

**Cunniff
Elementary School
Student Handbook
2008-2009**



**Stephen Billhardt, Principal
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617-926-7726
www.watertown.k12.ma.us/cunniff/**

The attached information is important. Please ask a family member, friend, or neighbor to translate it for you. If you don't know anyone who can translate it, please fill in the information below and return it to the principal of your child's school along with the attached notice. Someone who speaks your language will call you to review the information with you over the phone.
 Please call me about this notice. I speak _____. My daytime telephone number is _____. My name is _____.

Armenian

Կցված տեղեկությունը կարևոր է: Խնդրեք մի հարազատից, ընկերից կամ հարեանից որ բարձրանի ձեզ համար: Եթե չեք ճանաչում որևէ մեկին որ կարող է բարձրանել, խնդրում ենք լրացնել ներքևի տեղեկանքը եւ ձեր նրեխայի դպրոցի անօրենիւն վերադարձնել կցված ազդիւմ հետ: Չէր լեզուն խստող մեկը կզանգահարի ձեզ՝ հեռախոսով ըմնարկելու տեղեկությունը:

Խնդրում եմ ինձ զանգեր այս տեղեկություն մասին: Խոսում եմ _____: Իմ օրվա հեռախոսահամարն է _____: Իմ անունն է _____:

Portuguese

A informação unida é importante. Peça por favor que um membro, um amigo, ou um vizinho da família traduzam-no para você. Se você não souber qualquer um que pode o traduzir, para preencher por favor abaixo a informação e para a retornar ao principal da escola da sua criança junto com a observação unida. Alguém que fala sua língua chamá-lo-á para rever a informação com você sobre o telefone.
 Chame-me por favor sobre esta observação. Eu falo o _____. Meu telefone do dia o número é _____, Meu nome é _____.

Pushto

د مور او پلار/څارونکي د ترجمې درخواست فورمه
 نېټول شوی معلومات مهم دي. مهرباني وکړئ او د کورنۍ د یو غړی، ملګری، یا ګاونډی، نه غوښتنه وکړئ چې دا ټاکل شوی معلومات تاسې ته ترجمه وکړي. که تاسې څوک نه پېژنئ، چې دا معلومات تاسې ته ترجمه وکړي، مهرباني وکړئ دا لاندې معلومات ډک کړئ او د خپل د ماشوم ښوونځي دفتر ته د دا ټاکل شوی خبرتیا سره یوځای بیرته راواستورئ. څوک چې د ستا په ژبه باندې پوهیږي تاسې سره تماس به ونیسي او دا معلومات د تاسې سره یوځای په تېلېفون باندې کتنه وکړي.
 لطفاً زما سره د دې خبرتیا په برخه کې تېلېفون وکړئ. زه په _____ ژبه باندې خبرې کوم. زما د ورځې له خوا تېلېفون نمبر دا _____ دی. زما نوم _____ دی.

Spanish

La información unida es importante. Pida por favor que un miembro, un amigo, o un vecino de la familia lo traduzcan para usted. Si usted no sabe a cualquier persona que pueda traducirlo, para completar por favor la información abajo y para volverla al principal de la escuela de su niño junto con el aviso unido. Alguien que habla su lengua le llamará para repasar la información con usted sobre el teléfono.
 Llámeme por favor sobre este aviso. Hablo el _____. Mi teléfono del día el número es _____, Mi nombre es _____.

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to the Cunniff Community! A school and its children is most successful when parents, educators, and the community all work together. The staff of the Cunniff School is committed to providing a safe, respectful, supportive learning environment for all. We appreciate the opportunity to work in partnership with you to ensure that your experiences, and those of your children, during the important years of elementary school will be positive and productive.

We hope this handbook will help familiarize you with the practices and procedures at the Cunniff School. This handbook is the result of many hours of work by the members of the School Council and the staff Leadership Team. From time to time, as procedures change, we will send you additional pages with this information. Additional information that lists staff, PTO officers, volunteer information, and important phone numbers is available from the front office and may be found on the school's website. An updated version of this publication will be available each fall.

There are many opportunities for parents and guardians to participate in the life of the Cunniff School and share in both academic and social experiences. We welcome your interest and invite you to become involved. Teamwork and cooperation are key to the success of our students.

I appreciate you taking the time to carefully read and discuss the handbook with your child(ren). Keep it handy for reference and review throughout the coming school year.

Sincerely,

Stephen L. Billhardt
Principal

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GENERAL INFORMATION

A SCHOOL DAY, AT A GLANCE

Arrival:	8:15
Dedicated Literacy Block:	2 – 2 1/2 hours/day (times may vary)
Dedicated Mathematics Block:	45-60 minutes /day
Science/Social Studies:	45-60 minutes/day
Specials - (Art, Music, Library/Computers):	40 minutes per visit - 1 time/week
- (Health/Physical Education)	40 minutes per visit - 2 times/week
Recess:	20 minutes
Lunch:	30 minutes
Dismissal:	2:30

HOURS:

The school day begins at 8:15 a.m. The cafeteria opens at 7:45 a.m. for breakfast. Parents are invited to join children for breakfast any day. Students who are not participating in the breakfast program should not arrive prior to 8:05 a.m., as there is no supervision by staff outside until that time.

During inclement weather, snow, rain or extreme cold, children should come in through the designated doors where teachers will meet them.

Dismissal is at 2:30 p.m. for all students. Please notify the office if you will be late, as some children become stressed and upset when they are not picked up on time. Teachers will bring any child who has not been picked up back into the building. We will arrange for the child to be supervised by the Voyager extended-day staff until the parent or caretaker arrives. There is a fee for this service.

LATE ARRIVALS

Parents are responsible for getting children to school on time each day. Attendance is taken at 8:20. Students who arrive after 8:20 must check in at the office. In the case of students who live out-of-district, habitual tardiness may be cause for rescinding the approval to attend Cunniff.

DISMISSALS

If you need to have your child released from school early, you must send a note to the classroom teacher or call the office. An authorized adult who should report to the school office must pick up your child. No child will be allowed to leave the school grounds without the authorization of a parent or legal guardian. The adult responsible for the student must sign the child out in the log at the school office and wait for the child there.

EARLY RELEASE DAYS

Early release days are scheduled on some Wednesdays during the year for staff professional development. Students are released at 12:15 p.m. following lunch. There are additional whole days of staff professional development during the school year when children do not come to school. Children will not attend school on those days. Please consult your monthly school calendar and newsletter and also local newspapers for these important dates.

SNOW CLOSING AND DELAYED OPENINGS

On days of delayed opening, students should arrive at school between 10:05 and 10:15 a.m. There is no supervision for children before 10:05 a.m. Information about snow closings or delayed openings will be broadcast by 6:30 a.m. on the following radio & television stations:

RADIO STATIONS

WBZ (1030 AM)
WBCN (104.1 FM)

TELEVISION STATIONS

WHDH-TV Ch. 7
WCVB-TV Ch. 5
WBZ-TV Ch. 4
CABLE Ch. 13

**Please do not call the police, fire, or school departments*

ABSENCES - HOTLINE call 617-926-7726

If your child is going to be very late or absent for the day, please try and call the school's main number before 8:00 and leave a message in the school's voicemail system. This will help us to notify your child's classroom teacher and it also allows helps to ensure that we have accounted for all of our students.

