



# METHUEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS



## HANDBOOK FOR STUDENT-PARENT

2011-2012



# METHUEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## GRAMMAR SCHOOL PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK 2011-2012 SCHOOL YEAR

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# **GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION**

## **PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE**

Dear Grammar School Parents and Students,

Welcome to the Methuen Public Schools. It is our goal to provide students with an educational experience that is both challenging and rewarding in a safe and supportive environment.

This handbook contains the answers to many of the questions you may have regarding the school and school-wide policies. Please take some time to review the information.

We are here to work with you and look forward to developing a partnership that will ensure a high quality education for every Methuen Public School student. If you have any questions or concerns, always feel free to contact the school.

With best wishes,

Supervising Principals

**METHUEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY**

The Methuen Public Schools believes that the schooling of young people is a sublime responsibility that is based upon the expectation that all students can and will master a carefully crafted school curriculum designed to provide youngsters with the skills and abilities necessary to compete in a worldwide economy.

We recognize the diversity of our student body and celebrate differences in racial and ethnic background, abilities, talents, interests, and life experiences. This diversity provides us with the opportunity to learn from each other and to develop the skills necessary to function as good citizens and tomorrow's leaders.

Curriculum content and course offerings shall reflect the very latest educational thought and should be consistent with the requirements placed upon all school systems in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Learning experiences must provide youngsters with a solid foundation in basic academic skills. However, basic skill attainment is merely an educational beginning. We expect all our students to communicate effectively, express themselves through the arts, understand healthful living, think critically about situations, be creative problem-solvers, and develop a thirst for lifelong learning.

The school system must also share in the responsibility for the social development of young people and ensure that the school environment is physically and emotionally safe. Students must develop a sense of social awareness, self-esteem, self-discipline, respect for themselves and others, and the need to take responsibility for their own actions. They must also develop a sense of community that extends beyond the school. The school system must also provide a program of co-curricular activities that teaches youngsters the value of teamwork, develops self-confidence, and generates a sense of spirit and belonging.

Teachers, Administrators, and support staff must collaborate with each other, with the home, and with outside agencies. All adults must, themselves, demonstrate and model continued growth and development and must use new learning's and understandings in the educational context. Instructional staff must focus their attention on the individuality of children and adapt teaching styles and techniques to the needs of learners. In this sense, the teaching role is dynamic, exciting, and experience-based.

We also believe that there is a relationship between the role that parents play and academic achievement. To this end, we view parents as our partners in the intellectual and social development of our children. Parents are encouraged to take an active role in their child's education, taking an interest in lessons, projects, and homework. We believe in involving parents in decision-making that involves their children and providing them with opportunities to actively participate within the school community.

Adopted: July 22, 1997

**DISTRICT GOALS  
2011-2012 District Goals**

Based on the student achievement data, the district goals were established through collegial dialogue that involved all of the district's administrators, teachers, and cost center managers. In order to improve student achievement at all levels and across the curriculum, the district has set the following goals...

1. *Provide, supervise, and sustain effective interventions to increase the success of all underperforming students, including those in the transient and subgroup populations.*
2. *Continue curriculum development and revision and ensure appropriate classroom implementation of new curricula.*
3. *Provide, supervise, and support effective instruction that communicates high expectations and that meets the needs of all learners.*
4. *Improve classroom standards-based assessment practices and use of assessment data for formative and summative purposes.*
5. *Expand parental communication and involvement in the schools.*
6. *Support our students' learning by organizing effective organizational structures, nurturing a healthy culture, and providing well-maintained facilities.*
7. *Review and refine the district's business and financial practices, including budget preparation, to ensure that they identify and effectively deploy resources to support the student achievement goals.*

Revised & Readopted:            April 11, 2011

## **IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

### **Timony Grammar School**

Supervising Principal	978-722-9002
Principal/Clerk Secretary	978-722-9002
Associate Principal (Gr.PK-4)	978-722-9004
Lower School Secretary	978-722-9004
Associate Principal (Gr. 5-8)	978-722-9006
Upper School Secretary	978-722-9006
Special Education Administrator	978-722-9001 Ext.3428
School Nurses, RN	978-722-9009

### **Comprehensive Grammar School**

Supervising Principal	978-722-9052
Principal/Clerk Secretary	978-722-9052
Associate Principals (Gr. PK-8) Secretary	978-722-9054 or 978-722-9056 978-722-9054 or 978-722-9056
Special Education Administrator	978-722-9051 Ext.5213
School Nurses, RN	978-722-9059

### **Tenney Grammar School**

Supervising Principal	978-722-9027
Principal Clerk/Secretary	978-722-9027
Associate Principal (Gr. PK-4)	978-722-9029
Lower School Secretary	978-722-9029
Associate Principal (Gr. 5-8)	978-722-9031
Upper School Secretary	978-722-9031
Special Education Administrator	978-722-9026 Ext. 4487
School Nurses, RN	978-722-9034

### **Marsh Grammar School**

Supervising Principal	978-722-9077
Secretary	978-722-9077
Associate Principal, (PK-4)	978-722-9079
Lower School Secretary	978-722-9079
Associate Principal, (Gr. 5-8)	978-722-9081
Upper School Secretary	978-722-9081
Special Education Administrator	978-722-9076 Ext. 6115
School Nurses, RN	978-722-9084

## **CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATION**

Ms. Judith Scannell Superintendent of Schools	978-722-6001
Dr. Jennifer Smith Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	978-722-6007
Ms. Gina Bozek Director of Special Education	978-722-6014
Ms. Lyn Griffin Director of Grants Management and Program Development	978-722-6008
Mr. Timothy Hill Director of Mathematics and Computer Technology	978-722-6009
Mr. Glenn Fratto Business Administrator	978-722-6005
Ms. Colleen McCarthy Director of Human Resources	978-722-6013

### **District-Wide Programming/Services**

Ms. Ann Piccolomini Supervisor, Title I	978-722-9026Ext.4449
Ms. Jane Sigillo Supervisor of Language Acquisition	978-722-9051Ext.5221
Mr. Brian Fowler Supervisor of Transportation, Emergency Management, and Crossing Guards	978-722-9001Ext.3149
Mr. Wayne Vespa Director of School Nutrition Services	978-722-9076Ext.6117
Mr. Bruce Stella Director of Facilities	978-722-6006

### **School Committee**

Mayor William M. Manzi III, Chairperson  
Robert F. Vogler, Vice-Chairperson  
Evan Chaisson, Secretary  
Barbara Grondine  
Kenneth Henrick  
Gary M. Marcoux  
Kenneth Willette

# METHUEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## 2011-2012 School Calendar

### August 2011

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

### August

1 Instructional

2 Staff

16-18	Tues-Thurs	Summer Leadership Academy
22-25	Mon-Thurs	New Teacher Orientations
30	Tues	First Day All Faculty & Staff All Faculty & Staff Meeting - 8:30 a.m. - MHS
31	Wednesday	First Day for Students - 1-12 - Full Day

### Septem

### ber 2011

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

### September

20 Instructional

20 Staff

2	Friday	No School for 10 months Staff & Students
5	Monday	Labor Day - Schools Closed
6	Tuesday	First Day for PK and Kindergarten Students

### October 2011

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

### October

20 Instructional

20 Staff

10	Monday	Columbus Day - Schools Closed
28	Friday	Early Release Professional Development K-12 (PreK TBD)

### November 2011

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

### November

18 Instructional

19 Staff

8	Tuesday	Full Day Professional Development - No Classes
11	Friday	Veterans Day - Schools Closed
23	Wednesday	Early Dismissal - NO PreK Students
24	Thursday	Thanksgiving - Schools Closed
25	Friday	Schools Closed

### December 2011

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

### December

16 Instructional

16 Staff

1	Thursday	<b>TENTATIVE</b> Early Release - Parent Conferences - K-8 (PreK TBD) High School - Has a Full Day of Classes
1	Thursday	Parent Conferences - PreK-8 - 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.
2	Friday	Early Release - Parent Conferences - K-8 (PreK TBD) High School - Has a Full Day of Classes
23	Friday	Winter Break - Schools Closed thru January 2nd

Full Day 1st day All Faculty and Staff

Day 1 Students 1-12

No School

Early Dismissal - K-12

Full Day Professional Development - NO Classes

Early Dismissal- K-8 - Parent Conferences - H.S. has Full Day of Classes

MHS Graduation Day

Day 180 - Early Release

Day 185 - Early Release (includes 5 built in snow days)

Day 1 Students PK&K

COLOR KEY:

January 2012						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

January	20 Instructional	20 Staff
2	Monday	Schools Closed (New Year Holiday)
3	Tuesday	School Resumes
11	Wednesday	Early Release Professional Development K-12 (PreK TBD)
16	Monday	Martin Luther King Jr. Day - Schools Closed

February 2012						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29			

February	16 Instructional	16 Staff
2	Thursday	Early Release Professional Development K-12 (PreK TBD)
20	Monday	Winter Recess - Schools Closed
27	Monday	School Resumes

March 2012						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

March	22 Instructional	22 Staff
15	Thursday	<b>TENTATIVE</b> Early Release - Parent Conferences - K-8 (PreK TBD) High School - Has a Full Day of Classes
16	Friday	Early Release - Parent Conferences - K-8 (PreK TBD)  High School - Has a Full Day of Classes

April 2012						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

April	15 Instructional	15 Staff
		Gr
6	Friday	Sc
16	Monday	Spring Recess - Schools Closed
23	Monday	School Resumes

May 2012						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

May	22 Instructional	22 Staff
4	Friday	Early Release Professional Development K-12 (PreK TBD)
28	Monday	Memorial Day - Schools Closed

June 2012						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

	15 Instructional	15 Staff
<b><u>Kindergarten Screening Begins - 3 days before last day of school</u></b>		
8	Friday	TENTATIVE High School Graduation
14	Thursday	180th Instructional Day - Early Release
21	Thursday	185th Instructional Day - Early Release
<b><u>Unit B - Professional Development - Day after last day of school</u></b>		

**Grammar Schools Trimesters Reporting**  
 1st Trimester ends Wednesday, November 23 Report Card issued Friday, December 2  
 2nd Trimester ends Friday, March 9 Report Card issued Friday, March 16  
 3rd Trimester ends and report cards issued last day of school  
 3rd Trimester ends for Kindergarten 3 days before last day of school

**Methuen High School Only Reporting**  
 Report Cards issued Thursday, November 10  
 Report Cards issued Friday, January 27  
 Report Cards issued Thursday, April 5

10 M.S.C., 4/11/11

4th quarter ends and report card dates to be determined

## **GRAMMAR SCHOOL NURSE'S MESSAGE**

Dear Parents:

As we begin a new school year, I would like to share some thoughts with you regarding your child's health status.

It is our belief that we need to foster good health habits in our children which in turn results in decreased number of illnesses. Basic to this belief is the notion that a well balanced diet raises the body's ability to fight infection. Also, as the cold weather approaches, children should be encouraged to wear appropriate clothing for the current weather conditions.

If your child shows signs of becoming ill, please keep him/her home from school. The most contagious period of viruses is usually the first 24-48 hours. This practice will help decrease the spread of infection within the classroom. If your child has a fever of 100 degrees or above, he/she should stay home until the fever has been gone for 24 hours without medication. During times of increased contagious disease outbreak such as H1N1 flu you should keep your child home from school for 7 days from onset of symptoms, (fever of 100 degrees or more and cough or sore throat) or 24 hours after symptoms subside whichever is longer.

Other illnesses that require absences from school are:

1. Coughs and/or congestion 2-3 days.
2. Rashes - until diagnosed by a doctor.
3. Vomiting and/or diarrhea – 24 hours symptom free
4. Conjunctivitis (eye infection) – day after treatment begins
5. Bacterial infections i.e. Strep throat – until under treatment for 24 hours

Please be reminded that any medicines given in school need to be accompanied by a doctor's note. Medicines given three times a day do not need to be given during school hours. All medicines need to be brought to the nurse's office by an adult.

As always, let your common sense guide you in your decisions; but if you have any questions regarding your child's health, please feel free to contact us.

We are looking forward to a happy, healthy school year for your child.

Sincerely,

Grammar School Nurses

## SCHOOL HEALTH POLICY

The school attempts to provide a safe environment for your child in the school building or on the playground. Still, accidents do occur. In such events, first-aid will be administered by school staff. The responsibility for further treatment rests entirely with the parent and family physician. In cases of serious injury, an ambulance will be called to take the child to the nearest hospital. Parents will be notified as soon as possible.

**It is extremely important that both the child and the school Principal know where to contact parents or some other responsible person in cases of emergency or illness. An “emergency card” is sent home the first day of school each year. *If your home address or working address, home telephone or emergency telephone number is changed, please notify the school.***

Parents/guardians should inform the school authorities of any physical or emotional concerns their child may have so that adequate provisions may be made in his/her school program. Each year the school receives many requests to administer medication to children. The Methuen School Committee has an explicit policy on medication, intended to protect children, to which we strictly support and adhere. The policy is as follows:

### Policy concerning the administration of medication to students

Medications~~whether prescription or non-prescription, shall be administered to students on a daily basis by the school nurse; and/or those delegated by her on field trips.

