



# HWRSD CUTLER SCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK 2016-2017

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*The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, gender, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, housing status or disability in accordance with Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 and Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971.*

<b>PRINCIPAL'S LETTER</b> .....	<b>4</b>
District Mission and Core Beliefs.....	5
Cutler Staff List.....	7
<b>ACADEMIC</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Parent Concerns.....	9
Homework.....	9
MCAS.....	10
<b>RESPECTFUL COMMUNITY</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Expectations of Conduct.....	10
Bullying.....	11
Playground Rules.....	12
State Policy: Discipline.....	12
Special Education State Policy: Discipline.....	13
<b>GENERAL BUILDING INFORMATION</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Absences, Tardiness, Dismissals.....	15
School Lunch Program.....	16
Home School Communication.....	17
Dress Recommendations.....	17
Lost and Found.....	18
Library Books.....	18
Video Taping.....	18
School Council.....	18
Friends of Cutler.....	18
<b>SCHOOL SAFETY</b> .....	<b>18</b>
Crisis Plan.....	18
Delayed Openings.....	19
Emergency Dismissal.....	19
No School Announcement.....	19
Emergency Drills.....	20
Transportation.....	20
Bus Rules.....	20
Bicycle Permissions.....	21
Walkers.....	22
<b>HEALTH SERVICES</b> .....	<b>22</b>
Medication.....	22
Counseling Services.....	23
<b>SPECIAL EDUCATION</b> .....	<b>24</b>
Observation of students.....	24
Title VI/Section 504.....	26
Non-Custodial Parents.....	27
Records Request.....	28
<b>APPENDIX</b> .....	<b>28</b>
HWRSD Bullying Policy.....	28
HWRSD Harassment Prevention and Response Policy.....	34
HWRSD Acceptable Use Technology Policy.....	35
HWRSD Religious Observance Policy.....	39
Student Conduct and Discipline.....	40
Student Complaints and Grievances.....	46
Guidelines for Confidentiality and Ethics.....	46
Title IX.....	47
Playground Guidelines concerning Pets and Other Animals.....	47
Student Absences and Excuses.....	48
Gender Identity.....	48



# HAMILTON-WENHAM

## CUTLER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Jennifer Clifford  
Principal

237 Asbury Street  
Hamilton, MA 01982

August 31, 2016

Dear Cutler School Families,

Welcome to Cutler Elementary School for the 2015-2016 school year. We look forward to working with you in the coming year.

This handbook has been prepared by members of the elementary teaching staff and the building principal. In it you will find school policies and procedures. The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with a resource of information that will strengthen your connection to Cutler School. Please review the handbook and keep it handy for future reference.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about the contents of our handbook. Once again, we look forward to working with you to provide a challenging and meaningful educational experience for your children.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Clifford

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District does not discriminate in its programs, activities or employment practices based on race, age, color, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, housing status or disability.



# HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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## **Mission, Vision and Core Beliefs**

**Mission:** is a statement of purpose and defines the fundamental charge of the system. It is more general in nature and may, in fact, apply to other similar institutions. For example, all public schools have the same fundamental responsibilities. Therefore, they may share similar missions.

### **HWRSD Mission Statement**

**The Mission of the HWRSD is to educate our children to become young adults who are of good character and demonstrate mastery of the knowledge and skills needed to be successful members of our global economy and engaged citizens of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.**

**Vision statement:** describes the desired state of the system in the next five years. It is more specific in nature. It is an expression of possibility, yet based enough in reality to be achievable. Its purpose is to inspire those involved and interested individuals to help it become a reality. It provides the basis from which the school system determines the priorities and establishes targets for performance in the next five years; that is, yearly district and School Improvement Plan (SIP) goals result directly from the vision.

### **Vision Statement for the HWRSD for 2013-2018**

Through the development of an integrated, data-responsive system of curriculum, instruction, assessment and professional development, the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District will be a world-class learning organization that graduates students who are well-prepared to meet the post-secondary challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century economy and are engaged members of our global society.

### **Motto of the HWRSD:**

**Knowledge • Respect • Responsibility • Excellence**



# HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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**Core beliefs:** are the values that professionals in an organization draw from. Unlike the vision, which may change every few years, core beliefs are the philosophies that guide our day-to-day work.

## **HWRSD Statement of Core Beliefs**

1. We believe in high standards for all students.
2. We believe successful members of our global economy and engaged citizens of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century are effective communicators, collaborative, critical thinkers, and problem-solvers.
3. We believe engaged citizens of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century demonstrate respect for themselves, other people and their cultures, and our environment.
4. We believe in our shared responsibility to develop the whole child, including academic abilities and physical and emotional well-being.
5. We believe students can demonstrate success in a variety of ways.
6. We believe all students learn resilience and confidence through learning in an environment that provides a balance of support and challenge.
7. We believe learning is a lifelong pursuit that neither begins nor ends with one's formal education.
8. We believe education is the key to continuing the democratic ideals of our Nation.

# CUTLER SCHOOL STAFF LIST: 2016-2017

Adamik	Mary	2nd grade teacher
Ahearn	Gretchen	3rd grade teacher
Anderson	Alicia	4th grade teacher
Beane	Aurelia	Art teacher
Bellenis	Janie	Teaching assistant
Bowker	Tracey	3 <sup>RD</sup> grade teacher
Brouillard	Christina	SPED Teacher
Butler	Rebecca	SPED Teacher
Clark	Kendall	Music teacher
Clerkin	Suzanne	SPED Teacher
Clifford	Jennifer	Principal
Dagley,	Glenn	Technology Department
D'Entremont	Jill	Occupational Therapy
Drewes	Annie	Sped Teacher
Duffy	Nancy	2nd grade teacher
Ferreira	Michael	Music teacher
Fichera	Christine	Elementary Math Coach
Goodchild	Allison	Kindergarten Teacher
Graham	Melissa	5th grade teacher
Grassin	Susan	Teaching assistant
Greene	Carey	1st grade teacher
Hanna	Mary	Teaching assistant
Hanson	Liana	3rd grade teacher
Hebert	Heidi	Integrated Media Specialist
Ibarra	Adria	1 <sup>st</sup> grade Teacher
Leary	Joanne	Kindergarten Teacher
Lee	Mary	Reading Specialist
Luna-White	Jessica	Speech Language Pathology Asst.
Lucia	Susan	5th grade teacher
Marshall	Robert	Custodian
McGraw	Jessica	P.E. Teacher
Mcllvaine	Dolly	Adjustment Counselor
Mullarkey	Mike	Head Custodian
Nardella	Lynne	LPN School nurse
Niland-Mahar	Blanche	Cafeteria Staff
Painchaud	Sandy	Crossing Guard
Parker	Katie	Secretary
Paulson	Alysha	Speech Language Pathologist
Perkus	Nancy	Occupational Therapist
Reynolds	Carolyn	Teaching Assistant
Richards	Lynda	SPED Teacher

Santarelli	Joan	Teaching assistant
Sciandra	Dede	Teaching assistant
Stephens	Donna	Cafeteria Manager
Swartz	Lauren	Teaching assistant
Thompson	Nancy	Noon monitor
Linda	Trefry	Noon monitor
Valentine	Grace	4 <sup>th</sup> grade teacher
Worobey	Lisa	Teaching assistant

# ACADEMIC

## What should parents do when they have a concern regarding a child?

If it is an academic or social concern, parents should initiate school contact with the classroom teacher. This can be accomplished by a note, phone call, or email communication. Teachers will respond as soon as they are able. However, if you attempt to contact the teacher during the school day, the response may be delayed until students have gone home for the day.

The classroom teacher should be able to address your concern or seek assistance from other staff resources such as the Instructional Support Team, adjustment counselor, or building principal. If you continue to have a student concern after discussing it with the classroom teacher, contact the building principal for support.

The Instructional Support Team (IST) is made up of classroom teachers and specialists. The team reviews the student concerns and develops short-term interventions for improvement. Progress from the intervention is monitored and the team reconvenes to analyze the available performance data. Additional decisions regarding intervention will be determined as a result of this process.

## **HOMEWORK GUIDELINES**

We believe that homework is an important way for students to reinforce skills, develop proper study habits and support our efforts to create life-long learners.

How much time and what kinds of assignments can be expected?

Kindergarten: minimal, based on teacher and parent judgment of student needs; may include bringing items to school and/or sharing projects

Grade One: 15 minutes, four nights a week; may include Foundations paper and books, collecting items, or sharing projects

Grade Two: 20-30 minutes, four nights a week

Grade Three: 30-40 minutes, four nights a week

Grade Four: 30-60 minutes, four nights a week

Grade Five: 40-60 minutes, four nights a week

Grades Two, Three, Four and Five: Assignments may include language arts, (writing, word study, journal), math drill, problem solving and practice, studying for tests/quizzes, and long-range projects/reports.

Elementary teachers believe that reading is essential for life-long learning. It is recommended that elementary students read 30 minutes each night on their own, and/or with parents, as part of reading expectations planned by teachers, in addition to any assigned homework.



## MCAS TESTING

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) was designed to meet the requirements of the MA Education Reform Law of 1993. The law specified that the testing program must test all public school students in Massachusetts, including student with disabilities and/or students with limited English proficiency and be administered annually in at least grades 3, 4, 5, 8, 10 in various content areas. The performance of individual students, schools, and districts is reported. MCAS testing provides a measure of accountability for students, schools, and districts (for example, as of 2001, grade 10 students must pass the grade 10 tests as one condition of eligibility for a high school diploma).

## MCAS Test Schedule for 2017 (TBA)

# RESPECTFUL COMMUNITY

## EXPECTATIONS OF CONDUCT

Our school is an extension of the Hamilton-Wenham community. Students as well as adults are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at all times.

One of the primary goals of the Cutler School Community is to create a positive interdependence of students through sensitivity, respect, open communication and consistent standards of behavior. It is our expectation that students will be able to conduct themselves in a safe, orderly, considerate manner throughout our school community. **Please read and talk about our school behavioral expectations published inside the front cover of this booklet.**

In the beginning of every school year each classroom, on the first day of the year, your child's teacher spends a considerable amount of time discussing and drawing up classroom rules and reviewing school-wide expectations of conduct. These rules and expectations are posted in each classroom. The faculty works with students to help them develop problem solving, negotiation, and conflict resolution skills. We continually reinforce the strategy of seeking adult assistance when students cannot reconcile differences.

**Serious incidents of misbehavior** shall be termed "Unacceptable". These include: stealing, obscene language or gestures, dangerous fighting, vandalism, destruction of property, and physical or verbal assault on another child or adult. These incidents will be brought to the immediate attention of the principal. The student will be brought or sent to the office.

Consequence: These may include in-school suspension, detention, conference with the child, parent, principal and/or teacher. In some cases, the child may be suspended from school for the following day and/or a specific behavior management plan will be developed with the child, teacher, parent and principal to assist the child in gaining control of his/her behavior. These cases will include repeated offenses of the above incidents.

## BULLYING

Massachusetts state laws prohibits bullying in schools. School districts are required to develop an anti-bullying policy. **Please refer to the HWRSD Bullying Prevention Policy included in the appendix of this document.**

### **Hamilton-Wenham Elementary Schools Bullying Definition and Rules**

"Bullying is when someone repeatedly and on purpose says or does mean or hurtful things to another person who has a hard time defending himself or herself." (Olweus definition of bullying)

#### **Bullying involves:**

1. Repetition over time
2. Intent to do harm
3. Imbalance of power

#### **Anti-Bullying Rules:**

1. We will not bully others.
2. We will try to help students who are bullied.
3. We will try to include students who are left out.
4. If we know that somebody is being bullied, we will tell an adult at school and an adult at home.