BREAKFAST-SNACK-LUNCH

Children may bring a snack with them each day. Juice or other drinks are only allowed at snack time. Soda is not permitted for either snack or lunch. The classroom teacher schedules snack time.

Lunches are available each day. Our cafeteria uses a computerized system wherein each child has a separate account. Students may purchase lunch on a daily basis in one of two ways. An amount of money is deposited to their account and the cost deducted as items are purchased. Students may also simply pay cash when they purchase lunch or snacks. Letters to inform parents of the status of the accounts are sent out periodically. Lunch menus are published in the local papers and are distributed to all students at the beginning of each month on a calendar. If a student forgets lunch or lunch money, the food service provides them with lunch that can be paid for the following day. Prices will be published at the beginning of each school year. **Breakfast** is served each morning from **7:45 until 8:15 a.m.** Parents are welcome to join their child(ren) any morning. Students not participating in the breakfast program cannot enter the cafeteria during this time.

HEALTH

Parents will be notified immediately in the event of accident or illness. Please make certain that you have filled out a **School Emergency Card** and **keep it current**. Accident insurance is available at a minimal cost at the beginning of the year.

Vision and hearing tests are given each year and notices of concern about vision or hearing are sent home. Scoliosis screenings are provided to all children in grade five. Proof of a recent physical examination is required upon entrance to the school. All fourth grade students are required to have a physical exam, either through the school or by the family physician.

The following guidelines are meant to help parents and guardians understand when they should not send their children to school.

- If your child has a stomachache followed by vomiting or diarrhea your child should be kept home until symptoms have resolved for approximately 12 hours and the child is able to keep food and liquids down.
- Children average 6 to 8 colds per year. Fevers are generally signs of infection. No child should be sent to school with a fever. Any child with a fever over 100° F will be sent home from school. If your child has a sore throat along with fever and swollen glands, see the doctor.

The Massachusetts Department of Health requires that students should be excluded from school if they have the following:

- Chicken Pox – Students remain out of school for at least one week from the appearance of eruptions and all lesions must be scabbed over with no eruptions.
- Conjunctivitis – Students remain out of school until 24 hours after the start of antibiotic ointment has been given.
- Strep Throat – Students remain out of school until medication has been administered for 24 hours.

- Scabies – Students must remain out of school until treatment has been started and lesions are scabbed over.
- Head Lice – Students may not return to school until hair has been treated and all eggs/nits have been removed. If your child has lice, please contact the school nurse so she can check siblings and classmates. Students must be cleared by the school nurse before returning to class.

If a student has been absent due to a communicable disease such as chicken pox, measles, German measles, mumps, or scarlet fever, a letter from a doctor or the Board of Health (617-972-6446) is required before the student will be readmitted to school.

CONDUCT

Our goal is to foster a respectful and safe learning environment for our school community to ensure that all students can be successful.

For the safety of all students, the following Cunniff Code of Conduct has been established. All students are made familiar with the following behavioral expectations.

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1. HARM NO ONE | 6. BE COOPERATIVE |
| 2. RESPECT OTHERS | 7. MOVE SAFELY |
| 3. BE POLITE | 8. RESPECT PROPERTY |
| 4. BE FRIENDLY | 9. WORK QUIETLY |
| 5. BE TRUTHFUL | 10. DO YOUR BEST |

It is imperative that all members of the Cunniff Community assist in maintaining a respectful learning environment. Students are expected to follow the school rules. When a student makes a choice to break a school rule, appropriate consequences will be imposed. The consequence will be determined by individual circumstances and the seriousness of the offense after a meeting with all parties involved and giving each one an opportunity to be heard.

Harming another person physically or verbally is considered a serious infraction of school rules as it jeopardizes safety and infringes upon the rights of others. Disciplinary action up to and including suspension will be imposed for such behavior. Parents will be notified when serious conduct violations have occurred requiring disciplinary action.

We expect our code of conduct to be followed both during school hours and outside regular school hours. Parents and other volunteers for outside activities that use our school are expected to reinforce respect for our school by following these rules.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL

OPEN HOUSE

Each year the PTO sponsors an open house in late September in order for parents to meet classroom teachers, support staff and principal. It is an opportunity for parents to learn about their child(ren)'s curriculum, goals and expectations as well as daily routine for the year.

TEACHER CONFERENCE WEEKS

Twice a year, fall and spring, conferences are held so parents can meet personally with their child's teacher. (See school calendar for designated days.) Parents and teachers meet for approximately 20 minutes to discuss the student's progress. On these designated days, children are dismissed at 12:15 p.m. following lunch at school. There are two evening conferences, and two half-days with conferences in the afternoons. Parents may make appointments with teachers at other times during the school year as needed .

At this time voice mail is not yet available. If you need to leave an urgent message for a teacher call the school office. Generally we do not disturb teachers during class time but you may leave a brief message for them through the secretary. Teachers may also be reached through email by using the teacher's first initial, last name (all as one word) followed by @watertown.k12.ma.us

SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers help a great deal to make our school run smoothly. There are many opportunities to volunteer, including reading to students, photocopying for teachers or assisting at fundraisers. Look for volunteer information at Open House. Any volunteer working with children during the school day must fill out required paperwork, including a CORI form before working in the school. You may call the office for more information. Messages for the reading coordinator can be left in the PTO mailbox.

VISITATION

Safety of our students is of primary importance to all of us. Therefore, all visitors to the school are required to sign in at the office and wear a visitor badge. At no time may visitors proceed through the building without checking in at the office. This includes mornings when parents bring students to school. Parents should not accompany children to classrooms for both safety and space concerns.

On occasion, parents, guardians, grandparents and others may be invited by the teacher to participate in a special classroom event or presentation by the students. We welcome visitors to the classrooms at these times. We do not, however, allow parents or relatives to visit classrooms for the purpose of observation. This practice may become disruptive and distract students and teachers from their primary responsibilities.

SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

The *Cunniff Connection* is published bi-weekly. The purpose of this newsletter is to inform parents of school events, changes in school procedure and to provide academic and social news. Making the best use of this communication tool eliminates frequent calls to the school about upcoming events. You are invited to contribute articles and information. They may be left in the Corresponding Secretary's mailbox or sent to them by email. This newsletter is also posted on the school web site. A parent volunteer coordinates this publication.

GENERAL NOTICES

The Connect-ED System is used to send phone messages to remind you of upcoming events and to share important information.

Written notices are sent home on Mondays and Thursdays. Notices are not to be sent home without prior approval of the principal. Additional copies of general notices can be found in the rack outside the office. Organizations such as Children's Theatre, Watertown sports programs and Girl Scouts distribute notices of events and sign-ups. Non-community organizations must receive prior approval of notices from the Principal's office before they can be sent home with students.

Watertown maintains a website for the system along with individual school sites. Newsletters and other information for parents can be found at the Parent Information link. You can also find student technology projects, calendar information, etc. on the site: <http://www.watertown.k12.ma.us/cunniff/>

PARTY INVITATIONS

We do not allow the distribution of party invitations, as this practice can create uncomfortable situations for children.

ACADEMIC PROCEDURES

HOMEWORK

Homework is an integral part of a child's educational program. There are a number of different goals and purposes for assigning homework, including the following.

