to this end. Please be aware that employees may not always have immediate access to their email and messages may be inadvertently blocked by our spam filter. As always, you may call by phone to speak with any Williams employee. Finally, please note that email may not be monitored when school is not in session.

Emergency Procedures

Each quarter we have a fire drill so we can practice leaving the building in case of an emergency. These are just practices. Your child's teachers will know exactly what to do when we have a fire drill. Tell your child to pay attention to teachers when they ask you to line up quietly to exit the building in line without talking, running, or pushing. Once your class is outside the building, stay in line without talking, so your teacher can check to see that all your classmates are with you. When the all-clear signal is given, your teacher will direct you to enter the building in a quiet line. **Failure to follow directions during emergencies or drills will result in disciplinary consequences.**



There will be at least one other time during the year that we will have other practice drills. One is called a "relocation". We practice walking to The Christian Assembly Church on Williams Street in case there was ever a reason we could not remain at Williams. Our designated parent reunification site is the Holmes Road Fire Station. We also hold three other types of practices called "Lock Down", "Shelter in Place (weather)", "Hold in Passing" and "Drop, Cover, Hold". These are in case there was ever a reason students need to stay in their classrooms.

Relocation site: In accordance with the Massachusetts Department of Education Regulations, Williams Elementary School has an emergency relocation plan. In case of an emergency relocation, students will leave the building by way of designated fire exits and then proceed to Williams Street where they will walk to our designated evacuation site, Christian Assembly Church.

Fire drills: In cooperation with the Pittsfield Fire Department, fire drills are held several times throughout the school year. Each classroom has a designated primary fire exit and an alternate exit.

For emergency purposes, it is extremely important that you notify the office of any changes in contact information (i.e. phone numbers, names of emergency contacts).

Emergency Forms

Students will be given emergency forms at the beginning of each school year. It is important that this form be completely filled out and returned promptly. Three adult emergency contacts should be listed other than the parent/guardians. These contacts should be easily accessible in the parent/guardians' absence.

Babysitters, daycare providers, and neighbors should also be listed. **If any change in the information occurs during the school year, please notify the Main Office in writing immediately.**

Family Conferences

Williams Elementary School will be holding family conferences in December. Registrations for the December 9th & 10th family conferences will be sent home in November. In order to make your conference a positive experience, we would like to suggest some things to talk with the teacher about.

You May Want To Ask The Teacher:

1. Does my child participate in classroom activities?
2. Does he/ she exhibit self-control in school?
3. How does my child get along with others?
4. Can my child handle the learning materials of his/ her grade?
5. Does he/ she seem to enjoy reading?

6. How does my child read orally?
7. Can my child express thoughts and ideas clearly?
8. How is his/ her written communication?
9. Does he/ she seem happy in school?
10. Is he/ she accepted by the other students?

You May Want To Tell The Teacher:

1. School activities your child talks about at home.
2. What responsibilities your child handles at home.
3. Anything that may affect your child's performance in school.
4. Your child's favorite activities at home.
5. The strengths and weaknesses of your child.

Sharing information with the teacher will enable us to provide the best learning environment for your child.

Field Trips

At various times during the year, classes may take a field trip to enrich their curriculum. A permission slip will be sent home explaining the exact nature of the trip and requesting your written consent for your child's participation. If your child takes medication during the school day, arrangements for administration of the medication will be made in collaboration with the school nurse, teacher, and family. Not all field trips require additional chaperones due to limited space and fees, however, in order to chaperone a field trip, a CORI check form must be filled out and approved prior to the field trip.

Health Services

The goal of the School Health Program of Pittsfield Public Schools is to promote, protect, maintain, and improve student health. The school nurse is a health advocate for all students and coordinates the health services of school, home and community. The school nurse implements state laws, local board policies and administrative procedures relative to health services in assigned schools. A registered nurse, Nadine Fox, supervises the Nurse's Office. Students who feel ill or are injured in school should report to the nurse after obtaining permission from their teacher.

We want to provide each child with a safe and healthy environment. The nurse should be made aware of any pertinent medical information, i.e., allergies, medications, and/or physical restrictions. Any parent/guardian who has a health related concern should feel free to contact the School Nurse at 448-9680.

Medications

Massachusetts Law requires that all medication that must be administered during school hours be brought directly to the School Nurse by a parent/guardian. All medication must be in a properly labeled pharmaceutical container. The School Nurse will dispense the medication as directed by the physician. A written order from the doctor and written parent permission must accompany the medication. Long-term medications require a special form to be completed by the physician and parent. This form may be obtained from the School Nurse.