When bullying behavior is identified, progressive disciplinary steps will be taken to correct the problem. This will begin with a warning from the classroom teacher and progress to a First Bullying Offense, a Second Bullying Offense and a Third Bullying Offense. Anything above a warning will involve the school counselor and/or the principal. Parents will be notified any time bullying behavior has been identified.

- \* Being a bully is not permitted in school.
- \* Sometimes bullies say mean things like teasing too much or calling kids or their friends and family nasty names.
- \* Sometimes bullies do mean things like hitting kids, pushing them, making rude gestures or touch kids in a way that they don't want.
- \* If you think someone is being a bully to you or to one of your friends, tell them to stop and then walk away.
- \* If the bully won't stop, tell one of the adults in school.
- \* You can tell any adult in school you like.
- \* When the adult hears about your concern, the adult will try to solve the problem.
- \* If the adult cannot solve the problem right away the adult will talk with the Principal.
- \* Many concerns can be resolved by an adult or the Principal pretty easily.
- \* Sometimes, however, concerns are more serious. There may be some discipline for the bully and parents may be called.
- \* The bully is not allowed, however, to try to get back at you for telling your concerns to an adult; if that happens, tell an adult again right away.
- \* It is important to us that our elementary schools are safe and caring places for all our students and that both students and the adults behave in a courteous and respectful way with each other.

## **PLAYGROUND RULES**

- ♥ Be kind and considerate of others when on the playground.
- ♥ Share space with others.
- ♥ Respect Recess Supervisors and follow their directions.
- ♥ No kicking, pushing or shoving.
- ♥ No fighting -- anywhere at school!!!
- ♥ Touch football only -- no tackles.
- ♥ No slide tackles in soccer.
- ♥ Return all playground equipment to the classroom's recess bag.
- ♥ Share equipment with as many students as possible.
- ♥ Only one person on the slide at a time; sliding down in seated position.
- ♥ Balls cannot be kicked or thrown against the building.

## **STATE POLICY CONCERNING DISCIPLINE** see also page 40 Student Conduct/Student Discipline

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

b) Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

c) Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal.

After said hearing, a principal may, in his discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b); provided, however, that any principal who decides that said student should be suspended shall state in writing to the school committee his reasons for choosing the suspension instead of the expulsion as the most appropriate remedy. In this statement, the principal shall represent that, in his opinion, the continued presence of this student in the school will not pose a threat to the safety, security, and welfare of the other students and staff in the school.

(d) Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of his appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.

(e) When a student is expelled under the provisions of this section and applies for admission to another school for acceptance, the superintendent of the sending school shall notify the superintendent of the receiving school of the reasons for the student's expulsion.

In addition, any school department personnel must report in writing to their immediate supervisor an incident involving a student's possession or use of a dangerous weapon on school premises at any time.

Supervisors who receive such a weapon report shall file it with the superintendent of said school, who shall file copies of said weapon report with the local chief of police, the department of social services, the office of student services or its equivalent in any school district, and the local school committee. Said superintendent, police chief, and representative from the department of social services, together with a representative from the office of student services or its equivalent, shall arrange an assessment of the student involved in said weapon report. Said student shall be referred to a counseling program; provided, however, that said counseling shall be in accordance with acceptable standards as set forth by the board of education. Upon completion of a counseling session, a follow-up assessment shall be made of said student by those involved in the initial assessment.

A student transferring into a local system must provide the new school system with a complete school record of entering student. Said record shall include, but not be limited to, any incidents involving suspension or violation of criminal acts or any incident reports in which such student was charged with any suspended act." Section 37, School Reform Bill.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION DISCIPLINE POLICY**

The IEP of every special needs student indicates why the student is or is not expected to meet the regular discipline code and if not, what modification of the code is required. If a modified discipline code is necessary, it is described in the Individualized Education Program (IEP). In the event that a special needs student is suspended for more than ten (10) days in a school year, the IEP is reviewed to determine the appropriateness of the student's placement in the program. Suspension is defined as any action which results in the removal of a student from the program prescribed in his/her IEP. The term includes in-house suspension as well as any exclusion from transportation services, which prohibits the student's participation in his/her prescribed program.

The suspension policy is:

If the TEAM determines that the student's misconduct is related to a disability, an inappropriate Special Education Placement, or an IEP not fully implemented; the student is not suspended and the Plan is modified with the help of parents or special education personnel

and school officials. Following parental approval, the student is placed immediately in the new program.

If the TEAM concludes that the student's misconduct is not a result of a disability or the result of an inappropriate special education placement and that the original IEP was fully implemented:

a. An amendment to the IEP is developed and implemented to assure the student's access to special education services during the suspension.

b. The original IEP is modified to meet long-term plans (including discipline code expectations) designed to assure the student's continued participation in an educational program.

If suspension results in absence for more than ten (10) days in the school year, immediate written notification of the suspension and a request for approval of an alternative plan must be submitted to the Division of Special Education with a copy sent to the student's parents. Parents have the right to accept or reject this component of the IEP.

## GENERAL BUILDING INFORMATION

### SCHOOL HOURS

**Early morning supervision begins at 8:15am**

#### **Monday – Tuesday – Thursday – Friday**

8:25am Entering Bell

8:30am School Begins

2:57pm Dismissal

#### **Wednesday**

8:25am Entering Bell

8:30am School Begins

12:45pm Dismissal

### ABSENCES, TARDINESS AND DISMISSAL

The Cutler School maintains a **Safe Arrival Program**. We ask parents to call **978-468-8472**, if you know your child is going to be absent or tardy. This phone number is connected to an answering machine with a message asking that you leave your child's name and teacher name. If your child is absent and we have not heard from you, we will call you to check on the safety of your child. If there is no answer at the home phone, the child's emergency card will be used to contact a working parent. Please keep the office updated with cellular telephone numbers and the like.

A student arriving at school after the start of the day (8:25 a.m.) reports to the office upon arrival. Students who do not arrive at school until after 11:15 a.m. will be considered absent for the day. Students who are absent for 5 consecutive days due to illness will require a doctor's note before returning to school.

**For your child's safety, anytime a child's dismissal plans change from the regular routine, parents must send in a note to the classroom teacher informing them of the student's dismissal, whether it be a bus or walking plan change.**

All visitors, including parents, should use the front door entrance and report to the office upon entering the school building to sign in and wear a badge for identification purposes. This will allow us to locate you if an emergency arises.

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential for success in school. The Committee recognizes that parents of children attending our schools have special rights as well as responsibilities, one of which is to ensure that their children attend school regularly, in accordance with state law.

Therefore, students may be excused temporarily from school attendance for the following reasons: illness or quarantine; bereavement or serious illness in family; weather so inclement as to endanger the health of the child; and observance of major religious holidays.

A child may also be excused for other exceptional reasons with approval of the Principal or designee.

A student's understanding of the importance of day-to-day schoolwork is an important factor in the shaping of his character. Parents can help their children by not allowing them to miss school needlessly.

Accordingly, parents will provide a written explanation for the absence or tardiness of a child. This will be required in advance for types of absences where advance notice is possible.

Attendance letters will be sent to parents at regular intervals when a student is absent from school. The letter will request notification if the absences are due to a chronic medical condition. If the parent does not provide verification of a medical condition after receiving letters from the school and a student is absent for ten (10) days (consecutive or cumulative), the principal will contact parent(s) directly to discuss the reason for the absences and collaboratively develop a plan to support improved school attendance.

If a student's physician provides a written order verifying that the student has a medical condition precluding daily school attendance, an administrator will make the parent aware of rights and requirements with regard to home/hospital tutoring when absences exceed fourteen (14) days.

**Please note that the practice of taking vacations when school is in session is strongly discouraged.** Students who are absent miss vital classroom instruction and opportunities to practice developing skills. As a result, family vacations need to be scheduled during the December, February, and April school vacations only.

### **Early Dismissal**

Any student dismissed during school hours must be picked up by their parents or parent designee at the school's office. Parents picking up students during school hours may park in the designated areas. Please do not park in the fire lanes. Please send a note to your child's teacher indicating early dismissal. Students will be considered absent for the day if they are dismissed before 11:15 a.m.

### **Picking Up Students At Dismissal**

Parents picking up students at dismissal are asked to make sure they meet their child/children in the pick-up line outside. There is a staff member on duty everyday at after school pick-up. **A note must be sent to the teacher indicating that a child is to be picked**

**up. If the teacher does not receive a note, the child will be instructed to board the bus for transportation home.** Please make sure the note contains the date and the student's name.

1. All cars must enter through the lower parking lot and divide into two active pick up lanes, one in each section of the lot.
2. Stay in your car if you are in the active pick up lines. Please shut off your engines to reduce idling. Please have younger siblings safely in your car and ready to go when dismissal begins to ensure a timely dismissal. Pull up as far as possible as space becomes available in the line.
3. You may leave your car **only** if it is parked in a legal space in the parking lot.
4. We will be issuing labeled signs for your front windshield; please put this sign in front of the driver on the dashboard so that we can quickly identify your car. We ask that you use the signs regularly to expedite the dismissal, but if you do not have it for a day because you are in a different car, that is fine.
5. Your children will be brought to you by a staff member if you are in the far lane.
6. Your children will walk to your car along the grass if you are in the near lane, provided that all cars are stopped.
7. Please do not motion to your child to come to your car because:
8. All students must let the dismissal teacher know that they see their trusted adult before walking to your car or to you. For this reason, if you are not in your car, please remain on the grassy area and let your children walk to you after giving notice to the staff member on duty.
9. Students and parents who ride bikes must walk the bikes while on school property and must wear helmets in accordance with state law. Only fourth and fifth grade students may ride without an adult; younger students must have an adult accompany them if riding a bike.

We appreciate your cooperation by respecting these guidelines and helping us maintain a safe and orderly pick up at all times.

## **SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM**

School lunch can be purchased through the Nutrikids point of sale system.

Students are assigned a four digit PIN number to use for purchasing lunch and/or milk. Parents can put money on their child's account either online or by sending a check in to the cafeteria (payable to Hamilton Wenham Food Services). **Questions regarding PIN numbers and troubles with login information can be directed to Catherine Donovan, Director of Food Services, 978-468-0398 or [c.donovan@hwschools.net](mailto:c.donovan@hwschools.net).**

Children may also bring a lunch and or drink if they wish. No glass containers or carbonated beverages are allowed.

Menus are also posted in the office and classrooms as well as being published in the Hamilton-Wenham Chronicle and on our website. Lunch prices are set by the District Cafeteria Manager at the beginning of each school year, or at other times when necessary.

Two items are available on the menu. For this school year, full lunch is \$3.00, milk or juice separately is .50 cents. **Free and reduced-rate meals** are available to any students who

qualify under United States Department of Agriculture guidelines. We strongly encourage any parent who feels his or her income falls within the U.S.D.A. guidelines to apply for this program for his or her children. Applications are available at the principal's office at any time during the school year and online. If you have any questions regarding the Free and Reduced-Price Lunch Program, please contact the Food Service Director, Catherine Donovan at 468-0398.

**NUTRITIOUS SNACKS** should be sent in daily with your child, for consumption in the morning, at a time convenient to the teacher, coupled with a brief recess. The school nurse will alert all parents in nut-free rooms as to the guidelines which will keep all students safe. We request that food not be sent in to recognize birthdays, holidays or other classroom celebrations, as recommended by the District Wellness Committee. Thank you for your understanding.