- Provide a link between home and school
- Help children take personal responsibility for their learning
- Foster confidence and self-discipline
- Promote the understanding that learning also happens in places outside of school
- Expand and/or enrich classroom work
- Reinforce learning by providing additional practice
- Help teachers monitor student understanding
- Reinforce the understanding that the school sets high expectations for its students

The School Committee Policy Manual states the following recommendations. Parents should provide an environment conducive to studying and working independently. They may help students organize time, space and materials so children can complete their homework effectively. Parents are encouraged to help clarify directions and ask questions that may help students to organize their thinking and recall information from class lessons. Because teachers carefully select assignments, parents should encourage their children to work independently.

Teachers assign homework to support student learning. Assignments reflect on-going studies or are a review of previously learned materials. In some cases assignments may be long term, that is not due the following day. Homework will vary in intensity and degree at different grade levels. Informal homework may be assigned most frequently in grades PK-1, with more standardized homework beginning in grade two. While we all recognize that students work at different paces and have different learning styles, general guidelines established by School Committee policy indicate that first grade students receive 10 minutes of homework per night, and then 10 additional minutes are to be assigned each successive year.

Grades PK-1:

Pre-K, Kindergarten:

- Child and parent read together for at least 10 minutes per night
- Optional: Letter/writing practice in journals

Grade One:

- Reading with your child
- Practicing math facts
- Reviewing vocabulary words
- Specific projects as assigned

Grade 2: Approximately 20 minutes of homework is assigned each night in addition to reading. We offer the following suggestions for parents who wish to work with their children at home to supplement the homework given by the classroom teacher:

- Reading with your child
- Review math facts (addition/subtraction), money, telling time
- Prepare for word study tests
- Special projects as assigned
- Review concepts on papers completed in class and sent home
- Write stories following the same approach as in-class writing

Grades 3-5: In addition to independent reading, students in grade three have an average 30 minutes of homework per night, grade four an average of 40 minutes per night, and grade five an average of 50 minutes per night. Not all homework is written in nature. For example, the assignment might be to practice math facts orally or to study for a test. Periodically, assignments may be long term, and students are encouraged to work on them nightly.

Reading Homework:

In addition to homework addressed above, reading homework is assigned each night. Many studies have shown the importance of independent reading as a tool to improve literacy at all ages. The more students read, the greater their literacy skills. A study by Anderson and Wilson, published in *Reading Research Quarterly*, found that reading books was the best predictor of several measures of achievement in reading, especially between second and fifth grade.

Our balanced literacy model supports independent reading as a nightly homework assignment.

- Children in grade one should be reading to their parents for 10-15 minutes (rereading familiar books sent home), and parents should read to students as well.
- In grade two, children should be reading independently 15-20 minutes a night.
- In grades three, four, and five students should read, and be read to, approximately 30 minutes 4-6 times a week.

Students in grades 3-5 will be asked to record their reading each week in a weekly reading log. Many teachers request a parent signature to help validate that students are keeping up with this important work.

Homework for family vacations

In keeping with School Committee policy, we do not assign homework to be completed while a student is absent from school due to a family vacation since we believe homework supports daily classroom instruction. We do suggest that you may ask your child to read daily or to write in a journal about their vacation. Teachers may assign appropriate make-up work when students return to school.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards are issued to all students three times during the academic year. During the months of November and March, Parent-Teacher conferences are held to discuss student progress. Appointment notices will be sent home with each child prior to the conference dates.

TRANSFERS

Families should notify the teacher and the office as soon as possible, but at least one week prior to moving. Your new address, new school and address, and date of withdrawal are needed. A release must be signed by the parent or guardian in order for records to be sent to the new school.

SUMMER READING

Summer reading is strongly advised in all grades. Many children backslide over the summer months by not following their normal school year reading schedule. We encourage students to continue to read to avoid any loss of their skills in fluency, decoding, comprehension and speed. This can take place on the beach, at the pool, or during an afternoon rest time at home. Not reading over the summer does cause regression in their skills; please help maintain the important skills that your children have gained over this past school year!

A list of age appropriate books may be available from the town library. If you need help with this please speak to your child's classroom teacher, special educator, ELL teacher or Mr. Billhardt.

SUPPORT SERVICES AND OTHER PROGRAMS

Introduction

The Cunniff School provides a variety of programs and services from kindergarten through grade 5 designed to address the needs of identified students who have a disability and require Special Education services. The following provides an overview of these programs and services;

1. Child Study:

The Cunniff School has a General Education Team (GET) that is designed to assist students who are identified by their teacher(s) and/or parents as experiencing difficulties in academic, physical, social and/or emotional development. In order to initiate a child study, a parent must contact the classroom teacher or the Chairperson of the GET, to set up a child study meeting. Prior to this meeting, Team members will gather various information about the student (e.g., observations, portfolios of work, learning style attributes, and cultural and linguistic background information). During the meeting, this information will be discussed by the Team who will brainstorm and identify strategies (e.g., use of support services, modification of curriculum), to assist the student. After several weeks, the Team will reconvene and evaluate the student's progress to determine if the problem has been resolved or if additional measures (e.g., new strategies or a referral for a 766 evaluation) may be needed.

2. Resource Program:

The Special Education teachers within the school provide these program services. Students who receive services include those on Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs), 504 Plans and Cunniff School Service Plans. Students in this program typically have a diagnosis of a specific learning disability. In this program, teachers provide in-class support with some discrete out-of-class support in the areas of literacy and math. Developing instructional strategies, organizational skills, motivation, responsibility, and self-advocacy skills are emphasized. Specific social and emotional skills are addressed as needed. Students receive individualized instruction based on their evaluations/consultation with the classroom teacher as an ongoing activity. Related services such as speech and language, counseling, and occupational and physical therapy may also be included.

3. Inclusion Support Program:

This program is provided by the Inclusion Specialists. Students who receive these services include those on IEPs who may have a variety of diagnoses including, among others, significant learning disabilities, social/emotional needs, pervasive developmental disorders and developmental delays. In this program, students are provided with content area in-class support, which can be done through a co-teaching model and instructional support.

4. Concentrated Out of Class Instructional Programming:

Concentrated out-of-class instruction for literacy and math can be provided on a daily basis. Classes typically run from one to two hours per student per day. This program is designed to focus on curriculum modifications and accommodations of instructional strategies. Students who participate in this program usually receive one or more of the related services such as, speech/language, occupational, physical therapies and counseling. Specialized consultative services are available to staff who serve these students.

Related Services

The following related services are currently offered at the Cunniff:

- Speech and Language Therapy addresses such issues as fluency, voice, language delays/impairments, functional conversation and pragmatic difficulties.
- Occupational Therapy includes addressing fine motor, school functioning, sensory motor and organization/handwriting.
- Physical Therapy includes addressing gross motor, playground skills and safety issues in school.
- Counseling, Clinician Support (one-to-one, group therapy by Wayside Youth and Family Services or Colony Care).
- Special Education Reading Instruction (Wilson Reading Program, small group instruction.)

- Behavioral Consultation with behavioral specialists and educational teams, who work collaboratively to plan successful programs for students.
- Behavioral Specialist develops assessments and behavioral plans designed to provide behavioral supports for identified students.

These related services are typically provided in-class. However, there are times when a student requires “discrete” out of class interaction.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

The English Language Learners (ELL) Program at the Cunniff School develops proficiency skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing in both social and academic settings. Students develop the ability to function in social settings and increase their skills in required subject matter such as mathematics, social studies, science and language arts. ESL services are provided in both pull out and in class settings. Students typically complete the ESL Program in three years.

