

# ss coGibbs School

## Student & Family Handbook

### 2022-2023 School Year

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Dear Gibbs Students & Families,

Welcome to the 2022-2023 school year where there will be many new and wonderful educational experiences awaiting you! We know that this year will be an exciting and special one for all of us. Our team is acutely aware of some of the potential effects the last 2 years and a half have had on the educational process and how we deliver services. Therefore, nothing will be left to chance. We plan to have a thoughtful, engaging, intentional and collaborative year!

We have prepared this handbook as an informational tool to provide you with tips on how best to organize and prepare for day to day experiences and expectations at Gibbs. We will work continuously and collaboratively to ensure that every student has a successful educational experience in a safe and caring environment. We look forward to an exciting, rewarding and enjoyable year with you all.

Sincerely,  
The Gibbs School Staff

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#### The Gibbs Middle School

*"The greatest personal reward I have received during my career in Arlington is the great number of friendships which grew out of associations with students, fellow teachers, parents, and all the other persons who make this school system what it is, and the Town of Arlington a very special place."*

*- excerpt from retirement letter written by Superintendent Bill Gibbs*

Junior High East was dedicated October 19, 1928, joining Junior High Central and Junior High West as schools for Arlington students in grades 7-9. In 1983 the school's name was changed to "Gibbs Junior High" in honor of retiring Superintendent William Towle Gibbs. Mr. Gibbs was born in Salem, MA, graduated from Salem High School, served for five years in WWII, and then graduated with his Master's in Education from Boston University in 1949. That same year Mr. Gibbs was hired as an Arlington High School teacher in the Business Education department. He later became Assistant Superintendent for Business and then Superintendent in 1970. Mr. Gibbs retired after 34 years of service to the Arlington Public Schools, twelve of those as Superintendent. The Gibbs closed as a public middle school in 1989, and reopened in 2018 as the Gibbs Sixth Grade School.

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## Non Discrimination Policy

Arlington Public Schools Nondiscrimination Statement “Arlington Public Schools does not discriminate in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its services, programs and activities, on the basis of race, color or national origin, in accordance with: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI); on the basis or sex, in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; on the basis of disability, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); or on the basis of age, in accordance with the Age Discrimination Act of 1974 (Age Discrimination Act), or on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or religion in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71B and 151B.”

Title I: Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 Prohibits discrimination, exclusion from participation, and denial of benefits on the basis of disability in the areas of employment.

Title VI: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 Prohibits discrimination, exclusion from participation, and denial of benefits on the basis of race, color and national origin.

Title IX: Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 Prohibits discrimination, exclusion from participation, and denial of benefits in educational programs based on sex. To contact the district Title IX liaison click on the following link <http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/administration/staffdirectory.asp>

Section 504: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Prohibits discrimination, exclusion from participation, and denial of benefits based on disability.

504 Coordinator, Roderick MacNeal, Jr. [rmacneal@arlington.k12.ma.us](mailto:rmacneal@arlington.k12.ma.us) Arlington High School - 781-316-3523

MGL, Ch. 76, Section 5: Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 76, Section 5 Prohibits discrimination in all public schools on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, national origin, religion and sexual orientation.

Title II: Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 Prohibits discrimination, exclusion from participation, and denial of benefits on the basis of disability in the areas of educational programming and activities.

The Coordinators of the above statutes are as follows: Arlington Public Schools Individual School Principals

# SCHOOL CULTURE

## VISION OF A MIDDLE SCHOOL GRADUATE

Arlington Middle School graduates are lifelong learners who value and achieve high academic standards. They are responsible, inquisitive, and self-reliant individuals. Graduates are skillful communicators who think critically about the world around them. Our students remain determined, respectful, and resilient in the face of challenges. Middle school students strive to be creative and collaborative decision-makers, who are culturally aware and mindful of themselves and others.

## GIBBS VISION STATEMENT

The Gibbs Sixth Grade School Community is an environment where students and adults work cooperatively to strive for academic achievement and social-emotional growth. Our community encourages being **Understanding** of each other and what makes us unique, being **Unified** in our efforts to support one another's ability to grow and learn, and being **Unstoppable** when reaching for our personal and community goals.

## GIBBS MISSION STATEMENT

In order to inspire and empower students to grow holistically we prioritize the following elements in our daily work:

- Academic Rigor: Creating a challenging, culturally responsive, standards-based curriculum while fostering an academic growth mindset, perseverance, learning strategies, and academic behaviors.
- Social-Emotional Learning: Promoting resilience and persistence while developing skills related to cooperation, assertiveness, responsibility, empathy, and self control.
- Community: Developing an environment that is safe and supportive - emotionally, culturally, intellectually, and physically - and where staff and students collaborate to create a cohesive sense of significance, belonging and community.

## GIBBS SCHOOL VALUES

Gibbs' students are **Trailblazers**. Trailblazers harness their knowledge, skills, and resources to innovate, solve problems, and collaborate as a community. Trailblazers show their commitment to their school and to each other by being...

- **Understanding**: Trailblazers understand and respect what makes them unique individuals. They seek to embrace their differences and to appreciate each other's perspectives, strengths, and needs.
- **Unified**: Trailblazers stick together in order to form an inclusive and supportive school community. They understand that we are at our best when we band together.
- **Unstoppable**: Trailblazers strive to use their knowledge, skill, and connections to each other to overcome any challenge. When the going gets tough, Trailblazers persist, innovate, and collaborate to see things through.

The Gibbs Core Values (3 U's), common language, and shared community expectations foster a safe and productive environment that promotes students' social, emotional & cognitive growth.

# SCHOOL COMMUNITY

## Communities of Learners

We have five Learning Communities at the Gibbs 6th Grade School. A Learning Community (LC) consists of an English Language Arts teacher, Ancient Civilizations teacher, Math teacher and Science teacher. Each LC is also staffed with a Special Education teacher and Teaching Assistant. Additionally, there are several Exploratory Learning Classes including: Art, FACS, Technology, Physical Education, Computer Science, World Languages (Latin, French, Spanish, & Mandarin) Music, Band, Chorus, and Orchestra.

## Advisory

At Gibbs every day starts with 20 minutes of Advisory. During Advisory, students meet in small groups with one staff member, to focus on community building and social emotional learning. This allows for building meaningful connections and developing trusting relationships. Each student's Advisor serves as the consistent and primary point of contact.

## School Counselors

School Counselors collaborate with students, parents, faculty, and community partners to support students' well-being. They are a key part of the school community, helping to provide a nurturing environment that supports students' social, emotional, and academic growth.

Counselors can assist students with topics such as:

- Scheduling
- Executive functioning skills
- Social skills/struggles with peers
- Advocacy and communication skills around academics
- General life skills/advice

Students can request meetings with their LC's assigned counselor by completing an Appointment Request Form (accessible through the [Gibbs School's website](#)). Families are welcome to reach out to counselors by phone or email with questions or concerns related to their child. In the event that there is a concern about student safety, counselors will promptly reach out to the family(ies).

## School Nurse

The nurse's office is located on the main floor near the cafeteria (just inside the Tufts Street entrance). To see the nurse, students are required to get a pass from their teacher. If the Nurse's Office is closed, students should report to the main office for assistance.