### **HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION**

Cutler School now uses a blog format for communication to families about upcoming school events. **Please sign up to receive notification of blog posts at [cutlerschool.blogspot.com](http://cutlerschool.blogspot.com) or link to it from the Cutler homepage.** This is a two-step process, and once you have confirmed using the email sent to you, you will receive notice of all posts. The blog is public and can always be accessed from the Cutler website. There is a calendar of events in the blog also, which is a good reference for dates of important school events.

### **DRESS RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is expected that students will take pride in their personal appearance. Fads in dress, hair and makeup sometimes tempt students to persuade their parents that "all the kids are doing it." Student dress should be within reasonable limits and should not be extreme. Personal appearance, dress or grooming must not disrupt the education process or threaten the health or safety of any individual. Specifically:

- ◆ Sneakers must be worn on days when Physical Education is scheduled.
- ◆ No clothing or jewelry may be worn that causes disruption or disorder within the school.
- ◆ It is not appropriate to wear clothing to school that is designed for beach wear (belly shirts, spaghetti strap tank tops, halter tops, flip flops).
- ◆ No hats, bandanas or caps will be allowed within school buildings.
- ◆ Winter clothing and footwear should be appropriate to weather conditions since children play outdoors during morning and lunch recesses.
- ◆ Please label clothing such as jackets, sweater, raincoats, and hats, and other belongings; i.e. lunch boxes, boots, sneakers, etc. Labeled items are more easily returned if lost.
- ◆ Apparel with "double meanings", are inappropriate for school wear such as concert T-shirts depicting illegal or anti-social behavior and buttons or pins with profane or vulgar words.
- ◆ Parents will be notified by the principal if student's clothing does not meet school expectations.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

A "Lost and Found" area is maintained in the gym lobby, where articles are kept for a reasonable period of time before being donated to charity. Students are responsible for their belongings and can check the lost and found at lunchtime. We suggest that you label all of your children's clothing and items being brought to school. Unclaimed items will be donated to shelters at each school vacation. Items left on buses will be returned to Winthrop School.

### **CLASSROOM AND LIBRARY BOOKS AND PROPERTY**

Books are loaned to students with the understanding that if they are lost or damaged it is their responsibility to replace or pay for them. Persons who mark or destroy school property must pay for the cost of any repairs.



## **PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEOS**

Throughout the school year, classroom teachers and others take pictures and videos of the students participating in a wide variety of activities. These pictures will be displayed around the school, in the Hamilton-Wenham Chronicle, local cable channel, and perhaps other local publications. A general permission form will be distributed at the start of each school year. Please indicate your permission on that form and return it to school immediately.

## **SCHOOL COUNCIL**

The School Council is a representative, school building-based committee composed of the principal, parents, teachers and a community member. The School Council adopts educational goals that are consistent with our District policies. It also identifies needs for our school and reviews the annual school budget. The council formulates a school improvement plan that is submitted to the school committee. All meetings are open to the public.

## **THE FRIENDS OF CUTLER**

The Friends of Cutler is our parent volunteer service organization. The purpose of the Friends is to supplement the educational process with additional resources such as sponsorship of volunteer programs, materials and direct financial support. Activities of the organization are intended to facilitate more and closer communication between the home and school. The Friends, through hard work and interest, provide our school with funds and added programs. Friends of Cutler has a strong volunteer program. A survey is distributed at the beginning of each school year asking for volunteers. Please contact Co-Presidents Michelle Gilpin ([mg0222@hotmail.com](mailto:mg0222@hotmail.com)) or Kristen Degnan ([jkdegnan@gmail.com](mailto:jkdegnan@gmail.com)), if you are interested in helping with the wonderful work this group does for Cutler School. The meetings are generally each month at the school. Times vary.

# **SCHOOL SAFETY**

## **CRISIS PLAN**

As adults in a school and community setting, we help young people cope with painful losses and events that are a part of life. We help students heal and guide them through difficult times. We also must be prepared to deal with emergency situations.

When a crisis occurs, it can have devastating consequences for individuals, families, neighborhoods, schools and the community at large. The best response to a crisis is to be prepared before the crisis strikes with a well thought out plan of action and in integrated response. As schools are often the “hub” of communities, the school’s response to a crisis may set the tone for the community’s response as a whole. If handled calmly, responsively, and thoroughly, the crisis may even serve as a unifying force. Each school in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District has a “Crisis Action Plan” in place in the case of an emergency or other crisis.

## **DELAYED OPENING PROCEDURES**

Based on weather and road conditions in both communities of Hamilton and Wenham, the Superintendent of Schools will determine by 6:00am whether to declare a delayed opening for that school day. The Superintendent will use ConnectEd to make phone calls to staff and parents regarding a delayed opening of school. A delayed opening means that school will start 2 hours later than usual. Students should arrive at school no earlier than 10:15am, they will follow the schedule of the day and be dismissed at the regular time.

## **EMERGENCY DISMISSAL**

If it is necessary to dismiss school earlier than scheduled due to unusual weather conditions or other unforeseen emergencies, students will be sent home. As a precaution, parents are encouraged to work out an emergency plan with their children. No child will be allowed to go home to an empty house. **The principal will contact parents with a ConnectEd phone call.**

***ConnectEd is an effective procedure to inform parents of an emergency dismissal. Please do your part and follow through so that all children will be safe. If there is ever a change in a home, work or cell phone number, be sure to contact the school office so the appropriate changes can be made.***

## **NO SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

It is the policy of the Hamilton-Wenham schools to cancel classes only in case of extreme weather conditions or emergencies. Parents are urged to use their own judgment concerning their child's attendance at school on storm days.

Cancellation of the school day will be announced as follows:

<u>ConnectEd</u>	The Superintendent will use ConnectEd to make phone calls to staff and parents regarding school cancellation.
<u>Radio</u>	Announcements of school cancellation will be broadcast on radio stations WESX (1230), and WBZ (1030) between 7:15am and 7:30am.
<u>Fire Whistle</u>	The No-School Signal is given in Hamilton at 7:00am with a 2-2-2 signal and in Wenham at 7:00am with a 2-2-2- signal.
<u>Cable</u>	Hamilton-Wenham local Channel 10 is notified of any cancellations or delays.
<u>TV</u>	Boston Channel 4, Channel 5 and Channel 7

## **EMERGENCY DRILLS**

In keeping with state regulations, fire drills are conducted regularly in each school under the supervision of the building principal. Procedures are posted in each classroom or teaching area. A program on fire safety is provided in the schools by the local fire departments.

To provide fire engine access to our school in case of an emergency, we are asking parents/visitors not to park in the bus lanes located in front of the building.

We also practice lockdown drills and evacuation procedures periodically with the children to safeguard them in the unlikely event of a crisis situation.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

With a very high percentage of the school's students being bussed, transportation becomes an important and time-consuming facet of the school. Student safety is the number one priority in the transportation of your child. Any questions or concerns regarding transportation should be submitted to [transportation@hwschools.net](mailto:transportation@hwschools.net).

Behavior on the bus must be acceptable at all times. This is important to assure the safety of ALL bus passengers. Disruptive behavior can lead to the suspension of bus-riding privileges. We encourage you to help your child exhibit good bus-riding practices at all times, including a regard for all other riders.

**If your child is to be transported on a bus other than his/her regular bus, we must have a note to that effect.** We will then issue a bus pass. Bus passes are only given out if the bus in question is not overcrowded and if we have a note from a parent stating the change.

### **BUS RULES**

- Each pupil shall be seated immediately upon entering the bus in the place assigned by the driver, if such assignments have been made.
- Once seated, students should remain in their seats until the bus has reached its destination.
- Loud and/or profane language, or inappropriate conduct shall not be tolerated.
- No windows or doors will be opened or closed except by permission of the driver.
- No pupils shall enter or leave the bus until it has come to a full stop and the door has been opened by the driver.
- Students are to obey the directions of the bus driver and will identify themselves correctly when requested.
- There is to be no lighting of matches or smoking on the bus.
- Eating on the bus is not allowed.
- Students are not to throw objects on the bus or out of the windows.
- Students shall not put their hands or their heads out of the windows.
- Students are responsible to arrive at the bus stop on time.
- Littering the bus is unacceptable. Any damage to the bus caused by a student will result in reimbursement to the bus company.
- Students are not to stand in the stairwell of the bus.
- Any incident of disruptive behavior will be reported to the principal. Parents will be notified.
- A second instance may result in a suspension of bus privileges and requires that the parents and student meet with principal.

### **BICYCLE PERMISSION**

Students in grades K-3 may ride their bikes to school with adult supervision. Children in grades four and five are allowed to ride their bicycles to Cutler School independently. All children under 12 years of age must wear a helmet according to Massachusetts State Law. Students should ride bikes with the flow of traffic. A bike rack is provided for student use. The school cannot be responsible for lost or stolen bicycles. Children should not ride bicycles in rainy, icy or snowy weather. Parents are responsible for the safe operating condition of their children's bicycles. Youngsters who ride to school should be reminded that riding bicycles on the playground is not allowed. Improper use of this privilege will result in its suspension.

Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District  
Recommendations for Bicycle Safety

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District, its administrators and staff wish to recommend that students, within the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District and their parents/guardians, consider the following suggestions for Bicycle Safety should the student and his/her parents/guardians opt to have the student ride a bicycle to and/or from school:

- \* BIKE PLAN – It is recommended that parents/guardians and students prepare a bike plan outlining the route that the child may take to and from school. It is recommended that the student and parent/guardian write out a bike plan that may minimally include the streets to be traveled to and from school. The bike plan, if the student and parent/guardian decide to follow this recommendation, could be kept by the parent/guardian and periodically reviewed for safety.
- \* SAFETY TIPS – Helpful general safety and bicycle safety tips and suggestions are circulated by the Hamilton and Wenham Police Departments and the School District. It is recommended that students and their parents/guardians consider reviewing these safety tips. These safety tips often address issues involving the proper use of a bicycle helmet, where one can safely (and legally) ride a bicycle, how to properly cross a street, and proper bicycle maintenance.

It must be remembered that riding a bicycle can be very dangerous, and that the best way to avoid any accidents is for the student to plan out a bicycle route to and from school with a responsible parent/guardian, adhere to all traffic laws, and to follow any general recommended safety tips for a safe and enjoyable ride.

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee, the administrators and the staff hope that the above suggestions and recommendations are helpful and remind each student and parent/guardian that bicycle safety is up to you.

### **WALKERS**

The crossing guard on Asbury Street is provided for the safety of your children walking to and from school. Children are encouraged to walk in small groups whenever possible. If your child is walking home with another student, to the library or playing field, a note must be sent in to the teacher, so a walker's pass may be issued.

## **HEALTH SERVICES**

The Hamilton-Wenham Public Schools share with the parents of our community a deep concern for the health and well-being of its children. How well our children will be able to meet their new opportunities and responsibilities which they face in the years ahead will depend on a large measure of their physical vitality as well as intellectual capabilities. Your child's health status is determined through the modalities of observation, screening tests, (vision, hearing and postural), measurements (height and weight) as well as medical, dental, and psychological evaluations.

All children in grades K-5 are screened for visual and auditory problems during each school year and any problems are reported to parents. In addition, parents may request that the school nurse do further screening during the school year if they feel that their children may have impairment in vision or hearing.

## **Physical examinations are required for all children prior to entering school and in grade 4.**

The school nurse is your child's advocate. There are many opportunities for individual and informal health guidance offered in the course of a school day. Her role is to work in collaboration with you, the parents, and with others in the school system and in the community to foster good and wholesome health practices.