GUIDANCE

The Cunniff School’s Psychologist and Social Worker provides many services for children, parents, and staff. Such services include direct counseling of students (individual, small group, and classroom), parent consultation, staff consultation, coordination of student services. They also present special programs related to social behavior.

Guidance and counseling services are designed to assist all students in the growth and development process (academic, social-emotional, behavioral). Individual and small group counseling sessions address specific student needs. The focus of the counseling sessions may include issues such as academic achievement, decision-making skills, and peer relations. Large group counseling programs focus on developmental issues, such as appreciation of self and others, effective communication skills, coping strategies, self motivation and management, interest and career awareness.

D.A.R.E

D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) sponsored by the Watertown Police Department is a drug awareness program for fifth graders. Each year a presentation may be made to parents so they have a thorough understanding of the program prior to their child’s participation. The D.A.R.E. officer is also available as a resource to both school staff and parents if needed. The D.A.R.E. officer may be contacted through the Police Department.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Children participate in health and physical education classes two times per week. Wellness issues and basic skills are addressed. Activities are geared to the State and National Standards for PE/Health. Children learn about the human body and why it needs exercise. Health and physical fitness, basic locomotor skills, sport skills and concepts are addressed. Brain and health research points to the need and value for more physical activity in our lives. Students need to wear comfortable play clothes, socks, and gym sneakers on the days they are scheduled for physical education.

INSTRUMENT LESSONS

Small group instruction is offered in strings and band in grades 4 and 5. A demonstration of the instruments is held in September at which time students receive literature regarding the program. Daily practice is required. Children should be encouraged and helped to remember to bring their instrument to class. Pupils who practice and regularly bring their instrument to school will become members of the different ensembles. Concerts are held several times each year. Grade 4 lessons will be held on Tuesday mornings from 8:00-8:40 a.m. Grade 5 lessons will be held on Tuesday afternoons from 1:45-2:30. Ms. Woodworth will teach the string lessons and Mr. Jordan and Mr. Wallace will teach the band.

CHORUS

The Chorus is open to students in Grades 4 and 5. Currently practice is held Friday mornings from 7:30 - 8:15 a.m. Performances are held throughout the year. Mr. Spano will conduct the chorus.

APPENDIX 1 – District Policies

Acceptable Use Policy – Technology

The Watertown Public Schools shall provide access for employees and students to the system/network, including access to external networks, for limited educational purposes. *Educational purposes* shall be defined as classroom activities, career and professional development, and high quality self-discovery activities of an educational nature. The purpose of the system/network is to assist in preparing students for success in life and work by providing access to a wide range of information and the ability to communicate with others. The system/network will be used to increase communication (staff, parent, and student), enhance productivity, and assist staff in upgrading existing skills and acquiring new skills through a broader exchange of information. The system/network will also be utilized to provide information to the community, including parents, governmental agencies, and businesses.

Availability

The Superintendent or designee shall implement, monitor, and evaluate the District's system/network 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 and in accordance with administrative regulations and procedures.

Access to the system/network is a privilege, not a right. 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 other disciplinary actions consistent with the policies of the Watertown Public Schools. Violations of law may result in criminal prosecution as well as disciplinary action by the Watertown Public Schools.

Acceptable Use

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

Monitored Use

Electronic mail transmissions and other use 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.

Liability

The Watertown Public Schools 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 Watertown Public Schools shall not be responsible for ensuring the accuracy or usability of any information found on external networks.

The School Department shall disseminate a computer and Internet acceptable use policy.

Administering Medicine to Students

Medication may not be administered to students while at school unless such medicine is given to them by the school nurse acting under specific written request of the parent or guardian and under the written directive of the student's personal physician. When the school nurse is not present, a student who needs medication during the school day may be called to the office at the scheduled hour and reminded by the secretary to take the medicine. This provision only applies when the correct dosage of the medication has been placed in an individual container clearly marked with the student's name, the dosage to be administered, and the time and/or conditions under which the medicine is to be taken. In addition, the student must be able to recognize the medicine that he/she or she is taking. No one but the school nurse, and those others listed in the medical administration plan acting within the above restriction, may give any medication to any student.

The school district shall, through the district nurse leader, register with the Dept. of Public Health and train personnel in the use of Epi-pens.

Following consultation with the school nurse, students who fall into the following exceptions may self-administer medications:

1. Students with asthma or other respiratory diseases may possess and administer prescription inhalers.
2. Students with cystic fibrosis may possess and administer prescription enzyme supplements.
3. Students with diabetes may possess and administer glucose monitoring tests and insulin delivery systems.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:54B

Dept. of Public Health Regulations: 105 CMR 210.00

Asbestos Management

In compliance with the regulations of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency the Watertown Public Schools has an ongoing Operations and Management Program for monitoring the condition of asbestos in the school buildings.

Gang Activity

The goal of the School Committee is to keep District schools and students free from the threats or harmful influence of any gang. For purposes of this policy, gang is defined as any group, secret society, organization or association that advocates drug use, violence, ethnic intimidation, or disruptive or illegal behavior. The Principal or his/her designee shall maintain supervision of school premises to deter intimidation of students and confrontations between members of different gangs.

The Superintendent shall establish open lines of communication with local law enforcement agencies so as to share information and provide mutual support in this effort within appropriate legal guidelines.

The Superintendent shall provide in-service training to help staff members identify gangs and gang symbols, recognize early manifestations of disruptive activities, and respond appropriately. Staff members shall be informed about conflict management techniques and alerted to intervention measures and community resources that may help students.

Symbols: The School Committee finds that gang symbols are inherently disruptive to the educational process, and therefore prohibits the presence of any insignia, apparel, jewelry, accessory, notebook or other school supply, or manner of grooming which by virtue of its color, arrangement, trademark, or any other attribute denotes membership in gangs. The School Committee further prohibits any demonstration of gang membership through the use of hand gestures, graffiti, or printed materials. This policy shall be applied by the Principal or his/her designee as the need for it arises at individual school sites. A student may be suspended or expelled for failure to comply with the provisions of this policy.

Prevention Education: The School Committee realizes that students may become involved in gangs without understanding the consequences of such membership. Early intervention is a key component of efforts to break the cycle of such memberships. Therefore, gang violence prevention information shall be made available in the elementary, middle, and high schools as appropriate.

Secret Societies: Fraternities, sororities and/or secret societies shall not receive District or building recognition in any manner. A student may be suspended or expelled for failure to comply with the provisions of this policy.

Grievance Procedure for Students, Parents and Guardians

The aggrieved party should attempt remediation through a conference with the teacher involved. Should this prove to be unsatisfactory or undesirable, the grievance may be taken to the guidance counselor or the curriculum coordinator/director at the secondary level.

The aggrieved party, if dissatisfied, may present his/her grievances to the Headmaster whom after hearing the facts and after consultation with the teacher, takes any action he/she thinks is indicated. (The Student Council is encouraged to hear grievances on school regulations and to make recommendations to the Headmaster.)

If the aggrieved party feels that the solution or decision is not agreeable to him/her, he/she may appeal to the Superintendent. The Superintendent, after consultation with the Headmaster, takes action.

If the aggrieved party feels that the action taken by the Superintendent is not agreeable to him/her, he/she may present his/her case to the School Committee for a ruling.

Interrogations by Police

The schools have legal custody of students during the school day and during hours of approved extracurricular activities. It is the responsibility of the school administration to make an effort to protect each student's rights with respect to interrogations by law enforcement officials.