In the event that a student requires non-emergency medication during the course of a school day, such medication must be administered by the school nurse or the parent/guardian, or delegate. The parent/guardian must notify the school nurse of such need ahead of time. If the parent is to administer medication it must be given at the school’s nurse’s office. Medication to be administered by the school nurse must be brought into the nurse’s office at the beginning of the school day and must remain in the office for the duration of treatment. Students are not to administer medication to themselves, nor are they to possess medication during the school day without the knowledge and approval of the school nurse. In order for a student to carry an inhaler, the school nurse will require a permission slip signed by the student’s parent/guardian and physician.

If a student has a condition which requires emergency medication such as Epi-pen or Glucagon, such medication will be administered by the school nurse if she is present. If the school nurse is not present when the emergency arises ONLY Epi-pens may be administered by a delegated staff member. If a student has a condition which requires medication it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to do the following:

- A. Provide the medication in its original container with a pharmacy label including the student’s name, name of the medication, dosage, and instructions for administering, prescription number, and physician’s name.
- B. Insure that the medication is sufficient in quantity and is replaced when necessary.
- C. Sign and submit, at least annually, to the school nurse, a standardized authorization, which may be obtained from the nurse’s office, to be signed by the prescribing physician and to include all the information in “A” above.

- D. Parent or guardian must provide controlled substances in an amount sufficient (usually 30-day supply) to administer medication to child without disruption in the child's daily routine. They are to be counted by the parent/guardian in the presence of the school nurse and co-signed.
- E. Parents must bring in and pick up medication.

### **Non-prescription medication policy**

As per standing orders by the "on call" school physician, select non-prescription medications (see Physician Standing Orders) shall be dispensed to school children. Parental consent may be obtained by telephone but must be followed by written permission. Consent is to be renewed annually. There are very few medications that are necessary during school hours!

### **HEALTH SCREENINGS:**

**In February 2009, the State of Massachusetts amended their regulations on Physical Examination** – of school children, 105 CMR 200.00, to improve the screening and monitoring of the health assessment of children across the commonwealth. Among other changes, the amended regulations require screening for height and weight and the recording and reporting of the BMI (Body Mass Index) for all students in grades 1, 4 7 and 10 (or of comparable age). You may access the regulation, 105 CMR 200.500, on the website of the Massachusetts Department of Public School Health, School Health Services Unit, or contact your child's school nurse for more information.

Other annual screenings include:

Vision in grades K – 5, 7 and 10  
Hearing in grades K – 3, 7 and 10  
Scoliosis in grades 5 thru 9

### **PROMOTION AND ATTENDANCE POLICY – GRADES 1-8**

The Methuen Public Schools recognize each pupil as an individual and further recognize the wide variance in individual emotional, social, physical, and intellectual growth patterns. At the same time, however, certain basic standards of academic achievement and attendance must be maintained. This promotion policy attempts to provide a balance between individual rates of growth and basic standards.

#### **Grades 1, 2 and 3**

Promotion from each of these grades to the next grade level depends upon satisfactory performance by students in the area of Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics, as well as evidence of sufficient and emotional maturation as determined by the student's teacher(s).

The factors that play a prominent role in arriving at this decision are recommendations from teachers, counselors, the building Principal, the student's standardized test scores and periodic report cards as well as the child's potential to achieve.

### **Grades 4, 5 and 6**

Promotion from each of these grades to the next requires the successful completion of Reading/ Language Arts and Mathematics as well as two of the following two academic subjects: Social Studies and Science.

### **Grades 7 and 8**

Promotion from each of these grades to the next requires that a student successfully completes all but one of the courses in which he/she is enrolled that meet on a daily basis (English/Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies).

In all of the preceding instances, the Principal may make exceptions, when it is in the best interest of the student, subject to the reporting requirements as outlined below.

### **ATTENDANCE**

The Methuen Public Schools recognizes that regular attendance at school is an important factor in academic success. Students in grades 1 – 8 may not accumulate more than thirty (30) days of absence from school to be promoted to the next grade. This attendance policy may be waived by the Principal in instances of extended medical problems involving the students or, in other extenuating circumstances, subject to the reporting procedures set forth below.

### **DECISIONS ACCORDING TO THIS POLICY**

Each school will develop a promotional council consisting of the Principal, guidance personnel and the student's teacher(s). Each student's profile will be discussed and the appropriate recommendation made. The decision, however, as to whether retention or promotion will take place rests with the Principals. Appeal to the Superintendent of Schools is available to parents. Generally, in an appeal, the Superintendent will assure that procedural requirements have been followed. Under ordinary circumstances, the Superintendent will not substitute his/her judgment for that of the building Principal.

### **TIMELY NOTICE**

Building Principals will be responsible for seeing that parents are given timely notice regarding their child's risk of retention. This will be done at the end of each term. In giving notice, parents will be informed of the reason the risk exists and will be supplied with a copy of this policy.

### **DEFINITIONS**

1. Absence...a scheduled school day on which the student is not in attendance, regardless of the reason.
2. Promoted by Exception...means that due to particular reasons – age, attendance, past retentions, or other specific issues – a student may be promoted to the next grade and not be retained at grade level.

# **MISCELLANEOUS SCHOOL INFORMATION**

## **GRAMMAR SCHOOL** **SCHOOL HOURS:**

There will be minor changes in the bell schedule that are anticipated as a result of the construction project. Parents will be provided a separate letter once the bell schedules are finalized.

### **ATTENDANCE**

On the day following an absence (or tardiness), a student is required to bring her/his teacher a written excuse which specifies date of absence (or tardiness), reason for absence (or tardiness), and the signature of the parent or guardian. A written note will still be required even if a parent has called in and report of the student's absence. Failure to bring a note constitutes a breach of school rules.

Occasionally, family vacations do not coincide with scheduled school vacations. The school system discourages this practice. Instructional time is not easily replicated. Making up homework assignments, although required and important, does not provide students with the same educational experience they receive in the classroom. It is important that your child's teacher(s) be notified of this situation in advance. Also, please be aware that teachers are not obligated to anticipate assignments and give them to students in advance.

**It is strongly recommended that vacations not be taken while school is in session.**

**Tardiness:** When a student is tardy for the third time, the homeroom teacher will assign him/her to classroom detention and notify the parents. If the problem persists, the student should be reported to the office.

### **GABRIEL PROGRAM**

The Grammar Schools provides parents with the service of calling parents to be sure they are aware that their child has not arrived at school. This is an effort to help ensure the safety of our students. Please use the following procedure:

If your child is going to be absent or tardy, please call the appropriate school numbers listed below. Please leave the date, your child's name, his/her teacher's name, and if your child will be absent or tardy (if tardy, about what time he/she will be arriving at school).

**Timony Grammar School** (978) 722-9010, for Lower School  
(978) 722-9010, for Upper School

**Comprehensive Grammar School** (978) 722-9060 for Lower School  
(978) 722-9060 for Upper School

**Tenney Grammar School** (978) 722-9035 for Lower School.  
(978) 722-9035 for Upper School

**Marsh Grammar School** (978) 722-9085 for Lower School.  
(978) 722-9085 for Upper School

Calls may be made starting at 4:00 P.M. the previous day. Please use the number provided for this purpose. This system is instituted for the safety of your child. Please be aware that the school will call parents if their child is absent and no message was left on the answering machine.

### **EARLY DISMISSAL**

Only in the case of illness or in an emergency will dismissals be granted during the school day without presentation of a note from a parent or guardian. Due to concern for safety, a student will be released during the school day only to a parent or someone designated by a parent in writing.

Upper School students dismissed prior to 11:15 A.M. will be recorded, for attendance purposes, as absent. Lower School students dismissed prior to 11:45 A.M. will be recorded for attendance purposes, as absent.

**Early dismissals cause a disruption in the educational process.** Sending for children to be dismissed interrupts the teacher and all the students in the classroom. Please plan non-emergency medical appointments after school hours so that dismissals will not be necessary. Dismissals close to the end of the school day are the most disruptive of all and cause safety concerns. Please understand that the following policy is in the best interest of all our students.

#### **School Dismissal Policy:**

**Upper School:** Except for emergency situations, **students will not be dismissed after 1:30 PM**

**Lower School:** Except for emergency situations, **students will not be dismissed after 2:15 PM**

**Students will be dismissed only when a parent or guardian signs the student out in the office.**

### **EMERGENCY CLOSING – DELAYED OPENINGS**

In the event of an emergency, such as severe weather conditions which may create hazardous travel, the Superintendent of Schools may direct a delayed opening of one or two hours, closing schools for the entire day, or an early closing. This information will be announced via the local radio stations and television stations (WCCM 1490AM, WBZ 1030AM, WRKO 680AM, Channels 4, 5, 7 and Comcast Channel 10 and Verizon Channel 31 – the school channel). We suggest you listen to the radio, especially when inclement weather is predicted or exists. The Superintendent calls WCCM 1490AM

station first, and usually they broadcast the information promptly. At the beginning of the school year, you should review with your child where he/she should go in the event that you are not at home at the time of an early closing. You may also view the whole procedure on our website listed below:

<http://www.methuen.k12.ma.us/images/admin/MPS%20Procedures/Inclement%20Weather%20Procedures%20Eng.pdf>

## SCHOOL CANCELLATION/DELAY

If due to weather conditions, it becomes necessary to cancel school, the following procedures will be in effect:

- a. All daytime activities within the school system will be canceled for the day.
- b. The School Age Child Care Program will be opened as usual unless otherwise noted.
- c. Special events will be canceled by the Principal. Under ordinary circumstances, it is assumed that if school is not in session, all school activities will be canceled. Athletic activities will be canceled, as required, by the Athletic Director, who will notify the Superintendent.
- d. The “NO SCHOOL” announcement will be aired on WCCM 1490AM, WBZ 1030AM, WRKO 680 AM, and Channels 4, 5, and 7. Because WCCM is a local station, our experience is that this announcement is made continuously after it has been called in, while other radio stations usually make announcements only after the news on the hour and half hour. For this reason, it appears that the timeliest information regarding school closing can be received on WCCM.
- e. The “NO SCHOOL” announcement will also be aired continuously on our cable channel (Comcast Channel 10 and Verizon Channel 31).

There are occasions when additional time is needed for snow removal or when weather conditions are expected to improve in the early part of the school day. At these times, the opening of school may be delayed. This delay will be one or two hours.

When a decision to **delay the opening of school** is made, notification will be made as outlined above and the announcement will be aired as above. In addition, the following will be in effect:

- a. There will be no A.M. pre-school. The afternoon session will be held unless otherwise indicated.
- b. Because experience has shown us that some youngsters will arrive at school at the regular time, regardless of the announcement, staff members should be encouraged to arrive at schools as close to the normal starting time as possible.
- c. Unless otherwise noted, all school activities will be held as scheduled on the day of a delay in opening.
- d. The Breakfast Program will be delayed, but will be held.

## **SAFETY PROCEDURES**

### **FIRE DRILLS**

Fire drills are an important safety precaution and are scheduled at intervals throughout the school year. The teachers will instruct the children in the exit procedures.

1. Please follow exactly the instructions of your teacher if you are in a classroom, the cafeteria, auditorium, or the gym.
2. Be familiar with the fire regulations posted in each room you visit each day.
3. When the fire alarm sounds leave the room quietly and in an orderly manner.  
**Do not talk. Do not run. Walk quietly in a serious manner.**
4. Follow your teacher's directions, line up with your class outside the building and remain with your class until you are instructed to return to the building.
5. On the return to the building, the signal bell is given by the Principal or other person in charge.

### **LOCKDOWN PROCEDURES**

Methuen Grammar Schools, in conjunction with local law enforcement, has an Emergency Management Plan in place in the event that an emergency situation occurs in the building that necessitates mobilizing to a lock-down situation or an evacuation of the building. To familiarize students and staff with these procedures, several simulations are conducted during the year.

Keeping our students safe, both physically and emotionally, is of paramount importance in the Methuen Public Schools. Once the school day has begun, all outside doors are locked, and teachers are placed on duty to secure these openings. Visitors to the building are buzzed in and must sign in at the main office. Teachers and administrators supervise during passing time and during lunches. There is a full-time School Resource Officer on duty and the school grounds have regular security checks.

## **SCHOOL AGE CHILD CARE CENTER**

The Methuen School Department has established a program of extended child-care for Kindergarten-Grade 6 students, and a before-and-after school program for those families who are in need of child-care. All programs are held at the Pleasant Valley School Age Child-Care Center which is open from 6:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. Transportation is provided for your child to and from the Center to the child's school. Child-care is also available throughout the year including school vacations, snow days, summers, and some holidays. For more information, including tuition, activities, etc., you may call 978-681-1348 or 978-681-9408.

## **CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR TELEPHONE NUMBER**

Parents are asked to notify the school of any change of address or telephone number. Emergency cards must be on file for each student. It is extremely important that as contact people and telephone emergency numbers change, the school and the school nurse are notified.

## **KINDERGARTEN/NEW STUDENT REGISTRATION**

Kindergarten registration is held in the spring each year. Children must be five years old by September 1<sup>st</sup>. Parents need a birth certificate, immunization records, lead screening test (done before school begins for Kindergarten and first grade), and proof of residency (current lease agreement or mortgage statement, current utility bill reflecting appropriate name and address). The dates for registration at each building are publicized in the local newspaper and in school communications. Parents of new students need to bring transfer forms and any other available records from the previous school along with proof of residency. The secretary in each building can provide you with further information regarding registration requirements.

