McKay Elementary School



Student and Parent Handbook

2023-2024

67 Rindge Road – Fitchburg, MA 01420 - Telephone 978-665-3187 - Fax 978-665-3523

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JONATHAN THOMPSON
Interim Superintendent of Schools

Dear Fitchburg Public Schools Community,

Welcome back! As we prepare to start a new school year, I am filled with enthusiasm and anticipation. I hope your summer was filled with fun, relaxation and a chance to recharge. As your Interim Superintendent, I am eager to continue to implement our district's promise:

If all staff, families, and community partners collaboratively identify and remove barriers to personal growth and achievement, then every student will be ready to learn and access high quality core instruction and social emotional support.

As part of my transition and entry plan, I will conduct a Listening and Learning tour across the community to learn more about the Fitchburg Public Schools. My goal in undertaking the process is to learn more about the District and community, to gain a deeper understanding of the current conditions of the system and to identify areas for further development and growth. I see this entry plan as an opportunity not only to learn more about our school system through a new lens, but also to have our faculty, staff and community get to know me in a different capacity.

What to Expect This Year: As we get ready to launch the 2023-2024 school year, equity and inclusivity remain the bedrock upon which all of our educational endeavors are built, ensuring that every learner has the opportunity to thrive and contribute in a welcoming learning environment. Below are the three main commitments that the district will deliver this year:

- Clear Expectations Around Teaching and Learning: All students deserve to have access to the best quality instruction at their grade level. Students will receive the best grade level instruction with the appropriate and necessary support to access a quality education.
- Clarity Around Systems and Structures: Through thoughtfully designed curricula, empowered educators, and a supportive school environment, we can equip all students with the skills and mindset necessary to thrive academically, emotionally, and socially.
- Communication Within and Across Systems: Clear communication ensures that everyone is on the same page, promoting a positive atmosphere of mutual understanding, respect, and success for all students.

Stay Connected: I encourage everyone to stay connected with us throughout the year. Please ensure your contact details are up to date. Remember, you can follow us on Facebook @FitchburgPublicSchools, X (Twitter) @FitchburgPS, and on Instagram @fitchburgpublicschools for the latest updates and achievements.

Every new beginning offers opportunities for growth, learning and collaboration. Together, as a united community, we will ensure that every student in our district thrives and reaches their utmost potential.

Thank you for your continued support and trust. Here's to a year full of promise, accomplishments, and memorable moments!

Warm Regarding,

Jonathan Thompson, M.Ed
Interim Superintendent
Fitchburg Public Schools

FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School Calendar for 2023-2024

2023-2024 School Calendar Approved by School Committee 5/1/2023

AUGUST (0)				
M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4
7	9	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
OR	W	W	W	

SEPTEMBER (19)				
M	T	W	T	F
				W
N/S	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

OCTOBER (20)				
M	T	W	T	F
2	3	4	5	6
N/S	W	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

NOVEMBER (19)				
M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	N/S
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	E/R	N/S	N/S
27	28	29	30	

DECEMBER (16)				
M	T	W	T	F
				1
4	5	E/R	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
N/S	26	27	28	29

JANUARY (20)				
M	T	W	T	F
N/S	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
N/S	W	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

FEBRUARY (16)				
M	T	W	T	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
N/S	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	

MARCH (21)				
M	T	W	T	F
				1
4	5	E/R	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	E/R	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

APRIL (17)				
M	T	W	T	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
N/S	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

MAY (22)				
M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3
6	7	E/R	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
N/S	28	29	30	31

JUNE (10)				
M	T	W	T	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	N/S	20	21
24	25	26	27	28

August 28	New Teacher Orientation
Aug. 29 - Sept. 1	Teacher and Staff Workshops
September 4	Labor Day - No School
September 5	Classes begin for students 1-12 **(full day)**
September 5-7	PK and K Orientation
September 8	Classes begin for students PK and K
October 9	Indigenous Peoples' Day/Columbus Day - No School
October 10	Teacher Workshop - No School
November 10	Veteran's Day - No School
November 23 - 24	Thanksgiving Recess - No School
December 6	Parent/Guardian Teacher Conferences K-12 - Early Release
Dec. 25 - Jan 1	No School - December Vacation
January 2	School Re-opens from December Vacation
January 15	Martin Luther King Jr. Day - No School
January 16	Teacher and Staff Workshops - No School
Jan. 31 and Feb. 7	Parent/Guardian Teacher Conferences PK
February 19 - 23	No School - Winter Vacation
March 6	Teacher Professional Development - Early Release
March 20	Parent/Guardian Teacher Conferences K-12 - Early Release
April 1 - 30	Preschool and Kindergarten Registration
April 15 - 19	No School - Spring Vacation
May 8	Teacher Professional Development - Early Release
May 27	Memorial Day - No School
May 29 and Jun. 5	Parent/Guardian Teacher Conferences PK
May 30	Goodrich Academy Graduation
May 31	Fitchburg High School Graduation
June 14	**Last day of school -180th day- Early Release *(if no snow days)***
June 19	Juneteenth Day - No School

Students will be in attendance 180 days - Teachers 186.5 days

If no days are lost due to inclement weather, or other reasons, students will be dismissed as early as June 14th

First day of school
9/5 Gr. 1-12 and 9/8 PK and K

N/S Holiday

E/R Early Release - 11/22 Holiday, 6/14 Last day of School

E/R Early Release - 3/6, 5/8
Professional Development

E/R Early Release - 12/6, 3/20
Parent/Guardian Teacher Conferences

OR New Teacher Orientation
8/28

W Teacher Workshop- No School
8/29, 8/30, 8/31, 9/1, 10/10, 1/16
0.5 Asynchronous prior to 9/5

W Para Workshop- No School
8/29 0.5 day, 8/30 and 1/16 full day
0.5 Asynchronous prior to 9/5

PK and K Orientation

PK Parent/Guardian Teacher Conferences

( ) # of school days in the month

ESCUELAS PÚBLICAS DE FITCHBURG

Calendario escolar 2023-2024

2023-2024 Calendario Escolar Approvado 5/1/2023

AGOSTO (0)				
M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4
7	9	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
OR	T	T	T	

SEPTIEMBRE (19)				
M	T	W	T	F
				T
N/E	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

OCTUBRE (20)				
M	T	W	T	F
2	3	4	5	6
N/E	T	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

NOVIEMBRE (19)				
M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	N/E
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	S/T	N/E	N/E
27	28	29	30	

DICIEMBRE (16)				
M	T	W	T	F
				1
4	5	S/T	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
N/E	26	27	28	29

ENERO (20)				
M	T	W	T	F
N/E	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
N/E	T	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

FEBRERO (16)				
M	T	W	T	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
N/E	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	

MARZO(21)				
M	T	W	T	F
				1
4	5	S/T	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	S/T	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

ABRIL (17)				
M	T	W	T	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
N/E	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

MAYO (22)				
M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3
6	7	S/T	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
N/E	28	29	30	31

JUNIO (10)				
M	T	W	T	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	N/E	20	21
24	25	26	27	28

Primer dia de escuela
9/5 Gr. 1-12 y 9/8 Preescolar y Kinder

N/E Festivo

S/T Salida Temprana - 11/22 Festivo, 6/14 Último día de clase

S/T Salida Temprana - 3/6, 5/8
Desarrollo profesional

S/T Salida Temprana - 12/6, 3/20
Conferencias de padres/representantes y maestros

OR Orientación para nuevos 8/28

T Talleres para maestros
No hay clases
8/29, 8/30, 8/31, 9/1, 10/10, 1/16
0.5 Asíncrono antes del 9/5

T Talleres para paraprofessionals
No hay clases - 8/29 0.5 día
8/30 y 1/16 día completo
0.5 Asíncrono antes del 9/5