Therefore, when law enforcement officials find it necessary to question students during the school day or periods of extracurricular activities, the school Principal or his/her designee will be present when possible. An effort will be made to contact the student's parent or guardian so that the responsible individual may be notified of the situation.

If custody and/or arrest are involved, the Principal will request that all procedural safeguards, as prescribed by law, be observed by the law enforcement officials.

Pregnant Students

School-age mothers, unless they receive adequate assistance, might drop out of school without acquiring the necessary education or without marketable skills.

Pregnant students will be permitted to continue in school in all instances when continued attendance has the sanction of the expectant mother's physician. The physician's approval of this continued attendance must be on file at the school. The student and her physician, in cooperation with the school staff, will develop an appropriate educational plan if it is agreed she should no longer attend school regularly.

Every effort will be made to see that the educational program of the students is disrupted as little as possible; that health counseling services, as well as instruction are offered; that return to school after delivery is encouraged; and that every opportunity to complete high school is provided.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:84

Searches

The Watertown Public Schools recognizes and respects the privacy of its students in their persons and belongings. However, the school administration and staff must maintain a proper, safe, and secure educational environment where learning can take place. Possession of contraband in violation of the law or of school rules is prohibited on school premises. Such items include, but are not limited to, cigarettes, drugs (without proper prescription), weapons, and other items that pose a danger to the safety of the school community or which would disturb or disrupt the process of education.

In certain circumstances it may be necessary to search an individual student or group of students and to seize contraband items. Where the school principal, or his/her designee, has reasonable grounds for suspecting that a student has violated, or is violating, either the law or rules of the school, the suspected student or students may be searched for evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or rules of the school.

Searches of students, book bags, purses, clothing, and other containers, and of student lockers may be conducted when appropriate.

When the Principal, or his/her designee, has reason to believe that contraband items are present on school premises, locker inspections may take place without notice to students. A student's right to possession of a locker, or lockers, is nonexclusive as against the school and its officials. Students are hereby put on notice that they should not keep personal items in their lockers if they do not wish them to be discovered by school personnel during a locker inspection conducted in accordance with the provisions of this section. Contraband items discovered during any such inspection will be seized.

In addition, at various times throughout the school year, school administrators may use dogs trained to detect contraband to conduct random searches for contraband in student lockers, other common areas of school buildings, and vehicles parked on school grounds. A qualified and authorized trainer and a school administrator or designee shall accompany each dog. If a dog indicates that contraband is present on school property, school administrators can conduct a further search.

Any contraband items discovered and seized during an inspection or search conducted under the provisions of this section may be turned over to the police when the possession of such items may constitute a violation of any state or federal law. In all cases where illicit drugs or weapons are discovered as a result of inspections or searches conducted in accordance with the provisions of this section, the police will be contacted and any and all items will be turned over to the police department.

If there are any questions regarding whether a particular item may be brought to school, please ask the Principal.

Sexual Harassment

The Watertown School Committee affirms the policy of maintaining within the Watertown Public Schools a learning and working environment free of sexual harassment and intimidation. If you feel that you have been physically or verbally harassed you have a right to take action. There are established procedures for making complaints that are published in two booklets (one for faculty/staff, and one for students). These booklets, with details about what to do, are available on our website and in the Main Office of each school. You do not have to remain silent. Your voice is important in stopping, and preventing, harassment of any kind.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

The School Committee has the responsibility to afford students the rights that are theirs by virtue of guarantees offered under the federal and state constitutions and statutes. In connection with rights, there are responsibilities that must be assumed by students.

Among these rights and responsibilities are the following:

1. Civil rights--including the rights to equal educational opportunity and freedom from discrimination; the responsibility not to discriminate against others.
2. The right to attend free public schools; the responsibility to attend school regularly and to observe school rules essential for permitting others to learn at school.
3. The right to due process of law with respect to suspension, expulsion, and decisions the student believes injure his/her rights.
4. The right to free inquiry and expression; responsibility to observe reasonable rules regarding these rights.
5. The right to privacy, which includes privacy with respect to the student's school records.

It is the School Committee's belief that as part of the educational process students should be made aware of their legal rights, and of the legal authority of the School Committee to make and delegate authority to its staff to make rules regarding the orderly operation of the schools.

Students have the right to know the standards of behavior that are expected of them, and the consequences of misbehavior.

The rights and responsibilities of students, including standards of conduct, will be made available to students and their parents through handbooks distributed annually.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37H; 71:82 through 71:86

Suspension and Exclusion

Suspension is defined as the act of the chief administrator of a school in removing a student from school for a period not to exceed ten consecutive school days. Exclusion is defined as an act of the School Committee in removing a student from school permanently or for any period of time exceeding ten consecutive school days.

1. The Superintendent, a Principal/Headmaster, or an Assistant Principal/Housemaster may suspend a student for a period not to exceed ten consecutive school days for disobedience and/or misconduct as related to Policy 711, Paragraph 3 of the Official Policy Manual and the detailed rules supporting these paragraphs as promulgated in the current student manual.

Prior to suspension, a student must be given oral or written notice of the charge(s) against him or her, an explanation of the basis for the accusation(s) and an opportunity to present his or her version of the facts.

A student may be suspended prior to notice and hearing if he or she poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process if not removed immediately. In these cases, notice of suspension proceedings must be given within twenty-four hours of the decision to suspend and the hearing must be held within seventy-two hours of removal.

In a hearing on suspension, the Principal/Headmaster (Superintendent, Assistant Principal/Housemaster) is not required to give the student opportunity to secure counsel, to confront and cross-examine supporting witnesses of the charge(s), or to call his or her own supporting witnesses.

Suspension may be used as a preliminary step to exclusion from school.

Whenever possible, the student's parent or guardian will be informed of the suspension prior to the student's departure from school. Within twenty-four hours after the suspension, the student's parent or guardian will be sent a letter by certified mail informing them of the reasons for and the length of the suspension.

2. With the exception of G.L. Ch. 71 §37H and §37H1/2 the School Committee may exclude a student from school permanently or for any period of time exceeding ten consecutive school days for very serious disobedience and/or very serious misconduct as related to policy 711, Paragraph 3 and other appropriate paragraphs in the 500, 600, and 700 sections of the Official Policy Manual and the detailed rules supporting these paragraphs as promulgated in the current student manual.

Prior to a vote on exclusion, the student and his or her parent/guardian will be informed in writing of the charge(s) and the basis for the charge(s) and will be advised of their right to a hearing before the School Committee.

On the request of the student and/or the parent or guardian, the School Committee will hold a hearing on the charge(s) prior to a vote on exclusion.

The hearing will be held in Executive Session. The student has the right to secure counsel and have counsel represent him or her at the hearing. The student has the right to confront and to cross-examine witnesses supporting the charge(s) and to call his or her own supporting witnesses.

To vote to exclude a student from school, a majority of the members present must concur providing a quorum has been established. Votes and records of Executive Sessions remain secret according to the provisions of the law.

3. In accordance with Ch. 71, Section §37H, of the General Laws, a Principal/Headmaster may exclude or suspend a student at his/her judgment for the violations of good conduct listed. The student excluded or suspended under this provision may appeal to the Superintendent in accordance with subsection (d) of Ch. 71, Section §37H.