## Administrative Team

The Principal and Assistant Principal are responsible for leading a connected community where staff, students, and families collaborate to ensure student success. It is our hope that all parents/guardians and stakeholders feel connected and well-informed about the happenings, core values, vision and mission of our district and Gibbs School. The principal communicates regularly through the SchoolMessenger system to share important and pertinent information. Administrators frequently communicate with families to process student struggles, partner to find solutions and plan for ongoing student success.

## The Home/School Connection

A strong home-school connection is essential to a student's success in school. Important information is consistently shared through email newsletters and "Alert Now" messages. Teachers, counselors, and administrators can be reached via telephone and e-mail. Contact information for all staff can be found in the [Staff Directory](#) on the school website.

Agenda books and Google Classroom offer a convenient view into students' academic experiences and families are encouraged to check both often. Agenda books have a section at the bottom of each day's column in which families and teachers can exchange notes. The Fall Open House and teacher conferences are key opportunities to form and maintain connections with staff.

To connect with the Principal, families are asked to either call the Main Office and speak with the secretary or email her at [fpierremaxwell@arlington.k12.ma.us](mailto:fpierremaxwell@arlington.k12.ma.us) and copy the Assistant Principal ([sgreiner@arlington.k12.ma.us](mailto:sgreiner@arlington.k12.ma.us)) and her Executive Assistant ([aslater@arlington.k12.ma.us](mailto:aslater@arlington.k12.ma.us)).

Emergencies should go directly through the Main Office. Main Office hours are 7:30am - 3:30pm.

## Data Collection & Continuous Improvement

We embrace and embody a growth-mindset by continuously collecting data which is analyzed and used to plan effective and informed action. The following are examples of data collected at Gibbs:

- **Academics:** Classroom teachers collect academic data regularly which can be accessed through the [PowerSchool Parent Portal](#). MCAS assessments for ELA and Math are administered to all 6th Grade students, across the state, between April and May.
- **Social Emotional Learning\*:** The Social Emotional Learning Indicator Survey (SELIS) is administered twice a year, during the fall and spring. This survey collects information about students' perceptions of their social emotional skills. The data is used to explore grade and school level trends.
- **School Culture/Climate\*:** The Panorama School Culture/Climate survey is administered twice a year, during the fall and spring. This survey collects information about students', staffs' and families' perceptions of the culture/climate of the school. The data is used to explore school and district level trends.
- **Student Mental Health\*:** Two mental health screeners are administered by school counselors over the course of the school year. One screener focuses on indicators of anxiety while the other focuses on indicators for depression.

*\*Detailed information about these surveys and screeners will be shared with families prior to their administration. Families will be given the opportunity to opt their student out if they so choose.*

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## BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

**Every student has a right to feel they *belong*, they are *significant*, and they are *safe* at Gibbs.**

The surest way to build community is to be responsible for your own positive and productive actions, while also supporting others in doing the same. At Gibbs we come together as trailblazers to form a community that is ***understanding, unified*** and ***unstoppable***.

As a trailblazer and member of our middle school community, students are expected to be ***responsible upstanders***. An upstander is one who stands up for what he or she knows is right. If a student sees or hears something that does not feel right, they should say something to a trusted adult. Teachers, administrators, and staff have the responsibility of maintaining a productive learning environment and safety in classrooms and the building. Trailblazers are responsible for their actions and the impact of those actions, while also being an upstander who works to notice and address (with the support of an adult) any unsafe, unproductive or negative behaviors of others. We all share responsibility for making our school a safe and enjoyable place of learning.

At Gibbs we strive to support students in making positive and productive choices. When students demonstrate unexpected behaviors we seek to understand and address the situation through conversations, problem solving processes, and **logical consequences**. Logical consequences focus

on respecting students' dignity and building skills in self management. We recognize students' unique needs and seek to understand the behavior of each individual student. Therefore, how behaviors are addressed is based on the individual student and the specific context.

[Posters](#) around Gibbs remind students and staff of what it looks like to be understanding, unified, and unstoppable in various spaces throughout the school. These posters serve as reminders of the shared expectations. Below are details about specific, school-wide behavioral expectations.

## Phones

Classroom phones are not to be used by students. Student cell phones must be **turned off and locked in a locker**, unless a staff member has granted permission otherwise. Students are not to text and/or call parents or any other person during the day. Students must communicate with families only through school phones and with staff permission. Students who are not feeling well must see the nurse and may not use their cell phones to call home. Students who do not follow these expectations will have logical consequences such as having their phone temporarily confiscated and it may be necessary for a parent to come and collect the phone.

## Technology

Gibbs is a 1-1 device building meaning all students will have access to a Chromebook while at school. The *Arlington Public Schools Network* has been established for educational purposes (classroom activities, career development, research, and word processing). The network is **not** for the use of chat rooms, games, social networking or commercial purposes.

To use the internet on any computer, students and a parent/guardian must sign an [Acceptable Use Policy Agreement Form](#). The policy can be viewed on the [district web site](#) or in the school library. If students violate the policy or misuse computers, they will be denied access to computers and the internet. The internet, like any tool, can be helpful or harmful. It is crucial to be safe online by being mindful of what information is being shared and remembering not everyone on the internet is who they say they are.

## Attire

School is a public forum where appropriate attire is expected. Students are expected to dress in good taste and take pride in their personal appearance. To strengthen the link between these responsibilities, and to ensure the wellbeing of the entire student body, basic guidelines of dress have been established and should be followed by all students. Excessively tight, short or revealing clothing is not allowed. These guidelines include safety, cleanliness, neatness and decency.

Specific expectations for attire:

- Hats, caps, bandanas, hoods and other headgears are allowed as long as they do not cause disruption to the learning environment and are not worn in a way to keep students from being fully present, visible, and actively engaged in the lesson.
- Clothing that is imprinted with vulgar or obscene language or artwork that relates to alcohol, drugs, weapons or smoking is prohibited.
- Chests, stomachs, and buttocks must be fully covered at all times
- Safe and proper footwear.
- No sunglasses.
- No earpods.
- No face paint or costumes.

*Note: Administrators have the final decision on whether student clothing is suitable for school, based on safety and/or potential disruption to the educational process. Students whose attire does not meet the requirements will be asked to put on clothing that does and may face logical disciplinary consequences.*

## **Common Spaces**

- **Corridors and Corridor Passes**

The daily schedule allows for 2 minutes to pass from one class to the next. Students should walk with purpose while respecting other people and property. When classes are in session, any student outside of a classroom must have a pass signed by a staff member.

- **Bathrooms**

To use the bathroom during class, students must have permission from a teacher, sign out and sign back into class, and have a pass while in the hallway. When using the bathrooms, students are expected to behave and respect the facilities. If there is a lack of supplies or any other problems, students should immediately tell their teacher. Remember that the custodians are here to help keep our schools clean, not to clean up after us.

- **Lockers**

Jackets, hats, and other items students carry to and from school may be kept in lockers during the school day. Students may go to their locker only during designated times. Lockers should be kept locked at all times and students should not share their combination with anyone else. Combination locks will be given to every student. If lost, students must purchase a replacement lock from the school for \$5.00. Student lockers are school property and not the personal property of the student. Lockers may be subject to search by authorized personnel at any time.