You may call the health office at any time to check on the wellbeing of your child or to voice concerns that may arise. If your child has a fever or symptoms which would interfere with normal classroom functioning, please make arrangements to keep him/her out until the child is able to perform in the classroom. We are here as a team to provide a safe, healthful, and wholesome environment in which your child can experience growth and vitality each and every day.

### **MEDICATION**

In accordance with the Massachusetts State Law governing the administration of medications in schools, all medicines must be accompanied by a written doctor's order, including all over-the-counter drugs (e.g. cough syrup). **All requests for the dispensing of medications must be directed to the school nurse.** In those situations where it is necessary for medication to be given on a regular basis at school, the medicine should be brought to school in a prescription bottle by a parent. The container should be labeled with the name of medication, the amount to be given, the time to be given, the expiration date, if any, and the physician's name. The parent will also be asked to sign a permission form authorizing the school nurse to administer the medication.

It would be helpful for us to know of any serious accidents or operations or of any medicine administered at home which might affect a student's performance at school. In addition, **it is important that the school be informed about children with allergic reactions so that proper action can be taken if the need arises.**

### **COUNSELING SERVICES**

The School Counselor is a professional trained in social work or counseling and certified by the Massachusetts Department of Education as a School Social Worker/Adjustment Counselor. It is the role of the School Counselor to help students with their personal, social and academic concerns with a focus on school functioning. The School Counselor meets with students individually and in small groups. The School Counselor also works with teachers, administration and parents to help all students be successful in school. Dolly McIlvaine is the School Counselor at Cutler School. School personnel, i.e. teachers, Principal and nurse all may refer a student to the School Counselor if they believe he or she may benefit from this service. A parent may refer a student to the School Counselor or may call Dolly McIlvaine at 978-468-8475 or email her at [d.mcilvaine@hwschoolsnet](mailto:d.mcilvaine@hwschoolsnet) for information, advice, suggestions or with concerns. Students can also request to meet with the School Counselor themselves for assistance with various issues including academic, social or personal matters.

### **What kinds of services does the School Counselor offer?**

#### ***Student Services***

- Individual and small group counseling
- Lunch/Snack Groups
- Instruction in various social curriculums and personal safety
- Conflict resolution

- Coordination of puberty unit
- Family Services
- Provide information and consultation to parents around social/emotional issues.
- Meetings with parents upon request
- Communication with parents (phone, e-mail)

### **School/Community Services**

- Provide consultation and support to classroom teachers around individual student needs and social/emotional issues.
- Develop various social curriculums to address the Massachusetts Health Frameworks.
- Make appropriate community based referrals and network/collaborate with community based clinicians and state agencies working with students and families.
- Act as the primary school liaison for students with collateral agency involvement.
- Participate on various Special Education Team meetings as indicated.
- Member of Instructional Support Team and Clinical Team.
- Member of school's Crisis Team.
- Provide crisis intervention as needed.

If you have any questions about these services, please feel free to ask.

Mrs. McIlvaine is always happy to speak with families and looks forward to working with you.

### **NON-SMOKING POLICY**

State law prohibits the use of any tobacco products within the school buildings, the school facilities or on the school grounds or on school buses by any individual, including school personnel.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Special Education Laws, Massachusetts Chapter 766 and Federal P.L. 99-142, provide for all children ages 3-21 the right to an appropriate education through their local public school system.

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District offers a variety of programs and services to students ages 3-21 who have disabilities. Our special education programs provide for the maximum possible development of students in the least restrictive environment. Special education services and support are provided in the regular classroom through the collaborative efforts of a special education teacher and the classroom teacher whenever possible. Most children with disabilities progress faster academically and are less socially isolated when they remain with their peers in the regular classroom setting. Special classes, separate schooling, or the removal of the child from the regular education environment occurs only when the nature of severity of the disability is such that the educational needs of the child cannot be met in the regular classroom.

Emphasis is placed on early recognition and correction of student problems. The school system is required to screen all kindergarten entry level children to assess weaknesses in skill areas, and in addition, has the responsibility to notify the parents of three or four year olds that their children are eligible for the screening program.

Request for an evaluation may be made by parents, teachers, or other staff at any time to determine the presence and nature of special needs.

Subsequent individual programs, if needed, are then planned in collaboration with specialists, parents, the pupil's teacher, and other persons whom the parents and/or specialists wish to involve.

## Observations of Students and Programs by Parents, Advocates, and other Designees

### Introduction

The purpose of *An Act to Provide Access to Information for Parents and Evaluators* (House Bill No. 391) is to protect the rights of parents in participating fully and effectively with school personnel in the development of appropriate educational programs for their children. To that end, the Hamilton Wenham Regional School District has established guidelines regarding parents' observations of their child or child's program conducted by themselves, their educational advocate or an evaluator. The cooperation of school and parent is essential to ensure the safety of children and the integrity of the program while under observation.

### II. Policy

Requesting an Observation a. In order for the District to have verbal or written contact with an educational

consultant or evaluator who wishes to observe the student in the classroom, a "Release of Information" form must be signed by the parent.

A request for an observation through letter or telephone at least one (1) week in advance of the proposed observation and should include the purpose and activities requested for observation.

The Principal shall immediately notify the teacher(s) involved and the Director of Student Services and begin the process to determine the appropriateness of the specific date requested.

The duration and extent of the observation will be determined on an individual basis.

1. Different observation requests may require more planning and observation time than others depending on the complexity of the student's needs being evaluated or observed.

e. The Principal shall schedule the agreed upon time for observation as soon as possible.

1. The time needed to determine the feasibility of a request to observe a specific classroom in a week, may be only an hour. In other instances, such as when a designee needs to observe both the current and proposed programs, including periods of unstructured time to observe student's interactions and responses, the observation will likely take longer to schedule.

f. There will be periods of time when observations will not be scheduled, such as during MCAS or other district wide testing and during the first two weeks of school and the last two weeks of school.

Expectations During Observation a. The number of observers is limited to two (2) per observation and no children may accompany a parent, consultant or evaluator for the duration of the observation.

b. The observer is not to interfere with the educational environment of the classroom. If the observer is disruptive or inappropriate the observer will be asked to leave immediately and the observation will be discontinued.

1. Parent should be informed that his/her presence might influence the performance of their

child, as well as the performance of other children.

- c. The observer will be accompanied by a member of the school staff for the duration of the observation
- d. The accompanying staff member will seat the observer (in consultation with the teacher) in an unobtrusive location within the classroom.
- e. Those observing shall respect student confidentiality and shall not share any impressions of other students with anyone. Observers will be asked to sign a statement that in the event that they obtain personally identifiable or confidential information during the course of an evaluation/observation, they will not disclose it.
- f. Staff members involved in a classroom observation will welcome observers to the class but will not discuss the student with observers before, during, or immediately after the observation period. Discussion of the observation may take place at a subsequent conference. Discussions should last no more than 20- minutes unless a TEAM meeting is being scheduled.
- g. The accompanying staff member should take observation notes during the observation period, and note anything atypical that occurs during the observation. If the observation notes made by a staff member are reduced to a written report, said report shall become part of the temporary student record.
- h. School safety procedures shall be adhered to at all times. Principals retain the authority to exercise their discretion at any time to reschedule or terminate an observation in the event of a building emergency or a disruption that impacts the physical or emotional well-being of the children in the school or the program being observed or when necessary to protect:

The safety of the children in the program during the observation; The integrity of the program during the observation; and

Children in the program from disclosure by an observer of confidential or personally identifiable information he or she may obtain while observing the program.

#### Follow-Up

- a. Depending on the purpose of the observation, the Principal or other designated staff will schedule a meeting or make telephone contact to follow up on the observation.
- b. If the parent requests a TEAM meeting and an evaluation was conducted as part of the observation, the evaluator shall provide a written evaluation report to the school district at least 10 days prior to a scheduled team meeting.

#### II. Policy Review and Revision

Review and revision of this policy and procedures shall occur as needed, but at least every two (2) years.

#### III. Legal References M.G.L. c. 71B, s. 3 and 603 C.M.R. 28.07 (Parental Involvement)

Originally Adopted: November 2, 2006 Policy Review: April 27, 2012 Approved: May 21, 2012  
Vote: 8-0-1

Chairman, HWRSD School Committee: s/s Alexa McCloughan (Original signature on file in



## **Title VI/Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act\***

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District recognizes its responsibilities under the federal statutes of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 to prohibit discrimination against handicapped individuals on the basis of their handicap.

The definition of a handicapped person is the following: any individual who has a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more of major life activities; has a record of such an impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment. A major life activity for students is participation in activities and learning opportunities at school.

The policies of the Regional District are non-discriminatory in their employment practices for staff and reasonable accommodations are made to provide access to school meetings and functions for handicapped parents. No discrimination against any person with a handicap is knowingly permitted in any of the programs and practices of the school system.

\*As cited in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District Civil Rights Booklet (revised 4/3/01).

A complete Section 504 policy statement is available upon request from each principal (Cutler School Principal/ Jennifer Clifford).

### Section 504 Coordinators

Katherine Harris, Director of Student Services 978-468-5310

Cutler Elementary School: Jennifer Clifford 978-468-5330

## **Non-Custodial Parents**

According to state regulations pertaining to student records, a "parent" is defined as a student's father, mother, or a person or agency legally authorized to act on behalf of a student in place of or in conjunction with the student's father, mother, or guardian. The regulations further indicate that a "non-custodial parent" is any parent who by court order does not have physical custody of the student.

As a general rule, and excluding certain explicit regulatory exceptions, no third party shall have access to information in or from the student's record without the specific, informed written consent of the student or parent.

However, a "non-custodial parent" may have access to a student's record, provided that the non-custodial parent submits a written request to the school principal, including accompanying documentation for such access on an annual basis, and that such access is not legally prohibited.

In relevant part, the regulations indicate that a non-custodial parent is eligible to obtain access to the student record unless any one of the following events have occurred:

The parent has been denied legal custody based on a threat to the safety of the student or to the custodial parent, or

The parent has been denied visitation or has been ordered to supervised visitation, or

The parent's access to the student or to the custodial parent has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or subsequent modification) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record.

In the event that the non-custodial parent is not prohibited from accessing a student's record due to any of the circumstances enumerated above, the regulations further require the non-custodial parent

to submit a written request for such access to the school principal on an annual basis. Said request must indicate that the non-custodial parent continues to be entitled to unsupervised visitation with the student, and is eligible to obtain access to the student's record.

A non-custodial parent's initial request must include the following documentation:

1. A certified copy of the court order or judgment relative to the custody of the student that either indicates that the requesting parent is eligible to receive access as set forth ordering that the student records be made available to the non-custodial parent, and
2. An affidavit from the non-custodial parent that said court order or judgment remains in effect and that there is no temporary or permanent order restricting access to the custodial parent or any child in the custodial parent's custody.

Upon receipt of the non-custodial parent's request for access (Both initially and annually) the school district must notify the custodial parent "immediately" by certified, first class mail in the primary language of the custodial parent. The notice must state that the non-custodial parent will be granted access to the student's records within twenty-one (21) days, unless the custodial parent provides the district with documentation barring such access for any reason as set forth by state law.

Additionally, in the event that records are provided to a non-custodial parent, the address and telephone number of the student and the custodial parent must be deleted from the copy provided to the non-custodial parent, but must not be removed from the original, as this would constitute an unauthorized amendment of the student's official record. Furthermore, the records provided to the non-custodial parent must indicate that said records shall not be used to enroll the student in another school.