4. In accordance with Ch. 71, Section §37H 1/2, of the General Laws, a Principal/Headmaster may exclude or suspend a student upon the issuance of a complaint charging a student with a felony. The suspension/ expulsion may be appealed to the Superintendent. The Superintendent's decision shall be the final decision on the matter.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 39:23A

APPENDIX 2 – Federal and State Regulations

Americans with Disabilities Act

The Watertown Public Schools, in compliance with the American Disabilities Act, prohibits the discriminatory assignment of students with disabilities to segregated classes or facilities based solely on the student's disability. Students with disabilities may be assigned to separate facilities or courses when such a placement is necessary to provide equal educational opportunity.

Education Reform Act of 1993, M.G.L. c.71, § 37H

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

(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, 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 the 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, at his discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b).

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

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

Under appropriate circumstances, the principal, in his/her discretion, may consider the readmission of a student expelled from school pursuant to M.G.L. c.71, § 37H. The principal shall notify the student, in writing, at the time of his/her expulsion, of the terms and conditions which the student shall fulfill in order to petition the principal for readmission, as well as the process and timelines for such a petition. The principal's decision on an expelled student's petition shall be final and is not subject to appeal.

Education Reform Act of 1993, M.G.L. c.71, § 37H1/2

M.G.L. c.71, § 37H1/2 allows the principal of a school to suspend a student who has been charged with a felony or is the subject of a felony delinquency complaint, if the principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The statute also allows the principal to expel a student who has been convicted, adjudicated, or admitted guilt with respect to a felony or felony delinquency, if the principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

Students with Disabilities

The Code of Conduct applies to all students. There is a specific procedure, however, for disciplining students with disabilities. Your child's school can give you a copy of this document upon request. This procedure is also included in the "Notice of Procedural Safeguards" brochure that you receive with your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

In general, if a student with disabilities has violated the school's disciplinary code, the school may suspend or remove the student from his or her current educational placement for no more than 10 consecutive school days in any school year.

If a student with disabilities possesses, uses, sells or solicits illegal drugs on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event; carries a weapon to school or a school function; or inflicts serious bodily injury upon another person at school or a school-sponsored event, the school district may place the student in an interim alternative educational setting for up to 45 school days. If a student has been placed in an interim alternative education setting as a result of a disciplinary action, the student may remain in the interim setting for a period not to exceed 45 school days. Thereafter, the student will return to the previously agreed-upon educational placement unless the parent or the district has initiated a hearing on the disciplinary action that the district took and a hearing officer orders another placement, or the parent and the school agree to another placement.

Any time the school wishes to remove a student with disabilities from his or her current educational placement for more than 10 consecutive school days in any school year, or if a student is removed for disciplinary reasons for more than a total of 10 days in any school year when a pattern of removal is occurring, this is a "change of placement." A change of placement invokes certain procedural protections under federal special education law. These include the following:

- (a) Prior to any removal that constitutes a change in placement, the school district must convene a Team meeting to develop a plan for conducting a functional behavioral assessment that will be used as the basis for developing specific strategies to address the student's problematic behavior. If a behavioral intervention plan has been previously developed, the Team will review it to make sure it is being implemented appropriately, and will modify it if necessary.
- (b) Prior to any disciplinary removal that constitutes a change in placement, the school district must inform the parent that the law requires that the school district consider whether or not the behavior that forms the basis for the student's disciplinary removal is related to his or her

disability. This is called a “manifestation determination.” Remember that you, as the parent, always have the right to participate as a member of the group of people making this determination.

Consideration of whether the behavior is a manifestation of the student’s disability: The law provides that the school district and the parent, along with relevant Team members, must consider all evaluation information, observational information, the student’s IEP and placement; and must determine whether the student’s behavior that prompted disciplinary removal was a manifestation of his or her disability. The behavior is considered a manifestation of the student’s disability if the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to the student’s disability, or was a direct result of the school district’s failure to implement his or her IEP.

If the manifestation determination decision is that the disciplinary behavior was related to the student’s disability then the student may not be removed from the current educational placement (except in the case of weapon or drug possession or use, or serious bodily injury to another) until the IEP Team develops a new IEP and decides upon a new placement and the parent consents to that new IEP and placement, or a Hearing Officer orders a removal from the current educational placement to another placement.

If the manifestation determination is that the behavior was not related to the student’s disability, then the school may suspend or otherwise discipline the student according to the school’s code of student conduct, except that for any period of removal exceeding 10 days the school district must provide the student with educational services that allow the student to continue to make educational progress. The school district must determine the educational services necessary and the manner and location for providing those services.

In the case of a disagreement with the Team’s determination: If the parent disagrees with the Team’s decision on the “manifestation determination” or with the decision relating to placement of the student in an interim alternative education setting or any other disciplinary action, the parent has the right to appeal the Team’s decision by requesting an expedited due process hearing from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA).

Hazing Law and Policy

Hazing as defined in Chapter 269 under the Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is prohibited in the Watertown Public Schools.

M.G.L. Chapter 269; Section 17 Hazing; organizing or participating; hazing defined

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

The term "hazing" as used in this section and in Sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug, or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation. (Added by St. 1985, c.536)

M.G.L. Chapter 269: Section 18 Failure to report hazing

Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime, shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars. (Added by St. 1985, c.536; Amended by St. 1987, c.665)

M.G.L. Chapter 269: Section 19 Copy of secs. 17-19; issuance to students and student groups, teams and organizations; report

Statement of Compliance and Discipline Policy Required

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

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

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

Any person(s) found engaged in hazing may be subject to suspension or exclusion dependent upon the seriousness of the hazing offense.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act

Every child without a permanent home has a right to an education.

If you live in a shelter, motel, vehicle, or campground; on the street; in an abandoned building, trailer, or other inadequate accommodations; or with friends or relatives because you cannot find or afford housing, then your child has certain rights and protections under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act.

Your child has the right to:

- Access the same free and appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to all other children.
- Remain in the school he/she attended before becoming homeless.
- Receive transportation to the school they attend before your family became homeless or the school they last attended if you or a guardian requests such transportation.

- Enroll in school without giving a permanent address. Schools cannot require proof of residency that might prevent or delay school enrollment.
- Enroll and attend classes while the school arranges for the transfer of school and immunization records or any other documents for enrollment.
- Enroll and attend classes in the school of your choice even while the school and you seek to resolve disputes over enrolling your child.
- Receive the same special programs and services, if needed, as provided to all other children.

If you need assistance in enrolling your child into school contact: Director of Student Services

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) is a federal education law that aims to:

- Raise accountability by measuring each schools progress every year (Adequate Yearly Progress – AYP);
- Set goals to improve student performance in math, reading/English Language Arts (ELA) and science;
- Improve teacher quality by providing professional development funds;
- Provide parents/guardians with information about the professional qualifications of their child's classroom teachers. Parents/Guardians can request this information from the school principal, and
- Make schools safer and drug-free.

Nondiscrimination

Public schools have the responsibility to overcome, insofar as possible, any barriers that prevent children from achieving their potential. If someone has a complaint or feels that they have been discriminated against because of their race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability, their complaint should be registered with the Title IX non-discrimination compliance officer(s). This commitment to the community is affirmed in the following statements of School Committee intent to:

- 1.0 Promote the rights and responsibilities of all individuals as set forth in the State and Federal Constitutions, pertinent legislation, and applicable judicial interpretations.
- 2.0 Encourage positive experiences in human values for children and youth and adults, all of whom have differing personal and family characteristics and who come from various socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic groups.
- 3.0 Support a more integrated society and to enlist the support of individuals as well as groups and agencies, both private and governmental, in such an effort.
- 4.0 Use all appropriate communication and action techniques to air and reduce the grievances of individuals and groups.
- 5.0 Carefully consider, in all the decisions made within the school system, the potential benefits or adverse consequences that those decisions might have on the human relations aspects of all segments of society.