- **Cafeteria**

During lunch, the cafeteria should be an orderly place where students enjoy lunch and conversation. Horseplay, food throwing, and other disruptive behavior is prohibited. Students engaging in such behavior may/will face disciplinary action and logical consequences such as, loss of the privilege of eating in the cafeteria. Students are not allowed to take food, drinks, straws, or utensils out of the cafeteria without permission. Gibbs prides itself on consistent recycling and composting practices.

- **Library/Media Center**

During school hours, students may browse, do research, access references, and borrow materials from the Library/Media Center. The Media Specialists can assist students in finding information and helping with the use of computers. When classes are in session, students need to obtain a pass from a teacher before they can report to the Media Center. Most items borrowed are due back in two weeks, but some items can only be taken out overnight. Although there are no fines for items returned late, students may lose their borrowing privileges and students may have to pay for items lost or damaged. Food or drink are not allowed in the Media Center.

- **Elevator**

The elevator is only for students whose physical condition requires the use of an elevator. Elevator passes are issued by the nurse in the morning and must be returned at the end of the day. Unaccompanied students are not allowed in the elevator. A student must be accompanied by an adult and may be allowed one classmate (in addition to the adult) to help with books and other materials.



## Fire Drills/Evacuation/Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate (ALICE)

For everyone's safety, it is crucial that fire drills/evacuations/ALICE protocols be executed quickly and taken seriously. Students should follow teachers' instructions, stay in line, and proceed in an orderly manner without conversations. Students who are unable to follow expected procedures are subject to disciplinary action. Fire drill and evacuation regulations are posted in every room.

## Visitors

When arriving, all visitors must use the main entrance and check in with the Office Assistant. Students may only bring friends or relatives to class as guests when permission is granted in advance by an administrator. Visitors are required to sign in, display a visitor's pass during the duration of the visit, and sign out before leaving.

## Lost & Found and Valuables

Any items found around the school can be brought to the "Lost and Found" which is located in the cafeteria. Students are discouraged from bringing valuables or large sums of money to school. The school does not accept responsibility for lost or stolen items.

## Searches and Questioning

School administrators may search students and/or their personal property if there is a reasonable basis for believing that the search will reveal evidence of a violation of school rules or of the law. School officials are also authorized to question students about information that is relevant to the performance of their duties, including enforcement of school rules.

## Behavior Outside of School

When students are outside of school, they are still a member of the Gibbs School community. Students are a representative of the school and are asked to act in a way that will make others think well of the school. Students should be aware of their safety and the safety of fellow students while traveling to and from school. Students will be held accountable and may be subject to discipline for behavior outside of school or school-related events if that behavior is serious in nature and causes substantial disruption in the school environment.

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# ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

## Grades

Grades are based on a variety of assessments such as quiz and test results, homework, projects, portfolios, and class participation. Grades **A and B, C** are passing grades, while grades **D, F, and I** require that you attend extra help. Grades have the following interpretation:

- **A** = Exceeding (meeting grade level expectations and working with concepts above grade level)
- **B** = Meeting (meeting grade level expectations)
- **C** = Progressing (making progress toward meeting standards at grade level)
- **D** = Beginning (starting to show some grade level work)
- **F** = Not Yet (not meeting passing standards yet)
- **I** = Incomplete (requirements of the subject have not been met due to excused absence)

*Late work will be accepted until the end of the quarter.*

## Report Cards

[PowerSchool-Parent Portal](#) is the system used by the district to provide families real-time access to students' attendance, assignments, and grades. Teachers are required to update the online

grade book regularly throughout the quarter. Quarter and final grades are available on the portal four times a year: November, January, April, and June. If a family does not have access to a computer, they are asked to notify the office so arrangements can be made.

## **Progress Reports**

If during the year a student's grades, effort, or participation is not satisfactory, a notice may be issued from a teacher. This notice should be signed by a parent/guardian and returned to the teacher who issued it. Such a notice also means that the student needs to seek extra help and devote time and effort to improve their understanding and grade.

## **Extra Help**

Every teacher has a designated time to offer extra help. Students who need extra help after school, may ask their teachers about the days/times when they are available to provide extra help. Teachers may ask students to stay for extra support, with prior notice to the families.

## **Homework**

Completing homework assignments is very important. Homework assignments are designed to help students be more engaged in their classwork and will help students to develop responsibility. What matters is not the time you spend, but the quality of work you do. *If you find yourself frequently spending more than two hours on your homework, please talk to your teachers.*

If you were absent or forgot the assignments, you can call another student from your Learning Community and/or check your teacher's website/Google Classroom. Homework missed due to absence must be made up when you come back. In extreme situations, your teachers may give you more time or may waive or modify some of the assignments. Please talk with your teacher to make a plan for completing any missed work.

If a student does not have any homework they should engage in one hour of reading.

## **Agenda Book/Locks**

Every student will be assigned an agenda book and a lock for their locker at the beginning of the school year. Students should record all homework assignments and projects in the agenda book. Teachers may also post assignments on Google Classroom. These are two places where families may keep track/monitor their trailblazers' assignments and projects. If locks and/or agenda books need to be replaced, there will be a \$5.00 replacement fee.

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# **SCHOOL HOURS & ATTENDANCE**

## **School Hours**

**School hours are 8:30 a.m. to 2:56 p.m. Monday through Friday.**

Students are allowed to enter the building at 8:00am for breakfast. Otherwise, students can enter the building at 8:25am and are expected to be in Advisory by 8:30am. In the case of inclement weather, or when the temperature is below 20 degrees, students will be allowed to wait in designated spaces in the school. The final bell is at 2:56 at which time all students are expected to leave the building. Students may be required to stay after school for extra help or to work on a logical consequence.

**One Wednesday each month is an Early Release Day.** On these days, students are dismissed at 1:20pm for staff professional development. These dates can be found on the school calendar located on the [district website](#).

## **AM/PM Program**

The AM/PM program runs social, sport, and special-interest activities before and after school. The hours are generally 7:30 - 8:25 AM and 3:00 - 4:00 PM. Membership in the AM/PM Program at the Gibbs costs \$80 per term.

Some activities can be attended on a drop-in basis, while other activities have a limited number of slots and require a prior sign-up. Some are offered daily, while others meet on a regular weekly schedule. Participating students may attend more than one activity. The list of activities varies depending upon student interest and staffing, and is posted in the main office. Students may suggest or initiate new activities if they can find willing adults to supervise. The sign-up forms are distributed in Advisory and can be dropped in the designated box in the main office.

## **Attendance**

Student attendance information can be accessed through the [PowerSchool - Parent Portal](#).

### **Absent**

Students who are sick should stay home to rest, recuperate, and reduce the spread of infection. If unsure whether a student should stay home due to illness, please consult the school nurse at 781-316-9010 and/or email her at [cdalton@arlington.k12.ma.us](mailto:cdalton@arlington.k12.ma.us).