## **HOMELESSNESS**

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, reauthorized in December 2001, ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. The Massachusetts Department of Education has adopted Section 725(2) of Act regarding the definition of homeless children and youth:

- *Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence or have a primary nighttime residence in a supervised, publicly or privately, operated shelter for temporary accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill), an institution providing temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or a public or private place not designated for or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.*

This definition shall include:

- Children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement.

According to a child or youth's best interest, Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) must either continue the child/youth's education in the school of origin, or enroll the child/youth in school in any public school that nonhomeless students who live in the attendance area where the child/ youth is actually living are eligible to attend. In determining best interest, LEAs must, to the extent feasible, keep children/youth in the school of origin, unless it is against the wishes of the parent/guardian. A homeless child or youth's right to attend their school of origin extends for the duration of homelessness. If a child or youth becomes permanently housed during the academic year, he or she is entitled to stay in the school of origin for the remainder of the academic year.

The school selected shall immediately enroll the child/youth in school, even if the child or youth lacks records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency, or other documentation. If a child or youth lacks immunizations or immunization or medical records, the enrolling school must refer parent/guardian to the liaison, who shall help obtain necessary immunizations or

immunization or medical records. The Act does not prohibit LEAs from requiring parents or guardians to submit contact information

Students who are homeless have the right to:

- ◆ Go to school, including public pre-school
  - No matter where they live or how long they've lived there.
  - Continue to go to the school they attended before they left their permanent home, if that is their choice and it is feasible.
  - Without giving a permanent address.
  - While the school arranges for the transfer of school and immunization records.
  - Even while the school and the student resolve disputes over enrollment.
- ◆ Obtain free lunch (and breakfast, if offered).
- ◆ Receive transportation, if requested
  - To the school they attended last, if they request.
  - To school and to school programs.
- ◆ Participate in school programs (like athletics and other student activities).
- ◆ Receive the same support and services provided to all other students, as needed.

If you need more information, contact the Homeless Liaison at your child's school or Ms. Gina Bozek, Director of Special Education at (978) 722-6014

### **INSERVICE/HALF DAYS**

Due to the change in bell schedules as a result in the high school construction project, a separate letter with start and end times along with half day dismissal times will be sent upon finalization of the schedules district-wide. Breakfast and lunches are served on half days (with the exception of the day prior to Thanksgiving and the last day of school).

### **TELEPHONE CALLS**

Due to the number of students in the school, students **CANNOT** be called to the telephone during the day. In an emergency, the office will deliver a message to the student. For the same reason, except in unusual circumstances, students are not allowed to use the telephone.

Should you need to contact your child's teacher, you may call the teacher's voice mail directly and leave your message. You may also have the capability of calling a teacher's voice mail and finding out the homework assignment for that night. Check with your child's teacher regarding this option.

### **COMMUNICATION WITH TEACHERS**

Parents are encouraged to contact teachers with concerns or questions. There are several ways to communicate with teachers: notes, e-mail, voice mail, and agenda books (grades 3-8). We cannot address your concerns, if we are not aware of them. Please request an appointment by sending a note with the student, calling the school office, or leaving a

message on the teacher's voice mail. Please note, because we do not want to disturb instruction, calls do not ring through to the classrooms. Leave a message on the teacher's voice mail. The teacher will return your call as soon as possible. Teachers cannot be disturbed while they are supervising children or instructing a class.

When using e-mail or voice mail, please remember that the communications methods are not confidential. Refrain from using these methods for sharing confidential information.

## **PROGRESS REPORTS/REPORT CARDS**

Report cards are issued three times a year. Parent conferences are scheduled at the end of the first and second trimesters. In addition, progress reports will be issued in the middle of each trimester for students in grades 1-8. Teachers may request additional conferences, if the child's progress warrants it.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

The Methuen Public Schools complies with applicable laws state and federal laws and regulations pertaining to the maintenance of student records.

The Superintendent will provide for the proper administration of student records in keeping with state and federal requirements. The temporary record of each student will be destroyed no later than seven (7) years after the student transfers, graduates or withdraws from the school district. Former students desiring information from their records may obtain it by requesting such information from the principal before the date of destruction. Student transcripts shall be maintained for sixty (60) years following the Student's graduation, withdrawal or transfer from the school district.

The following is a summary of the major parent and student rights regarding their student records:

### **I. Inspection of Record**

A parent, or a student who has entered the ninth grade or is at least 14 years old (eligible student), has the right to inspect all portions of the student record upon request. The parent and/or eligible student have the right to receive copies of any part of the record, although a reasonable fee may be charged for the cost of duplicating materials. The record must be made available to the parent or eligible student no later than ten (10) days after the request, unless the parent or student consents to a delay. The parent and/or eligible student may request to have parts of the record interpreted by a qualified professional of the school, or may invite anyone else of their choosing to inspect or interpret the record with them.

### **II. Confidentiality of Student Records**

With a few exceptions, no individuals or organizations but the parent(s), student, and authorized school personnel are eligible to access information in or from a student record without the specific, informed written consent of the parent or the student.

### III. Amendment of the Student Record

Eligible students and/or parents have the right to add additional information, comments, data, and/or other relevant material to the student record. Eligible students and/or parents also have the right to request in writing that the student record be amended. Any such request should be directed to the building Principal. The building Principal will render a written decision on such a request within one week.

### VI. Non-Custodial Parent's Right To Information

Unless there is a court order to the contrary, a non-custodial parent of any public school student has the right, subject to certain procedures, to receive information regarding the student's achievements, involvement, behavior, etc. A non-custodial parent who wishes to have this information shall submit a written request annually to the child's school principal. Upon receipt of such a request, the principal shall send written notification to the custodial parent by certified and first class mail that the records and information will be provided to the non-custodial parent in twenty-one (21) calendar days unless the custodial parent provides documentation of the non-custodial parent's ineligibility to access such information. In all cases where school records are provided to a non-custodial parent, the electronic and postal address and other contact information for the custodial parent shall be removed from the records provided. Any such records provided to the non-custodial parent shall be marked to indicate that they may not be used to enroll the student in another school. Upon receipt of a court order that prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to G.L. c. 71, §34H, the school will notify the non-custodial parent that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial parent. M.G.L. c.71, §34H, 603 CMR 23.07.

If you require more detailed information regarding the rights of parents and students as they pertain to student records, a copy of the regulations (603 CMR 23.00) may be obtained from the principal's office or the Department of Education. Complaints alleging non-compliance with applicable federal student record regulations may be directed to:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-5920

## **TRANSFERS**

Students who move during the school year will need to have transfer information and records for the new school. Parents must contact the school office so the transfer forms can be forwarded. It is the practice of the Methuen Public Schools to forward the student record of any student who transfers to another public school district upon request of the receiving district.

## **FUNDRAISING**

During fundraisers, students are encouraged to sell to family and friends. There should be **NO** door to door selling.

## THE CAFETERIA AT LUNCH TIME

We have a computerized lunch accounting system program on the schools' website <http://www.methuen.k12.ma.us/> . It should make paying for lunches more convenient for both you and the school.

Please make checks payable to the METHUEN SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM. Lunch and breakfast costs are as follows:

	<b>Daily</b>	<b>Weekly</b>	<b>Monthly (4 weeks)</b>
Lower School Lunch	\$2.00	\$10.00	\$40.00
Upper School Lunch	\$2.25	\$11.25	\$45.00
Reduced:	.40	\$2.00	\$ 8.00
Breakfast	1.00		
Reduced Breakfast	.30		

**Milk** may be purchased for \$.50 a day for **Lower School**

**Milk** may be purchased for \$.75 a day for **Upper School**

**(Prices for the above are subject to change as the need arises)**

The cafeteria is open to students at the Grammar Schools for both breakfast and lunch. Breakfast is served daily twenty (20) minutes prior to the Upper and Lower School starting times.

Lunches are served by grade level. Students are given an opportunity to eat lunch and have a short recess.

A free or reduced breakfast is available to students whose parents qualify. Forms may be picked up and returned to the office where questions about the program will be answered. A free or reduced lunch program is also available to qualifying students.

## SCHOOL NURSES

The office of our school nurses is located on the first floor. The nurses take care of accidents or illnesses that may occur during normal school hours. Their duties and responsibilities include screening for hearing and vision, updating health records regarding medical problems, immunization requirements, postural screening in grades five through eight, and recording heights and weights of all students.

Our school nurses are available for parent/nurse conferences by appointment. **Students must have a pass from their teacher to go to the nurse's office.**

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

Some children with disabilities require specialized instruction and/or supportive services to help them make effective progress in school. These services can include, but are not limited to, speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, specialized instruction, or placement in a special classroom. Parents or teachers may refer students for a special education evaluation when they suspect that the student has a disability and that the disability is negatively affecting their progress. Referrals can be made to the Special Education Administrator at the student's school or to the Special Education Office. Within five (5) school days of a written request for an evaluation of a student's eligibility for special education, a consent form authorizing an evaluation of the child will be forwarded to the parent(s). Upon receipt of the parent(s)' consent, an evaluation will be conducted and a TEAM meeting will be held to determine if the child is eligible for special education services. If the child is found eligible for special education services, the Team will develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) identifying the necessary services.

In some cases, the Evaluation Team determines that a child with a disability may require only individual accommodations as opposed to specialized instruction and /or related services. Such children are then referred for an evaluation of their eligibility for an individual accommodation plan in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

For more information regarding the services available to students with disabilities please contact the school guidance counselor or Special Education Administrator at your child's school or the Office of the Director of Special Education.

## HOMEROOMS (UPPER SCHOOL)

Each upper school student has been assigned to a homeroom. The school will loan each student a combination lock. Each student must memorize the combination. It should not be shared with anyone (except your locker partner.) Students are responsible for the lock (\$5.00). Each day when the student enters the building he/she goes to the locker and then reports directly to homeroom. During this time of the day, attendance will be taken and announcements will be made.

## LOST AND FOUND

If at any time a student loses something, he/she should first check with his/her classroom teacher. If the lost article cannot be located, with the permission of the teacher, check at the Lost And Found in the cafeteria. Be sure to receive your teacher's permission to go to the café at an appropriate time. Unclaimed Lost and Found articles will be donated to a charitable organization several times during the school year. **Please do not bring valuables or large sums of money to school.**

## NOTICE TO PARENTS

**To:** All Grammar School Parents  
**From:** Supervising Principals

As a parent of a student at one of the four Grammar Schools, you have the right to know the professional qualifications of the classroom teachers who instruct your child. Federal law allows you to ask for certain information about your child's classroom teachers and, if you ask for it, requires us to give you this information in a timely manner. Specifically, this information includes:

- whether the Massachusetts State Department of Education has licensed or qualified the teacher for the grades and subjects he or she teaches,
- whether the Massachusetts State Department of Education has decided that the teacher can teach in a classroom without being licensed or qualified under state regulations because of special circumstances,
- the teacher's college major: whether the teacher has any advanced degrees and if so, the subject of the degrees, and
- the qualifications of any teachers' aids or similar paraprofessionals who provides services to your child.

If you would like to receive any of this information, please call the respective school.

**GUIDELINES FOR  
STUDENT BEHAVIOR  
P-8**

## **GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT BEHAVIOR**

### **BEHAVIOR**

The district follows a positive approach to discipline. Students will be expected to act in a responsible manner, and to always be respectful to those in authority and also to each other.

Like every other situation in life, when people live, work, or learn in groups, there have to be rules to guide people in a positive direction. For the protection and safety of everyone in the school environment there are rules established. Appropriate student behavior allows us to teach all our students in a pleasant learning environment.

The Methuen Public Schools believes that discipline has, as its primary objective, the development of personal responsibility, respect towards others, social awareness and self-direction of students within a framework of rules and regulations developed by parents, students, and faculty.

### **RULES and EXPECTATIONS**

We believe in effective and appropriate school discipline and are continuing to use an approach which focuses on the positive behavior of students and supports encouragement, praise, and rewards. Classroom rules are posted in each room and include positive and negative consequences. Each student should know the rules and the consequences in advance and accepts the premise that the choice for keeping or breaking a rule is his or hers. Students following classroom rules receive age appropriate positive consequences. Genuine praise for appropriate behavior is encouraged at all grade levels.

Parents are an important part of our discipline program. Negative consequences start with a warning and progress to more preventative consequences. Parent contact is an important part of the success of the program either through a telephone call, a note home and/or a parent conference. We have found that the more supportive you, as the parent, are of the program, the more successful your child is in following school and classroom rules.

Please note that there is a severe clause for all situations which includes sending the student to the Principal's office. At the discretion of the Administration, you may be asked to attend a conference about your child's behavior.

Students are expected to:

- Follow directions given by any staff member or substitute the first time they are given
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to themselves (no fighting)
- Not engage in name calling, cursing, or teasing
- Not bring toys to school
- Be silent while waiting and during special announcements such as bus calling
- Not be in any area without supervision or not leave any area without permission
- Keep their area neat and free of litter, placing trash in proper containers
- Walk, not run, except when instructed otherwise. i.e. physical education class
- Use equipment properly
- When it is time to enter the building - stop playing, line up immediately, and enter quietly
- Follow all classroom or other area rules

## **SUSPENSION**

Out-of-school suspension is to be used as little as possible, since it interferes with the continuous progress of the child's education. However, it is an important tool for us to address serious misbehavior. Parents will be notified of any suspension by letter and/or telephone. A parental conference with the teacher and/or the Principal will be expected before the child may return to school from an out-of-school suspension.