- 6.0 Ensure continual process of reviewing policies and practices of this school system in order to achieve to the greatest extent possible the objectives of this statement.

The Watertown School Committee's policy of nondiscrimination and all other pertinent Federal and State laws will extend to students, staff, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business; and will apply to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.

Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap

- 1.0 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and its accompanying regulations and amendments apply to all school systems receiving federal funds. Under this act the Watertown Public Schools:
- 1.1 May not discriminate against qualified handicapped persons in any aspect of school employment solely on the basis of handicap.
 - 1.2 Shall make facilities, programs, and activities accessible, usable, and open to qualified handicapped persons.
 - 1.3 Shall provide appropriate education at elementary and secondary levels, including non-academic and extracurricular services and activities, to qualified handicapped persons.
 - 1.4 May not exclude any qualified handicapped person solely on the basis of handicap from participation in any preschool education or day care program or activity or any adult education or vocational program or activity.
 - 1.5 Shall provide each qualified handicapped person with the same health, welfare, and other social services that are provided others.

Accordingly, employees of this school system will comply with the above requirements of the law and policy statements of this Committee and all other pertinent Federal and State laws to ensure non-discrimination on the basis of handicap.

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

The Watertown Public Schools in keeping with the regulations set out in the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment requires notification to parents and/or students under the following conditions:

- Instructional materials are made available for inspection by parents if those materials will be used in connection with a federal U.S. Department of Education or other publicly funded survey, analysis, or evaluation in which their children participate; and
- That schools obtain prior written parental consent before minor students are required to participate in any U.S. Department of Education or other publicly funded survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning:
 1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent;
 2. Mental and psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
 3. Sex behavior or attitudes;

4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
 5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
 6. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, or ministers;
 7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parent; or
 8. Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).
- The right of parents to inspect, upon request, any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum for students. This term does not include academic tests or academic assessments.
 - The right to prior knowledge and consent if the school district administers physical examinations or screenings. This does not include hearing, vision, or scoliosis screening.
 - The right to prior knowledge of the school district's collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or selling, or otherwise providing the information to others for that purpose.
 - The right to inspect, upon request, any instrument used in the collection of personal information.

The Watertown Public Schools will notify parents, guardians, and/or eligible students the specific or approximate dates during the school year if and when these activities are scheduled. Such notification will be provided through specific notices, newsletters, and/or the Watertown Public Schools web site.

This federal requirement is not intended to preempt applicable provisions of State law that require parental notification. The law does not apply to any physical examination or screening that is permitted or required by State law, including such examinations or screenings without parental notification. The requirements of PPRA do not apply to a survey administered to a student in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The requirements under PPRA do not supersede any of the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Restraint of Students

The Watertown Public Schools complies with the Department of Education (DOE) restraint regulations, 603 CMR 46.00 et seq. ("Regulations"), to the extent required by law. According to their terms, the Regulations apply not only at school but also at school-sponsored events and activities, whether or not on school property. A brief overview of the Regulations is provided below.

Methods and Conditions for Implementation

School staff may use physical restraint only:

1. When non-physical interventions would be ineffective and the student's behavior poses a threat of imminent, serious harm to self and/or others.
2. Pursuant to a student's IEP or other written plan developed in accordance with the state and

federal law and approved by the school and parent or guardian.

Physical restraint may not be used as a means of punishment or as a response to property destruction, disruption of the school order, a student's refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive, or verbal threats that do not constitute a threat of imminent, serious physical harm. Chemical and mechanical restraints may only be used if explicitly authorized by a physician and approved by a parent or guardian. Seclusion is prohibited.

The Regulations do not prevent the teacher, employee, or agent of the District from using reasonable force to protect the student, other persons, or themselves from assault or imminent serious harm, or from restraining students as otherwise provided in the Regulations.

Reporting Requirements and Follow-Up

In instances when a physical restraint (1) lasts more than five minutes or (2) results in an injury to a student or staff member, the school staff must report the physical restraint to the principal or a designee. The principal/designee must maintain an ongoing record of all reported instances, which will be made available in accordance with State and Federal law and regulations. The principal/designee must also verbally inform the student's parent or guardian of the restraint as soon as possible, and by written report postmarked no later than three school working days following the use of the restraint. The written restraint report must be provided to the parent or guardian in the language in which report cards and other necessary school-related information are customarily provided.

In the event that a physical restraint (1) lasts longer than 20 minutes, or (2) results in serious injury to the student or staff member, the school must, within five school working days of the reported restraint, provide a copy of the written report to the DOE along with a copy of the school's record of physical restraint covering the thirty-day period prior to the date of the restraint.

For students who require the frequent use of restraint because they present a high risk of dangerous behaviors, school staff may seek and obtain the parent/guardian consent to waive reporting requirements for the restraints administered to an individual student that do not result in serious injury to the student or staff member or constitute extended restraint (longer than 20 minutes).

Follow-up procedures for restraint include not only reporting requirements set forth above, but also reviewing the incident with the student, staff, and consideration of whether follow-up is appropriate for students who witnessed the incident.

A copy of the Regulations can be obtained at www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr46.html.

Sex Education (MGL Ch. 71 §32A)

Schools are required by law to notify parents/guardians about any classes that will be held on human sexual education or sexual issues. The notice must tell the parent/guardian how he/she can review the content and materials of the classes.

While parents/guardians do not have to give permission for their children to take sex education classes, parents do have the right to exempt their children from such classes. Please read and **return** the sign-off page entitled "Commonwealth of Massachusetts: An Act Relative to Sex Education" to your building principal.

Student Record Regulations and Confidentiality

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s education records. They are:

The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days of the day the district receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask the Watertown Public Schools to amend a record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the district decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the district will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Committee; a person or company with whom the district has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

The parent/guardian has the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the district to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

FERPA requires that the Watertown Public Schools, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child’s education records. However, the Watertown Public Schools may disclose appropriately designated “directory information” without written consent, unless you have advised the District to the contrary in accordance with District procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the Watertown Public Schools to include this type of information from your child’s education records in certain school publications.

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent’s, guardian’s, and/or student’s prior consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two Federal laws require school districts receiving Federal funds to provide military recruiters, upon request, with three directory information categories - names,

addresses, and telephone listings – unless parents/guardians, and/or students have advised the school district that they do not want their information disclosed without their prior written consent.

If you do not want the Watertown Public Schools to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the school district in writing by September 15th of each school year. The Watertown Public Schools has designated the following information as directory information:

1. Student's name
2. Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
3. Address
4. Telephone listing
5. Weight and height of members of athletic teams
6. Electronic mail address
7. Photograph
8. Degrees, honors, and awards received
9. Date and place of birth
10. Major field of study
11. Dates of attendance
12. Grade level and the most recent school attended

Massachusetts Student Records Regulation

State regulations governing student records are briefly summarized below. These regulations are available at each public school and the superintendent's office for review. Parents may access the student records regulations through the Massachusetts Department of Education website.