In the event that a principal, who has begun to provide information from a student's record to a non-custodial parent, is subsequently provided with documentation prohibiting a non-custodial parent's access to a student's record, the principal shall "immediately cease" providing the information, and shall notify the requesting parent accordingly.

### **Records Request**

Only authorized personnel have access to information in a student's record. Written consent of the parent, or legal guardian, is required for school records to be released for any purpose. At any time, a parent, or legal guardian, may add relevant information to the student record or make a request to the principal to amend or delete information. If a parent or legal guardian wishes to review a student's records, contact the building principal. A "Request to Transfer Students Records" to another school must be done in writing. Please contact the principal if you have any questions.

## **APPENDIX**

### **BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY**

HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

H8019

#### **Bullying Prevention Policy**

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive educational environment where students can achieve the highest academic standards. No student shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyber-bullying.

"Bullying" as defined in MGL.Ch. 71:370, is the repeated use by one or more students or school staff members 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 him/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.

Cyber-bullying is bullying through the use of technology or 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. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 370 for the legal definition of cyber-bullying.

Bullying and cyber-bullying may occur in and out of school, during and after school hours, at home and in locations outside of the home. When bullying and cyber-bullying are alleged, the full cooperation and assistance of parents and families are expected.

For the purpose of this policy, whenever the term bullying is used it is to denote either bullying, or cyber-bullying.

Acts of bullying, which include cyber-bullying, are prohibited:

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

Bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District if the act or acts in question:

- create a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringe on the rights of the target at school; and/or
- materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

### **Prevention and Intervention Plan**

The Superintendent and/or his/her designee shall oversee the development of a prevention and intervention plan, in consultation with all district stakeholders, which

may include teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians, consistent with the requirements of this policy, as well as state and federal laws. The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be reviewed and updated at least biennially. The Principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the bullying prevention and implementation plan within his or her school.

### **Reporting**

Students, who believe that they are a target of bullying, observe an act of bullying, or who have reasonable grounds to believe that these behaviors are taking place, are obligated to report incidents to a member of the school staff. The target shall, however, not be subject to discipline for failing to report bullying.

Each school shall have a means for anonymous reporting of incidents of bullying. No formal disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Parents or guardians, or members of the community, are encouraged to report an incident of bullying as soon as possible.

A member of a school staff shall immediately report any instance of bullying the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the school principal or their designee.

### **Investigation Procedures**

The Principal or their designee, upon receipt of a viable report, shall promptly contact the parents or guardians of a student who has been the alleged target or alleged perpetrator of bullying. The actions being taken to prevent further acts of bullying shall be discussed. The school principal or a designee shall promptly investigate the report of bullying, using a Bullying/Cyber-bullying Report Form which may include interviewing the alleged target, alleged perpetrator, staff members, students and/or witnesses.

Support staff shall assess an alleged target's needs for protection and create and implement a safety plan that shall restore a sense of safety for that student.

Confidentiality shall be used to protect a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or is witness to or has reliable information about an act of bullying.

If the school principal or a designee determines that bullying has occurred he/she shall take appropriate disciplinary action and if it is believed that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator, the principal shall consult with the school's resource officer and the Superintendent to determine if criminal charges are warranted. If it is determined that criminal charges are warranted, the local law enforcement agency shall be notified.

The investigation shall be completed within fourteen school days from the date of the report. The parents or guardians shall be contacted upon completion of the investigation and informed of the results, including whether the allegations were found to be factual, whether a violation of this policy was found, and whether disciplinary action has or shall be taken. At a minimum the Principal or his/her designee shall contact the parents or guardians as to the status of the investigation on a weekly basis.

Disciplinary actions for students who have committed an act of bullying or retaliation shall be in accordance with district disciplinary policies.

Each school shall document any incident of bullying that is reported per this policy and a file shall be maintained by the Principal or designee. A monthly report shall be provided to the Superintendent.

Confidentiality shall be maintained to the extent consistent with the school's obligations under law.

### **Retaliation**

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

### **Target Assistance**

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District shall provide counseling or referral to appropriate services, including guidance, academic intervention, and protection to students, both targets and perpetrators, affected by bullying, as necessary.

### **Training and Assessment**

Annual training shall be provided for school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students in preventing, identifying, responding to, and reporting incidents of bullying.

Age-appropriate, evidence-based instruction on bullying prevention shall be incorporated into the curriculum for all K to 12 students.

### **Publication and Notice**

Annual written notice of the relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to students and their parents or guardians, in age-appropriate terms.

Annual written notice of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to all school staff. The faculty and staff at each school shall be trained annually on the bullying prevention and intervention plan applicable to the school.

Relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff shall be included in the school employee handbook.

The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be posted on the District's Schools website hwschools.net.

REFERENCES: LEGAL REFS:

CROSS REFS:

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended

Federal Regulation 74676 Issued by EEO Commission

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

603 CMR 26.00

MGL 71:370

MGL 265:43,43A

MGL 268:13B

MGL269:14A

AC, Nondiscrimination

ACAB, Sexual Harassment

JBA, Student-to-Student Harassment

JICFA, Prohibition of Hazing

### **Appendix A - Summary for Parents and Guardians, and Student Handbooks**

#### **BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**

On May 3, 2010 Governor Patrick signed an *Act Relative to Bullying in Schools*. This new law prohibits bullying and retaliation in all public and private schools, and requires schools and school districts to take certain steps to address bullying incidents. Parts of the law (M.G.L c. 71, § 370) that are important for students and parents or guardians to know are described below.

These requirements are included in the district's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan ("the Plan"). The Plan includes the requirements of the new law, and also information about the policies and procedures that the school or school district will follow to prevent bullying and retaliation, or to respond to it when it occurs

#### Definitions

*Aggressor* is a student who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

*Bullying* is the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property; (ii) places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the target; (iv) infringes on the rights of the target at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Bullying includes cyberbullying.

*Cyberbullying* 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.

*Hostile environment* is 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.

*Target* is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation is directed.

*Retaliation* is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

### Prohibition Against Bullying

Bullying is prohibited:

- on school grounds,
- on property immediately adjacent to school grounds,
- at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program, whether it takes place on or off school grounds,
- at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school,
- through the use of technology or an electronic device that is owned, leased or used by a school district or school (for example, on a school computer or over the Internet using a school computer),

### Reporting Bullying

Anyone, including a parent or guardian, student, or school staff member, can report bullying or retaliation. Reports can be made in writing or orally to the principal or another staff member, or reports may be made anonymously.

School staff members must report immediately to the principal or his/her designee if they witness or become aware of bullying or retaliation. Staff members include, but are not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity, or paraprofessionals.

When the school principal or his/her designee receives a report, he or she shall promptly conduct an investigation. If the school principal or designee determines that bullying or retaliation has occurred, he or she shall (i) notify the parents or guardians of the target, and to the extent consistent with state and federal law, notify them of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation; (ii) notify the parents or guardians of the aggressor; (iii) take appropriate disciplinary action; and (iv) notify the local law enforcement agency if the school principal or designee believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

### Professional Development for School and District Staff

Schools and districts must provide ongoing professional development to increase the skills of all staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying.

The content of such professional development is to include, but not be limited to: (i) developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents; (ii) developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents; (iii) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying; (iv) research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school

environment; (v) information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and (vi) Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.

Adapted from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
September 2010

## Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District Anti-Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

### I LEADERSHIP

#### Statement of Purpose

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District (the "District") expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.

The District is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyber-bullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process.

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

The District, will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. We will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target's sense of safety. We will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, Staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent or guardian involvement.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (the "Plan") is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyber-bullying, and the district is committed to



working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. In consultation with these constituencies, we have established this Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. The Principal or his/her designees are responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan at their respective buildings.

A. Public Involvement in Developing the Plan,

As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 370, the Plan will be developed with various constituencies. This involvement will include:

- District/School administrators, faculty and Staff;
- school volunteers;
- interested community representatives, students, parents, and guardians; and
- the District School Committee. Consultation will include, at a minimum, notice and a public comment period before the District School Committee adopts the Plan.

HWRSD Anti-Bullying and Prevention Plan, Rev. January 8, 2015

B. Assessing Needs and Resources

The Superintendent, along with the Superintendent's designees, with input from administrators, faculty, and families, will assess the adequacy of current programs, policies and procedures. This task will include:

- review of current policies and procedures;
- review of available data on the prevalence and characteristics of bullying and behavioral incidents;
- assessment of available resources including curricula, training programs, and behavioral health Services; for designing ongoing professional development
- review of current and relevant articles and research on best methodology to prevent, intervene and address bullying and cyber-bullying;
- research and review of field tested and research-based anti-bullying curricula and instructional guides; • development of a resource bank of relevant materials for both parents and students;
- review of the Massachusetts comprehensive Health and Wellness Curriculum frameworks to provide a working curriculum context for anti-bullying curriculum; and
- at least once every four years beginning with 2015/16 school year, the district will administer a Department of Elementary and Secondary-developed student survey to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in our schools.
- the district will annually report bullying incident data to the DESE.
- assessments of initial and periodic needs, by surveying students, faculty, staff, parents, guardians on school climatic and school safety needs.

C. Planning and Oversight

The building Principal or his/her designees will be responsible for the following tasks under the Plan:

- receiving reports on bullying;
- collecting and analyzing school-wide data on bullying to assess the present level of need and to measure improved outcomes;
- creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports, and for accessing information related to targets and aggressors;
- implementing the ongoing professional development that is required by the law;
- identifying supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors;
- choosing and implementing, in partnership with central office administrators, the curricula that the school or district will use;
- amending student and Staff handbooks and codes of conduct; and
- leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials.

The Director of Technology will be responsible for updating the Acceptable Use Policy.

The Superintendent, in partnership with the Anti-bullying Subcommittee, will be responsible for reviewing and updating the Bullying Prevention Policy biennially or more frequently if needed.

## II PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

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

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited. As stated in M.G.L. c. 71, § 370, nothing in this Plan requires the District or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

## III. DEFINITIONS

In order to work as collaboratively and as efficaciously as possible, to prevent and intervene on all acts of bullying, it is essential for administrators, faculty, Staff, students, parents, guardians, law enforcement agencies, and other interested parties to use common language. The following definitions are provided to facilitate this goal.

Aggressor is a student or a member of a school staff who engages in bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation.

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 370, is the repeated use by one or more students or school staff members, 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 or herself or of damage to his or 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.

Cyber-bullying is bullying through the use of technology or 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. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 370 for the legal definition of cyberbullying.

Hostile environment as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 370, is 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 a student's education.

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

Staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

#### IV. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§37H or 37H72, other applicable laws, or HWRSD Anti-Bullying and Prevention Plan, Rev. January 8, 2015 4 local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

## V. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### A. Annual Staff Training on the Plan.

Annual training for all District Staff on the Plan will include Staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the Principal or his/her designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades throughout the school. Staff members hired after the start of the school year is required to participate in school-based training during the school year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years.

### B. Ongoing Professional Development.

The Superintendent, in collaboration with the Anti-bullying Subcommittee will be responsible for oversight and implementation of the training used throughout the system. The goal of professional development is to establish a common understanding of tools necessary for Staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences. Professional development will build the skills of Staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 370, the content of school- wide and district-wide professional development will be informed by research and will include:

- developmental appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- developmental appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
- research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
- information on the incidence and nature of cyber-bullying;
- internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying;
- promoting and modeling the use of respectful language;
- fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference;
- building relationships and communicating with families;
- constructively managing classroom behaviors;
- using positive behavioral intervention strategies;
- applying constructive disciplinary practices;
- teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management, and empathy for others;
- engaging students in school or classroom planning and decision-making; and
- maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students.