In all cases of suspension, an informal hearing with the student will be held prior to suspension.

### **STUDENTS MAY BE SUSPENDED FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:**

- a) Direct insubordination to persons in authority
- b) Fighting
- c) Theft...full restitution to be made
- d) Willful destruction of school or private property
- e) Leaving school grounds without permission
- f) Habitual behavioral problems
- g) Obscene or abusive language or gestures (e.g. racial slurs, sexual gestures /language /pictures)
- h) Smoking, matches, etc....safety hazards
- i) Truancy
- j) Extortion
- k) Objects intended for bodily harm
- l) Causing a disturbance that disrupts the order of the school
- m) Possession of controlled substances
- n) Harassment of other students
- o) Causing intentional physical injury
- p) Bullying
- q) Swearing at a staff member
- r) Gambling
- s) Serious misbehavior on the school bus or at a school bus stop

The above list of prohibited conduct is intended to serve as a general guideline and shall not limit the authority of the building Principal to impose suspension for other acts of misconduct. In certain disciplinary situations referral might be made to the police department for further investigation. That investigation will be conducted by the police department and may result in criminal charges. These situations generally would involve issues of violence, threatening violence, or destruction of school property.

Chronic school offenders or students, who commit a serious offense including but not limited to those listed in the discipline code, may be referred to the school committee for exclusion.

Although rare, a student may also be subject to long-term suspension (more than 10 consecutive school days) or expulsion in cases of serious misconduct. Prior to the imposition of a long-term suspension or expulsion, the student and parents will be provided with a formal hearing. The student and parents shall have the right to appeal any long-term suspension or expulsion imposed within ten days (10) of the effective date of the effective date of the long-term suspension or expulsion. Where a child is suspended or expelled pursuant to M.G.L. c.71 §37H1/2, the student and parents shall

have the right to appeal to the Superintendent of the Methuen Public Schools within (5) days of the imposition of the long-term exclusion. The Superintendent will conduct a hearing within three (3) days of receipt of the appeal and will issue a decision thereon within five (5) days.

## **STUDENT DISCIPLINE POLICY**

Students are detained after school for minor infractions of the school rules. Students and parents will be notified in writing a day in advance when there is an after-school detention.

**Detentions will be served.**

**Should a transportation problem make the detention unworkable, an alternative consequence will be given at the discretion of Administration.**

**NO CHILD WILL BE KEPT AFTER-SCHOOL WITHOUT PARENTAL NOTIFICATION.**

The Grammar Schools operate without a regular “office detention” policy. The following is a list of rules and regulations for the students that may result in teacher detentions either during school (recess) or after school.

**Class Truancy:** Skipping class is a rare occurrence at the Grammar Schools and will be handled seriously by the teachers.

**Corridor Behavior:** When passing in the corridor, all students are to walk to the right. Running, pushing and shoving in the corridor is not permitted. This is both a safety and school climate issue.

**Corridor Passes:** No student should be in the corridor without a written pass other than at obvious times.

**Gum Chewing:** Gum chewing is not allowed at the Grammar Schools.

**Late for Class:** There should be absolutely no reason for a student to be late for class.

**Offensive Language:** Offensive language among students is not tolerated.

**Inappropriate Classroom Behavior:** Any violation of classroom rules will be handled by the classroom teacher accordingly.

**Improper School Dress/Belongings:** (See next section)

**Proper School Dress/Belongings:** Parents and students should exercise their good judgment as to the safety, appropriateness, and health in student’s clothing. Students should dress in a neat, clean and decent manner appropriate for school. Dress of an extreme nature of any type will not be allowed. Student dress should not cause a disruption to the educational climate of the school. Examples of inappropriate dress:

- clothing that refers to or advertises alcoholic beverages or drug culture
- shirts with inappropriate messages. Also, tank tops, shorts (at the discretion of the Principal), torn, tattered, or revealing clothing
- hats may not be worn inside the building

### **Examples of Improper School Belongings:**

- All electronic devices including, (but not limited to), cell phones, personal listening devices (e.g. iPods), audio and video devices, cameras, pocket lasers, electronic games, etc... are prohibited and will be confiscated. These items will be returned to parents upon request.
- No selling of items of any kind to other students is allowed.
- No toy weapons of any kind.
- No sharp objects.
- No items that could distract from the school day.

## **LOCKERS**

Upper School students will be assigned lockers and locks by their homeroom teachers. Students should:

1. use only the locker assigned him/her
2. store only school materials and clothing in the locker
3. not leave personal items of value in the lockers

**Students will be allowed to go to their lockers at the following times:**

- a) before homeroom
- b) before and after lunch
- c) at dismissal
- d) at the discretion of the teachers

**Backpacks will NOT be carried by students during the school day.**

## **ACCESS TO STUDENT LOCKERS**

For the convenience of students, the Methuen Public Schools does provide for the assignment of lockers to students for the purpose of storing lawful materials. For the purpose of this policy, the same guidelines that apply to student lockers will apply to student desks, physical education lockers or any property of the Methuen Public Schools that is, from time to time, put to student use.

It is the policy of the Methuen Public Schools that student lockers are the sole property of the Methuen Public Schools and are, as stated above, made available for the convenience of students and are not their private property. Further, the Methuen Public Schools asserts that it maintains control of lockers.

Consistent with this policy, students are hereby notified that school officials maintain the right to inspect and/or exercise their right to access and search lockers for any reason without the consent of the student. School officials have the right to cut off any non-school issued lock to a locker.

## **STUDENT SEARCHES**

A student's person, personal possessions, and student locker may be searched whenever school administrators have reasonable suspicion that the student is in possession of illegal, prohibited, stolen, and contraband items/ materials. Any and all illegal, prohibited, stolen or contraband materials discovered as a result of such a search will be

confiscated. Students found in possession of such items or materials will be subject to discipline and/or criminal prosecution.

## **PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

Any student in Grades P-8 who is suspended one or more times during the school year may not be allowed to attend any school function. This decision is at the discretion of the Principal. The events that a student may not be allowed to attend include:

**Student Dances, After-School Programs, School Picnic, Eighth Grade Class Party, Other Class Parties, Certain Field Trips, Field Day, etc.**

**Final Assembly:** Grade eight (8) students who are not promoted (fail two or more academics) will not attend the Final Assembly.

## **BUSES**

Buses are a special service provided by the City of Methuen. Rules must be followed by bus riders so that the trips to and from school are safe and enjoyable for everyone. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) should be aware that the right to ride a school bus may be temporarily or permanently revoked if the “School Bus Code; General Rules for Student Conduct” are violated. Anyone who does not follow the following rules will not be able to ride the bus. If bad behavior on the bus or at the bus stop is severe, it is cause for a possible out-of-school suspension as well as a suspension from the privilege of riding the bus.

- **Please note that all buses may be equipped with either a video monitor or a hired monitor enabling school personnel to view/review information on activities on each bus as appropriate. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are not allowed to view videos due to student confidentiality laws.**

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are responsible for the safety of their children from the time they leave home in the morning, until the time they board the school bus; and at the end of the school day, from the time the school bus departs the bus stop and the children reach home. Once the child enters the school bus, the responsibility generally lies with the bus driver and the bus contractor.

If you have transportation concerns, you are welcome to call your School Principal, the School Districts’ Supervisor of Transportation 978-722-6016 or Trombly Bus Company at 978-937-3422.

### **I. Student Eligibility**

A. Transportation shall be furnished by the Methuen Public Schools to:

1. High School and Upper School students, grades 5 through 12 living more than two miles from their assigned schools.
2. Elementary school students, grades K through four, living more than 1 mile from their assigned schools.

- B. Eligibility distances, in all disputed cases, shall be measured from the end of the pupil's drive area to the entrance portal of the school by the most direct, traveled route. This traveled route may be roads or walkways.
- C. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) or other adults who are designated as chaperones may ride the bus during the school day for an educational field trip. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) may **not** enter school buses when buses are being used to transport children to and from school on their normal runs.

## II. Bus Routes and Stops

- A. Routes will be planned so that a maximum number of children are picked up and discharged at the nearest spot to their home.
- B. Request for extension of existing routes should be submitted to the Transportation Coordinator. Criteria for granting such requests are as follows:
  - 1. The distance between the home and the closest designated bus stop must exceed one mile. This traveled route may be roads or walkways.
  - 2. If the bus must turn around, a safe and adequate turning place must be available.
  - 3. The turn from the existing route and entrance back onto the existing route must be safe.
- C. Exceptions to the distance a pupil must live from the school or an established route may be made for disabled and special education pupils, or where the safety of the pupil is jeopardized by an exceptional hazard.
- D. Bus stops shall be located, whenever possible, at points where vision is unobstructed in both directions and room is available for children to stand off the traveled portion of the road while waiting for the bus. To provide minimum obstruction to traffic flow and minimum time to complete the run, the bus stops for all children shall be designated at least a quarter of a mile apart. Exceptions may be made, at the discretion of the Transportation provider and Transportation Coordinator in concert with the Methuen Police Department, where unusual conditions exist.

## III. School Bus Code: General Rules for Student Conduct

- 1. Bus drivers are in complete charge of school busses. Students are expected to cooperate with them in every way for their own safety as well as the safety of others. The bus driver must be obeyed at all times. Misconduct, carelessness and thoughtlessness are hazards to the safe operation of the school bus. Bussing is an integral part of the total school program; the driver, who is an adult in a position of authority within the Methuen Public Schools, must insist on appropriate behavior.
- 2. **All grade K, 1 and 2 bus riders must be easily identified as to bus route number. Each child must wear a badge with his/her bus route number on it; these badges will be provided by each school. These Students must be picked up from their respective bus stops by a parent, guardian or older sibling, 5<sup>th</sup> grade or higher. If no one is there to receive the child, the child will be brought back to the school. In the event that school personnel are not available, the child will be brought to the central office until such time that a**

**parent/guardian can pick up the child. At 5 PM, the close of the day at central office building, the child who is not picked up by an adult will be transported to the police station to await the arrival of the parent/guardian.**

3. Students should follow correct safety procedures when walking to and from a bus stop.
4. Students must be on time at bus stop locations and shall not play when waiting for the bus.
5. Students will enter and leave the bus at school loading stations and at street bus stops in an orderly fashion and in accordance with instructions, without haste and without loitering, without crowding and without pushing, with each student showing due regard for his/her own safety and the safety of others.
6. Students will go directly to an available seat upon entering the bus and remain seated until the bus has stopped.
7. Students shall refrain from shouting and other boisterous activity, shall refrain from talking to the bus driver while the bus is in motion except for emergencies, and shall keep their hands to themselves.
8. Students shall neither purposely nor carelessly destroy property nor deface the bus in any manner.
9. Students shall keep feet off the seats.
10. Students shall keep sharp objects off upholstery.
11. Students shall not extend arms or other parts of body out through the windows, and shall leave the windows alone unless instructed by the bus driver.
12. Students shall not throw objects about in the bus nor out through the windows.
13. Books and other property should be properly stowed on laps.
14. Students shall not smoke, light a match, cigarette lighter or other flammable object.
15. Students shall not fight, use indecent or abusive language or molest others.
16. Students shall not open the emergency door without authorization from the bus driver, school or other official, or unless an emergency exists, then students should follow standard bus evacuation drill procedures.
17. Students leaving the bus who cross the road must do so ten feet in front of the bus immediately after leaving the bus, after being signaled to do so by the bus driver.
18. A Bus Conduct Report will be issued to all students violating the School Bus Code with a copy given to the Parent(s)/Guardian(s), school Principal, and Bus Company.
19. Any student, while under suspension from riding his/her bus, is not allowed to board another bus. If a student does board another bus while under suspension, he/she will receive additional suspension of riding privileges.

20. Students boarding a bus with ice skates shall not be allowed to ride the bus unless the blades of the ice skates are suitably covered with skate guards or unless the ice skates are in an equipment bag.
21. Students may not eat, drink or chew gum on the bus.
22. All school Principals are to keep a record of School Bus Code infractions and shall send a written notification to Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of each violation and accompanying disciplinary action.

#### **IV. For Parent(s)/Guardian(s):**

1. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) should be reminded that Massachusetts law makes Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of non-emancipated children under age 17 and over age 7 years liable in a civil action for any willful act committed by their child which results in injury or death to another person or damage to the property of another up to the amount of \$5,000.00.
2. The school bus driver and the bus company must conform to all applicable laws, rules and regulations of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts General Laws and Regulations of the Department of Education Pupil Transportation Guide and Registry of Motor Vehicles pertinent to transportation of students, City of Methuen, and the Methuen School Committee, including that which prohibits bus drivers from smoking on bus. If you believe that a violation exists, or if you have a complaint involving a bus driver or the bus company, please notify the school Principal or Transportation Coordinator immediately.
3. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are reminded that, although a student's riding privileges are suspended, he or she is required to attend school on time.