**In case of an unanticipated absence, a parent/guardian is asked to call the absentee line (781) 316 - 9017 or email [gibbsafearrival@arlington.k12.ma.us](mailto:gibbsafearrival@arlington.k12.ma.us) before 8:30am, whenever possible.** If a student has not been called in absent, an automated call from "Alert Now" will be made. *If a family receives this call and the child is home from school, it is important that the family call the office to verify their absence.* In the event of an absence, even when the school has been notified via phone or email, **follow-up with a written notice is always required.**

Upon a fifth unexcused absence in the school year, a meeting will be scheduled with the building Principal (or his/her designee), the family, and the student to develop an action plan to improve attendance. In all circumstances families are encouraged to contact school staff and work collaboratively with them to correct the reasons that the student is missing school. *[Atty. note: required by G.L. c 76 sec 1B]* Excessive school absences may also result in the school taking legal action to address the situation.

### **Tardy**

All students arriving after 8:30 must sign in at the main office and receive a pass to class. At Gibbs, more than three unexcused tardies a term constitutes frequent tardiness. Frequent, unexcused tardiness may result in a logical consequence such as a family conference with administrators, a visit from the district truancy officer or an intervention to improve attendance. Medical appointments are excusable tardies (or early dismissals) only with a note from the medical provider. We encourage families to schedule appointments outside of school hours, if possible. Please consult the [school calendar](#) when scheduling appointments.

### **Early Dismissal**

If students have to leave before 2:56 p.m. they must bring a note from home to the main office prior to the start of the school day. They will be asked to fill out a dismissal form to give to the classroom teacher at the time of their required dismissal. When families arrive to pick up their child, **they must enter the school to sign the student out at the main office.** Please let us know if someone other than the parent/guardian listed on the record will be picking up your child. Whenever possible, we ask families to schedule appointments outside of school hours. If students feel ill during school, they must visit the nurse and may not attempt to dismiss themselves using their cell phones.

### **Taking Students Out of School**

Vacations during the regular school session, early departures, or late returns from scheduled vacations are strongly discouraged. Class discussion and classroom interactions often provide the main focus for learning and cannot be replicated through out-of-class make-up assignments. *Absences from school for vacation purposes are not excused.* Missed work will be made available upon the student's return. Students and families are responsible to work with teachers to create a plan for completing missed work.

### **Make-Up Work**

It is the responsibility of the student to make up any work that has been missed when a student is absent. If a student is absent for an extended period of time due to illness or injury, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the administration, teachers, and school counselors, as soon as possible. Any request for homework for absent students requires a minimum of 24 to 48 hour notice.

### **School Closings and Delays**

An "Alert Now" message will be sent in the event of any school closings or delays. School closings or delays are also reported at [www.town.arlington.ma.us](http://www.town.arlington.ma.us) and on local media stations. For a recorded message call 781-316-3510.

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## District Discipline Policies

While this section provides examples of conduct that is prohibited, not every type of prohibited conduct can be listed. Students are expected to recognize that any conduct that is inconsistent with maintaining an appropriate environment either at school or at a school-sponsored event could lead to discipline, including exclusion from school. Even misconduct that does not take place in school or at a school-sponsored event can result in discipline if it is of a serious nature and has a direct relationship to the school or causes substantial disruption to the school environment.

### Possible Detention: Logical Consequences

- Class disruption
- Out of class without a pass
- Class cut
- Inappropriate behavior during a fire drill
- Loud/inappropriate Gum Chewing/popping
- Failure to report after school
- Improper use of Technology
- Cheating
- Plagiarism
- Disrupt operation of school assembly/classroom instruction

### Possible Suspension

- Assaulting/threatening another student
- Harassment/Bullying
- Vandalism
- Theft
- Possession/use of alcohol or fireworks
- Fighting
- Destruction/defacing of school property including textbooks and library books
- Refusing to obey an instruction from a teacher and/or administrator
- Disrupt operation of school assembly/classroom instruction
- Possession/use of cigarettes, vaping devices, matches, and/or lighters

### Possible Expulsion (Section 37H of Ch. 71)

- Assaulting/threatening school personnel
- Possession of a firearm, knife or other weapon
- Possession/use of drugs

*Students are also subject to long-term suspension/expulsion by the Principal when charged/convicted of a felony based upon the standards and procedures set forth in M.G.L. c.71, §37H1/2.*

### Harassment and Bullying

If you feel you are being harassed or bullied, steps to be taken may include:

- Ask the person to stop.
- Inform the harasser/bully or a friend how you feel
- Tell a trusted adult in the school. (Telling an adult should be your first step if you are uncomfortable talking to the person.)
- Keep a record of the actions of the harasser/bully (how, where, when, what, and any witnesses) and your responses and actions.

*Please Note: If the above has not stopped the harasser/bully, keep a copy of the recorded behaviors and take it to the main office. Arlington Public School System is committed to providing a safe education for all and we will do whatever it takes to stop any form of harassment/bullying. The Arlington Public Schools Harassment and Bullying policy is listed below.*

“Bullying” is the repeated use by one or more students or a staff member 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.

“Harassment” includes communication such as, jokes, comments, innuendos, notes, display of pictures or symbols, gestures, or other conduct which offends or shows disrespect to others based on race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability.

Bullying and Harassment shall be prohibited on school grounds, 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, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a school district or school, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Nothing contained herein shall require schools to staff any non-school related activities, functions or programs. See [Appendix A](#) for additional information about reporting bullying.

### **Referral To The Police**

School officials generally report suspected criminal conduct that occurs at school or school related events to the police. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, possession of weapons such as guns or knives, possession of a controlled substance, and significant incidents of bullying, assault, vandalism, and theft. Reporting suspected criminal conduct is separate from any disciplinary action that school officials may take based upon the same conduct.

## **District Discipline Procedures**

The procedures that must be followed prior to suspending or expelling a student from school are outlined in [Appendix B](#) of this Handbook.

**Discipline of Special Education Students** The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C., §1400 et seq.) and the related regulations (34 C.F.R. §300 et seq.) (“IDEA”) provides eligible students (“students”) with certain procedural rights and protections in the context of student discipline, as set forth below.

**Short term removals.** Students who violate school rules are subject to removal from their current placement for up to ten (10) consecutive school days to the extent that such a removal would be applied to students without disabilities, without a prior determination of whether the conduct is a manifestation of the student’s disability. Students may be removed for additional periods of up to ten (10) consecutive school days in the same school year for separate incidents of misconduct without a manifestation determination, so long as the removal does not constitute a “change of placement” as described below. However, during such additional removals the district must provide the student with services to the extent necessary for progress in the general curriculum and the student’s Individualized Education Program (“IEP”) goals, as determined by the Principal in consultation with at least one teacher. In addition, if appropriate, the district must conduct a functional behavioral assessment and develop or revise an existing behavioral plan for the student.

**Change of Placement.** A suspension of longer than 10 consecutive days or a series of shorter term suspensions that constitute a pattern are considered to represent a “change in placement.” Prior to a suspension that constitutes a change in placement, the student’s Team, including the student’s parents, must convene to determine whether the behavior is a manifestation of the student’s disability. In making this determination, the Team must review all relevant information in the student’s file, including the IEP, teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parents, to determine if the conduct

was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability, or was the direct result of any failure by the school to implement the IEP.

**Results of the Manifestation Determination.** If the Team determines that the behavior is not a manifestation of the disability, then the school may suspend or expel the student consistent with the policies applied to students without disabilities, except that the district must still provide an appropriate educational program to the student, as determined by the Team, which program may be in a different setting. If the Team determines that the behavior is a manifestation of a disability, the Team must conduct a functional behavioral assessment and develop a behavioral intervention plan or where a behavioral intervention plan was previously developed, must review the plan and, if necessary, modify it to address the behavior. Except in circumstances involving drugs, weapons, or serious bodily injury as described below, the student will be returned to the placement from which the student was removed unless the placement is changed by agreement or through the Team process.