Professional development will also address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disability affects social skills development.

### C. Written Notice to Staff.

The District will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties, in the school or District employee handbook and the code of conduct.

## VI. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

The Superintendent, in collaboration with the Anti-bullying Subcommittee will be responsible for researching, reviewing and adopting appropriate curriculum and instructional materials for use in the schools. This work will require consultation with other appropriate district and town resources. The curriculum must be:

- Developmental appropriate
- Evidence based - based on research, or field tested
- Evaluated for effectiveness

The resources will be evaluated on documented success rate, design that is engaging to students and in keeping with our core values and philosophies of pedagogy. Curriculum should have creative presentation and should encourage students to find solutions and use critical thinking skills.

### A. Identifying Resources.

Resources for targets, aggressors, and their families may include, but are not limited to: adopting new curricula, establishing safety planning teams, and identifying other agencies that can provide services.

The Anti-bullying Subcommittee will be responsible for creating and posting a bibliography of anti-bullying resources including, but not limited to:

- the District Bullying Prevention Policy;
- the District Anti-Bullying Prevention and Instructional guides and materials;
- research articles and materials on the prevalence and characteristics of bullying;
- relevant and useful websites; and
- community resources and related services.

### B. Counseling and Other Services.

The District has a variety of appropriate resources within the district. The District utilizes adjustment counselors and school psychologists who assist in developing safety plans for students who have been targets of bullying or retaliation, providing social skills programs to prevent bullying, and offering education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors. The District utilizes a variety of tools including, but not limited to, behavioral intervention plans, social skills groups, and individually focused curricula. Translators are

provided as are translations of materials for Hamilton-Wenham families as needed.

C. Students with Disabilities.

As required by M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing. All special education Administrators and faculty members were trained on this requirement in September 2010.

D. Referral to Outside Services.

The District has a referral protocol for referring students and families to access appropriate services. Referrals comply with relevant laws and policies. Current local referral protocols will be evaluated to assess their relevance to the Plan, and revised as needed.

## VII. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

A. Specific Bullying Prevention Approaches.

\Bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:

- using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
- empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
- helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyber-bullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
- emphasizing cyber-safety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
- enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications; and
- engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

Initiatives will also teach students about the student-related sections of the Plan. The District will review the Plan with students by October 1st of each school year.

B. General Teaching Approaches that Support Bullying Prevention Efforts. The following approaches are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment. These underscore the importance of the District bullying intervention and prevention initiatives

- setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;

- creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including for students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students;
- using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline; • using positive behavioral supports;
- encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students;
- modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
- using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
- using the internet safely; and
- supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

## VIII. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION

### A. Reporting Potential Bullying or Retaliation.

Reports of potential bullying or retaliation may be made by Staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a Staff member shall be documented in an age appropriate manner by the Principal or his/her designee. A school district Staff member is required to report promptly to the Principal or his/her designee any instance of bullying or retaliation the Staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardian, or other individuals who are not school or district Staff members, may be made anonymously. The District will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including an anonymous electronic option.

Use of a written form is not required as a condition of making a report. The District will: 1) take all reported incidents either verbal or written and will record necessary information to document the information as reported, 2) provide information on how to report incidents on both the website for each school, as well as in the handbook.

At the beginning of each school year, the Superintendent will provide the school community, including administrators, Staff, students, and parents or guardians, with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the Principal or his/her designee, will be incorporated in student and Staff handbooks, on the school or District website, and in information about the Plan that is made available to parents or guardians.

#### 1. Reporting by Faculty and Staff

Faculty or Staff member will report immediately to the Principal or his/her designee when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to the Principal or his/her designee does not limit the authority of the Staff member to respond to

behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school or District policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

## B. Responding to a Report of Bullying or Retaliation.

### 1. Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the Principal or his/her 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 not be 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 his/her designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary for all parties involved.

The Principal or his/her designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

### 2. Obligations to Notify Others

a. Notice to Parents or Guardians Upon, determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Principal or his/her designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the Principal or his/her designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.

#### b. Notice to Another School or District

If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the Principal or his/her designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the Principal or his/her 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.

#### c. Notice to Law Enforcement

At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the Principal or his/her designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the Principal or his/her designee will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00. 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 his/her 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 or his/her designee will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable District policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer, if any, and the Superintendent.

C. Investigation.

The Principal or his/her designee will investigate promptly 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 his/her designee will, among other things, interview students, Staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The Principal or his/her designee (or whoever is conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

The Principal or his/her designee, other Staff members as determined by the Principal or his/her designee, and in consultation with the school counselor, may conduct interviews. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the Principal or his/her designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The Principal or his/her designee will maintain a written record of the investigation, including the preservation of all email and text communications.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with the District policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the Principal or his/her designee and the Superintendent will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

D. Determinations.

The Principal or his/her designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the Principal or his/her designee will take reasonable steps to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The Principal or his/her designee will 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary.

Depending upon the circumstances, the Principal or his/her designee may choose to consult with the students' teachers and/or counselors, and the targets 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.

The Principal or his/her designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor 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 his/her designee cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

The principal or designee shall inform the parent or guardian of the target about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's problem resolution system and the process for accessing that system, regardless of the outcome of the bullying determination.

#### E. Responses to Bullying.

##### 1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-Building

Upon the Principal or his/her designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the school or district use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. M.G.L. C.71, § 370(d) (v). Skillbuilding approaches that the Principal or his/her designee may consider include:

- providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with guidance counselors and other appropriate school personnel; HWRSD Anti-Bullying and Prevention Plan, Rev. January 8, 2015 9
- offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the school's/districts antibullying curricula;
- implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social 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;
- adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills; and
- making a referral for evaluation.

##### 3. Taking Disciplinary Action

If the Principal or his/her designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the Principal or his/her 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 Plan and with the school's or District's code of conduct.

Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), which should be read in cooperation with state laws regarding student discipline.

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

#### 4. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

The Principal or his/her 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. One strategy that the Principal or his/her designee may use is to increase adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur.

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

### F. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

#### A. Parent Education and Resources.

The District in collaboration with parent associations will offer education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by the District or school.

#### B. Notification Requirements.

Each year the District will inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about the antibullying curricula that are being used. This notice will include information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyber-bullying and online safety. The school or District will send parents written notice each year about the student-related sections of the Plan and the school's or district's Internet Safety Policy. All notices and information made available to parents or guardians will be in hard copy and electronic formats, and will be available in the language(s) most prevalent among parents or guardians. The District will post the Plan and related information on its website.

C. Problem Resolution System. Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seeking assistance outside of the district may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Resolution System (PRS). That information can be found at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa>, emails can be sent to [compliance@doe.mass.edu](mailto:compliance@doe.mass.edu)

or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information is also available at the Superintendent's office.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY**

Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District

### **Sexual Harassment Policy**

#### **Summary of Procedures**

- Sexual harassment is against the law and is not permitted in school
- Sexual harassment is unwelcome, unwanted, sexual behavior
- It can be verbal, non-verbal or physical
- If you think someone is being harassed, if you have witnessed harassment or overheard a harassing situation, tell someone
- Once an adult or a supervisor is aware of a potential concern about sexual harassment, she/he must report the concern in writing to the principal within one day
- The principal will investigate the issue promptly
- Investigations are kept as confidential as possible; in general, however, the principal lets the students' parents know of the concerns
- Some concerns can be resolved easily and informally
- Other more serious concerns may require a formal investigation and report; discipline may result
- All students and/or staff involved in a complaint will be made aware of the results of the investigation
- It is illegal to retaliate against anyone involved in such an incident; if retaliations occur, tell someone immediately
- The Title IX Coordinator reviews all complaints of possible sexual harassment
- The school district's goal is to be a safe and caring school climate that fosters mutual respect for all of its members

## ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY-TECHNOLOGY

**A1003**

**Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District**

**ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY – TECHNOLOGY**

### **I. Policy**

#### **A. Purpose**

The purpose of the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District (HWRSD) network and technology resources is to prepare students for success in life and work by providing access to a wide range of information and the ability to communicate with others. The network and technology resources will be used to increase communication (staff, parent, and student), enhance productivity, and assist staff and students in constructing learning environments, upgrading existing skills and acquiring new skills through a broader exchange of information. In order to accomplish this mission the HWRSD establishes this Acceptable Use Policy for current and future technologies.

#### **B. Availability**

Access to the network is a privilege, not a right. Prior to accessing the network all users shall be required to acknowledge receipt and understanding of all administrative regulations and procedures governing use of the system and shall agree in writing to comply with such regulations and procedures. Noncompliance with applicable regulations and procedures may result in suspension or termination of user privileges and/or other disciplinary actions consistent with the policies of HWRSD. Violations of law may result in criminal prosecution as well as disciplinary action by the HWRSD.

#### **C. Acceptable Use**

The Superintendent or designees shall develop and implement administrative regulations, procedures, and user agreements consistent with the purposes and mission of the HWRSD as well as with law and policy governing copyright.

#### **D. Monitored Use**

The Superintendent or designees shall implement, monitor, and evaluate the district's network and technology resources for instructional and administrative purposes. Access to the system/network, including external networks, shall be made available to employees and students for instructional and administrative purposes only in accordance with administrative regulations and procedures. As a condition of use, staff and students waive any right to privacy in anything they create, store, send, disseminate or receive via the district's technology.

The HWRSD has the authority and the right but not the duty to monitor all aspects of its technology, including, but not limited to, monitoring computer and Internet activity of any system user

Electronic mail transmissions and other uses of electronic resources by students and employees shall not be considered confidential and may be monitored at any time by designated staff to ensure appropriate use for instructional and administrative purposes.

Under the Public Records Law electronic mail transmissions and other uses of electronic resources by district employees may be considered public records.

Internet activities will be monitored by school personnel to ensure users are not accessing inappropriate (obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening or disrespectful) sites.

### **E. Liability**

The HWRSD shall not be liable for users' inappropriate use of electronic resources or violations of copyright restrictions, users' mistakes or negligence, or costs incurred by users. The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District is not responsible for losses or illegal tampering sustained by users of the computer networks, including loss of data or interruption of service. It is highly recommended that the user make a backup copy of all information. The HWRSD shall not be responsible for ensuring the accuracy or usability of any information found on external networks.

### **F. Administrative Regulations and Procedures**

1. The district will provide each user a copy of the Acceptable Use Policy and Administrative Regulations and Procedures.
2. Access will be granted to employees with a signed access agreement and permission of their supervisor.
3. Access will be granted to students with a signed access agreement and permission of the building administrator or designees.
4. Passwords shall be changed a minimum of once a year.
5. Passwords are confidential. All passwords shall be protected by the user and not shared or displayed.
6. Principals or their designees will be responsible for disseminating and enforcing policies and procedures in the building(s) under their control.
7. Principals or their designees will ensure that all users complete and sign an agreement to abide by policies and procedures regarding use of the system/network. All such agreements are to be maintained at the building level.
8. Principals or their designees shall be authorized to monitor or examine all system activities, including electronic mail transmissions, as deemed appropriate to ensure proper use of electronic resources.
9. Individual users shall, at all times, be responsible for the proper use of accounts issued in their name.
10. System users shall not use another user's account.