Orientación para Preescolar y Kinder

Conferencias entre padres/ representantes y maestros Preescolar

( ) # Número de días del mes

Agosto 28	Orientación para nuevos maestros
Ago. 29 - Sept. 1	Talleres para maestros y el personal
Septiembre 4	Día del Trabajador - No hay clases
Septiembre 5	Comienzan las clases para los grados 1-12 (**día completo**)
Septiembre 5-7	Orientación para Preescolar y Kinder
Septiembre 8	Comienzan las clases para Preescolar y Kinder
Octubre 9	Día de los Pueblos Indígenas / Día de la Raza - No hay clases
Octubre 10	Taller para maestros - No hay clases
Noviembre 10	Día de los Veteranos - No hay clases
Noviembre 23 - 24	Receso de Acción de Gracias - No hay clases
Diciembre 6	Conferencias entre padres/representantes y maestros K-12
Dic. 25 - Ene 1	Vacaciones de Diciembre
Enero 2	La escuela vuelve a abrir después de las vacaciones de Diciembre
Enero 15	Día de Martin Luther King Jr. - No hay clases
Enero 16	Talleres para maestros y personal - No hay clases
Ene. 31 y Feb. 7	Conferencias entre padres/representantes y maestros Preescolar
Febrero 19 - 23	Vacaciones de invierno - No hay clases
Marzo 6	DP para maestros - Salida temprana
Marzo 20	Conferencias de padres/representantes y maestros Kinder-12
Abril 1 - 30	Inscripción para Kinder
Abril 15 - 19	Vacaciones de primavera - No hay clases
Mayo 8	DP para maestros - Salida temprana
Mayo 27	Día de los Caídos - No hay clases
May. 29 y Jun. 5	Conferencias entre padres/representantes y maestros Preescolar
Mayo 30	Graduación de Goodrich Academy
Mayo 31	Graduación de Fitchburg High School
Junio 14	**Último día de clases -día 180- Salida Temprana (sin días de nieve)**
Junio 19	Día del Juneteenth - No hay clases

Los alumnos asistirán 180 días - Los maestros 186,5 días

Si no se pierden días debido a las inclemencias del tiempo, u otras razones, los estudiantes serán despedidos a partir del 14 de Junio.

ESCOLAS PÚBLICAS DE FITCHBURG

Calendário Escolar 2023-2024

2023-2024 Calendário Escolar Aprovado 5/1/2023

AGOSTO (0)				
M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4
7	9	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
OR	S	S	S	

SETEMBRO (19)				
M	T	W	T	F
				S
N/E	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

OUTUBRO (20)				
M	T	W	T	F
2	3	4	5	6
N/E	S	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

NOVEMBRO (19)				
M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	N/E
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	E/R	N/E	N/E
27	28	29	30	

DEZEMBRO (16)				
M	T	W	T	F
				1
4	5	E/R	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
N/E	26	27	28	29

JANEIRO (20)				
M	T	W	T	F
N/E	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
N/E	S	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

FEVEREIRO (16)				
M	T	W	T	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
N/E	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	

MARÇO (21)				
M	T	W	T	F
				1
4	5	S/A	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	S/A	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

ABRIL (17)				
M	T	W	T	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
N/E	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

MAIO (22)				
M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3
6	7	S/A	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
N/E	28	29	30	31

JUNHO (10)				
M	T	W	T	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	N/E	20	21
24	25	26	27	28

Primeiro dia de aula
9/5 Gr. 1-12 e 9/8 PK e K

N/E Feriado

S/A Saída Antecipada - 11/22 Feriado, 6/14 Último dia de escola

S/A Saída Antecipada - 3/6, 5/8
Desenvolvimento Profissional

S/A Saída Antecipada - 12/6, 3/20
Conferências de Pais/Yutor e Professores

OR Orientação de Novos Professores
8/28

S Seminários para Professores
Não há escola
8/29, 8/30, 8/31, 9/1, 10/10, 1/16
0,5 Assíncrono antes de 9/5

S Seminários para Paras
Não há escola
8/29 0.5 dia
8/30 and 1/16 dia inteiro
0,5 Assíncrono antes de 9/5

Orientação Pré-escola e da Jardim de Infância

Conferências de pais/tutor e professores PK

Agosto28	Orientação de Novos Professores
Ago. 29 - Set. 1	Seminários para professores e funcionários
Setembro 4	Día do Trabalho - Não há escola
Setembro 5	Início das aulas para os alunos do 1º ao 12º ano (dia inteiro)
Setembro 5	Orientação Pré-escola e da Jardim de Infância
Setembro 8	Começam as aulas do Pré-escola e da Jardim de Infância
Octubro 9	Dia dos Povos Indígenas / Día de la Colombo - Não há escola
Octubro 10	DP para Professores - Não há escola
Novembro 10	Día dos Veteranos - Não há escola
Novembro 23 - 24	Recesso de Ação de Graças - Não há escola
Dezembro 6	Conferências de pais/tutor e professores K-12 - Saída Antecipada
Dez. 25 - Jan 1	Feriados de dezembro - Não há escola
Janeiro 2	A escola reabre a partir das férias de Dezembro
Janeiro 15	Día de Martin Luther King Jr. - Não há escola
Janeiro 16	Seminários para professores e funcionários - Não há escola
Jan. 31 y Fev. 7	Conferências de pais/tutor e professores PK
Fevereiro 19 - 23	Férias de inverno - Não há escola
Março 6	Desenvolvimento Profissional - Saída antecipada
Março 20	Conferências de pais/tutor e professores K-12 - Saída Antecipada
Abril 1 - 30	Inscrição no Jardim de Infância
Abril 15 - 19	Férias de primavera - Não há escola
Maio 8	Desenvolvimento Profissional - Saída antecipada
Maio 27	Dia da Memória - Não há escola
Maio 29 y Jun. 5	Conferências de pais/tutor e professores PK
Maio 30	Graduação da Goodrich Academy
Maio 31	Graduação da Fitchburg High School
Junho 14	**Último dia de aula - dia 180- Demissão antecipada (se não houver dias de neve)**
Junho 19	Dia de Juneteenth - - Não há escola

( ) # Número de dias de aulas no mês

Os alunos frequentaram 180 dias - Professores 186,5 dias

Se não se perderem dias devido ao mau tempo ou a outros motivos, os alunos serão dispensados a partir de 14 de Junho

LEKÒL PIBLIK FITCHBURG

Kalandriye lekòl la 2023-2024

2023-2024 Kalandriye lekòl la apwouve pa komite lekòl la le 5/1/2023

OUT (0)				
M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4
7	9	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
OR	S	S	S	

SEPTANM (19)				
M	T	W	T	F
				S
V	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

OKTÒB (20)				
M	T	W	T	F
2	3	4	5	6
V	S	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

NOVANM (19)				
M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	V
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	M/J	V	V
27	28	29	30	

DESANM (16)				
M	T	W	T	F
				1
4	5	M/J	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
V	26	27	28	29

JANVYE (20)				
M	T	W	T	F
V	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
V	S	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

FEVRIYE (16)				
M	T	W	T	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
V	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	

MAS (21)				
M	T	W	T	F
				1
4	5	M/J	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	M/J	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

AVRIL (17)				
M	T	W	T	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
V	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

ME (22)				
M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3
6	7	M/J	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
V	28	29	30	31

JEN (10)				
M	T	W	T	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	V	20	21
24	25	26	27	28

Out 28	Oryantasyon nouvo pwofesè yo
Out 29 - Sept. 1	Devlopman pwofesyonèl anplwaye yo
Septanm 4	Jounen Travay - Pa gen lekòl
Septanm 5	Klas yo kòmanse pou klas 1-12 **(jounen konplè)**
Septanm 5-7	Oryantasyon pou lekòl matènèl ak Kindergarten
Septanm 8	Klas yo kòmanse pou Kindergarten ak lekòl matènèl
Oktòb 9	Jounen Pèp Endijèn yo / Jounen Christophe Colomb - Pa gen lekòl
Oktòb 10	Seminè pwofesè - pa gen lekòl
Novanm 10	Jou veteran yo - pa gen lekòl
Novanm 23 - 24	Jou fèt Thanksgiving - pa gen lekòl
Desanm 6	Konferans paran-pwofesè K-12 - Mwatye Jou
Des. 25 - Jan. 1	Desanm jou ferye - pa gen lekòl
Janvye 2	Lekòl la rekòmanse apre jou ferye desanm yo
Javye 15	Jou Martin Luther King Jr. - Pa gen lekòl
Janvye 16	Seminè pwofesè - pa gen lekòl
Jan. 31 ak Fev. 7	Konferans lekòl matènèl - paran-pwofesè
Fevriye 19 - 23	Jou ferye ivè - pa gen lekòl
Mas 6	Devlopman pwofesyonèl anplwaye yo - Mwatye Jou
Mas 20	Konferans paran-pwofesè K-12 - Mwatye Jou
Avril 1 - 30	Enskripsyon pou Kindergarten ak lekòl matènèl
Avril 15 - 19	Vakans prentan - Pa gen lekòl
Me 8	Devlopman pwofesyonèl anplwaye yo - Mwatye Jou
Me 27	Jour de commémoration - Pa gen Lekòl
Me 29 ak Jen 5	Konferans lekòl matènèl - paran-pwofesè
Me 30	Goodrich Academy - Seremoni gradyasyon
Me 31	Fitchburg High School - Seremoni gradyasyon
Jen 14	**Dènye jou lekòl -180yèm jou- Mwatye jou (si pa gen jou nèj)**
Jen 19	Journée Juneteenth - Pa gen Lekòl