**Exception for Drugs, Weapons and Serious Injury.** Regardless of the Team's decisions regarding the manifestation determination, school personnel may order a change in the placement of a student to an interim alternative educational setting, such setting to be determined by the Team, for not more than forty-five (45) school days if the student (1) carries a weapon to school or to a school function; (2) knowingly possesses, uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school, on school premises, or at a school function; or has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person at school, on school premises, or at a school function. Additionally, a Massachusetts Bureau of Special Education Hearing Officer, under certain circumstances, may order a change in the placement of a student with a disability to an interim alternative education setting for up to forty-five (45) days if the hearing officer determines that maintaining the current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or others.

When a parent(s)/guardian(s) disagrees with the Team's decision on the "manifestation determination" or with a decision regarding placement, the parent(s)/guardian(s) has a right to request an expedited due process hearing from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals.

Additional information regarding the procedural protections for special education students eligible for services under laws providing for services for students with disabilities can be obtained from Stephanie Greiner 781-316-3745 ex. 28043.

**Discipline of Students Whose Eligibility for Special Education is Suspected** The IDEA protections summarized above also apply to a child who has not yet been found eligible for services under the statute if the district is "deemed to have knowledge" that the child was eligible for such services before the conduct that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred. The IDEA provides that a school district is "deemed to have knowledge" if: (1) the child's parent had expressed concern in writing to district supervisory or administrative personnel or the child's teacher that the child needs special education and related services; (2) the child's parent had requested an evaluation of the child to determine eligibility for special education services; or (3) the teacher of the child or other school district personnel had expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior by the child directly to the district's director of special education or to other supervisory personnel. However, a school district is not "deemed to have knowledge" if the district evaluated the student and determined that the child was not eligible for special education services or the child's parent refused an evaluation of the child or IDEA services.

If the school district has no knowledge that a student is an eligible student under the IDEA before taking disciplinary measures against the student, the student may be disciplined just as any other student may be. If, however, a request is made for an evaluation to determine eligibility while the student is subject to disciplinary measures, the district must conduct the evaluation in an expedited manner. Pending the results of the evaluation, the student must remain in the educational placement

determined by school authorities, which may include suspension or expulsion without services. If the student is determined eligible for an IEP as a result of the evaluation, the school district must provide the student with special education and related services in accordance with the IDEA.

**Discipline of Students with Disabilities Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act** Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504") provides students with disabilities certain procedural rights and protections in the context of student discipline. Prior to imposing a "significant change in placement" for disciplinary reasons, the district must determine whether the conduct is a manifestation of the student's disability. A significant change of placement results not only from an exclusion for more than 10 consecutive school days, but also from a pattern of shorter suspensions accumulating to more than 10 school days during a school year. Whether a pattern exists must be decided on a case-by-case basis, considering such factors as the length of each suspension, the nature of the alleged conduct, the proximity of the suspensions to one another, and the total amount of time the student is excluded from school.

Prior to any significant change in placement for disciplinary reasons, a group of individuals knowledgeable of the student, the evaluation data, and the school program must determine whether the conduct at issue is related to the student's disability. If the conduct is directly related to the disability, the district will not impose the discipline and will develop an individual behavior management plan if the behavior significantly interferes with the student's ability to benefit from his education. If the conduct is not directly related to the student's disability, the district may discipline the student as it does general education students.

## **Policies on Harassment and Discrimination**

### **Harassment Policy**

The Arlington Public Schools are committed to maintaining a school environment free of harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, gender identity, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. Harassment by administrators, certified and support personnel, students, vendors and other individuals at school or at school sponsored events is unlawful and is strictly prohibited. The Arlington Public Schools requires all employees and students to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner with respect to their fellow employees, students and all members of the school community.

**Definition of Harassment:** Harassment includes communications such as jokes, comments, innuendos, notes, display of pictures or symbols, gestures, or other conduct which offends or shows disrespect to others based upon race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.

By law, what constitutes harassment is determined from the perspective of a reasonable person with the characteristic on which the harassment is based. What one person may consider acceptable behavior, may reasonably be viewed as harassment by another person. Therefore, individuals should consider how their words and actions might reasonably be viewed by other individuals. It is also important for individuals to make it clear to others when a particular behavior or communication is unwelcome, intimidating, hostile or offensive.

**Sexual Harassment.** While all types of harassment are prohibited, sexual harassment requires particular attention. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Acceptance of, or submission to, such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of employment or education.
2. The individual's response to such conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting an employee or as a basis for educational, disciplinary, or other decisions affecting a student.



3. Such conduct interferes with an individual's job duties, education or participation in extracurricular activities.
4. The conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work or school environment.

### **Harassment and Retaliation Prohibited**

Harassment in any form or for any reason is absolutely forbidden. This includes harassment by administrators, certified and support personnel, students, vendors and other individuals in school or at school related events. In addition, retaliation against any individual who has brought harassment or other inappropriate behavior to the attention of the school or who has cooperated in an investigation of a complaint under this policy is unlawful and will not be tolerated by the Arlington Public Schools.

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

#### Investigation

Any individual who believes he/she has been harassed or who has witnessed or learned about the harassment of another person in the school environment should inform the Principal as soon as possible. If the individual does not wish to discuss the issue with him/her, or if s/he does not address the problem in an effective manner, the individual should inform the Assistant Superintendent of Schools who can be reached at 869 Massachusetts Ave, Arlington, MA 02476, 781-316-3523

The Arlington Public Schools will promptly investigate every complaint of harassment. If it determines that harassment has occurred, it will take appropriate action to end the harassment and to ensure that it is not repeated. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent consistent with the school's obligations under law and under applicable collective bargaining agreements.

In certain cases, the harassment of a student may constitute child abuse under Massachusetts Law. The Arlington Public Schools will comply with all legal requirements governing the reporting of suspected cases of child abuse and will report suspected criminal activity to the appropriate authorities.

### **Closure of a Complaint**

When an investigation has been completed, school personnel will inform the complainant of the results and file a report with the Coordinator for Title IX/Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act/Chapter 622.

The Arlington Public Schools urges all individuals in the school community to bring any concerns or complaints of harassment to the attention of school personnel so that they can resolve the issue. The state agencies responsible for enforcing laws prohibiting harassment is the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD), located at One Ashburton Place Boston, Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [add address]. The agency responsible for enforcing federal laws prohibiting harassment in the employment context is the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which is located at One Congress Street, Boston, MA and in the educational context is U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, [add address]

"It is the policy of the Arlington Public Schools to notify parents and guardians if and when the curriculum primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues. Parents and guardians may exempt their children from any portion of said curriculum through written notice to the school principal. No child so exempted shall be penalized by reason of such exemption. To the extent practical, program instruction materials for said curricula shall be made reasonably accessible to parents, guardians, educators, school administrators, and others for inspection and review."