HWRSD Acceptable Use Policy Page 2 of 5

11. The system/network may not be used for illegal purposes, in support of illegal activities, or for any activity prohibited by district policy.
12. Commercial use of the system/network is prohibited.
13. The school's plagiarism policy applies to electronic materials found on the Internet.
14. System users may redistribute copyrighted/fair use material only in accordance with applicable copyright/fair use laws, district policy, and administrative procedures.

15. System users may request that the technology staff upload/download public domain programs to the system/network. Technology staff is responsible for determining if a program is in the public domain.
16. Copyrighted software or data shall not be installed on the district system/network without permission from the holder of the copyright and the technology staff. Users are not permitted to install software not licensed to the district.
17. System users are not permitted to download executable software files such as Mp3 or music files, video files, Quicktime movie trailers, Instant Messenger Software, games, etc. unless justified and approved by the technology staff.
18. Adding unauthorized computers, servers or other devices to the network is prohibited. This does not include devices used temporarily to offload personal files.
19. Instant messaging and other similar devices may only be used for approved personal use or educational purposes.
20. Student use of personal technologies, such as cell phones, iPods, or MP3 players, may only be used for approved personal use or educational purposes.
21. Any attempt to alter, harm or destroy equipment, materials, data, or programs is prohibited.
22. Deliberate attempts to degrade or disrupt system performance may be viewed as violations of district policy and/or as criminal activity under applicable state and federal laws. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of malware.
23. Vandalism such as knowingly transferring any type of malware or destroying other people's computer files on school technology may result in the cancellation of system privileges and will require restitution for costs associated with hardware, software, and system restoration.
24. Attempts to read, delete, copy, or modify the electronic mail of other users or to interfere with the ability of other users to send/receive electronic mail is prohibited.
25. Posting, transmitting or viewing inappropriate (obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening or disrespectful) language or material is prohibited.
26. System users will not use the network/system to harass another person. If users are asked by a person to stop sending those messages, they must stop.
27. System users will not knowingly or recklessly post personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks, false or defamatory information about a person or organization on the network/system.
28. Pretending to be someone else when sending/receiving message is prohibited.
29. Revealing another person's personal information (addresses, phone numbers, etc.) or accessing personal information sites is prohibited.
30. System users must immediately notify the technology staff or designees, if they have identified a possible security problem.
31. If a system user mistakenly accesses inappropriate information, he/she should immediately notify the technology staff or designees.



The District reserves the right to deny, revoke, or suspend specific user privileges and/or to take other disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion from school, for violations of this policy. Additionally, all handbook regulations apply to the use of the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District network and technologies. In the event that there is a claim that a student/staff person has violated any of the guidelines in this policy, the student/staff person will be provided with notice of the suspected violation and an opportunity to be heard. The District will advise appropriate law enforcement agencies of illegal activities conducted through the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District network and technologies. The district will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to misuse of the district's network and technology resources.

## **II. Policy Review and Revision**

This policy and its procedures will be reviewed every two years for compliance with state and federal law. Review and revision of these policies and procedures shall occur as needed, but at least every two years.

## **III. Legal References**

Title 17 U.S. Copyright law

Massachusetts General Laws:

- c.66 s.10 (public records)
- c.71 s.37h1/2 (felony complaint or conviction of student)
- c.76 s.5 (prohibiting educational discrimination in public schools)
- c.214 s.1c (right to be free from sexual harassment)
- c.265 s.43 (prohibiting stalking)
- c.266s.37e (use of personal identification of another)
- c.266 s.98 (schoolhouse defacement)
- c.266 s.120f (unauthorized access to computer system)
- c.266 s.127 (personal property malicious or wanton injury)
- HWRSD Acceptable Use Policy Page 4 of 5
  - c.266 s.143a (unauthorized reproduction or transfer of sound recordings)
  - c.269 s.17 (prohibiting hazing)
- Other relevant statutes and case

## **IV. Approvals**

First Reading: May 18, 2006

Second Reading & Adoption: June 15, 2006

Approval: June 15, 2006

Vote: 8 to 0

HWRSD School Committee Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_ Donald E. Gallant \_\_\_\_\_

Signature on File in Superintendent's Office

Original Policy Adopted: Replaces Electronic Communication Policy (A1003) and Policy (A1004)

HWRSD Acceptable Use Policy Page 5 of 5

## RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

1003

### HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

#### I. Policy

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee recognizes that certain religious observances occur during the school year. Students and staff will be encouraged to appreciate, accept, and honor ethnic, religious and cultural diversity and be respectful of the beliefs and practices of others. It is within this framework, that the following is adopted:

- A. Students and staff will be marked as "present" on the days they observe their religious holidays. Students must have a letter from their parent/guardian informing the principal of the student's absence due to religious observances; staff members must complete and submit the District "Request for Leave" noting "religious observance" to his/her principal by the 10<sup>th</sup> working day of the new school year.
- B. With respect to make-up work or homework, quizzes, exams, major projects or papers, it is the student's responsibility to see his/her teachers the day he/she returns to school to find out what assignments are due. Elementary and middle school students are allowed a number of days to make up assignments equivalent to the number of days absent (e.g., if absent on Monday, then assignments are due on Wednesday; if absent on Monday and Tuesday, assignments are due on Friday). High school students will follow the "attendance/make-up policy" in the approved High School Handbook.
- C. The District will make reasonable efforts not to schedule special events the night before, during or after school that would interfere with a person's ability to participate because of that person's religious observance. The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District will encourage consideration of this policy in inter-league sports scheduling.
- D. By June 1, the Superintendent shall provide teachers and staff with a list of religious holidays most commonly observed by members of the Hamilton-Wenham community for the following school year.

#### II. Policy Review and Revision

Review and revision of these policies and procedures shall occur as needed, but at least every two years.

First, Second Reading & Adoption: June 17, 2010\

Approved: June 19, 2008

Vote: 8-0

Chairman, HWRSD School Committee: Alexa McCloughan Original signature on file in Supt.'s Office

## **STUDENT CONDUCT**

The Massachusetts General Laws require the School Committee to adopt written policies, rules and regulations not inconsistent with law, which may relate to study, discipline, conduct, safety and welfare of all students, or any classification thereof, enrolled in the public schools of the District.

The implementation of the general rules of conduct is the responsibility of the Principal and the professional staff of the building. In order to do this, each school staff in the District shall develop specific rules not inconsistent with the law nor in conflict with School Committee policy. These building rules shall be an extension of the District policies by being more specific as they relate to the individual schools.

The purpose of disciplinary action is to restore acceptable behavior. When disciplinary action is necessary, it shall be administered with fairness and shall relate to the individual needs and the individual circumstances.

Students violating any of the policies on student conduct and control will be subject to disciplinary action. The degree, frequency, and circumstances surrounding each incident shall determine the method used in enforcing these policies. Most of the situations which require disciplinary action can be resolved within the confines of the classroom or as they occur by reasonable but firm reprimand, and/or by teacher conferences with the student and/or parents or guardians.

If a situation should arise in which there is no applicable written policy, the staff member shall be expected to exercise reasonable and professional judgment.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. [71:37H](#); 71:37H1/2; 71:37H3/4; 71:[37L](#); [76:16](#); 76:[17](#); 603 CMR 53.00

## **STUDENT DISCIPLINE**

The School Committee believes that all students deserve every opportunity to achieve academic success in a safe, secure learning environment. Good citizenship in schools is based on respect and consideration for the rights of others. Students will be expected to conduct themselves in a way that the rights and privileges of others are not violated. They will be required to respect constituted authority, to conform to school rules and to those provisions of law that apply to their conduct.

Each Principal shall include prohibited actions in the student handbook or other publication and made available to students and parents.

Principals and staff shall not use academic punishment of any form as a consequence to inappropriate behaviors/actions by students.

The Principal may, as a disciplinary measure, remove a student from privileges, such as extracurricular activities and attendance at school-sponsored events, based on the student's misconduct. Such a removal is not subject to the remainder of this policy, law, or regulation.

### **Suspension**

In every case of student misconduct for which suspension may be imposed, a Principal shall consider ways to re-engage the student in learning; and avoid using long-term suspension from school as a consequence until alternatives have been tried. Alternatives may include the use of evidence-based strategies and programs such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive behavioral interventions and supports.

### **Notice of Suspension**

Except for emergency removal or an in-school suspension of less than 10 days, a Principal must provide the student and the parent oral and written notice, and provide the student an opportunity for a hearing and the parent an opportunity to participate in such hearing before imposing suspension as a consequence for misconduct. The Principal shall provide both oral and written notice to the student and parent(s) in English and in the primary language of the home if other than English. The notice shall include the rights enumerated in law and regulation. To conduct a hearing without a parent present, the Principal must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent.

### **Emergency Removal**

A Principal may remove a student from school temporarily when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the Principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption.

The Principal shall immediately notify the Superintendent in writing of the removal including a description of the danger presented by the student.

The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days following the day of the emergency removal, during which time the Principal shall: Make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student's parent of the emergency removal, the reason for the need for emergency removal, and the other matters required in the notice; Provide written notice to the student and parent as required above; Provide the student an opportunity for a hearing with the Principal that complies with applicable regulations, and the parent an opportunity to attend the hearing, before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for hearing is otherwise agreed to by the Principal, student, and parent; Render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day, which meets the requirements of applicable law and regulation.

A Principal shall also ensure adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation prior to removal.

### **In School Suspension – Not More Than 10 Days Consecutively or Cumulatively**

The Principal may use in-school suspension as an alternative to short-term suspension for disciplinary offenses.

The Principal may impose an in-school suspension for a disciplinary offense under this provision, provided that the Principal follows the process set forth in regulation and the student has the opportunity to make academic progress as required by law and regulation.

### **Principal's Hearing – Short Term Suspension of up to 10 Days**

The hearing with the Principal shall be to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequences for the infraction.

At a minimum, the Principal shall discuss the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information.

The student also shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the Principal should consider in determining whether other remedies and consequences may be appropriate as set forth in law and regulation.

The Principal shall provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the Principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.

The Principal shall, based on the available information, including mitigating circumstances, determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, what remedy or consequence will be imposed.

The Principal shall notify the student and parent of the determination and the reasons for it, and, if the student is suspended, the type and duration of suspension and the opportunity to make up assignments and such other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal, as required by law and regulation. The determination shall be in writing and may be in the form of an update to the original written notice.

If the student is in a public preschool program or in grades K through 3, the Principal shall send a copy of the written determination to the Superintendent and explain the reasons for imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the short-term suspension takes effect.

### **Principal's Hearing – Long Term Suspension of more than 10 days but less than 90 days (consecutive or cumulative)**

The hearing with the Principal shall be to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the

alleged incident, determine if the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequences for the infraction.

At a minimum, in addition to the rights afforded a student in a short-term suspension hearing, the student shall have the following rights: In advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the Principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not; The right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's/parent's expense; The right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so; The right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district; The right to request that the hearing be recorded by the Principal, and to receive a copy of the audio recording upon request. If the student or parent requests an audio recording, the Principal shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made and a copy will be provided to the student and parent upon request.

The Principal shall provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the Principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.

The Principal shall, based on the evidence, determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension as required by law and regulation, what remedy or consequence will be imposed, in place of or in addition to a long-term suspension. The Principal shall send the written determination to the student and parent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the Principal and the parent.