Elèv yo pral prezan 180 jou - Pwofesè yo 186.5 jou

Si pa gen okenn jou ki pèdi akòz move tan oswa lòt rezon, elèv yo pral kite 14 jen

Premye jou lekòl
9/5 Gr. 1-12 et 9/8 Kindergarten ak lekòl

V Vakans

M/J Mwatye Jou - 11/22 Fete,
6/14 Dènye jou lekòl

M/J Mwatye Jou - 3/6, 5/8
Devlopman pwofesyonèl anplwaye yo

M/J Mwatye Jou - 12/6, 3/20
Konferans paran-pwofesè K-12

OR Oryantasyon nouvo pwofesè yo
8/28

S Seminè pwofesè - pa gen lekòl
8/29, 8/30, 8/31, 9/1, 10/10, 1/16
.5 Asynchrone anvan 9/5

S Seminè parapwofesyonèl
pa gen lekòl - 8/29 0.5 mwatye jou
8/30 ak 1/16 jounen konplè
.5 Asynchrone anvan 9/5

Oryantasyon pou lekòl matènèl ak Kindergarten

Konferans lekòl matènèl - paran-pwofesè

( ) # Kantite jou lekòl nan mwa a

District Contact Information

Fitchburg Public Schools		
South Street Early Learning Center	376 South Street	978-348-2300
Crocker Elementary School	200 Bigelow Road	978-345-3290
McKay Elementary School	67 Rindge Road	978-665-3187
Reingold Elementary School	70 Reingold Avenue	978-345-3289
Arthur M Longsjo Middle School	98 Academy Street	978-343-2146
Memorial Middle School	615 Rollstone Street	978-345-3295
Fitchburg High School	140 Arn-How Road – Enrollment for GR. 9-12	978-345-3240
Goodrich Academy	111 Goodrich Street – Enrollment for GR. 9-12	978-345-3244
Central Office - 376 South Street		
Superintendent	thompsonj@fitchburg.k12.ma.us	978-345-3220
Assistant Superintendent	colong@fitchburg.k12.ma.us	978-345-3223
Family & Community Engagement Coordinator	fernandezl@fitchburg.12.ma.us	978-956-3140
Enrollment Center (PK-8)	packardn@fitchburg.k12.ma.us	978-345-3200
Special Education Services	berrospea@fitchburg.k12.ma.us	978-345-3209
Pupil Services	demancher@fitchburg.k12.ma.us	978-345-3209
Transportation	hildrethd@fitchburg.k12.ma.us	978-348-2312
Food Services	semenzad@fitchburg.k12.ma.us	978-345-3285
21st Century Program	fischerj@fitchburg.k12.ma.us	978-345-3209 x116
Mayor's Office	718 Main Street	978-829-1801
Director of Nursing	riversp@fitchburg.k12.ma.us	978-343-2134

Director of Technology	spinneye@fitchburg.k12.ma.us	978-343-2149
Director of English Language Arts	keefej@fitchburg.k12.ma.us	
Director of English Language Learners	kellye@fitchburg.k12.ma.us	978-343-2109
Director of Math	chandlert@fitchburg.k12.ma.us	
Director of Science	stodulskij@fitchburg.k12.ma.us	
Director of Social Studies	marderosianj@fitchburg.k12.ma.us	
Director of Social Emotional Learning	keenanb@fitchburg.k12.ma.us	978-45-3209
Director of Enrollment & Data	packardn@fitchburg.k12.ma.us	978-343-2123
School Committee		
Mayor Stephen L. DiNatale	Chairman	mayor@fitchburgma.gov
Mr. Peter Stephens	Vice Chairperson	stephensp@fitchburg.k12.ma.us
Dr. Martiza Knight	Committee Member	knightm@fitchburg.k12.ma.us
Mr. James Walsh	Committee Member	walshj@fitchburg.k12.ma.us
Mr. Thomas Hughes	Committee Member	hughest@fitchburg.k12.ma.us
Ms. Rosemary Reynolds	Committee Member	reynoldsr@fitchburg.k12.ma.us
Mr. Aidan Horgan	Committee Member	horgana@fitchburg.k12.ma.us

SECTION I – DISTRICT INFORMATION

District Vision/Mission

Our Vision

Each Fitchburg Public School provides learning experiences that engage all students in achieving high academic standards while developing intellectual rigor, creative interest, and the social characteristics that prepare them for the challenges of living successfully and productively as citizens of this new century.

Our Mission

The Fitchburg Public Schools mission is to provide coordinated curricular and extracurricular experiences that inspire students to develop the academic, intellectual, creative, technological, and social skills necessary to work and to participate in our democratic society. Highly qualified educators who motivate and support students in achieving the high standards of literacy and numeracy as described in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks will staff our schools. Teachers, admin see istrators, and parents will collaborate to ensure the effectiveness of learning experiences that are differentiated to meet a variety of student learning styles, needs, and interests. All members of the school community will focus on achieving academic excellence through curricula that promote inquiry and stimulate curiosity and the foundation for lifelong learning.

Valuing Diversity

The Fitchburg Public Schools value the cultural diversity of our students and staff. It is our belief that this diversity contributes to our creativity, enhances our productivity and increases our ability to live in a world community. We are striving to enlarge our understanding of, and our appreciation for, the many cultures represented in our student and staff population.

The atmosphere of our school plays a significant part in communicating this philosophy to our students, parents and teachers. Each member of the school community must contribute to making the school a place where every individual, regardless of race, ethnicity or cultural heritage, enjoys a sense of belonging, the feeling of being valued and treated fairly by all. Each staff or student member must help to counter those forces that set one group against another or that undermine learning and teaching. Good manners, common decency and a respect for the rules that strike a balance between personal freedoms and the common good are cornerstones to our public schools and to our society.

Therefore, we expect our students and staff to demonstrate a tolerance of individual differences and to promote an atmosphere where no one has the right to intimidate, harass or abuse another human being, physically or verbally, because of their religious, racial or ethnic heritage.

Notice of Non-Discrimination

The School Committee's policy of nondiscrimination extends to students, employees, and the general public with whom it does business. Fitchburg Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender

identity, age or disability in admission to, access to, employment in, or equal treatment in its programs and/or activities in compliance with state and federal law.

Questions related to this policy must be addressed to: The Human Resources Director/Grievance Officer, 376 South Street, Fitchburg, MA 01420, (978) 345-3215.

Equal Educational Opportunity

In accordance with M.G.L. c. 76, 5, 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, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.

Enrollment in Fitchburg Public Schools

Students up to grade 8:

Enrollment and Parent Information Center at 376 South Street.

Students entering grades 9 and above:

Fitchburg High School, 140 Arn-How Farm Road.
Goodrich Academy, 111 Goodrich Street.

Residency

In accordance with M.G.L. c. 76, 5, every person shall have a right to attend the public schools of the town where he actually resides, subject to the following section. No school committee is required to enroll a person who does not actually reside in the town unless said enrollment is authorized by law or by the school committee. Any person who violates or assists in the violation of this provision may be required to remit full restitution to the town of the improperly-attended public schools.

Withdrawal from Fitchburg Public Schools

When withdrawing a student from Fitchburg Public Schools, the school office and your child's teacher(s) should be notified as soon as possible and at least two days in advance. A withdrawal form must be completed and accompany the student to his/her new school. In the process of withdrawing, the parent/guardian will sign a release of records, which allows school records to be forwarded to the new school. By law, school records must be sent directly from school to school.

SECTION II – SCHOOL INFORMATION

Letter from Administration

Welcome to McKay Elementary School - Home of the Dragons!!

On behalf of the entire administration team, I would like to extend the invitation of working together to ensure your child(ren) has a great school year. We want to see all of our students feel safe and happy to come to school everyday. If there are any issues please reach out to the parent liaison and schedule an appointment. You can also email your child's teacher or an administrator and we will get back to you within 24 hours.

We have many fun family events planned for the upcoming year. We hope to see you and your family. Some of the events are: Open House, book fairs, turkey trot, grade level family nights, March Madness Carnival and Parent/Teacher conferences; these are just a few! We have a new PTO that we would love parents to join as well - more details to follow.

Attendance is extremely important - attending school everyday is a must! However, if your child is sick please contact the office. If your child needs to be out of school for an extended amount of time - we can help you get school work so your child does not fall behind their classmates.

Again, anything we can do to help your child be as successful as they can be - please reach out to us and let's make it happen!!