The Arlington Public Schools Curricula is aligned with the National Health Frameworks. At the Ottoson Middle School, health topics are taught in Health/Physical Education, Family and Consumer Science, and Science courses as well as school wide assemblies and field trips. Middle School health topics include Violence Prevention, Substance Use Prevention, Relationships and Communication Skills, Growth and Development, Reproduction/Sexuality, AIDS/HIV, Pregnancy, Birth Control, Mental Health, Prevention of Sexual Abuse, Physical Activity and Fitness, Disease Prevention/Control, Safety and Injury Prevention, Ecological Health, Community/Public Health, Personal Wellness, sexual orientation and current topics in the media. A Youth Risk Behavior Survey is administered every two years.

Parents who desire additional information or would like to view curricular materials may contact the building principal.

### **Smoking/Tobacco Use**

The possession and/or use of any vaping materials (regardless of the substance involved) and tobacco products within the school buildings, school facilities, on school grounds, on school buses by an individual, at school sponsored events, including school personnel and students, is prohibited at all times.

Smoking cessation classes are available to all students after school during the school year.

These excerpts are taken directly from the Town of Arlington Board of Health regulations. The public regulations on tobacco use will be enforced within the buildings and on the grounds of Arlington High School.

## **TOWN OF ARLINGTON BOARD OF HEALTH RULES AND REGULATIONS RESTRICTING SMOKING AND DISTRIBUTION OF TOBACCO AND TOBACCO PRODUCTS WITHIN THE TOWN OF ARLINGTON**

### **SECTION 3.0 PROHIBITION ON SMOKING IN PUBLIC PLACES**

No person shall smoke in any public place. Schools. It shall be unlawful for any person, including all teaching and non-teaching personnel to smoke in any public or private school, on school grounds or school buses at any time.

### **SECTION 5.0 PUBLIC PLACES/WORKPLACE ENFORCEMENT**

(A) Any person who smokes in a non-smoking area shall be subject to a fine of \$100.00 for each violation.

All students caught in violation of this policy will be issued a \$100 fine. For a first offense, the fee will be waived if the student completes the consultation and education provided within 21 days. For any subsequent violations in the school year a \$100 ticket will be issued. No report cards, schedules, diplomas or transcripts will be issued until any and all fines are paid in full.

## APPENDIX A

### **Bullying and Retaliation are Prohibited**

The Arlington Public Schools are committed to maintaining a school environment where students are free from bullying, including cyber-bullying, and the effects of such conduct. We further recognize that students may be more vulnerable to bullying based upon actual or perceived differences related to race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socio-economic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical developmental or sensory disability or by associations with other people who have one or more of these characteristics. We will provide support to students whose vulnerability is brought to the attention of a teacher, guidance counselor or administrator through observation or direct report from a student, staff member or parent/guardian. This support may be in the form of counseling, education to support both the student's ability to report bullying and his/her skills, knowledge and strategies to respond to bullying or harassment.

#### **A. Definitions**

**Bullying** is conduct that is repeated by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, a school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional and is directed at a student, causing one or more of the following:

- a. Physical or emotional harm to the targeted student or damage to his/her property;
- b. Placement of the targeted student in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself or of damage to his/her property;
- c. Hostile environment at school for the targeted student;
- d. Infringement on the rights of the targeted student at school; or
- e. Material and substantial disruption to the educational process or the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying generally involves "picking on" a student over time and may include conduct such as hitting and shoving; pressuring a student into taking an action he/she does not wish to take; words that involve threats, teasing, putdowns, or name-calling; threatening looks, gestures, or actions; cruel rumors; false accusations; and social isolation.

**Cyberbullying** is bullying through the use of cell phones, computers or other technology and may include conduct such as sending derogatory, harassing, or threatening email messages, instant messages, text messages, or bogs; creating websites or blogs that make fun of, humiliate, or intimidate others; and posting or sending embarrassing or inappropriate pictures or images of others. It may also include creating a website, bog, or posting by which the creator/author impersonates another person.

**Hostile Environment** is a circumstance 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. The targeted student becomes so concerned about bullying that he/she is unable to participate in and concentrate on academic and other school activities.

**Retaliation** is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying. It involves a student or staff member "getting back at" a student because of a belief that the student reported bullying or provided information about it to an adult or others who may help the targeted student.

## **B. Acts of Bullying (Including Cyberbullying) and Retaliation Are Prohibited.**

The Arlington Public Schools prohibit bullying (including cyberbullying) and retaliation as defined above both at school and under the following circumstances:

- on school grounds or any property next to school grounds;
- at the bus stop or on school buses or any other school vehicle;
- at any school-sponsored, or school-related activities, functions or programs;
- through use any school computers, internet connection or other school based technology;
- at a location or during activities that are not school related, or by using a private computer or cell phone, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the targeted student; infringes on the rights of the targeted student at school, or otherwise disrupts the orderly operation of the school.

## **C. How to Report Bullying**

Students who believe they are the targets of bullying or retaliation, or who know about bullying conduct should report the conduct to: K-5 Building principals, 6-8 Grade level Administrator, 9-12 House Deans. Students may also report the conduct to a teacher, guidance counselor, or other school staff member, who will in turn report the incident to the Principal (or to a member of the Superintendent's staff if appropriate). Students may also contact a member of the Superintendent's staff directly at [add contact information]. Students are urged to report all conduct that is of actual concern to them. However, knowingly making a false accusation of bullying could result in discipline.

## **D. Addressing Concerns Regarding Bullying**

The Principal or other appropriate administrator will be responsible for taking steps to investigate and otherwise address reports of bullying and retaliation. Where appropriate, the Principal/designee will take steps to restore a student's safety even before an investigation has been completed. Students who engage in bullying will be subject to discipline by the Principal or Assistant Principal, subject to any procedural requirements. In making disciplinary decisions, the Principal/Assistant Principal will consider both the need for accountability and the importance of teaching appropriate behavior. The range of disciplinary action for students that may be taken includes, but is not limited to:

- verbal warning;
- written warning;
- reprimand;
- detention;
- short-term or long-term suspension; or
- expulsion from school

In addition to taking disciplinary action, the Principal/Designee will report conduct relating to bullying and retaliation to local law enforcement if s/he believes that criminal charges may be pursued.

Nothing in this handbook is intended to prevent school staff and/or school committee, if applicable, from addressing and taking disciplinary action against a student for conduct that does not meet the definition of bullying/cyberbullying or retaliation, as defined above, but that is nevertheless inappropriate for the school environment.

## **E. Closing a Complaint Regarding Bullying**

In the event school staff determine that bullying or retaliation (as defined in this policy) has taken place, the Principal or designee will, in addition to taking disciplinary action, notify the parent or guardian of the student aggressor. Staff will also inform the parent of the targeted student of the steps that will support the student and to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation, so long as it is consistent with applicable legal restrictions. For

example, specific information about disciplinary action taken will generally not be released to the target's parent or guardian—unless it involves a “stay away or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

#### **F. Further Review**

If either party is dissatisfied with the results of an investigation, he/she may direct his/her concerns in writing to the Superintendent or designee for further consideration.

In addition, regardless of the outcome, school officials will inform parents about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Resolution System (PRS) and how to access that system. 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 are also available at the Superintendent's office.