#### **V. Discipline for Violation of Bus Conduct Rules**

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of children whose pattern of behavior and misconduct on school busses and at bus stops or walking to and from bus stops endangers the health, safety, and welfare of other students will be notified that their children face the loss of riding privileges in accordance with the Parent/Student Handbook school discipline code and applicable bus conduct rules.

The bus driver must issue a Bus Conduct Report to the building Principal about any students violating the School Bus Code. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are to be notified prior to a bus suspension and sent a copy of the Principal's action for the violation. The building Principal, using the Parent/Student Handbook school discipline code and applicable School Bus Code: General Rules for Student Conduct as a guideline is to determine an appropriate consequence based upon the child's overall behavior.

The Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of a pupil who has been denied the right to ride a school bus for disciplinary reasons may appeal to the building Principal.

It is the Parent(s)/Guardian(s)'s responsibility to provide transportation to and from school for that pupil for the period of suspension.

#### **VI. Transportation Disciplinary Guidelines**

In order to insure a uniform disciplinary policy, these guidelines have been broken down into two levels. These guidelines will be applied in conjunction with the Methuen Public School's *Student/Parent Handbook* policy.

## **BUS BEHAVIOR INFRACTIONS**

<b>LEVEL II INFRACTIONS</b>	<b>LEVEL I INFRACTIONS</b>
Improper boarding/departing procedures Unnecessary noise Refusing to obey the driver Improper bus line behavior Littering Riding another bus route without authorization from the building Principal. Other School Bus Code: General Rules for Student Conduct infractions as reported by the bus officials	Smoking Lighting matches or playing with hazardous items on the bus Fighting, pushing, tripping Vandalism Failure to remain seated Other behavior relating to safety Bullying/harassment behaviors Tampering with bus equipment Throwing object in or out of the bus Spitting Use of obscenities or abusive language toward bus occupants Other School Bus Code: General Rules for Student Conduct infractions as reported by the bus officials

Below are the guidelines that Principals/Administrators will use to determine appropriate bus behavior consequences.

### **BUS BEHAVIOR CONSEQUENCES**

	<b>1ST REPORT</b>	<b>2ND REPORT</b>	<b>3RD REPORT</b>	<b>4TH OR MORE REPORTS</b>
<b>LEVEL II</b>	•Warning	•Warning or 1-3 day bus suspension	•Warning or 1-5 day bus suspension	•Warning or up to a 20 day bus suspension
<b>LEVEL I</b>	•Warning or up to a 20 day bus suspension	•Up to a 20 day bus suspension	•Up to a 20 day bus suspension •Possible loss of bus service for the remainder of the school year	•20 day minimum bus suspension •Possible loss of bus service for the remainder of the school year

Note: Anytime a student defaces a bus, or any part thereof, or destroys property, restitution must be made by his/her Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and the student will **not** be allowed on the bus after his/her suspension has been served until such restitution is made.

Adopted prior to 1975

Confirmed: April 24, 2006

### **DISCIPLINE AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in this handbook. In addition to those due process protections afforded to all students, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and related regulations require that additional provisions be made for students who have been found eligible for special education services or who the school district knows or has reason to know might be eligible for such services. Students who have been found to have a disability that substantially limits

a major life activity, as defined under §504 of the Rehabilitation Act, are, generally, also entitled to increased procedural protections prior to imposing discipline that will result in the student's removal for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or that would constitute a change in placement. The following additional requirements apply to the discipline of students with disabilities:

(1) The IEP for every student eligible for special education or related services shall indicate whether the student can be expected to meet the regular discipline code of the school or whether the code should be modified to address the student's individual needs.

(2) Students with disabilities may be excluded from their programs for up to ten (10) school days to the extent that such sanctions would be applied to all students. Before a student with a disability can be excluded from his/her program for more than ten (10) consecutive school days in a given school year or subjected to a pattern of removal constituting a "change of placement", building administrators, the parent(s)/guardian(s) and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team will meet to determine the relationship between the student's disability and behavior (Manifestation Determination). In most instances, the student has the right to receive appropriate alternative educational services during any days of exclusion in excess of ten (10) days in a given school year.

(3) If building administrators and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team determine that the student's conduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, the school may discipline the student in accordance with the procedures and penalties applicable to all students but will continue to provide a free appropriate public education to those students with IEPs. The student's IEP Team will identify the services necessary to provide a free appropriate public education during the period of exclusion, review any existing behavior intervention plan or, where appropriate, conduct a functional behavioral assessment.

(4) If building administrators and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team determine that the conduct giving rise to disciplinary action was a manifestation of the student's disability, the student will not be subjected to further removal or exclusion from the student's current educational program for that conduct (except for conduct involving weapons, drugs, or resulting in serious bodily injury to others) until the IEP or 504 Team develops, and the parent(s)/guardian(s) consent to, a new placement or until the District obtains an order from a court or from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA) authorizing a change in the student's placement. The student's Team shall also review, and modify as appropriate, any existing behavior intervention plan or arrange for a functional behavioral assessment.

(5) If a special education student possesses or uses illegal drugs, sells or solicits a controlled substance, possesses a weapon, or causes serious bodily injury to another on school grounds or at a school function, the District may place the student in an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) for up to forty-five (45) school days. A court or BSEA hearing officer may also order the placement of a student who presents a substantial likelihood of injury to self or others in an appropriate interim setting for up to forty-five (45) school days.

# **GENERAL POLICIES**

## **EARLY DISMISSAL**

When it becomes necessary to dismiss a student from school because of illness the school will contact the parent or guardian.

When it is necessary to be dismissed early for a doctor's appointment or other personal business the student must bring a **note** from the parent or guardian stating the reason for early dismissal.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION UPPER SCHOOL/LOWER SCHOOL**

The physical education program in the Methuen Upper Schools is geared not only to develop the student physically but also to increase his/her awareness of good sportsmanship. Each student will be scheduled for two blocks of gym each week.

Physical education classes are mandatory for all students with the exception of those who present medical excuses. If a student is going to miss more than two class meetings in a row, his/her excuse should come in written form from a physician.

It is strongly recommended that regulation uniforms be worn by students. Uniforms consist of blue and white Methuen shorts and tee shirts, white socks and sneakers.

Lower school students are not required to wear gym uniforms; however, sneakers must be worn on gym days.

Students must report any accident or injury IMMEDIATELY to a member of the physical education staff so that proper treatment may be provided.

In accordance with the new state mandatory regulations, the Methuen Public Schools is devoted to keeping children healthy. Every child's height and weight is checked each spring and their "BMI Percentile" calculated. Information will be sent home early spring each year. This Progress Report explains your child's weight range. The children also do fitness tests in Physical Education class. These tests are designed to check energy and strength. The fitness test scores on the Progress Report will be sent home confidentially. This report shows the level at which your child performed on the tests. If you have any questions about this report, please contact your child's PE teacher or school nurse. They will be happy to discuss this with you and answer any questions.

\*\* Grades one, four, seven and ten are state mandated.

## **STUDENT COUNCIL (Upper School)**

Student Council is the center of a well-rounded school.

- It should reach out to the entire student body surrounding all activities within the school.
- It should be the communications center.
- It should have a committee to handle every situation.
- It should be handled by students and teachers alike sharing in successes and

- failures, making decisions which are the best for our school.
- It should be representative of the total school population and not of certain segments of students.

One student in each homeroom will be elected as a homeroom representative. From the elected council of homeroom reps, the officers will be chosen as an executive committee of the council. Further information will be distributed to classes in the fall.

## REPORT CARDS

Report cards are issued for grades K through 8 three times a year. Standards based report cards are issued in grades K-4 and traditional letter grades are issued in grades 5 through 8.

### Grades 1-4 Grading Scale

<b>OVERALL ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS KEY</b>	
EXC—EXCELLING (A)	Student's achievement consistently exceeds the standards for this grade level.
CPT2 ◀ CPT1—COMPETENT (B)	Student's achievement consistently meets and sometimes exceeds the standards for this grade level.
DEV2 ◀ DEV1—DEVELOPING (C)	Student's achievement is developing but does not regularly meet the standards for this grade level.
BGN—BEGINNING (D/F)	Student's achievement does not meet the standards for this grade level.
<i>Please refer to the Overall Achievement Levels Rubric for more information.</i>	
<b>STANDARDS RATINGS</b>	
AS—ABOVE STANDARD:	The student consistently demonstrates an understanding of concepts and skills beyond what is expected for the grade level.
ST—AT STANDARD:	The student demonstrates an understanding of the concepts and skills expected for the grade level.
NS—NOT AT STANDARD:	The student has not yet demonstrated an understanding of the concepts and skills expected for the grade level.

### Grades 5-8 Grading Scale

A	Excellent
B	Above Average
C	Average
D	Needs Improvement
E/F	Failure

### HONOR ROLL REQUIREMENTS:

In order for a student to attain honor roll status he/she must be in the Upper School and receive A's and B's in academic subjects. Academic subjects include:

Grades 5 and 6: Reading/Language Arts, Social Studies, Science and Math  
 Grades 7 and 8: Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, Math and Foreign Language

- SCHOLARS CLUB** All A's academic subjects and no U's in conduct in any subject.
- PRINCIPAL'S LIST** A minimum of 3 A's, remaining grades of B in academic subjects and no U's in conduct in any subject.
- ACHIEVEMENT LIST** A minimum of B's in academic subjects no U's in conduct in any subject.
- Grades of D or E/F in any subject, including specials, will keep a student from the honor roll.**

In order to be placed on one of the above Honor's list, students may not receive lower than a C in any "special subject" (i.e. Art, Music, etc...).

Advanced Math/Algebra class is a regular Math class. The grade is not weighted any differently. Thus, an A=A and a B=B.

Progress reports for students receiving special education services are issued in accordance with the requirements of federal and state laws and regulations.

### **HOMEWORK GUIDELINES**

Homework may be assigned on a regular basis as early as first grade. It provides reinforcement of concepts, practice of skills, and study discipline. Homework done with care and diligence is an important ingredient for success in school. Therefore, students are required to complete and pass in all assignments.

The Methuen Public School System's Homework Guideline uses the suggested following formula for determining the length of nightly homework assignments: (The grade level times 10)

Grade One	10 minutes
Grade Two	20 minutes
Grade Three	30 minutes
Grade Four	40 minutes

Parents can help their children to form good study habits by providing a quiet area for study, setting the time for study, and making sure the proper time is spent on homework assignments. The **MINIMAL** home study guide for the Upper School is as follows:

Grade Five	students should study at least 50 minutes per night
Grade Six	students should study at least 60 minutes per night
Grade Seven	students should study at least 70 minutes per night
Grade Eight	students should study at least 80 minutes per night

**File: JCDA**

### **EXTRACURRICULAR CODE OF CONDUCT**

Methuen Public School students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner which will bring credit to, and reflect positively upon themselves, their school, their families and their community. Furthermore, participation in any school sponsored activity is a privilege, not a right, extended to all Methuen Public Schools students. Those students

who exercise the privilege of participation in school sponsored extra-curricular activities assume total responsibility for their behavior.

All students involved in school sponsored extra-curricular activities shall strictly adhere to the following code of conduct:

**1. Use of, possession, or distribution of illegal drugs, narcotics, alcohol...**

- a) Any student who violates the Methuen Public Schools' drug and alcohol policy jeopardizes his/her opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities.
- b) Additionally, a student who uses, possesses, is under the influence of, sells or attempts to sell illegal drugs, narcotics and/or alcohol during non-school periods (i.e. vacations, weekends, holidays, and nights), on non-school property and/or on occasions unrelated to the schools may jeopardize his/her privilege to participate in extra-curricular activities under certain circumstances. These circumstances include:
  - 1) Where the student's conduct indicates that the health, safety or morals of the student, other students or employees of the Methuen Public Schools could be jeopardized by the student's participation in the activity.
  - 2) Where the student's conduct has received public attention, such that the conduct has brought negative publicity or discredit to the student, other students or the Methuen Public Schools.
  - 3) In the case of athletics where the student's conduct has occurred during the training period or playing season.
- c) Students who are suspended or excluded from participation in the activity shall be denied the rights and privileges accorded to a member of that team, group or club.
- d) The Superintendent or his/her designee should take immediate steps to determine involvement by student (s) in the prescribed conduct.
- e) Decisions made by the Superintendent or his/her designee will be binding upon the student (s) until such time as a hearing can be held. Generally, such hearing will be conducted on the next school day, but may be postponed where circumstances warrant a postponement (i.e. more time for investigation, unavailability of student, unavailability of parent, etc.

**2. Stolen/Lost/Vandalized Equipment.....**

- a) All students are responsible for equipment/materials issued to them and will be assessed for the replacement cost of any lost, stolen, or vandalized item.
- b) All students who fail/refuse to pay such replacement costs by the time set for repayment will be prohibited from further participation in all aspects of the extra-curricular activity from which the equipment/materials were lost, stolen or vandalized.

**3. General requirements for participation in extra-curricular activities.....**

- a) A student must check into school by 10:30 a.m. in order to participate in an extra-curricular activity on that day.