Suzanne Tingas, Principal

McKay Elementary School Contact Information

(978) 665-3187		
Suzanne Tingas	Principal	978-665-3187
Katrina Murray	Asst. Principal	978-665-3186
Joyce Chapman	Asst. Principal	978-665-3425
Kat Craven	SPSA	978-665-3550
Maura Babineau	Secretary	978-665-3187
Thalia Maronas	Secretary	978-665-3187
Nivia Torres	Home Liaison	torresn@fitchburg.k12.ma.us
School Nurse's Office	Nurses	978-665-3187

McKay Elementary School Website: https://sites.google.com/fitchburg.k12.ma.us/mckay

Fitchburg Public Schools Website: http://www.fitchburg.k12.ma.us/

School Philosophy and/or Mission Statement

School Vision

The McKay Elementary School (MES) is a diverse, 1-5 School that provides a safe and inclusive learning environment. Our students build character, self-confidence, academic and social leadership skills to become creative problem-solvers and responsible, productive citizens.

School Mission

At MES, the Common Core curriculum is infused with standards based arts integrated projects to foster expression and creativity in all students. All staff members in partnership with parents and community collaborate to provide students appropriate resources to achieve success in all disciplines, and to progress socially and emotionally.

Overarching or Thematic Goal

Expanding our working relationships with our Community Partners, professional development in Professional Learning Communities (PLC) facilitation, arts-integrated project-based learning and writing across content areas are key components of teacher -identified professional development. These and a Responsive Classroom approach will provide a common language and shared strategies spiraling across school grade levels, which will positively impact student learning.

Family and Emergency Information Forms

Please complete this form and return it to the school immediately because it is the only means of reaching you or your designated emergency contact. All telephone numbers must be current; emergency contacts must live in Fitchburg or the immediate area. Please make sure your designated emergency contact is aware that you are providing their name and number to the school, and inform them as to what they need to do.

Parents/Guardians must notify the school of any changes that occur in your family, such as changes regarding child custody, restraining orders, names, medical status, addresses, home and work phone numbers, emergency contacts, etc., so that schools have current information.

Connect-Ed Messages

Either the School District or individual schools may send automated voice messages, called "Connect Ed Messages," to the phone numbers provided by parents/guardians. These messages will include announcements regarding attendance, special school events, calendar reminders, school activities, schedule changes, school cancellation or closures, and other important updates. Please ensure that the school office has current phone numbers at all times so that you can receive these important messages.

Cancellation of School

No School or Delayed Opening

Announcements of school cancellation or delayed openings will be made as early as possible through the telephone Connect Ed system. Announcements will also be broadcast over the following local radio stations: WPKZ (AM 1280), WBS (AM 1030) and WXLO (FM 104.5), and televised on Channels 4, 5 and 7 and posted on the District's website (fitchburgschools.org). Please check your phone messages and tune into the radio or television or check the District's website for these announcements so that it will not be necessary to call individual schools or the school department.

Unexpected Closing Once School is in Session

In the event that school is dismissed early because of storm conditions or for reasons of an emergency nature, children will take their usual means of transportation home.

Please ensure that the school office has the current name and contact information for an emergency contact in case you are not at home at the time of any such a dismissal.

School-Home Communication

Notices

School-home communication is very important! Parents/guardians should check with their child daily to ensure they receive notices regarding events, programs, concerns, calendar changes and other pertinent information, which is regularly sent home with your child. Please respond to any such notices as promptly as possible.

Phone Calls

School office staff will be pleased to help with any problem or answer any questions concerning school in general. Please be advised that only in emergencies will messages be relayed to students or will students be permitted to use the telephone. Please refrain from texting or calling your child's cell phone during school hours.

Contacting Teachers

Parents wishing to speak with a teacher directly should leave a message with the office staff. Parents may also use email to contact teachers. Teachers will reply to messages within a reasonable period of time.

Parent/Guardian Dismissals from School

Parents are urged to schedule doctor, dentist, or other similar appointments outside of school hours or during school holidays or vacations. Parents are urged to avoid taking family trips or vacations during school time.

Students will not be dismissed without written parent/guardian authorization provided to the school in advance. The written authorization must provide the reason, time of dismissal and the name of the person authorized to pick up the student. The parent/guardian or authorized

individual must report to the office to provide identification (photo ID/license) as necessary and to sign the student out.

Homework

Homework is defined as written or non-written tasks that are assigned by teachers to be completed by students outside of the classroom.

The purposes of homework are to practice newly taught skills, review previously mastered skills, develop independent study habits, or to extend and enrich the curriculum.

Homework should be related to the curriculum of the school. The information for any homework assignment should be clear and specific so that the student can complete the assignment.

Homework should not be used as a behavior management tool or as a form of punishment.

Homework should not be done by parents.

Reading assignments are to be incorporated into homework time allotments at each grade level, but voluntary reading beyond homework guidelines is encouraged. Long-term projects should be assigned with enough time to complete the work. Homework assignments should take into consideration individual differences of students such as health, ability, conditions at home, and educational resources at home.

Homework is a learning activity which should increase in complexity with the maturity of the student. With increased maturity, learning should become an independent activity. This should be established through consistent assignments which encourage students to investigate for themselves and to work independently as well as with others. There are appropriate responsibilities regarding homework for students, parents, teachers and principals. Each school is directed by the Superintendent to publish their homework plan and list the roles and responsibilities of students, parents, teachers and principals in their handbook. Each school will also publish the guidelines for the appropriate time limits that children at each grade level should devote to homework each night. *School Committee Policy #5207*

School Visitors

ALL BUILDING ENTRY DOORS HAVE PROCEDURES POSTED FOR VISITORS ENTERING THE BUILDING. Following entry, all visitors must report to the school office upon entering the building to sign in and receive a visitor's pass. Before leaving the building visitors must report back to the office to sign out and return the visitor's pass.

Parents/guardians and adult school visitors are always welcome, but plans should be made in advance through the Principal's office. Parents/guardians and visitors must remain in the location for which they receive authorization. Visitors should not expect to confer with

teachers while classes are in session. Parents/guardians and visitors must schedule conferences in advance, at times mutually convenient for both the teacher and parent.

Field Trips

Occasional field trips are provided as part of the school's curriculum. Students taking such trips must have two permission slips signed by a parent or guardian: one that gives permission for your child to attend that specific trip, and a second that details any existing medical conditions and appropriate prescribed medications.

Background Checks for Volunteers/Chaperones

Any parent/guardian or other community member who wishes to volunteer in schools or attend a field trip as a chaperone must submit to an appropriate CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) check. Such persons must come to school at least two weeks in advance, with appropriate identification, to fill out the necessary CORI paperwork.

Parent Involvement

The Fitchburg Public Schools will support and provide opportunities for parents to participate in and become involved with their child's/children's school related activities and events. The District will consult with parents in the planning, implantation and evaluation of these educational programs and activities. Individual schools will develop and implement specific procedures to involve parents in supporting the academic achievement of their children. The District and schools will comply with all state and federal requirements for involvement.

PTO (Parent Teacher Organization): The School Committee recognizes the School-Parent Associations as private, non-profit adjuncts of the School Department under its auspice.

School Council: A School Council is a representative; school building-based committee composed of the principal, teachers, parents, community members and, at the secondary level, (middle school & high school) students, as required to be established pursuant to M.G.L. c.71, s.59C.

SEPAC (Parent Advisory Council): The School Committee of any city, town, or school district shall establish a Parent Advisory Council on Special Education. Membership shall be offered to all parents of children with disabilities and other interested parties. The parent advisory council duties shall include, but not be limited to: advising the school committee on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities; meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school committee's special education programs. The Parent Advisory Council shall establish by-laws regarding officers and operational procedures. In the course of its duties under this section, the parent advisory council shall receive assistance from the school committee without charge, upon reasonable notice, and subject to the availability of staff and resources.

Title I

In compliance with Title I Parent Involvement requirements mandated in Section 118 (b) (1) and (c) – (f) of No Child Left Behind, all schools have developed a written Parent Engagement Policy with input from parents by presenting the policy to parents during: School Council Meetings, Parent Teacher Organization Meetings and at various programs where parent input has been requested. Additional information about all of these groups may be obtained from the main school office.

Open Houses/Parents Nights

Open House will take place on September 28th - from 5:30 PM-7: 30 PM.

Parent Conferences Grades 1-5 will take place twice per year. One time on December 6th from 1:30-4:30pm and the other on March 20 from 1:30-4:30pm.

Families will be reminded of the dates and times via email, phone calls/texts, paper copies in backpacks.