- ***Additional information regarding the Arlington Public Schools' procedures for addressing allegations of harassment, can be found at:***  
<http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/asc/policies/aca.pdf>
- ***The above language is intended to be consistent with the Arlington Public School's Policy Addressing Bullying and the Arlington Public School's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. The complete plan is available at:***  
<http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/administration/bullyingprevention/pdfs/apsbullyingpreventionplan.pdf>
- ***A Bullying Report Form is attached at the end of this document and more are available in the main office or online at:***  
[http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/eforms/parent\\_forms/Bullying\\_-\\_Initial\\_Suspected\\_Bullying\\_Report.pdf](http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/eforms/parent_forms/Bullying_-_Initial_Suspected_Bullying_Report.pdf)

The grade level administrator will be responsible for taking steps to investigate and address bullying and retaliation. They will take steps to ensure the safety of the target, and will notify parents of the aggressor and the target of confirmed cases of bullying and retaliation. The Arlington Public Schools Bullying Prevention Plan is located at: <https://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/administration/bullyingprevention/pdfs/apsbullyingpreventionplan.pdf> March 2014 Arlington Public Schools

## **APPENDIX B**

### **DUE PROCESS and OTHER PROVISIONS RELATING TO STUDENT SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION** **STATUTORY OFFENSES: CONDUCT THAT MAY LEAD TO EXPULSION UNDER M.G.L. c. 71, §37H and 37H½**

Under M.G.L. Ch. 71, §37H, students are subject to expulsion (i.e., permanent exclusion) by the Principal for the following conduct:

- Possession of a controlled substance (such as marijuana, cocaine, or prescription drugs not authorized by the school nurse)
- Possession of a dangerous weapon\*
- Assault on teachers, administrative staff or other educational personnel

\*This includes not only knives and guns, explosive devices and realistic replicas of such weapons/devices, but also other objects used to assault another person or to otherwise create a dangerous situation, such as a baseball bat, a pair of scissors, matches or a lighter. While such objects would not always constitute “dangerous weapons”, administrators and educational professionals will review the circumstances of each case and make a reasonable determination about whether a particular object in a student's possession constitutes a dangerous weapon in the school setting. Any illegal weapon will be turned over to the Police Department. Any student who brings a firearm to school must be expelled for a minimum of one school year, with exceptions granted only by the superintendent. (The definition of a

firearm includes but is not limited to guns (including a starter gun), bombs, grenades, rockets, missiles, mines and similar devices.)

Students are also subject to long term suspension/expulsion by the Principal when charged/convicted of a felony based upon the standards and procedures set forth in M.G.L. c.71, §37H½.

Any student who is removed from school for a disciplinary offense under G.L. c. 71, §37H or §37H½ for more than ten consecutive days will have an opportunity to receive educational services and make academic progress during the period of removal under a school-wide education service plan, and will be so informed at the time of the suspension/expulsion.

### **Procedures Applicable to Statutory Offenses**

When considering the exclusion of a student from school for possession of a dangerous weapon, possession of a controlled substance (such as marijuana, cocaine, or prescription drugs not authorized by the school nurse), or assault on teachers, an administrator may place a student on short term suspension (ten days or less) based upon an informal hearing, to be followed by a formal hearing before the Principal within that period of suspension to determine whether to take additional disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from school.

1. The informal hearing will be in the form of a conference between the student and the principal or designee. At this conference, the student (1) shall be informed of the reason for the conference, (2) shall be given the opportunity to present his or her side of the story, and (3) shall be given a decision on the suspension. If the administrator deems delay of the hearing necessary to avoid danger or substantial disruption, this process may occur immediately after, rather than before, the suspension.
2. Prior to putting a suspension into effect, the principal or designee shall make a reasonable effort to telephone and inform the student's parent or guardian of the impending suspension; this shall include attempts to contact the parents or guardian at home and at work. Parents may contact the school for additional information regarding the suspension.
3. A letter will be mailed to the parent/guardian of the suspended student stating:
  - a) The reason for the suspension
  - b) A statement of the effective date and duration of the suspension
  - c) A statement regarding whether or not the Principal will schedule a formal hearing to consider further discipline, up to and including expulsion from school in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, §37H (See below.)

When considering a suspension/expulsion of a student charged with/convicted of felony, the Principal will use the standards and procedures set forth in M.G.L. c.71, §37H½. In addition, prior to initiating such procedures, the Principal may meet informally with the student and/or his parents to review the charge and the applicable standards if the Principal deems appropriate. (See below.)

### **Controlled Substances, Dangerous Weapons and Assaults on Education Personnel (M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H)**

1. 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.
2. 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.

3. 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).

4. 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 is not limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.

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

#### **Felony Complaints and Felony Convictions (M.G.L. c. 71, §37H½)**

1. Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony or upon the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may suspend such student for a period of time determined appropriate by said principal or headmaster if said principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and the reasons for such suspension prior to such suspension taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such suspension; provided, however, that such suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the Superintendent. The student shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the Superintendent. The student shall notify the Superintendent in writing of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the suspension. The Superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) within three (3) calendar days of the student's request for an appeal. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The Superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The Superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days of the hearing. Such a decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the suspension.

2. Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony delinquency, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may expel said student if such principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and reasons for such expulsion prior to such expulsion taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such expulsion; provided, however, that the expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the Superintendent. The student shall have the right to appeal the expulsion to the Superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent, in writing, of his request for an appeal no later than five (5) calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) within three calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal; or headmaster, including recommending an alternate

educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such a decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the expulsion.

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

### **CONDUCT OTHER THAN STATUTORY OFFENSES**

Conduct of concern in a school setting that is not covered by M.G.L. c. 71, §37H and 37H½ may result in disciplinary action up to and including long term suspension (up to 90 days) from school. The administration will determine the consequences for serious infractions of the Code of Discipline and avoid using long-term suspension from school (i.e., more than ten days cumulative in a school year) as a consequence until alternatives have been tried as appropriate. Alternatives may include the use of evidence-based strategies and programs such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive behavioral interventions and supports.)

If a principal decides to impose an out-of-school suspension for a student in preschool or in grades K through 3, the principal will send to the superintendent a copy of the written determination and an explanation of the reasons therefore, before the out-of-school suspension takes effect.

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.

### **DUE PROCESS: PROCEDURES THAT APPLY TO DISCIPLINE FOR CONDUCT OTHER THAN STATUTORY OFFENSES**

#### **A. In-School Suspension for Less than 10 Cumulative Days During a School Year**

An in-school suspension is a removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises. The procedure for an in-school suspension of no more than (10) school days (consecutive or cumulatively for multiple infractions during the school year) will be as follows:

1. The administrator will inform the student of the disciplinary offense charged, the basis for the charge, and provide the student an opportunity to respond. If the administrator determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the administrator will inform the student of the length of the student's in-school suspension, which may not exceed 10 days, cumulatively or consecutively, in a school year.
2. On the same day as the in-school suspension decision, the administrator will make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding that the student committed the infraction, and the length of the in-school suspension. The administrator will also invite parents to a meeting to discuss the student's academic performance and behavior, strategies for student engagement, and possible responses to the behavior. Such meetings will be scheduled on the day of the suspension if possible, and if not, as soon thereafter as possible. If the administrator is unable to reach the parent after making and documenting at least (2) attempts to do so, such attempts will constitute reasonable efforts for purposes of orally informing the parent of the in-school suspension.
3. The administrator will send written notice to the student and parent about the in-school suspension, including the reason and the length of the in-school suspension, and inviting the parents to a meeting with the administrator to discuss the student's academic performance and behavior, strategies for student engagement and possible response to the behavior. Such meetings will be scheduled on the day of the suspension if possible, and if not, as soon thereafter as possible. If the administrator is unable to reach



the parent after making and documenting at least (2) attempts to do so, such attempts shall constitute reasonable efforts for purposes of orally informing the parent of the in-school suspension. An in-school suspension of more than 10 cumulative days in a school year will be subject to the procedures for long-term suspension found under Section C below.