- b) A student who is on suspension from school for any reason on a particular day is also suspended from participating in any extra-curricular activity on the day (s) of his/her suspension.
  - c) Respective supervisors may designate and enforce appropriate curfews.
  - d) A student must receive a passing grade in at least four major academic subjects in order to participate in extra-curricular activities during the next marking period.
- 4. Conduct which is unbecoming a student of the Methuen Public Schools, but which is not specifically addressed in the foregoing code of conduct, may also jeopardize a student's privilege to participate in extra-curricular activities.**

Adopted: October 27, 1986

**File: JH/JCD/JHCA**

### **EXTRA-CURRICULAR CODE OF CONDUCT - PROCEDURES**

- 1) The Extra-Curricular Code of Conduct will be included in the student handbook.
- 2) Each student participating in an extra-curricular activity shall receive the Code as part of the parental permission form.
- 3) Parents and students will acknowledge their awareness and understanding of the Code by virtue of their signatures on the parental permission form. The parental permission forms shall be kept on file by the club advisor, by the athletic director (athletes) and music director (music, band). A parental permission form must be signed and returned to the activity advisor/coach before a student can participate in the activity.
- 4. At the first meeting of the activity, the advisor/coach will review the Code and establish rules and regulations for that activity. Expectations of behavior and proper conduct will also be stressed. Consequences for violations of the Code will be reviewed.
- 5. The activity advisor/coach is the first step in the procedural chain should a student violate the Code. The advisor/coach is responsible to investigate alleged violations. The advisor/coach is empowered to make a decision regarding the alleged violation/infraction pending a review at the second trip.
- 6. In the case of an activity advisor, the decision and the reasons for it must be reported in writing to the Principal; for athletics and performing arts the decisions and the reasons must be reported in writing to the athletic director or music director.
- 7. A student and/or parent may appeal the decision of the advisor/coach in writing within two school days of being notified of the decision. A student may not participate in the activity until a review of the decision has been made. Parents

and/or students have a right to be present and to be heard at all steps in the appeal process.

8. If a coach's/advisor's decision is appealed, the decision is appealed to the second step, the vice Principal for clubs and other activities, to the athletic director for athletics, and to the director of music for the performing areas as appropriate.
9. A student or parent may appeal second step decision to the Review Board.
10. The Review Board shall consist of the Principal, Assistant Principals, Activity Advisor/Coach, Athletic Director (if appropriate), and Music Director (if appropriate).
11. As soon as is practical the Review Board (step 3) will schedule a meeting with the student and/or parent (s) to review the prior decisions (steps 1 and 2). Within 24 hours the Review Board will render a decision (if possible).
12. The decision of the Review Board may be appealed to the Superintendent or his/her designee who shall hear the appeal and render a decision as soon as is practical (step 4).
13. The decision of the Superintendent may be appealed to the School Board. The School Board shall hear the appeal and render a decision as soon as is practical (step 5).

Adopted: August 19, 1985

**File: JCDAB  
JCDAC**

### **DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE POLICY**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear message to students, parents, and the community that the use, possession or distribution of illegal drugs and alcohol will not be tolerated.

- I. It is the policy of the Methuen Public Schools that the following actions are strictly prohibited and will result in the student being disciplined.
  - a) Student use of illegal drugs, narcotics and/or alcohol on school property, on school busses, at school bus stops or at school-sponsored or school-related functions.
  - b) Student possession of illegal drugs, narcotics, alcohol and/or drug paraphernalia on school property, on school busses, at school bus stops or at school-sponsored or school-related functions.
  - c) Being under the influence of illegal drugs, narcotics and/or alcohol on school property, on school busses, at school bus stops or at school-sponsored or school-related functions.

d) Student sale, distribution or attempted sale or distribution of alcohol, illegal drugs, and/or narcotics on school property, on school busses, at school bus stops or at school-sponsored or school-related functions.

II. The following procedures will be utilized in any case where a student is suspected of engaging in any of the prohibited conduct enumerated in paragraphs a-d above.

a) The student will be referred to the Principal or the Assistant Principal.

b) The Principal or Assistant Principal will contact the school nurse concerning the case if he/she feels that it is warranted. If the nurse is unavailable, an alternative medical evaluation may be sought. If it is determined that physical symptoms may be present after speaking to the student and evaluating the symptoms, the nurse or other medical professional will make recommendations to the referring Administrator.

c) The Principal or Assistant Principal will, if reasonably possible, notify the parent (s) or legal guardian (s) of the student.

d) The Principal or Assistant Principal will inform the student, in the presence of his/her parent (s) or legal guardian (s) if reasonably possible, of the conduct prohibited by Paragraphs 1a-d in which the Principal or Assistant Principal believes the student has engaged.

e) The student will have the opportunity to respond to the Principal or Assistant Principal.

f) After considering the evidence, if the Principal or Assistant Principal believes that a student has violated any of Paragraphs I. a) through d) above, the Principal or Assistant Principal will suspend the student.

g) For conduct prohibited by Paragraphs I. a) through c) above, the length of the suspension shall be: first violation - suspension from school

1. Any student who engages in conduct prohibited by Paragraphs I. a) through c) above after a first violation shall be suspended and the Principal shall refer him/her to the Superintendent for possible exclusion and/or expulsion from school.

h) Any student who engages in conduct prohibited by Paragraph 1d above shall be suspended for an interim period of up to ten days and the Principal shall refer him/her to the Superintendent of Schools for possible exclusion and/or expulsion from school.

i) Following the meeting with the Principal or Assistant Principal, the student will be released from school and as a general rule, will be released only into the care and custody of his/her parent (s), legal guardian (s) or other responsible adult designated by the student's parent (s) or legal guardian (s).

- j) Prior to the student's return to school, and as a condition of his/her return to school, the parent (s) or legal guardian (s) and the student must meet with the Principal or Assistant Principal and/or other staff for the purpose of determining a specific plan of intervention and/or support services.
- k) Should the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) fail to cooperate with school authorities at any point in this procedure, the school authorities may find it necessary to pursue a CHINS or a care and protection action.
- III. The Methuen Public Schools reserves the right to discipline students for drug or alcohol-related actions or offenses which are committed by the student during non-school time, on property other than school property and/or at functions or events which are neither sponsored by, nor related to, the Methuen Public Schools. This right will be exercised where the health, safety or morals of the other students or employees of the Methuen Public Schools could be jeopardized by the student's presence in the Methuen Public Schools.
- IV. Students found in possession of illegal drugs, narcotics or drug paraphernalia while on school property, on a school bus, while attending school-sponsored or school-sanctioned functions shall be referred to the police.
- V. For those students who are involved with extra-curricular activities in the Methuen Public Schools, violations of this policy may jeopardize their continued participation in those activities, as more fully outlined in the Extra-Curricular Code of Conduct.

Adopted: October 27, 1987

### **POSSESSION OF FIREARMS**

**The following paragraph was added to M.G.L. c269 s.10 by Chapter 150 of the Acts of 1987.**

Whoever not being a law enforcement officer, and notwithstanding any license obtained by him under the provisions of chapter one hundred and forty, carries on his person a firearm as hereinafter defined, loaded or unloaded, in any building or on the grounds of any secondary school, college or university without the written authorization of the board or officer in charge of such secondary school, college or university shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars or by imprisonment for not more than one year, or both. For the purpose of this paragraph, "firearm" shall mean any pistol, revolver, rifle or smoothbore arm from which a shot, bullet, or pellet can be discharged by whatever means.

**TOY GUNS OR WEAPONS OF ANY KIND (INCLUDING WATER PISTOLS) ARE NOT ALLOWED IN SCHOOL OR ON SCHOOL BUSES.**

## **SCHOOL DISCIPLINE LAW**

According to Chapter 71, Section 37 of the Massachusetts General Laws, 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 as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the Principal.

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

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

(d) 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).

(e) 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.

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

### **Chapter 71, Section 37H 1/2**

Felony Complaint or Conviction of Student; Suspension; Expulsion; Right to Appeal notwithstanding the provisions of section eighty-four and sections sixteen and seventeen of chapter seventy-six:

(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 reason for such suspension prior to such suspension taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of this 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 or guardian within three 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 calendar days of the hearing. Such 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 calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion. The Superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian 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 decision shall be the final decision of the city, town, or regional school district with regard to the expulsion.

Upon expulsion of such student, no school or school district shall be required to provide educational services to the student. Added by St. 1993, c380, s.2.

**HAZING**

Activities involving hazing by any and all Methuen Public School students or groups, and by those groups or individuals using or renting school facilities is prohibited. At the High School and middle school levels, annual notice of this policy and the text of MGL, Chapter 269, Sections 17-19, will be distributed annually as part of student handbooks which are annually submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Education Bureau of Student, Adult and Community Services. An individual student sign-off provision will be included and placed on file in the office of the building Principal.

Group and individuals using or renting Methuen Public Schools' facilities will be supplied with a copy of the above law or part of the rules and regulations governing the use of school facilities.

Adopted: May 27, 1986

CRIMES AGAINST PUBLIC PEACE	269-17
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HAZING (NEW)

§17 HAZING; ORGANIZING OR PARTICIPATING, HAZING DEFINED

**Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 269, sections 17-19. Est. the following:**

Whoever is a principle organizer or participant in the crime of hazing as defined herein shall be punished by a fine or 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 substances, or any brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the 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. C536

1985 Enactment St. 1985, C536, adding this section and #'s 18 and 19 of this chapter, was approved by November 26, 1985. Emergency declaration by the Governor was filed on the same date.

**§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 five hundred dollars.

**§19. Copy of sections 17, 18 and this section:**

**Issuance to members and applicants of school groups or organizations.**

Each secondary school and each public and private school or college shall issue to every group or organization under its authority or operating on or in conjunction with its campus or school, and to every member, plebe, pledges or applicant for membership in such group or organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen. An officer of each such group or organization, and each individual receiving a copy of said sections seventeen and eighteen shall sign an acknowledgement stating that such group, organization, or individual has received a copy of said sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each secondary school and each public or private school or college shall file, at least annually, a report with the regents of higher education and in the case of secondary schools, the board of education, certifying that such institution has complied with the provisions of this section and also certifying that said school has adopted a disciplinary policy with regards to the organizers and participants of hazing. The board of regents and in the case of secondary schools, the board of education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution which fails to make such report.

**TOBACCO FREE WORKPLACE**

The Methuen Public Schools, in compliance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 111, Section 31 and Chapter 71, Section 37H (The Education Reform Act of 1993), has adopted the following regulation mandated by statute to provide a healthy, safe, and productive environment for staff, students, and the general public.

Effective September 1, 1993, smoking and the use of any tobacco products will be prohibited at all school buildings, facilities, grounds, busses, school sponsored activities, and meetings by any individual, including school personnel, students, and visitors.

**File: JICFB**

**BULLYING / CYBER BULLYING  
BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLAN**

The Methuen Public Schools (MPS) created the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (the Plan) required under M.G.L. c.71, §37O in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents, and guardians. The Plan is posted on the district website [www.methuen.k12.ma.us](http://www.methuen.k12.ma.us).

The Methuen Public Schools' Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan ("the Plan") is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyber-bullying. The district is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. In consultation with these constituencies, we have established this Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of

bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. The principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan.

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

We understand that members of certain student groups, such as students with disabilities, students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, and homeless students may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing. The district will take specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

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

## **DEFINITIONS**

*Several of the following definitions are copied directly from M.G.L. c.71, §37O, as noted below.*

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

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c.71, §37O, is the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- i. causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- ii. places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- iii. creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- iv. infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- v. materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Cyberbullying, is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. See M.G.L. c.71, §37O for the legal definition of cyberbullying.

Hostile environment, as defined in M.G.L. c.71, §37O, is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.

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

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

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

### **PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION**

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

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

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

As stated in M.G.L. c.71, §37O, nothing in the Plan requires the district or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

Reporting bullying or retaliation. The district expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of suspected bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or associate/assistant principal. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Reports may be made orally or in writing. The “MPS Suspected Bullying Incident Reporting Form” has been developed for student, parent or other non-school or district staff use to report incidents of suspected bullying. This form can be obtained in every school office or it can be printed from the district’s website [www.methuen.k12.ma.us](http://www.methuen.k12.ma.us). Use of the “MPS Suspected Bullying Incident Reporting Form” is not required as a condition of making a report.

Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the principal or associate/assistant principal.

Determinations. Within fifteen (15) school days of the principal’s receipt of the complaint of bullying or retaliation, the principal or associate/assistant principal will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or associate/assistant principal will determine what remedial action may be required, if any, and determine what responsive and/or disciplinary actions will be taken. The principal’s finding and determinations shall be documented in writing.

All notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal or associate/assistant principal cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

#### Taking Disciplinary Action

If the principal or associate/assistant principal decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or associate/assistant principal, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the Plan and with the school's or district's code of conduct. Disciplinary sanctions may include, but are not limited to, suspension or expulsion from school.

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

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

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the principal or associate/assistant principal will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the principal or associate/assistant principal will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately. The principal or associate/assistant principal will monitor the effectiveness of any such interventions employed and, where appropriate, recommend alternative or supplemental interventions.

#### **RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS**

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

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c.71, §37H or 37H½, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

Adopted: May 9, 2011

## **HARASSMENT POLICY**

### **HARASSMENT/DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

A complaint may be filed at any time by a student, employee, Administrator and/or applicant who believes that his/her rights as outlined in the Sexual Harassment and/or Civil Rights - Equal Opportunities policy have been violated. This may be done in writing or orally.