SECTION III – HEALTH & SAFETY

Safety

Student Dismissal

Students will not be allowed to leave school grounds or school-sponsored activities at any time other than general dismissal except with written permission from a parent/guardian. Students will not be released except in the care of a parent/guardian or other individual authorized by a parent/guardian. Parents/guardians are responsible for advising the school where the child attends of any restraining orders or court orders which affect parental rights with respect to students.

Parental Responsibility for Students Before and After School

Each school is responsible for the safety of students during the school day; supervision on school grounds begins fifteen (15) minutes before the start of school and ends fifteen (15) minutes after dismissal. The District is responsible for bus transportation for students based on certain age and mileage restrictions. For students who walk to and from school, the District provides crossing guards and initial supervision in the areas of the school building.

Parents are responsible for students who arrive more than fifteen (15) minutes prior to the start of school, who leave school grounds after dismissal, or who remain on school grounds fifteen (15) minutes after dismissal (unless the student is authorized to remain on school grounds for school-related reasons).

Reporting to the Authorities – Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

School officials or employees must report any suspected child abuse or neglect required by MGL Ch. 119, S 51A to the Department of Children and Families.

Bus Transportation and Safety - Policy 5410.03 (May 1, 2023)

Eligibility for Bus Transportation

The following table sets forth the minimum distance from school that students must reside in order to be provided with transportation by the District:

GRADE LEVEL	DISTANCE Eligible for Busing Transportation
Kindergarten	Students attending the district's kindergarten center will be eligible for transportation
1-5	Student must reside one (1) mile or more from school
6-8	Student must reside one and one-half (1.5) miles or more from school

9-12	Student must reside two (2) miles or more from school

The above distances will be determined by an authorized vehicle driving from the school to the student's residence over the shortest traveled distance or electronic/technological means, including mapping software or a similar internet-based program.

Students who choose to attend a school other than their regularly assigned school (due to extenuating circumstances) will not be provided with transportation.

Transportation of students with special needs will be determined by the student's IEP (Individual Education Plan) or Section 504 Plan. Transportation services for these students will be coordinated by the Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services and delivered in accordance with state and federal law. Exceptions to this policy will be considered for students on the basis of unusual circumstances and bus availability. Exceptions will be determined by the Superintendent or his/her designee. Written requests for exceptions due to illness or disability must be accompanied by a doctor's note. These requests should be processed through the school nurse, who will then forward the information to the Transportation Coordinator.

Bus Fees

GRADES 1-5

UNDER 1 MILE	1 MILE OR MORE
Walkers/Parent Responsibility	May purchase MART Pass through MART

GRADES 6-8

UNDER 1.5 MILES	1.5 MILE OR MORE
Walkers / Parent Responsibility	May purchase MART Pass through MART

Bus Passes

Montachusett Area Regional Transit Authority ("MART") passes may be purchased at MART Inter-Modal Center. MART are ONLY available for transportation to Reingold Elementary School and Memorial Middle School.

Transportation for school choice students shall be the sole responsibility of the parent/guardian unless transportation services are included in the student's IEP.

Bus Safety

The safety and welfare of student riders will be the primary consideration in all matters pertaining to transportation. Safety precautions will include the following:

- Students will be instructed on proper procedure for boarding and exiting buses and proper conduct while on board.
- Emergency evacuation drills will be conducted periodically during the school year to acquaint students with procedures in emergency situations.
- Authorized bus stops will be located at convenient intervals where students may board and leave the vehicles, cross highways, and await arrival of buses with the utmost safety allowed by road conditions.
- Video cameras will be operating on all large yellow buses at all times.

Parents are to review general safety rules with their children to help ensure a safe environment to and from school.

Every effort will be made to ensure that transportation services operate efficiently and buses are punctual. Bus routes will be structured so that the total time a student spends on the bus on any given day is minimized.

Student Conduct and School-Related Transportation

Riding is a privilege enjoyed by passengers who are safe and courteous. This privilege can be taken away from any student who is not courteous or who violates bus or school rules. Conduct that violates school and/or bus rules will be documented on a bus incident report, which will be forwarded to the appropriate school administrator and other members of the administration as necessary. School administrators will notify parent/ guardians regarding incident reports as necessary and will determine the appropriate consequences for the student's conduct.

Student riders are expected to follow all bus rules and school rules as established in the student handbooks, including the following:

1. Students waiting for the bus must do so in an orderly manner. They should stay out of the street and not approach the bus until it has come to a complete stop.

2. Students riding the bus must comply with the requests and directives of the bus drivers and other adults assigned to ensure their safety.

3. Upon entering the bus, students must immediately sit in a seat facing forward with feet on the floor. Students may not change seats. Students may be assigned seats by the bus driver or school administration and must sit only in those seats.

4. Students may not: open windows, unless permission is granted by the bus driver; throw objects in the bus or out the windows; place their hands, arms or heads out of an open window; touch any safety equipment; shout and/or use obscene language.

Bus Procedures for Parents/Guardians

Students will only be picked up and dropped off at their scheduled/assigned bus stops. Students must ride the bus to which they are assigned. Any request to ride a different bus must be provided in writing by the parent/guardian and submitted to the school office for approval.

State law requires that all vehicles come to a full stop and remain so while a school bus with flashing lights is stopped to allow passengers to get on/off the bus. This includes school grounds. DO NOT PASS A BUS WITH FLASHING LIGHTS WHEN DROPPING OFF YOUR CHILD IN THE MORNING OR PICKING UP YOUR CHILD AT THE END OF THE SCHOOL DAY.

Student Transportation in Private Vehicles - Policy 5410.06 (May 6, 2013)

School buses will be used for the transportation of students participating in co-curricular or extracurricular activities.

Private vehicles may be used to transport students to or from school-related activities that fall within the academic day or extend beyond the school day, provided all of the following conditions are met:

1. The transportation has the approval of the school principal.
2. The owner of the vehicle being used in transporting students must file evidence with the Superintendent of personal liability insurance coverage on the vehicle in the amounts of $100,000 - $300,000 or more.
3. The parents of students to be transported in this manner will be fully informed as to this means of transportation and will sign a statement to this effect.

Motor Vehicle Idling On School Grounds

No motor vehicle operator shall cause or allow any motor vehicle operated by him/her on school grounds to idle unnecessarily, except for any of the following reasons:

- traffic conditions
- lining-up at a school for the purpose of picking up or discharging students
- turbo-charged diesel engine cool-down or warm-up
- maintenance of appropriate temperature for school buses or other motor vehicles when accepting or discharging passengers not to exceed three minutes in any fifteen minute period
- for circumstances involving safety or emergencies and for servicing or repairing motor vehicles
- and as these exceptions are more completely described in the below-referenced regulation.

The term “school grounds” shall mean in, on or within 100 feet of the real property of the school whether or not it is in session, and shall include any athletic field or facility and any playground used for school purposes or functions which is owned by the school district, regardless of proximity to a school building, as well as any parking lot appurtenant to such school athletic field, facility or playground. A motor vehicle operator shall not idle a motor

within 100 feet of such air intake system, unless Fitchburg has determined that alternative locations block traffic, impair student safety or are not cost effective.

Safety for Walkers

Parents/guardians of students who are “walkers” should periodically review the following safety rules throughout the school year.

- Be sure that your child knows his/her full name, address, telephone number and what to do if lost or confused.
- Show your child the most direct and safest route to and from school. Point out landmarks and potential hazards. Instruct them to walk on the shoulder of the road facing traffic if there are no sidewalks and not to walk in the road.
- Stress the importance of going directly home after school and coming straight to school in the morning.
- Stress safeguards such as police officers, crossing guards, traffic lights, crosswalks, etc.
- Warn against speaking to strangers or accepting rides, candy, money or anything else from them.
- Be sure to work out a plan of action with your child in the event that no one is at home when he/she arrives there after school.

Emergency Procedures

Every school has security, emergency medical and crisis procedures in place. Students will be instructed in proper procedures for evacuation and other responses in the event of an emergency and will participate in periodic drills.

Security at Entrances: The only accessible entrances for personnel & visitors during the school day are the main entrances. The doors to the schools are locked. Access to the schools is at the main entrance with a buzzer entry system in place.

Evacuation: The signal to evacuate the building will be a continuous sounding of the fire alarm. An evacuation plan is posted in each classroom. Evacuation will take place under the following circumstances: fire (conducted according to state mandates for fire), bomb threat, power outage, detection of unidentified odor. Students are not permitted to re-enter the building until safety forces have approved re-admittance.

Lockdown: Each building has lockdown procedures in place and practices lockdown drills each year.