Medical Exemption from Physical Education

If physical activities are restricted for a medical reason, a signed note from the doctor or the parent/guardian must be presented to the Health Office. If the exemption is to be for an extended period of time, written documentation must be presented from the physician.

Health Screening

All students are scheduled for vision, height, weight, and hearing screenings each year. Fifth grade students are also screened for scoliosis.

Illness

If your child feels ill in the morning, please keep him/her home. Although good attendance is desirable, a sick child should never be sent to school. Please call the school, if your child will be absent.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

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

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

REQUIRED IMMUNIZATIONS TO REGISTER FOR KINDERGARTEN – GRADE 12*	
Hepatitis B	3 doses
DtaP/DTP/DT/Td	5 doses (1 Td booster gr. 7-11)
Polio	4 doses
Hib	(3 or 4 doses for pre-school)
MMR	2 doses for measles; 1 for mumps; 1 for rubella
Varicella (Chickenpox)	2 doses for kindergarten entry
*Immunization requirements vary by grade.	
Please contact the nurse at your child's school if you have questions.	

Homeless Assistance

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

Homework

Homework is considered an important adjunct to classroom instruction. Regular homework assignments not only reinforce course content introduced by the classroom teacher but also provide an opportunity for students to develop the ability to function independently. The frequency and complexity of homework assignments is

expected to increase with grade level and with program level in the high school. However, it is expected that homework assignments will be a component of the student's education program commencing with grade 1.

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

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

www.pittsfield.net.

Invitations

The distribution of invitations for out of school activities and parties is discouraged. Invitations will not be distributed in school unless the entire class is invited.

Lost and Found

Please label all layered clothing. Lost and Found is most often kept in the front lobby, and sometimes in grade levels. When there appears to be a large collection of items, reminders will go home to search for missing items. Unclaimed items will be donated.

Mandated Reporter Status of School Employees (M.G.L. c. 119 §51A)

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

Non-Promotion

Non-Promotion to next grade level. Where movement to the next grade is concerned, the following shall apply:

Retention at a grade level will be an acceptable course of action when it has been determined by the principal that passing to the next grade level would be detrimental to the educational progress of a student. In such cases, an educational plan will be developed for the student by the principal in collaboration with the teachers who will be delivering the instructional program in the next year. The educational plan cannot be a simple repetition of the entire grade but will address the specific needs of the retained student. Students moving to the next grade level who have demonstrated academic deficiencies will be scheduled appropriately to address their development needs. Parents are contacted midyear if there is a concern over non-promotion. This mid-year mark is determined to create a support plan to be reviewed in May or June in order to recommend retention or confirm promotion. Parents are involved in each step of the process.

Recess

All students should be properly clothed for daily outside play. Closed toe shoes are best for running on the playground. When snow covers the ground, students should be prepared with a coat, snow pants, snow boots, hat and gloves or mittens. If students do not have proper snow clothes, they will not be able to go sledding or play in the snow. We also need to alert you that for safety reasons, no sweatshirts/sweaters, shirts or jackets

should have string cord closures, which can be caught on playground equipment putting your child in a potentially dangerous situation.

Children are sent outside for recess when the temperature is 15 degrees Fahrenheit or above, and the wind chill is 15 degrees Fahrenheit or above, and playground conditions permit safe play.

We understand that children with asthma or those returning after a serious illness may need to occasionally stay in.

Resources and Student Plans

We encourage you to contact us to share any concerns, questions, suggestions, or successes. We need constructive input from all members of the school community to keep our school on the path of continuous improvement. When expressing a concern or sharing a suggestion, we invite you to be a part of the solution. It is so important to bring our collective best thinking to the table when problems arise. To that end, when communicating with us about an issue, we encourage you to first contact the person who has the closest knowledge of your child's day-to-day progress at school: your child's teacher. As teachers are busy in their classrooms for nearly the entire school day, the best way to get in touch with your child's teacher is to leave a message with the school office with a phone number where you can be reached. The teacher will then contact you when s/he has some time available outside of classroom responsibilities.

If the issue is not resolved at that level, or you wish to connect with us about a school-wide issue, you may contact the principal through the school office. Please know that if this is a classroom or child specific issue, the principal will first ask if you have already spoken with the teacher as this is where the first round of conversation needs to take place. Often, many issues are clarified and resolved through a parent-teacher conversation.

In addition to classroom teachers, we also have a Special Education Resource Teacher, Speech and Language Specialist, Occupational and Physical Therapist, Visual and Hearing Loss Specialist. We support our students with a Reading Specialist, Academic Interventionist and a specialist teacher for English Language Learners.