- A. The complainant shall file within thirty (30) days of the alleged harassment. Complaints of sexual harassment and other Title IX violations shall be directed to the Title IX Coordinator, Director of Special Education, 90 Hampshire St., Methuen, MA (978) 722-6014. Complaints of discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, religion, disability, creed, and/or national origin shall be directed to the Title VI and Section 504 Coordinator, Director of Special Education, 90 Hampshire St., Methuen, MA (978) 722-6014. They are also available to discuss any concerns you may have and to provide information to you about the policy against discrimination and harassment and our complaint procedure. The complainant may, however, file a complaint directly with the Superintendent of Schools at his/her option. In the case of a student, the complaint may, initially, be discussed with any responsible adult with whom the student is comfortable. This adult will then serve as the liaison between the student and the responsible Coordinator. The liaison must document the incident in a written form and submit the form to the appropriate Coordinator within one working day of the receipt of the complaint.
- B. The Coordinator shall conduct an investigation of the harassment'/discrimination complaint within ten (10) working days.
- C. Such investigation may consist of, but not be limited to, the following actions:
  1. Interview (s) with the complainant.
  2. Interview (s) with the individual alleged to be the harasser.
  3. Interview (s) with other employees, students or witnesses.
  4. Interviews with other individuals at the discretion of the Coordinator
  5. Review of pertinent records.
- D. Within fifteen (15) school working days the receipt of the complaint, the Coordinator shall inform the alleged harasser and the complainant of the disposition of the investigation.
  1. If the Coordinator determines that the allegations are not credible, the matter shall be closed. The Coordinator shall keep the documents, notes and other material from the investigation as a permanent record. The purpose for retaining this record is to enable the Methuen Public Schools to document that an appropriate investigation was undertaken.
  2. If the Coordinator determines that the allegations or any part of the allegations, are credible, this fact should be reported to the Superintendent of Schools for appropriate action.
  3. When the investigation has been completed, to the extent possible, both the complainant and the person alleged to have committed the offense will be informed of the results of the investigation.
  4. If the complainant is not satisfied with the results of the complaint, he/she may request a review of the Coordinator's investigation by the Superintendent of Schools or the Methuen School Committee if, in the opinion of the Superintendent, the Superintendent is not able to address the complainant's concerns.
  5. At any stage in the grievance procedure, the complainant has the right to file formal complaints with:

Regional Office for Civil Rights      or      Massachusetts Commission Against  
Discrimination  
5 Post Office Sq., 8<sup>th</sup> Floor,                      One Ashburton Place, Sixth Floor, Rm 601  
Boston, MA 02109-3921                              Boston, MA 02108  
(617) 289-0111    (617) 727-3990

For complaints of discrimination on the basis of disability the complainant may also file a complaint with:

Massachusetts Department of Secondary and Elementary Education  
75 Pleasant Street  
Malden, MA 02148  
(617) 338-3300

or may file a Request for Hearing with

Massachusetts Department Secondary and Elementary Education  
Bureau of Special Education Appeals  
75 Pleasant Street  
Malden, MA 02148  
(781) 338-6500

Complaints of discrimination in employment practices may also be filed with:

United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)  
475 JFK Federal Building  
Boston, MA 02203-0506  
(800) 565-3200

### **Miscellaneous**

- A. Any retaliatory action of any kind taken by an employee or student of the Methuen Public Schools against any other employee or student of the Methuen Public Schools as a result of that person's seeking redress under these procedures, cooperating in an investigation, or otherwise participating in any proceeding under these procedures is prohibited, and shall be regarded as a separate and distinct matter under this procedure and shall be subject to disciplinary action. .
- B. All complaints and subsequent proceedings will, to the greatest extent possible, be held in confidence by all persons directly or indirectly involved in them.
- C. If the alleged sexual harassment constitutes sexual abuse of a child by a "caretaker" (i.e. by a school staff member), then mandated reporters are required by Mass. General Laws, Chapter 119, Section 51A to report the suspected child abuse to the Department of Social Services.

### **Penalties for Harassment/Discrimination**

Remedial actions will depend on the severity of the incident (s). Because of the private nature of certain incidents, particularly those involving sexual harassment and the emotional and moral complexities surrounding such issues, every effort will be made to resolve problems, where appropriate, on an informal basis.

An admission of guilt, an acknowledgement of the verbal warning, a promise not to commit such abuse again, and action taken to provide appropriate relief for the complainant may be sufficient resolution. At the informal level, it is hoped to sensitize the person at fault to the

effects of such behavior, to be constructive, and not unduly punitive in the disciplinary action. If informal resolutions are not adhered to, or if the allegations involve conduct for which informal resolutions are not appropriate, the Superintendent of Schools may deem it necessary to take appropriate action that can include formal letters of reprimand, suspension, expulsion, discharge, or other disciplinary action.

Revised and Readopted May 23, 2011

### **AMENDMENT TO ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAW**

Effective March 10, 1994, the state law prohibiting discrimination against students in public schools includes protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation. As a result of enactment of Chapter 282 of the Acts of 1993, General Laws Chapter 76, section 5 now includes the following provision:

No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.

Enactment of this law advances efforts to ensure that all students can attend school in a safe, supportive environment that is conducive to serious learning.

In addition, as the Board of Education stated in its Recommendations on the Support and Safety of Gay and Lesbian Students (published in May 1993), schools should amend existing anti-harassment policies to include prohibiting violence, harassment, and verbal abuse directed against gay or lesbian students and those perceived to be gay or lesbian. Such incidents should be treated with the same discipline procedures as other incidents involving bias and hatred.

### **CIVIL RIGHTS – EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

The Methuen Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation or disability in admission to, access to, treatment of or employment in its programs and activities. The Methuen Public Schools complies with all applicable State and Federal Laws, including but not limited to, Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Massachusetts General Laws, c.151B, c.151C, c.76, §5, and c.71B.

The Methuen Public Schools has duly appointed individuals responsible for the overall monitoring, auditing, and ensuring compliance with this policy. For compliance issues regarding employment activities, employees should contact: Ms. Gina Bozek, Director of Special Education, Methuen Public Schools, Methuen, Massachusetts, the Coordinator for compliance issues regarding employment. For compliance issues regarding educational activities, contact the building principal or the Director of Special Education, Methuen Public Schools, Methuen, Massachusetts. Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against in any of the District's educational or employment activities can file a written grievance with the appropriate officer.

## **MESSAGE TO PARENTS REGARDING OUR HEALTH PROGRAM**

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The Upper School health program is structured so that students take it on a rotating basis throughout the school year. Your child is currently taking health as part of his/her academic program. The topics discussed at this grade level are age appropriate and have been approved by the Methuen School Committee. The purpose of this letter is to inform you that within the next few weeks the topic of adolescent growth and development will be discussed.

The purpose is to help each child have a better understanding of the emotional and physical changes that take place during puberty. The role of the school is to supplement and support the information that parents give their children and it is hoped that you will discuss this topic with your child to instill your moral and personal views. If you would like materials to use in the discussion with your child, they will be available at the main office of the school.

In accordance with General Laws Chapter 71, Section 32A, the Methuen Public Schools would like to inform you that it is our right to inspect and review program instruction materials for the curriculum by making arrangements with the building Principal. Parents also may exempt their child from any portion of the curriculum that primarily involves human sexuality issues, without penalty to the student, by sending a letter to the school Principal requesting an exemption.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call the health educator at your child's school:

Comprehensive Grammar School  
978-722-9051 Ext. 5279

Marsh Grammar School  
978-722-9076 Ext. 6244

Timony Grammar School  
978-722-9001 Ext. 3141

Tenney Grammar School  
978-722-9026 Ext. 4230

or

Dr. Jennifer Smith, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment  
at 978-722-6007.

Thank you for your continued support of the Methuen Public Schools. It is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Supervising Principals

Health Education Teachers

## **THE METHUEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS** **PEER MEDIATION PROGRAM**

As a part of a continuing effort to provide safe schools for the children of Methuen, peer mediation programs at the Upper School and High School were instituted during the 1994-95 school year. The success of these programs prompted the pilot of an elementary program during the 1996-97 school years. Peer mediation empowers students to solve their conflicts in a peaceful manner with the assistance of trained student mediators acting as a neutral third party. Student mediators are a diverse group of students from the school who have participated in a twelve hour (lower school students), or an eighteen hour (Upper School students), intensive training course in mediation and conflict resolution skills, teaching them the general and specific skills they will use as mediators. Hundreds of Methuen Public Schools students have resolved disagreements with their peers utilizing the help of student mediators.

Peer mediation generally solves disagreements between children that may be caused by name calling, rumors, or misunderstandings. The goal of mediation is for students to reach a successful agreement acceptable to all involved. A peer mediation session usually takes less than one class period and approximately 90 percent of these sessions result in agreements. Student mediators employ essential life skills such as active listening, problem solving, critical thinking and negotiation to assist students in ending their conflicts. After each mediation session, the adult coordinator or a teacher/advisor reviews the mediation session with the student mediators.

Participation in mediation is voluntary. Students participate because they want to be able to resolve their conflicts collaboratively. Students appreciate mediation because it is confidential. All students involved in the mediation are encouraged to keep all mediation information confidential so that students will be able to talk freely in the mediation session without fearing that their personal business will course throughout the school rumor mill when they are finished. This enables the process to work because students feel safe. No one beyond the student mediators and the adult coordinator know what transpires in a mediation session with the following exceptions: information about drug use, alcohol use, potentially harmful behaviors, or anything considered a reportable offense in the student handbook. Peer mediation does not replace the school disciplinary system. Students who violate school rules must suffer the disciplinary consequences of their actions. After disciplinary action has been taken, they may choose to participate in a mediation session to help resolve the conflict in a non-violent manner.

Learning how to settle problems in a non-violent way is an important part of growing up in a world where violence is prevalent especially in music and on television. Children need to have the opportunity to resolve differences without the input of adults. Students understand their peers and therefore make the mediation process age-appropriate, framing the problem in a developmentally appropriate way. Students who participate in mediation feel more empowered and in control, they learn that it is okay to talk out problems. Just as reading and writing are essential skills for leading a productive life, so too are conflict resolution skills. Young people need to be able to communicate effectively, appreciate the consequence of their actions, generate and evaluate alternative solutions to problems and coexist with people with whom they disagree. Peer mediation teaches these fundamental skills and attitudes to both student mediators and students who

participate in mediation sessions. Teaching students skills to resolve their own conflicts not only improve their lives, but also improve the schools in which they learn.

Peer mediation is a key component in the continuing effort to keep our schools safe for all students. Providing all children with the opportunity to participate in mediation will help them to develop lifelong skills for resolving conflict. If you have any questions about the program, please call your child's school and ask to speak with the peer mediation coordinator. If for any reason you do not want your child to participate in a peer mediation session, please complete the following information and return it to your child's school.

=====

**Exclusion from Peer Mediation Form**

I do not want my child \_\_\_\_\_ to participate in any peer mediation sessions during this school year.

Parent Signature:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**File JKAA**

**PHYSICAL RESTRAINT**  
**POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

Physical restraint is defined as the use of bodily force to limit a student's freedom of movement. Physical restraint shall only be used as a behavior management tool when other less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate. In the event that physical restraint is required to protect the safety of school community members, the Methuen Public Schools has enacted the following policy and procedures to ensure the proper use of restraint and to prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of restraint. These procedures shall be annually reviewed, provided to school staff and made available to parents of enrolled students. None of the foregoing paragraph or the policy/procedures which follow, precludes any teacher, employee or agent of the Methuen Public Schools from using reasonable force to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent, serious physical harm.

**STAFF TRAINING**

- A. All program staff/faculty will receive training regarding the school's restraint policy within the first month of each school year, and employees hired after the school year begins will receive training within one month of starting their employment
- B. Required training for all staff will include review of the following:
  - 1. The District's restraint policy;
  - 2. Interventions, which may preclude the need for restraint, including de-escalation of problematic behaviors;
  - 3. Types of restraints and related safety considerations including information regarding the increased risk of injury to a student when an extended restraint is used;
  - 4. Administering physical restraint in accordance with known medical or psychological limitations and/or behavioral intervention plans applicable to an individual student; and

5. Identification of program staff who have received in-depth training (as set forth below in section C) in the use of physical restraint.
- C. Designated staff members shall participate in at least sixteen hours of in-depth training in the use of physical restraint.
1. At the beginning of the school year, the principal or his or her designee will identify those staff who will participate in in-depth training and who will then be authorized to serve as school-wide resources to assist in ensuring proper administration of physical restraint.
  2. In-depth training will include:
    - a. Appropriate procedures for preventing the need for physical restraint, including the de-escalation of problematic behavior, relationship building and the use of alternatives to restraint
    - b. A description and identification of dangerous behaviors on the part of a student that may indicate the need for physical restraint and methods for evaluating the risk of harm in individual situations in order to determine whether the use of restraint is warranted;
    - c. The simulated experience of administering and receiving physical restraint instruction regarding the effect(s) on the person restrained, including instruction on monitoring physical signs of distress and obtaining medical assistance;
    - d. Instruction regarding documentation and reporting requirements and investigation of injuries and complaints; and
    - e. Demonstration by participants of proficiency in administering physical restraint.
  3. Staff/faculty will review any behavior plans pertaining to special techniques for identified students.