Medical Emergency: Each building has a medical emergency response plan (see below) and a practice drill takes place each year.

Security Cameras In Schools – Policy 5717 (April 25, 2016)

The Fitchburg School Committee works to maintain a safe and secure environment for its students, staff, visitors, and facilities. Security means more than having locks and making certain that doors are locked at the proper times. Security also means minimizing fire hazards, reducing the possibility of faulty equipment, keeping records and valuables in a safe place, protection against vandalism and burglary, the prosecution of vandals, and developing crisis plans.

School facilities and their contents, constitute one of the greatest investments of the community. The Fitchburg School Committee believes it to be in the best interest of students and taxpayers for the district to exert every reasonable means to protect the investment adequately.

In pursuit of this objective, the Fitchburg School Committee authorizes the use of security cameras in school district buildings and on its property to ensure the health, welfare and safety of all students, staff and visitors, to deter theft, vandalism and other negative behavior, to safeguard district buildings, grounds and equipment, and to monitor unauthorized individuals in or on school property. Security cameras may be used in locations as deemed appropriate by the Superintendent of Schools in consultation with school officials as well as local law enforcement and emergency response agencies. They may be used in any area, inside or outside of school buildings where there is no reasonable expectation of privacy.

The district shall notify students and staff through student and employee handbooks and appropriate signage that security cameras have been installed and may be used at any time. Students or staff identified on security cameras in violation of School Committee policies will be subject to disciplinary action.

The Superintendent shall ensure that proper procedures are in place and are followed regarding use, viewing, disclosure, retention, disposal and security of video recordings or photographs from security cameras in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. A video recording used for security purposes in school district buildings and/or on school property shall be the sole property of the school district. All video recordings will be stored in their original format and secured to avoid tampering and to ensure confidentiality in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Access to video recordings from security cameras shall be limited to school administrators (Superintendent/designee, School Principal/designee). Law enforcement and emergency response officials shall be granted access to video recordings or the security system after giving prior notice to the School Superintendent/designee.

The Superintendent may, from time to time, issue further guidance that is consistent with current laws and this policy.
SOURCE: MASC

Student Search Policy – Policy 5718 (March 6, 2017)

The School Committee, in cooperation with the Fitchburg Police Department, stands firmly on their belief that Fitchburg Public Schools must be free of illegal substances. We have been entrusted with the responsibility of providing a "safe and drug free" environment for all of our students. The search procedure will assist us with this mission and send a strong message to our students that we will not tolerate illegal drugs and/or other illegal substances in our schools.

In order to maintain a safe environment in its schools, Fitchburg Public Schools reserves the right to search all school property including, but not limited to lockers assigned to students, for contraband or controlled substances in accordance with state and federal laws.

- Searches of school property, including lockers, may be conducted on a periodic basis and may include the use of trained K-9 units whose specific mission is illegal drug or illegal substance detection.
- The police department designee and the appropriate building administrator and Superintendent of Schools will coordinate these searches in an effort to minimize disruption and maximize the security of the search.
- Students' personal belongings may be searched by school officials if there are reasonable grounds to believe the student is in possession of contraband or illegal substances.
- Searches of students' personal effects, such as coats and pockets, purses, knapsacks, and/or other bags, will be reasonable at their inception and in their scope.
- Students who drive automobiles to school and park on school property are advised that by accepting the use of school drives and parking lots, they consent to a search of the vehicle consistent with state and federal laws.

Once notification has been given to parents and students through the inclusion of the policies in the student and/or parent handbook, and on school and district websites, the district will have met its obligation to advertise the searches. Each Principal will ensure this is completed.

<u>Regulations</u>

- Parents will be notified by the school administration immediately after a K9 search has been conducted.
- The focus of this policy is on middle school grades (5-8) and secondary school grades (9-12).
- The K-9 will not come in direct contact with any students.

Health

Health/Wellness and Safety Advisory Committee

The Fitchburg Public Schools has a Health/Wellness and Safety Advisory Committee in accordance with state law, which meets quarterly and includes district personnel, parents, and community members. The Committee is charged with implementation and monitoring of the District's policy, which is as follows:

The District promotes a healthy school climate in grades pre-K-12 by supporting wellness, good nutrition and regular physical activity as part of the total learning environment. The District supports a healthy environment where children learn and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices. Schools contribute to the basic health status of students by facilitating learning about good nutrition and positive personal habits, as well as about lifestyle choices in physical activity. Schools also contribute to students' healthy living by collaborating with parents and the community in this endeavor. *For more information refer to the full Health/Wellness and Safety Policy #5713 – approved by SC 5/1/23*

Comprehensive Sexual Health Education

In Accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 32A, the Fitchburg Public Schools will ensure that in adopting, implementing or maintaining curriculum that primarily involves human sexuality issues, it will follow all requirements as noted.

Sexual health instruction offered by the Fitchburg Public Schools shall begin no later than seventh grade, be medically and scientifically accurate, age appropriate, appropriate for students regardless of gender, race, disability status, gender identity, or sexual orientation and include information about abstinence and other methods of preventing unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. The life-threatening dangers of HIV and AIDS, its transmission and its prevention shall be taught as part of the sexual health education instruction. Abstinence will not be taught to the exclusion of other instruction on contraceptives and disease prevention.

Fitchburg Public Schools recognizes that the purpose of sexual health education instruction is to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to develop healthy attitudes concerning adolescent growth and development, body image, gender roles, sexual orientation, dating, marriage, and family. Fitchburg Public Schools therefore desires to provide a well-planned sequence of instruction on comprehensive sexual health.

The district's curriculum shall respect the rights of parents/guardians to supervise their children's education on these subjects and to impart values regarding human sexuality to their children.

Parental/Guardian Notification and Material Review & Adoption Notice

A parent/guardian who wishes to have a student excused from planned instruction in sexual health education must file a written request with the school principal or his/her designee, at

least one full week prior to the planned instruction. Fitchburg Public Schools will make the appropriate opt-out form available. Excused students shall be provided with appropriate alternative educational opportunities. A student shall not be subject to disciplinary action, academic penalty, or other sanction if the student's parent/guardian declines to permit the student to receive the instruction.

One month prior to teaching a program in sexual health education, each school will provide written notice to parents/ guardians of the planned instruction.

Parents/guardians will be provided an opportunity to review the materials to be used and provided information on excluding their child from sexual health education instruction. The opportunity for inspection of materials will be provided at a time and place convenient for parent/guardian participation such as evenings or weekends.

Definitions
Sexual Health Education shall be defined as:

1. The physiological, psychological and sociological developmental processes experienced by an individual;
2. The development of intrapersonal and interpersonal skills to communicate respectfully and effectively to reduce health risks and choose healthy behaviors;
3. Health care and prevention resources
4. The development of meaningful relationships and avoidance of exploitive relationships; and
5. Understanding of the influences of family, peers, community and the media throughout life on healthy sexual relationships.

Medically and scientifically accurate shall be defined as information that is verified or supported by research in compliance with scientific methods and is recognized as accurate and objective by professional organizations and agencies with expertise in the field of sexual health including but not limited to, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

This policy replaces:* ***Human Development Education Policy #5201.02*

Life-Threatening Allergy (LTA) Policy/Response Plan

FPS will provide life-threatening allergy (LTA) awareness education and Epi-Pen training for all employees based on the Department of Public Health (DPH) and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) recommendations, including but not limited to:

- the significance of LTAs and a discussion on the most common food, stinging insect, latex, and medication allergies,
- how to create a safe environment for students with LTAs,
- the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis,
- what an Epi-Pen is and how to use it, and

- Procedures for activating the Emergency Response System (ERS), (i.e., nurse and 911 Emergency Medical Services (EMS)) to deal with an actual, suspected, or potential anaphylactic reaction.

At the elementary school level during the school day, all schools will require that any parties and celebrations be food free. The use of food for curriculum instruction or special luncheons during the school day will be restricted to only those with prior approval by the principal. The use of food as a reward in any classroom will be eliminated, except as required by students in specialized programs.

Each elementary school, as reasonably appropriate, will provide a peanut safe/tree-nut safe table in the cafeteria. Reasonable efforts will be made for such tables to become "safe" of other allergens as deemed needed for an individual student through documentation from the student's primary care physician or board-certified allergist. At the middle and high schools' appropriate accommodations will be made as needed.

The principal or designee in each school will implement a "No Food or Utensil Sharing" practice, with particular focus at the elementary school level.

The risk involved in allowing students of elementary and middle school age to make unsupervised food choices at bake sales is recognized; therefore, no bake sales will be permitted at elementary or middle schools during the school day.