Restraint of Students and Staff Restraint Training

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has specific regulations concerning the use of physical restraint of students in public schools (603 C.M.R. 46.00). These regulations apply to all students whether in regular education or special education. Pursuant to the regulations, Pittsfield Public Schools personnel will use physical restraint with two goals in mind, and only after other less intrusive methods have been attempted or considered:

- To protect a student or member of the school community from imminent, serious physical harm
- To prevent or minimize any harm to the student when a restraint is deemed necessary

Rights of Students with Disabilities:

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

Every Pittsfield public school offers Resource/Learning Center services. These programs provide specialized instruction for eligible students in the area of documented disability.

The PPS also offers services in a substantially separate setting for students with developmental delays, intellectual impairments, autism, and behavioral disorders. These programs provide specialized instruction in a structured and predictable learning environment.

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

Rights under Section 504

A student with a disability recognized under the federal statute known as Section 504 (29 USC §794[a]) is entitled to accommodation of that disability to the extent that it interferes with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from any educational or other program of the Pittsfield Public Schools. Section 504 also prohibits discrimination against any student based on such a disability. A student whose disability is recognized under special education law, known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA: see USC §1401[3]) is entitled to educational programs and assignments that are designed to develop her/his educational potential. [M.G.L.C. 71B §1] Section 504 accommodation plans and special education individualized education programs (IEPs) must be developed in accordance with procedures set out in federal and Massachusetts law and regulations. The 504 Coordinator is responsible for assuring compliance with Section 504. She can be reached at 413-499-9515.

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

English Language Learner (ELL) Support

A student whose home language is not English, as shown on the district home language survey, is administered an English language proficiency assessment. If deemed necessary based on the assessment results, the student is placed in an appropriate ELL program.

For information regarding the ELL program, entrance and exiting procedures, and the rights of families of English Language Learner students, please call the ELL Coordinator at 413-499-6304.

Building Assistance Meeting

A Building Assistance Meeting (BAM) is a preventive and proactive problem solving system designed to formulate targeted interventions to deal with student's difficulties in order to increase success in school. A teacher or parent, who has concerns regarding a student, presents them to the team to explore various strategies and options to develop a measurable course of action. Many times a collaboration of people can offer more solutions than one or two people. The Building Assistance Meeting is made up of several people, including the principal, teachers, support staff, school adjustment counselor, and school psychologist. Our office will contact you with a date and time to schedule a BAM.

Restricted Items

Personal items (toys, electronics, valuables, etc.), non-educational items will no longer be allowed at Williams. These items are a distraction to the educational atmosphere. If a faculty member views these items, they will be held until the end of the day to be sent home.

Student Records and Privacy

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

Access of Non-Custodial Parents to student information

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

Technology/Computer Use

All students at Williams Elementary School have opportunities to use technology during the instructional day. Students are expected to use technology with care and respect at all times. Students are only to use the technology at Williams for the purpose that the teacher or principal dictates.

Please read the District's Acceptable Student Use of Technology Policy for more details.

Vacations

We strongly urge parents to plan vacations that don't conflict with the school calendar whenever possible. No matter what make-up work is completed, we cannot fully duplicate the classroom learning experience that is lost by going on vacation. Keep in mind that some students have a very difficult time catching up with their classes when they return from such vacations. If you must take your children out of school for an extended vacation when school is in session, please make the office and classroom teacher aware. Work will not be sent home during vacation and will need to be made up upon the student's return.

Visitor Policy

We welcome visitors to our school, but to ensure the safety and security of our students we require all parents, volunteers, and visitors to report to the office to sign-in and receive a visitor's badge. When delivering a "forgotten" item to school for your child, please leave the material at the office. A member of the staff will see to it that the item is promptly delivered.

Please see the Visitor's Policy for the District below.

PITTSFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Pittsfield, Massachusetts
VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS

Recognizing that access to the schools is an important benefit to the community, and also that the physical safety of the students and staff of the Pittsfield Public Schools is a matter of paramount importance, the School Committee established that the Superintendent of Schools shall develop regulations that allow parents, members of the community, and other

interested parties to visit the district's schools under circumstances that will preserve the safety of students and staff and will not disrupt classes or other educational activities occurring in the schools.

The Superintendent shall see to it that those regulations are posted conspicuously in all the district's schools. All those with business in the schools, and all other persons, shall adhere to those regulations.

The principal is authorized by the Superintendent, pursuant to School Committee policy, to take any action he/she deems necessary in order to secure the safety of students and district personnel. The principal or his/her designee has the authority to authorize visitors to be present on school grounds as defined in the policy regulations below. Unauthorized visitors or use of the school facility or grounds that does not follow School Committee policy by any visitor, will result in the visitor being asked to leave the school premises immediately and he and she will be subject to arrest and prosecution for trespassing if they refuse.