#### **ADMINISTRATION OF PHYSICAL RESTRAINT**

- A. Physical restraint may only be used in the following circumstances:
1. When non-physical interventions would be ineffective; and
  2. The student's behavior poses a threat of imminent, serious, physical harm to self and/or others.
- B. Physical restraint is prohibited in the following circumstances:
1. As a means of punishment; or
  2. As a response to property destruction, disruption of 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. However, if the property destruction or the refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive poses a threat of imminent serious, physical harm to the student or to others, physical restraint is appropriate.
- C. Only school personnel who have received required training or in-depth training pursuant to this policy shall administer physical restraint on students with, whenever possible, one adult witness who does not participate in the restraint. The training requirements, however, shall not preclude a teacher, employee or agent of the school from using reasonable force to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent serious, physical harm.

- D. Physical restraint shall be limited to the use of such reasonable force as is necessary to protect a student or others from assault or imminent serious physical harm.
- E. A person administering physical restraint shall use the safest method available and appropriate to the situation. Floor or prone restraints shall be prohibited unless the staff member administering the restraint has received in-depth training as specified in this policy and when in the judgment of the trained staff member, such method is required to provide safety for the student or others present.
- F. Physical restraint shall be discontinued when it is determined that the student is no longer at risk of causing imminent physical harm to self or others.
- G. Additional safety requirements:
  - 1. A restrained student shall not be prevented from breathing or speaking. During the administration of a restraint a staff member shall continuously monitor the physical status of the student, including skin color and respiration.
  - 2. If at any time during a physical restraint the student demonstrates significant physical distress, as determined by the staff member, the student shall be released from the restraint immediately, and school staff shall take steps to seek medical assistance.
  - 3. Program staff shall review and consider any known medical or psychological limitations and/or behavioral intervention plans regarding the use of physical restraint on an individual student.
  - 4. A restraint shall be released immediately upon a determination by the staff member administering the restraint that the student is no longer at risk of causing imminent physical harm to him or herself or others.
- H. At an appropriate time after release of a student from physical restraint, a school administrator or other appropriate school staff shall:
  - 1. Review the incident with the student to address the behavior that precipitated the restraint and involve the parent when applicable in accordance with this policy,
  - 2. Review the incident with the staff person(s) who administered the restraint to discuss whether proper restraint procedures were followed; and
  - 3. Consider whether any follow-up is appropriate for students who witnessed the incident

## **METHODS OF PHYSICAL RESTRAINT**

- A. Children's Control Position: This technique should be used with children or smaller adults. Staff needs to gain control of the arms of the acting out person and position him or herself so that he or she will be able to wrap the arms around the acting out person. To secure the arms, lock one arm under the other. Staff should position him or herself off to one side. An ancillary team member remains in the background, ready to assist as needed.
- B. Team Control Position: Staff members face the same direction, inside legs are placed in front of the student, staff members' outside hands hold the student's wrists, staff members' inside hands form a "c" on the student's shoulders and tip the student forward.

- C. Interim Control Position: This is a temporary control position. The staff member with the acting out person should always maintain control of one arm and move his or her other hand under the acting out person's other arm to possibly gain control of the acting person's loose arm.
- D. Transport Technique: Staff removes their hands from the person's shoulders and moves them under the arms of the person to clasp their wrists. This forms a cross-grained grip to secure the person between staff. Staff should remain close to the person. It is not recommended to transport a struggling individual.

### **CHEMICAL/MECHANICAL/SECLUSION RESTRAINTS PROHIBITED**

- A. Chemical restraint - the administration of medication for the purpose of restraint is prohibited unless explicitly authorized by a physician and approved in writing by the parent(s)/guardian(s).
- B. Mechanical restraint - the use of a physical device to restrict the movement of a student or the movement or normal function of a portion of his/her body is prohibited unless explicitly authorized by a physician and approved in writing by the parent(s)/guardian(s).
  - 1. A protective or stabilizing device, such as a harness, lap or other belts for securing a child in a chair, ordered by a physician or a therapist shall not be considered a mechanical restraint.
- C. Seclusion restraint - physically confining a student alone in a room or limited space without access to school staff is prohibited.
  - 1. The use of "time out" procedures during which a staff member remains accessible to the student, although not necessarily present, shall not be considered "seclusion restraint."

### **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

- A. Program staff shall report the use of physical restraint after administration of a physical restraint that;
  - 1. Results in injury to a student or staff member; or
  - 2. Lasts longer than five minutes.
- B. The staff member who administered such a restraint shall verbally inform principal of the restraint as soon as possible and by written report no later than the next school working day. The written report shall be provided to the principal or his/her designee, except the principal shall prepare the report if the principal administered the restraint;

The principal or his/her designee shall maintain an on-going record of all reported instances of physical restraint, which shall be made available for review by the Department of Education, upon request.

- C. The principal or his/her designee shall verbally inform the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) of such restraint as soon as possible, and by written report postmarked no later than three school working days following the use of such restraint.

1. If the school customarily provides school related information to the parent(s)/guardian(s) in a language other than English, the written restraint report shall be provided in that language.

D. The written report by both sections B and C above shall include:

1. Names and job title of the staff who administered the restraint and observers, if any;
2. Date of restraint and time restraint began and ended;
3. Name of administrator who was verbally informed following the restraint;
4. Description of the activity of the student, other students, and staff in the area were engaged in immediately preceding the use of physical restraint,
5. Student's behavior that prompted the restraint;
6. Efforts made to de-escalate the situation and alternatives to restraint that were attempted;
7. Justification for initiating physical restraint;
8. Description of administration of restraint including:
  - a. The holds used and reasons such holds were necessary
  - b. The student's behavior and reactions during the restraint
  - c. How the restraint ended and
  - d. Documentation of injury to the student and/or staff, if any, during the restraint and any medical care provided
9. For extended restraints (restraints lasting more than twenty minutes), description of the alternatives to extended restraint that were attempted, the outcome of those efforts, and the justification for administering the extended restraint;
10. Information regarding any further action(s) that the school has taken or may take, including any disciplinary sanctions that may be imposed on the student; and
11. Information regarding opportunities for the student's parents/guardian(s) to discuss with school officials the administration of the restraint, any disciplinary sanctions that may be imposed on the student and/or other related matters.

E. The school will, within five school working days of the reported restraint, provide to the Department of Education: (1) a copy of the written report as described above; and (2) a copy of the record of physical restraints maintained by the program administrator for the thirty day period prior to the date of the reported restraint when:

1. A restraint has resulted in a serious injury to a student or program staff member;  
or
2. When an extended restraint has been administered.

A copy of the written report will be sent to the Superintendent of Schools and the Director of Pupil Services.

F. Parent(s)/guardian(s) may voluntarily waive the reporting requirements as stated above for restraints that do not result in serious injury to the student or a program staff member and do not constitute extended restraint.

1. Methuen Public Schools may seek such individual waiver for students who present a high risk of frequent, dangerous behavior that may require the frequent use of restraint
2. Methuen Public Schools shall not require parental consent to such a waiver as a condition of admission or provision of services.

3. Parent(s)/guardian(s) may withdraw consent to such waiver at any time without penalty
4. Extended restraints and restraints that result in serious injury to a student or program staff member must be reported as described above regardless of any individual waiver.
5. The following documentation regarding individual waiver of reporting requirements will be maintained on-site in the student's file and will be made available for inspection to the Department of Education upon request:
  - a. Informed written consent of parent(s)/guardian(s) to the waiver which shall specify those reporting requirements listed above that the parent(s)/guardian(s) agrees to waive, and
  - b. Specific information regarding when and how the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed regarding the administration of all restraints to the individual student
6. Grievance procedures (can be found in the School Committee Policy Manual located in the Supervising Principal's office at every school or the Superintendent's office.)

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

- A. Restraints may be administered to a student with a disability pursuant to the student's Individualized Education Plan or other written and agreed upon plan developed in accordance with state and federal law, subject to the following exceptions:
1. The limitations on chemical, mechanical and seclusion restraint as stated above shall apply; and
  2. The training and reporting requirements described in this policy shall apply.

[District should also provide methods for preventing student violence, self-injurious behavior, and/or suicide, including techniques for de-escalation of potentially dangerous behavior occurring among groups of students or with an individual student]

### ***PROVISION***

The Public Schools complies with the provisions of 603 CMR sect 46.00 ex. seq. dealing with restraint of students in the public schools. To that end, the policy developed pursuant to those regulations is available upon request from the principal, the Director of Pupil Services and the Superintendent's office. Further, the policy is to be posted in the main bulletin board of the school near the office.

\*Physical escort is defined as touching or holding a student without the use of force for the purpose of directing the student physical escort is not physical restraint and is not covered by this policy/procedures.

Legal Ref: 603 CMR 46.00  
M.G.L. 71:37 G

Revised and Readopted: April 12, 2010

## **USE OF THE INTERNET AND INTRANET**

Internet and intranet access is available to the students and staff of the Methuen Public Schools. To the extent it is appropriate; references in this policy to the Internet shall also apply to the intranet. The Internet is an electronic communications network that expands student learning by providing access to many information resources. The Methuen Public Schools support its use for worldwide information access, communication, and collaboration. Our goal is to promote educational excellence by encouraging and facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication and to prepare students for success in life and work. Internet use that is integrated into the school curriculum fosters the development of research and information skills, encourages critical and higher level thinking, and provides expanded educational opportunities for both student and staff.

While supporting the rights of students and staff to use all available tools to investigate a broad range of topics, the Methuen Public Schools recognize that there may be material on the Internet that may be objectionable or devoid of educational value in the context of a school setting. The Methuen Public Schools have taken steps to restrict access to controversial materials. The school department has installed software to limit access to inappropriate material. Additionally, staff will closely supervise student use of the Internet. There may be other materials that are not in accord with family values. This can provide an opportunity for parents to discuss their family values with their child and their expectations about how these values will guide their child's activities while accessing the Internet.

The smooth operation of the network relies upon the proper conduct of the end users who must adhere to strict guidelines. In general, this requires safe, efficient, ethical, and legal utilization of the network resources. These guidelines provide direction for the privilege of using this powerful new resource. If a Methuen Public School user violates any of these provisions, his or her account will be terminated and future access could possibly be denied. The assistance and cooperation of students, staff, and parents in developing responsible attitudes, reinforcing appropriate behaviors, and observing network security practices is vital to the successful use of this powerful learning tool.

### **TERMS AND CONDITION OF INTERNET USE**

The district's Internet access has been established for a limited educational purpose, and use must support education and research and be consistent with the Methuen Public Schools' educational objectives. Use of another organization's network or computing resources must comply with the rules appropriate for that network. Transmission of any material that violates any national or state regulation is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, copyright material, threatening or obscene material, or material protected by trade secret. The use of the system is limited to educational and career or professional development activities and will be used to achieve educational objectives in ways that other resources cannot provide.

Staff will plan and coordinate Internet use in ways that closely guide student experience. Guidance in using the Internet will aim to connect students with sites and sources that meet the district's guidelines for Selection of Instructional Materials. Staff will instruct students in the skills that are needed to effectively use the Internet, including those skills

needed to critically select, evaluate, and use information resources that are relevant and authoritative.

Staff will supervise student access as closely as possible. This includes frequent review of what students are using and, if deemed necessary, a check of the sites which students have visited or accessed via e-mail. Students are responsible for doing only those activities approved by the staff. Activities that require the thoughtful use of accessed information to construct knowledge and understanding will be emphasized.

Internet use is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use may result in possible cancellation of that privilege or in other penalties as outlined in the student handbook. The system Administrators will decide what is inappropriate use and their decisions are final. Accounts may be closed at any time. The Administration, faculty, and staff of the Methuen Public Schools may request the system Administrators to deny, revoke, or suspend specific user accounts.

Any verified acts of vandalism will result in cancellation of privileges. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy the data of another user, the Methuen Public Schools' network, or other networks that are connected to our system through the Internet. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses.

The full text of "Use of the Internet and Intranet," approved by the Methuen School Committee, is located in the Principal's office at each school building.

Adopted: February 9, 1998

### **NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS UNDER THE PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA)**

PPRA affords parents certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

1. Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (DOE): political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent; Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family; sex behavior or attitudes; illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior; critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships; legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers; religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.
2. Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of the following: any other protected information survey, regardless of funding; any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a

student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.

3. Inspect, upon request and before administration or use: protected information surveys of students; instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights transfer to from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.

The Methuen Public Schools will develop and adopt policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The District will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes.

The District will also directly notify, such as through U.S. Mail or email, parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation of the specific activity or survey. The District will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the District has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and are provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys.

Specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement include: the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution; the administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by DOE; and any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-5901

**DISTRICT-WIDE CURRICULUM ACCOMODATION PLAN**  
**(D-CAP)**

In accordance with M.G.L. c.71, §38Q1/2 and 603 CMR 28.03(3), the Methuen Public Schools has developed and adopted a district-wide curriculum accommodation plan to meet the needs of diverse learners in the general education environment. Responsibility for implementation of this curriculum accommodation plan in each school building is the responsibility of the building principal. For more information regarding the specific services that may be available, please contact the guidance department of building principal.