At the elementary school level, when a student's medical need to be in an LTA-*safe* environment is clearly documented by a board-certified allergist, and clear directions from the allergist are provided, FPS will make reasonable efforts to create LTA-*safe* classrooms for the student. FPS reserves the right to consult with a board-certified allergist of its choice to review the recommendation to determine if it will authorize its implementation.

Each school's Crisis Management Plan will include how to respond to an anaphylactic reaction (life-threatening allergic reaction). This plan will be reviewed annually by each building principal and will be part of all LTA-awareness training.

Each school/nurse will develop and maintain an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) for any student identified with a life-threatening allergy in collaboration with the student's parent/guardian and primary care physician or board-certified allergist.

The FPS nursing staff will maintain records of any life-threatening allergic reaction, the use of an Epi-Pen, and the call for medical assistance by calling 911. FPS will report all such LTA reactions to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), according to department regulations and protocol.

Because of the confidentiality of medical records, a student's parent/guardian has the responsibility for notifying school bus drivers directly of any life-threatening allergies of which the bus driver should be aware.

For any event outside of the regular school day which is neither sponsored by FPS nor part of the FPS curriculum, the sponsor of such event is responsible for ensuring that appropriate provisions concerning LTA's of participants are in place. *Refer to policy 5701.03 updated 5/1/23.*

Medication Policy

All medications must be turned in to the office, or to the school nurse. In the event that medication must be given to a student by school personnel at school, parents/guardians must sign a medication permission form which must be on file in the school nurse's office. Medication will be distributed only when accompanied by written orders by the attending physician/Primary Care Provider (PCP) and only under the following conditions:

1. The medication must be in the original prescription container, which is clearly labeled with the following:
   a) Name of the student;
   b) Date of the prescription (duration to be given i.e. school year);
   c) Name of the Medication and dosage;
   d) Name of the prescribing physician/Primary Care Provider (PCP);
   e) Times medication is to be given

2. Medication will be distributed according to the physician's/Primary Care Provider's (PCP's) orders. Any deviations from the original order will require a new physician/Primary Care Provider's (PCP's) order.

3. All medication orders must be renewed at the beginning of each school year.

Any student, who requires emergency medication for severe allergies (bee stings, etc.), asthmatic attacks, diabetic care/reactions, etc., must provide the school with emergency kits, inhalers, etc., in the original pharmacy container. A medication permission form must be on file (renewed at the beginning of each school year) and must be accompanied with written orders/instructions from the student's physician/Primary Care Provider (PCP). Non-prescription drugs or over-the-counter medications may only be given when approved in writing by a physician/Primary Care Provider (PCP) stating the dosage and times of administration. Medication must once again be in the original container and supplied by the parent/guardian. A child requiring medication on field trips will receive the medication as designated by the school nurse according to the medication policy. If there is any other medical history or existing condition which is under doctor/Primary Care Provider (PCP) supervision, the school must be made aware of this. Please contact the school nurse for more information regarding the distribution of medication if you have specific questions.

Teachers will be informed of health problems that may affect a student's educational progress or require special health monitoring services while in school. If the parent or guardian does not want pertinent medical information shared with the teaching staff, they must notify the school nurse in writing prior to the start of school or as soon as possible after a condition has been diagnosed. *Refer to School Committee Policy - Administration of Medications/Prescription Medications #5701.01.*

Over-the- Counter Medications (OTC)

The school physician for Fitchburg Public Schools, in compliance with Massachusetts Department of Public Health Regulations (105 CMR 210.00) has authorized the district's school

nurses to administer the following over-the counter medications during the school day – for students with signed permission forms from their parent/guardian:

- IBUPROFEN (Advil, Motrin)—for headaches, body aches or menstrual cramps (elevated temperatures following School Nurse assessment – as needed)
- ACETAMINOPHEN (Tylenol)—for headaches, body aches or menstrual cramps (elevated temperatures following School Nurse assessment – as needed)
- BENADRYL—for general allergy symptoms or mild insect stings
- TUMS —for upset stomach or indigestion
- EUCERIN - cream/lotion OR Aloe Vera Gel —for mild inflammation/dryness of skin

To assure safe administration of OTC medications to students during the school day, the school nurse will:

- Assess the student's condition, current medication profile, history of allergies and evaluate the need for medication.
- Review the signed parent permission form, which is valid for one school year.
- Call the parent/guardian to confirm, when necessary, the time of the last dose given.
- Administer the correct dosage according to the physician's written protocols.
- Document the medication administration in the health office visit log.
- Contact parent/guardians who have requested notification following OTC medication administration during the school

Health Habits

It is important that children learn to practice good health habits early in life.

1. Eat the basic four food groups (milk and milk products or enriched soy, grains, meat, fish, proteins, fruits, and vegetables). Avoid high fat and sugar foods. Begin each day with a good breakfast.
2. Go to bed regularly at an early hour to get enough sleep. Primary grade children need from 10 to 12 hours of sleep daily.
3. Cover the nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing.
4. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before eating, after using the toilet and after using a tissue.
5. Bathe or shower regularly.
6. Brush and floss teeth nightly and brush teeth before coming to school.
7. Have hair shampooed often enough to keep it clean.
8. Check hair periodically for nits and head lice. Contact the school nurse if your child has head lice or if you need assistance.
9. Keep your child home if he/she shows signs of illness.
10. Stay physically active.

Immunizations

Massachusetts school immunization requirements are created under authority of 105 CMR 220.000 Immunization of Students Before Admission to School

Requirements apply to all students including individuals from another country attending or visiting classes or educational programs as part of an academic visitation or exchange program. Requirements apply to all students, even if over 18 years of age.

Massachusetts State Law requires all students enrolled in school to have an up-to-date Certificate of Adequate Immunization before they attend classes. This form must be obtained from the student's personal physician's office. Mandatory immunizations required for school attendance include:

Enrollment Requirements for Grades 1-6

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Massachusetts State Law-states that no child shall be admitted to school except upon presentation of a physician or clinic's certificate stating that the child has been immunized against:

Massachusetts School Immunization Requirements 2023-2024

Grades 1 – 6

Requirements apply to all students including individuals from another country attending or visiting classes or educational programs as part of an academic visitation or exchange program. Requirements apply to all students, even if over 18 years of age.

In ungraded classrooms, grade 7 requirements apply to all students ≥12 years.

DTaP	**5 doses;** 4 doses are acceptable if the fourth dose is given on or after the 4th birthday. DT is only acceptable with a letter stating a medical contraindication to DTaP.
Polio	**4 doses;** fourth dose must be given on or after the 4th birthday and ≥6 months after the previous dose, or a fifth dose is required. 3 doses are acceptable if the third dose is given on or after the 4th birthday and ≥6 months after the previous dose
Hepatitis B	**3 doses;** laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable
MMR	**2 doses;** first dose must be given on or after the 1st birthday and second dose must be given ≥28 days after first dose; laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable
Varicella	**2 doses;** first dose must be given on or after the 1st birthday and second dose must be given ≥28 days after first dose; a reliable history of chickenpox* or laboratory evidence of immunity acceptable

YOUR CHILD WILL NOT BE ADMITTED TO SCHOOL WITHOUT PROOF OF THESE REQUIREMENTS
School Nurse to determine if documented immunizations meet entry requirements

Physical Exam is required for 4th grade, administered by primary care providers if possible. School physicians can administer a limited exam on your child in school that will meet state requirements, but this is not a substitute for comprehensive, ongoing medical care provided by your child's own doctor.

Required Forms:

MA School Health Record Physical Exam form
Student Health History
Certificate of Immunization

* A reliable history of chickenpox includes a diagnosis of chickenpox, or interpretation of parent/guardian description of chickenpox, by a physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant or designee.

§ Address questions about enforcement with your legal counsel. School requirements are enforced at the local level.

†Medical exemptions (statement from a physician stating that a vaccine is medically contraindicated for a student) must be renewed annually at the start of the school year and religious exemptions (statement from a student, or parent/guardian if the student is <18 years of age, stating that a vaccine is against sincerely held religious beliefs) should be renewed annually at the start of the school year.

*A reliable history of chickenpox includes a diagnosis of chickenpox or interpretation of parent/guardian description of chickenpox, by a physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or designee.

‡ Students who are 15 years old in grade 11 are in compliance until they turn 16 years old.

Exclusion of Children with Contagious Conditions

The following are common among school children and are considered to be communicable or contagious conditions. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health Regulations requires that a student be excluded from school for the following:

Head Lice/Nits – Students with live head lice/nits may not return to school until hair has been treated. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to accompany students upon return to school, following treatment. Students will be checked by the school nurse.