REGULATIONS (Visitors to the Pittsfield Public Schools shall be governed by the following rules):

1. No unauthorized persons shall be allowed on school grounds from sunset until 6:00 p.m. the next evening except if attending official school activities or other activities recognized and approved by the School System administration or individual school administrators. On weekends and holidays, no unauthorized persons shall be allowed on school grounds from sunset until sunrise except if attending official school activities or other activities recognized and approved by the School System administration or individual school administrators.
2. No unauthorized person shall be allowed in any gated area at any time.
3. All visitors wishing to enter the inside of a school building shall report to the Main Office of the school, sign in, and be issued a visitor's permit, which shall be displayed at all times during the visit. The permit shall be returned to the Main Office, and the visitor shall sign out, upon completion of his/her business in the building. The principal shall establish procedures to effectuate the purposes of the regulations.
4. Any parent or guardian wishing to speak with a specific teacher about the progress of that person's child must make an appointment with the teacher. Scheduling appointments must not interfere with instructional time.
5. Registration such as is described in #3 shall not be required for school functions that are open to the public, whether admission is to be charged or not.
6. Parents and guardians are encouraged to visit the principal, guidance counselors, school nurses, school psychologists, and other support personnel, by appointment, in order to discuss any problems or concerns the parent may have regarding the student, whether school related or not.
7. All visitors, including the press, wishing to inspect school records or wishing to interview students on school premises and other media, shall comply with all applicable School Committee rules, regulations, and policies. In any questionable case, the visitor shall be referred by the principal or his/her designee to the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, in order to obtain written permission for such a visit. The Superintendent's determination in any such case will be final.
8. Motorcycles, snowmobiles, or any other types of motorized transportation vehicles are prohibited on school property except those used for transportation and from school activities and authorized by the school administration.
9. Security should mean not only maintenance of secure buildings from a locking standpoint, but also being secure from fire hazards and faulty equipment. Security should also extend to safe practices in the use of electrical, plumbing, and heating equipment. Records should be in a safe place and under lock and key as required.
10. Automobiles, trucks, and other vehicular conveyances that are authorized to be on school property are not permitted to travel off the paved roadways, except for those official vehicles authorized to do so in the performance of their responsibilities.
11. All types of alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, tobacco (smokeless included) are prohibited on school grounds.

Volunteer Policy

Anyone who wishes to volunteer time to work with our students and is likely to have access to students who, at times, may be unsupervised, either on school premises or while participating or assisting in school-sponsored programs or activities, must register with the district for a Criminal Offender Records Information (CORI) check before engaging in volunteer activities. The opportunity to volunteer may be denied if the check reports evidence of criminal conduct deemed by the Superintendent or designee to create a credible risk to students, staff, or the public. M.G.L.c. 71, §38R and PER-10A.

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

The Williams Volunteer Handbook will also be provided to volunteers.

Wellness Policy

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

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

School lunch menus and prices as well as suggestions for healthy snacks and fundraisers are available at www.pittsfield.net.

The Pittsfield Food Service department has assisted the schools and parents with birthday celebrations. Each elementary school celebrates "Birthday Friday" once per month with a special treat provided by the food service department for all students with a school lunch. Pittsfield Public Schools shall limit celebrations that involve food to no more than one per class per month. Pittsfield Public School employees and volunteers shall not use foods or beverages as rewards in the classroom for academic performance or good behavior.

2021-2022 Important Dates**21-22 School Year Calendar - PPS**

August 31 Popsicle Meet & Greet
August 31 Kindergarten Orientation
September 1 First Day of School
Grades PreK & 1-5
September 8 First Day of School
for Kindergarten Students
September 17 Half Day of School
October 1 Half Day of School
October 15 Progress Reports
October 11 Indigenous
Peoples' Day
October 29 Half Day of School
November 2 No School Students/PD
Staff
November 11 Veterans Day Observed
November 24-26 Thanksgiving Recess
December 3 Report Cards
December 3 Half Day of School
December 9 Parent/Guardian
Conferences
December 10 Parent/Guardian
Conferences
December 23 - January 2 Holiday
Recess
January 14 Half Day of School
January 17 Martin Luther King
Jr Day
January 21 Progress Reports
February 11 Half Day of School
February 21-25 Winter Recess

March 4 Half Day of School
March 11 Report Cards
April 8 Half Day of School
April 15 Good Friday
April 18 Patriots' Day
April 18-22 Spring Recess
April 29 Progress Reports
May 6 Half Day of School
May 30 Memorial Day
June 16 Report Cards
June 16 Half Day of School
June 16 Last Day of School
June 20 Juneteenth Observed