If the Principal decides to suspend the student, the written determination shall: Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing; Set out the key facts and conclusions reached by the Principal; Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school; Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of removal from school as required by law and regulation; Inform the student of the right to appeal the Principal's decision to the Superintendent or designee, but only if the Principal has imposed a long-term suspension. Notice of the right of appeal shall be in English and the primary language of the home if other than English, and shall include the following information: The process for appealing the decision, including that the student or parent must file a written notice of appeal with the Superintendent within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long-term suspension; provided that within the five (5) calendar days, the student or parent may request and receive from the Superintendent an extension of time for filing the written notice for up to seven (7) additional calendar days; and that the long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the Superintendent decides to reverse the Principal's determination on appeal.

If the student is in a public preschool program or in grades K through 3, the Principal shall send a copy of the written determination to the Superintendent and explain the reasons for imposing an out-of-school suspension before the suspension takes effect.

### **Superintendent's Hearing**

A student who is placed on long-term suspension following a hearing with the Principal shall have the right to appeal the Principal's decision to the Superintendent.

The student or parent shall file a notice of appeal with the Superintendent within the time period noted above (see Principal's hearing – Suspension of more than 10 days). If the appeal is not timely filed, the Superintendent may deny the appeal, or may allow the appeal in his or her discretion, for good cause.

The Superintendent shall hold the hearing within three (3) school days of the student's request, unless the student or parent requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days, in which case the Superintendent shall grant the extension.

The Superintendent shall make a good faith effort to include the parent in the hearing.

The Superintendent shall be presumed to have made a good faith effort if he or she has made efforts to find a day and time for the hearing that would allow the parent and Superintendent to participate. The Superintendent shall send written notice to the parent of the date, time, and location of the hearing.

The Superintendent shall conduct a hearing to determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense of which the student is accused, and if so, what the consequence shall be. The Superintendent shall arrange for an audio recording of the hearing, a copy of which shall be provided to the student or parent upon request. The Superintendent shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made of the hearing and a copy will be provided to the student and parent upon request. The student shall have all the rights afforded the student at the Principal's hearing for long-term suspension.

The Superintendent shall issue a written decision within five (5) calendar days of the hearing which meets the requirements of law and regulation. If the Superintendent determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the Superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than the Principal, but shall not impose a suspension greater than that imposed by the Principal's decision. The decision of the Superintendent shall be the final decision of the school district with regard to the suspension.

### **Expulsion**

Expulsion is defined as the removal of a student from school for more than ninety (90) school days, indefinitely, or permanently as allowed by law for possession of a dangerous weapon; possession of a controlled substance; assault on a member of the educational staff; or a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, or adjudication or admission of guilt with respect to such felony, if a Principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

Any student alleged to have committed one of these acts shall be afforded the same due process rights as for a long term suspension. Any student expelled from school for such an offense shall be afforded an opportunity to receive educational services and make academic progress.

**Academic Progress**

Any student who is suspended or expelled shall have the opportunity to earn credits, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of his or her removal from the classroom or school. The Principal shall inform the student and parent of this opportunity in writing, in English and in the primary language of the home, when such suspension or expulsion is imposed.

Any student who is expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days, whether in school or out of school, shall have an opportunity to receive education services and make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, through the school-wide education service plan.

The Principal shall develop a school-wide education service plan describing the education services that the school district will make available to students who are expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days. The plan shall include the process for notifying such students and their parents of the services and arranging such services. Education services shall be based on, and be provided in a manner consistent with, the academic standards and curriculum frameworks established for all students under the law.

The Principal shall notify the parent and student of the opportunity to receive education services at the time the student is expelled or placed on long-term suspension. Notice shall be provided in English and in the primary language spoken in the student's home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate. The notice shall include a list of the specific education services that are available to the student and contact information for a school district staff member who can provide more detailed information.

For each student expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days, whether in-school or out-of-school, the school district shall document the student's enrollment in education services. For data reporting purposes, the school shall track and report attendance, academic progress, and such other data as directed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

**Reporting**

The school district shall collect and annually report data to the DESE regarding in-school suspensions, short- and long-term suspensions, expulsions, emergency removals, access to education services, and such other information as may be required by the DESE.

The Principal of each school shall periodically review discipline data by selected student populations, including but not limited to race and ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, English language learner status, and student with a disability status in accordance with law and regulation.

SOURCE: MASC



## **STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES**

The School Committee recognizes that there may be conditions in the school system that are in need of improvement and that students should have some means by which their concerns may be effectively expressed, considered, and dealt with fairly. Such means, if well conceived and understood in advance, can do much to maintain harmonious relationships among the schools and the students and community.

The traditional "open door" policy in the public school system will be continued. Students--and their parents and/or guardians--who believe that a student has received unfair treatment may bring forward their grievance. Appeals of individual disciplinary cases will be required to follow the district's policy on student discipline. Any applicable provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws or federal law will be followed by school officials in conducting hearings and reviews of student grievances. In general, procedures will begin with the authority imposing the penalty (for example, Principal or teacher) and may ultimately be referred to the Superintendent and on to the School Committee if a policy needs to be approved or changed.

Every attempt will be made to seek a satisfactory solution to any legitimate grievance in a friendly and informal manner.

SOURCE: MASC

## **GUIDELINES FOR CONFIDENTIALITY AND ETHICS**

Teachers, staff, and other adults working in the school setting will be at times privileged to confidential information as they work and spend time with children and their families. A strict code and policy of confidentiality is maintained and upheld at all times during school and after school hours to ensure the privacy of the children and families who are involved in any aspect of the elementary school program.

The recommended "best practice" for those involved in elementary school programming is to treat all information regarding children with complete confidentiality. These guidelines protecting student and family rights with respect to confidentiality and ethics are listed below:

- Never share a child's or family's issues with another family.
- Avoid talking about a particular child in the presence of other students or people who are not authorized to access information.
- Refrain from discussing personal issues with parents and families.
- Obtain written permission from parents before sharing or receiving information with anyone outside the school setting.
- Allow only authorized personnel access to children's records.

- Defer to a supervisor (such as an administrator) when people request sensitive information from a staff member.
- Avoid judging families or imposing personal values on a child if there is a difference in belief systems.
- Avoid gossip at all times and refer direct questions and/or concerns to someone authorized to provide accurate information.
- Require written permission to take a photograph and/or to make video or audio records used for research, advertising, and/or publishing in a newspaper, or for any other purpose.
- Do not keep such documentation within the context of classroom activities or give documentation to others without specific authorization.
- Request additional permission if photographs, video or audio records are to be used for research, advertising, and/or publishing in a newspaper, or for any other purpose.

**Confidentiality can ONLY be broken when:**

- A child is in danger, with regard to health, neglect, or abuse and it becomes necessary to report confidential information without permission.
- When a child imparts information that implies abuse or neglect, you are legally obligated to report this information to your immediate supervisor.

(\*Citation Source: Hamilton-Wenham Integrated Preschool Program Guidelines for Confidentiality and Ethics)

## **TITLE IX/CHAPTER 622 NOTIFICATION**

Please be advised that the students and the faculty of the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District are protected by the Federal Law Title IX and State Statute, Chapter 622. Under these statutes, it is illegal to discriminate against an individual based on his/her race, color, religion, national origin, gender or sexual orientation. Negative or demeaning comments or comments which draw attention to any of these factors are considered a form of harassment and are not allowed on the grounds of the Regional School District.

Chapter 622 is referred to as an act to prohibit discrimination in the public schools. The state law reads as follows: "No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion or national origin."

## **PLAYGROUND GUIDELINES CONCERNING PETS & OTHER ANIMALS**

The control of animals on school grounds is required to insure the safety of all students at Cutler School. Please note the following town by-laws specifically related to dogs:

Section 1.

- 1.01 The Animal Control Officer is authorized to require owners or keepers of dogs to prevent such dogs from becoming a public nuisance. The Animal Control Officer is further authorized to require owners or keepers of dogs to restrain their dogs from running at large. Excessive or untimely barking, worrying or otherwise threatening or harming persons or domestic animals, chasing vehicles, trespassing upon school grounds, or trespassing upon private property or public property in such a manner as to foul or otherwise damage property shall be deemed a violation of this by-law.
- 1.02 No person owning, harboring, or otherwise having custody or control of a dog, shall permit such dog be at large in the town of Hamilton at any time, except that it be on the premises of another person with their consent. Any owner, harborer, or person having custody or control of a dog which is not on either premises of the owner or the premises of another person with their consent shall control and restrain such dog by a leash of appropriate length. Disposition of complaints or violations of this by-law will be in accordance with General Laws, Chapter 140, 173A.

**Definition of Nuisance**

Animal behavior which constitutes nuisance includes, but not limited to, the following: molesting passerby or passing vehicles (including bicycle), attacking persons or domestic animals, trespassing on school grounds or other public property, damaging public or private property, barking, whining, or howling in an excessive continuous, or untimely fashion.

**STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES**

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential for success in school. The Committee recognizes that parents of children attending our schools have special rights as well as responsibilities, one of which is to ensure that their children attend school regularly, in accordance with state law.

Therefore, students may be excused temporarily from school attendance for the following reasons: illness or quarantine; bereavement or serious illness in family; weather so inclement as to endanger the health of the child; and observance of major religious holidays.

A child may also be excused for other exceptional reasons with approval of the Principal or designee.

A student's understanding of the importance of day-to-day schoolwork is an important factor in the shaping of his character. Parents can help their children by not allowing them to miss school needlessly.

Accordingly, parents will provide a written explanation for the absence or tardiness of a child. This will be required in advance for types of absences where advance notice is possible.

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

### **Student Absence Notification Program**

Each Principal will notify a student's parent/guardian within 3 days of the student's absence in the event the parent/guardian has not informed the school of the absence.

Each Principal or designee shall meet with any student, and that student's parent/guardian, who has missed five (5) or more unexcused school days (a school day shall be equal to two (2) or more class periods in the same day) in a school year. The meeting shall be to develop action steps to improve student attendance and shall be developed jointly by the Principal or designee, the student, and the student's parent/guardian. The parties may seek input from other relevant school staff and/or officials from relevant public safety, health and human service, housing, and nonprofit agencies.

### **Dropout Prevention**

No student who has not graduated from high school shall be considered permanently removed from school unless the Principal has sent notice to a student, and that student's parent/guardian, who has been absent from school for ten (10) consecutive days of unexcused absence. The notice shall be sent within five (5) days of the tenth consecutive day of absence and shall offer at least 2 dates and times within the next ten (10) days for an exit interview with the Superintendent or designee, the student, and the student's parent/guardian. The notice shall be in both English and the primary language of the home, if applicable. The notice shall include contact information for scheduling the exit interview and shall indicate the parties shall reach an agreement on the date/time of the interview within the ten (10) day timeframe. The timeframe may be extended at the request of the parent/guardian and no extension shall exceed 14 days.

The Superintendent or designee may proceed with any interview without a parent/guardian present, provided the Superintendent has documented a good faith effort to include the parent/guardian.

The Superintendent or designee shall convene a team of school staff to participate in the exit interview and shall provide information to the student and, if applicable, the student's parent/guardian on the detrimental effects of early withdrawal from school and the alternative education programs and services available to the student.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [76:1](#); 76:1B; [76:16](#); 76:18; [76:20](#)

## **GENDER IDENTITY**

The term "gender identity", distinct from the term "sexual orientation," refers to a person's innate, deeply felt psychological identification as male or female, which may or may not correspond to the person's body or designated sex at birth (meaning that sex was originally listed on a person's birth certificate.)

-Human Rights Campaign Website

## **FOR COMPLETE LISTING OF DISTRICT POLICIES**

<http://www.hwschools.net/page.cfm?p=1894>