#### **B. Procedures for Short-Term, Out-of-School Suspensions (10 Cumulative Days or Less in a School Year)**

Except in the case of an Emergency Removal as provided under Section D below, prior to imposing a short-term out-of-school suspension (**i.e., 10 days or less in a school year**), **the administrator will** provide the student and his/her parent oral and written notice and an opportunity to participate in an informal hearing.

1. **Notice:** The written notice to the student and the parent will be in English and in the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate and will include the following:
  - a. The disciplinary offense;
  - b. The basis for the charge;
  - c. The potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension;
  - d. The opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the administrator concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and for the parent to attend the hearing;
  - e. The date, time, and location of the hearing;
  - f. The right of the student and the student's parent to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate;

Written notice to the parent may be made by hand delivery, first-class mail, certified mail, or email to the address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the school and parents.

2. **Efforts to Involve Parents:** The administrator will make reasonable efforts to notify the parent of the opportunity to attend the hearing. To conduct a hearing without the parent present, the administrator must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent. The administrator is presumed to have made reasonable efforts if the administrator has sent written notice and has documented at least two (2) attempts to contact the parent in the manner specified by the parent for emergency notification.

3. **Format of Hearing:** The administrator will discuss the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student also will have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the administrator should consider in determining whether other remedies and consequences may be appropriate. The administrator will provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the administrator should consider in determining consequences for the student.

4. **Decision:** The administrator will provide written notice to the student and parent of his/her 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. The notice of determination may be in the form of an update to the original written notice of hearing.

#### **C. Procedures for Long-Term Suspension**

Except in the case of an Emergency Removal provided under Section D below, prior to imposing a long-term suspension (**more than 10 days of suspension, whether in-school or out-of-school**),

**whether consecutive or cumulative for multiple offenses during a school year), an administrator will follow the procedures for short-term suspension plus additional** procedures as follows:

1. **Notice:** The notice will include all of the components for a short-term suspension in Section B above, plus the following:
  - a. In advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the administrator may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not;
  - b. The right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's/parent's expense;
  - c. 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;
  - d. The right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;
  - e. The right to request that the hearing be recorded by the administrator, and a copy of the audio recording provided to the student or parent upon request; and
  - f. The right to appeal the administrator's decision to impose long-term suspension to the superintendent.
2. **Format of Hearing:** The Hearing will afford the rights set forth in the notice above. The administrator will also provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the administrator should consider in determining consequences for the student.
3. **Decision:** Based on the evidence, the administrator will determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to long-term suspension, what remedy or consequence will be imposed, in place of or in addition to a long-term suspension. The administrator will send the written determination to the student and parent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to the address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the school and the parent. If the administrator decides to suspend the student on a long-term basis, the written determination will:
  - a. Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing was held, and the participants at the hearing;
  - b. Set out the key facts and conclusions reached;
  - c. Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school;
  - d. Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of removal from school (if more than 10 consecutive days);
  - e. Inform the student of the right to appeal the administrator's decision to the superintendent or designee. Notice of the right of appeal will be in English and the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate, and will include the following information stated in plain language:
    - i. 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
    - ii. The long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the superintendent decides to reverse the administrator's determination on appeal.

No long-term suspension will extend beyond the end of the school year in which such suspension is imposed.

#### **D. Exception for Emergency Removal**

Notwithstanding the provisions for short or long-term suspension set forth above, a student who is charged with a disciplinary offense may be removed temporarily from school if 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 administrator's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption.

The administrator will immediately notify the superintendent in writing of the removal and the reason for it, and describe the danger or disruption by the student.

The temporary removal will not exceed two (2) school days following the day of the emergency removal, during which time the administrator will provide the following, as applicable to the length of suspension:

- 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 other applicable matters;
- Provide written notice to the student and parent as provided in Section B or C above, as applicable;
- Provide the student an opportunity for a hearing with the administrator, as applicable, 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 administrator, student, and parent.
- Render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day.

An administrator may not remove a student from school on an emergency basis for a disciplinary offense until adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation.

#### **E. Appeal to the Superintendent**

If a decision by an administrator, following the parent meeting, results in suspension of a student for more than 10 cumulative school days for the school year, the student may appeal the decision to the superintendent. In order to do so the student or parent must file a notice of appeal with the superintendent within five (5) calendar days with a seven (7) day postponement option. The superintendent must 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. If the appeal is not filed within this time frame, the superintendent may deny the appeal, or may allow the appeal in his or her discretion, for good cause.

The following apply:

- The superintendent will make a good faith effort to include the parents in the hearing. The superintendent will 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 will send written notice to the parent of the date, time, and location of the hearing.
- The superintendent will conduct a hearing to determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense of which the student is accused, and if so, what the consequences will be. The superintendent will arrange for an audio recording of the hearing, a copy of which will be provided to the student or parent upon request. The superintendent will 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 will have all the rights afforded the student at the administrator's hearing for long-term suspension as described in Section C above.

- The superintendent will issue a written decision within five (5) calendar days of the hearing which meets the requirements for a long-term suspension as described in Section C above. If the superintendent determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than the administrator, but will not impose a suspension greater than that imposed by the administrator's decision.

The decision of the superintendent constitutes the final decision of the school district.

## REPORTING FORM FOR ALLEGATIONS OF BULLYING OR RETALIATION RELATED TO BULLYING

1. Name of Person Filing the Report: \_\_\_\_\_

(Note: Reports may be made anonymously (unless reporter is staff member or administrator), but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous complaint)

2. Check whether you are the:

☐ Target of the behavior

☐ Reporter (not the target)

3. Check whether you are a:

☐ Student

☐ Parent

☐ Staff Member (specify role) \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Administrator

☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Your contact information/telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Information about the Alleged Incident

• Name of Alleged Target (of behavior): \_\_\_\_\_

• Name of the Alleged Aggressor (Person who allegedly engaged in the behavior):  
\_\_\_\_\_

• Date(s) of Incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_

• Time When Incident(s) Occurred: \_\_\_\_\_

• Location of Incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_

• Please list names of people who saw the incident or have information about it:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe the details of the incident (including names of people involved, what occurred, and what each person did and said, including specific words used, if possible). Please use additional space on the back if necessary.

5. Signature of person filing this report \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Note: Reports may be made anonymously unless reporter is staff member or administrator)

6. Signature of person receiving this report \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

7. Initial Determination Regarding Potential Civil Rights Violation: If there is evidence indicating that the reported incident is related to a protected classification (i.e. race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability), the person receiving this report must arrange for the allegations to be processed under the district's harassment policy rather than bullying policy.