A student's record consists of his or her school transcript and temporary record. The temporary record includes all information, which is organized on the basis of the student's name, is relevant to the educational needs of the student and is kept by the school. A student's parent or guardian or an eligible student (who is 14 years old or has entered the ninth grade), has the right to inspect all portions of the student's record upon written request to the principal. The record must be made available to the parent, guardian, or eligible student not later than two consecutive workdays after the request is made, unless the parent or guardian, or eligible student consents to a delay. The parent/guardian, or eligible student may request copies of any part of the record. A fee may be charged for the cost of copying.

Confidentiality of Records

No individual or organization other than the parent/guardian, eligible student, or school personnel working directly with the student is allowed access to a student's record without the specific written consent of the parent/guardian, or eligible student except in limited instances as specified by the State or Federal regulations governing student records.

Amendment or Deletion of Records

The parent, guardian, or eligible student has the right to add relevant comments, information, or other written material to the student's record. In addition, the parent, guardian, or eligible student has the right to request that information contained in the record be amended or deleted except for information inserted in the record by a special needs or Section 504 evaluation. The parent/guardian, or

eligible student has a right to a conference with the school principal for the purpose of information contained in the school record. Within a week after such conference, the principal must render a decision in writing on the objection. If the parent/guardian or eligible student is not satisfied with the principal's decision, he or she may appeal such decision to the Superintendent of Schools and ultimately, to the School Committee.

Destruction of Records

A student's temporary record shall be destroyed no later than seven years after the student leaves the school system. The school system may offer the student, parent, or guardian the temporary record upon graduation or leaving school as long as the student, parent, or guardian acknowledges and accepts the temporary record by written consent. A student's transcript may be destroyed no sooner than 60 years after the student leaves the school system. A school principal or his or her designee may destroy misleading, outdated or irrelevant information contained in the temporary record during the time the student is enrolled in the school district, provided the parent/guardian, or eligible student has been notified in writing and given the opportunity to inspect and copy any of the information prior to destruction.

All parents/guardians of children in the Watertown Schools have the right of inspection of their children's records in accordance with [M.G.L Chapter 71, Section 34D](#), and [M.G.L Chapter 71, Section 34E](#). Also, a student, eighteen years of age or older, has the right of access to all records relative to him/her in accordance with M.G.L. Ch.71, Sections 34D, 34E.

M.G.L. Chapter 71, specifies detailed procedures that govern access to student records by parents who do not have physical custody of their children. For more information, please contact the principal.

Courtesy and the need for maintenance of order suggest that anyone interested in exercising the above right make his/her request in writing for an appointment with the principal so that possible questions may be answered.

Non-custodial Parent Access to Student Records

The Massachusetts Board of Education has amended Student Records Regulations concerning access to student records by non-custodial parents. As set forth in the amended regulation, 603 CMR 23.07(5), non-custodial parents are eligible to obtain access to their children's student records *unless* the school or district has been given documentation that:

1. the non-custodial parent has been denied legal custody based on a threat to the safety of the student or to the custodial parent;
2. the non-custodial parent has been denied visitation or has been ordered to supervised visitation;
3. the non-custodial parent's access to the student or to the custodial parent has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the order or any subsequent court order specifically allows access to student record information.

If you have any questions or need further information regarding any of the above named District Policies, Federal Laws, or State Laws, please contact the Watertown Public Schools Central Office. Watertown Public Schools, 30 Common Street. Watertown, MA 02472. 617-926-7700 (phone)

APPENDIX 3 – Summaries & Signature Page

The Watertown Public Schools is required to collect signatures to ascertain that parents/guardians and students have read and understand the following:

1. Content of the Student Handbook (including Media Release, Directory Information, and Transfer of Records)
2. Information concerning an Act Relative to Sex Education (M.G.L. Ch. 71 §32A)

To assist you, please refer to the following summaries.

Complete and return the signature page to your child's school no later than one week after the receipt of the Student Handbook.

Pictures, Names, or Quotes in the Media

Sometimes media (such as newspaper, television, radio, or cable) reporters or photographers would like to be involved in activities in the schools. Having a picture in the paper for participating in a program is usually acceptable to parents, but occasionally, for legal reasons, it is not prudent. **If you do not wish your child's name to be used or picture to be taken for the media, you must notify the school in writing on the back of the Signature Page.**

Directory Information Notice

The Watertown Public Schools has designated certain information contained in the education records of its students as directory information for purposes of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Student Record Regulations, 603 CMR 23.00 et seq.

The following information regarding students is considered directory information: name; address; telephone number; date and place of birth; major field of study; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; weight and height of members of athletic teams; dates of attendance; degrees, honors, and awards received; and post high school plans of the student.

Directory information may be disclosed for any purpose in the School System's discretion, without the consent of a parent/guardian of a student or an eligible student. Parents/guardians and eligible students have the right, however, to refuse to permit the designation of any or all of the above information as directory information. In that case, this information will not be disclosed except with the consent of a parent/guardian or eligible student, or otherwise allowed by FERPA and 603 CMR 23.00 et seq.

Any parent/guardian or student refusing to have any or all of the designated directory information disclosed must file a written notification to this effect with the school's principal no later than one week following the receipt of this handbook. This notification should be written on the back of the Signature Page.

In the event a refusal is not filed, it is assumed that neither parent/guardian nor eligible student objects to the release of directory information.

Notice on Transfer of Records to Another School

Pursuant to 603 CMR 23.07 (g), notice is hereby given that the Watertown Public Schools forwards the complete school record of a transferring student to schools in which the student seeks or intends to enroll. Such transfer of records takes place without consent of the parent/guardian or eligible student.

An Act Relative to Sex Education (M.G.L. Ch. 71 §32A)

Parent Notification

The Health Education and Science programs of Watertown Public Schools contain comprehensive PreK-12 curricula. The goal of the program is to help students acquire appropriate content background to develop the life skills of problem solving, communication, and decision-making abilities to prepare for a healthy and productive future.

The Health Education and Science programs have been designed by our professional staff, using their own research based programs as well as programs developed by the Massachusetts Department of Education, the American Heart Association, the American Cancer Society, the American Red Cross, Operation Lifesaver, and other health and science education resources.

During health and science classes, student questions will be answered factually and in an age-appropriate manner. Each student's privacy will be respected, and no one will be required to answer questions or reveal personal information. Material is presented factually.

Under Massachusetts law and the Watertown School Committee policy, you may exempt your child from any portion of a curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues. If you would like to exempt your child from a particular class, please send the request in writing.

The Director of Health Education or the Principal are available to meet with you to review curriculum and materials. To review these materials, please call to make an appointment.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that your child has a positive and educationally enriching experience this school year. If you have any questions regarding the exemption process for the Health and Science Programs, please call your school's principal.

To exempt your child from any portion of the health and/or science curriculum that primarily involves sexual education or human sexuality issues, you must notify the school in writing on the back of the Signature Page.

Signature Page

PLEASE CUT OUT AND DELIVER TO SCHOOL OR HOMEROOM TEACHER

Student Information:

Last Name
First Name
Home Address
Date of Birth
Age

School/Grade

Parent Information

Parent/Guardian Name
Home Phone& Cell
E-Mail Adress

Student Handbook

I acknowledge that I have read and we have discussed the preceding rules and regulations of this SCHOOL HANDBOOK.

An Act Relative to Sex Education

I acknowledge that I have read the information concerning Parent Notification of as related to Sex Education M.G.L. Ch. 71 §32A .

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian
Signature
Date