Chicken Pox – Students must remain out of school for at least one week from the appearance of eruptions or until all lesions are scabbed over with no new eruptions.

Conjunctivitis – Students must remain out of school until there is no discharge from the eye(s). A doctor's/PCP note must be submitted upon the student's return stating that the student has received treatment.

Impetigo – Students must remain out of school until all lesions are dry. A doctor's/PCP note must be submitted upon the student's return stating that the student has received treatment.

Strep Throat – Students must remain out of school until the student is on medication for a full 24 hours.

Scabies – Students must remain out of school for 24 hours after medication has been used.

Unidentified Rashes – Students must be evaluated by a physician/PCP.

Fever over 100 – Students must be out of school until fever free for 24 hours, without fever reducing medication.

Health Exams/Screenings

Physical exams are required for students before beginning grades PK, K, 4, 7 and 11. Ideally, this is done by the family doctor who has knowledge of the child. The exam is recorded on forms provided by the school and returned to the school nurse where it becomes part of the student's health record. With signed permission, a school physician will examine students if they are not seen by their family doctor.

Dental exams are offered in school each year for all students with a signed parent permission form.

Vision and hearing screenings are conducted annually for students K-3 for hearing, and K-5 for vision. An additional vision and hearing screening will be conducted once in middle school and once in high school. Notices of any failures are sent to the parent by the school nurse for follow-up. Results of the follow-up are to be returned to the school nurse.

Scoliosis screenings for curvature of the spine are conducted annually for students' grades 5-9 who have not provided the school nurse with the results of a physical exam including such screening within the last twelve months. Parents will be provided with notice prior to the screening and of any recommendations for follow up after the screening. Results of the follow-up are to be returned to the school nurse.

Body Mass Index (BMI) screenings are conducted for students in grades 1, 4, 7, and 10 who have not provided the school nurse with the results of a physical exam including such screening within the last twelve months.

Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral for Treatment in Schools (SBIRT) screenings conducted for students in grades 7 & 9 - with parent/guardian notification.

* Please contact the school nurse with questions about any of these exams or screenings.

Refer to School Committee Policy – Health Policy & Student Physicals #5701

Medical Emergency Response Plans (Michael's Law)

State law requires each school district to have a medical emergency response plan to be better prepared to respond to life-threatening emergencies, including training in CPR and use of defibrillators. Every school has a plan to reduce the incidence of life-threatening emergencies and to promote efficient responses to such emergencies. Please contact the school nurse for more information. Parents will be notified of any practices or drills related to the plan.

Drug, Inhalant and Alcohol Use by Students

In view of the fact that the use of drugs, alcohol and inhalants can endanger the health and safety of the user, and recognizing the deleterious effect the use of alcoholic beverages, drugs or inhalants can have on the maintenance of general order and discipline, the School

Committee prohibits the use or consumption of any drug or alcoholic beverage on school property or at any school function.

Additionally, any student, regardless of age, who is under the influence of drugs, alcoholic beverages, or inhalants prior to attendance at, or participation in, a school-sponsored activity, will be barred from that activity and subject to disciplinary action. *For more information refer to Teaching & Intervention: Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs Policy # 5406 – approved by SC 10/17/16*

Tobacco Use

Smoking, chewing, or other use of tobacco products by staff, students, and members of the public shall be banned from all district buildings. All forms of tobacco use shall be prohibited on all district property. In addition, tobacco use by students is banned at all school-sponsored events, even though this use does not take place on school grounds.

Sports-related Head Injuries and Concussions Policy

Sports-related head injuries and concussions can have serious consequences for students, including long term health and educational issues if they are not properly managed. Early recognition of a concussion is essential to maximize safe management.
The Fitchburg Public Schools is committed to promoting the safety and well-being of our students. As part of this commitment, we fully support the Massachusetts General Law and the Department of Public Health (DPH) regulations regarding procedures pertaining to sports-related head injuries occurring in extracurricular athletic activities. All persons specified in DPH regulations shall be required to annually participate in a mandatory prevention and recognition of sports-related head injury training program approved by DPH. Requirements for athletes and parents/guardians, as stated in DPH regulations, must be met before athletes may participate in extracurricular athletic activities.

Copies of the District's policies and procedures are available from the Athletic Director and Nursing/Health Services Director, who are responsible for the implementation of this policy.

Animals in School Policy

<u>Service Animals, Guide or Assistance Dogs, Miniature Horses</u>
The Fitchburg School Committee does not permit discrimination against individuals with disabilities, including those who require the assistance of a service animal. The District will comply with Massachusetts law and federal law concerning the rights of persons with guide or assistance dogs and may permit such animals on school premises and on school transportation.

For purposes of this policy, a "service animal includes any dog that has been individually trained to do the work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability." Further stated: "a public entity shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures to permit the use of a miniature horse by an individual with a disability if the horse has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of the individual with the disability."

Service animals perform some of the functions and tasks that individuals with disabilities cannot perform themselves. The animal must be required and "individually trained" to do work or to assist the individual with a disability. Service animals are not pets. There are several kinds of service animals that assist individuals with disabilities. Examples include, but are not limited to, animals that:

- Assist individuals who are blind or have severe sight impairments as "seeing eye dogs" or "guide dogs;"
- Alert individuals with hearing impairments to sounds;
- Pull wheelchairs or carry and pick up items for individuals with mobility impairments; and
- Assist mobility-impaired individuals with balance.

Special Provisions/Miniature Horses: Requests to permit a miniature horse to accompany a student or adult with a disability will be handled on a case-by-case basis, considering:

A. The type, size and weight of the miniature horse and whether the facility can accommodate these features;
B. Whether the handler has sufficient control of the miniature horse;
C. Whether the miniature horse is housebroken;
D. Whether the miniature horse's presence in a specific facility compromises legitimate safety requirements that are necessary for operation of the facility.

The District shall not assume or take custody or control of, or responsibility for, any service animal or the care or feeding thereof. The owner or person having custody and control of the animal shall be liable for any damage to persons, premises, property, or facilities caused by the service animal, including, but not limited to, clean up, stain removal, etc.

The Fitchburg Public Schools is not responsible for providing a staff member to walk the service animal or to provide any other care or assistance to the animal.

Students with service animals are expected to care and supervise their animal. In the case of a young child or student with disabilities who is unable to care for or supervise his service animal, the parent/guardian is responsible for providing care and supervision of the animal. Issues related to the care and supervision of service animals will be addressed on a case-by-case basis within the discretion of the school Principal.

If, in the opinion of the school Principal or authorized designee, any service animal is not in the control of its handler, or if it is not housebroken, the service animal may be excluded from the school or program. The service animal can also be excluded if it presents a direct and immediate threat to others in the school or if the animal's presence would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity. The parent or guardian of the student having custody and control of the animal will be required to remove the service animal from District premises immediately. Owners of service animals are liable for any harm or injury caused by the animal to students, staff, visitors, and/or property.

If any student or staff member assigned to the classroom in which a service animal is permitted suffers an allergic reaction to the animal, the person having custody and control of the animal

will be required to remove the animal to a different location designated by the school Principal or designee and an alternative plan will be developed with appropriate District staff. Such a plan could include the reassignment of the person having custody and control of the animal to a different classroom. This will also apply if an individual on school transportation suffers an allergic reaction. In this case, an alternate plan will be developed in coordination with appropriate school, District, and transportation staff including the involvement of the parents/guardian of the student.

When a student will be accompanied by a service animal at school or in other District facilities on a regular basis, such staff member or such student's parent or guardian, as well as the animal's owner and any other person who will have custody and control of the animal will be required to sign a document stating that they have read and understood the foregoing.

The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee shall be responsible for developing procedures to accommodate a student's use of an assistance animal in District facilities and on school transportation vehicles.

Other Animals

No animal shall be brought to school without prior written permission of the Superintendent of Schools, and required documentation of vaccinations. All written requests must be delivered to the Superintendent of Schools at least 30 business days prior to bringing the (service) animal to school or a school function.

The Fitchburg Public School District is committed to providing a high quality educational program to all students in a safe and healthy environment.

School Principals, in consultation with the Health Services Providers in each building and/or the District, shall utilize the Department of Public Health publication "Guidelines for Animals in Schools or on School Grounds" and review student health records to determine which animals may be allowed in the school building. The decision of the Superintendent of Schools shall be final.

Educational Program

Use of animals to achieve specific curriculum objectives may be allowed by the Superintendent of Schools provided student health and safety is not jeopardized and the individual requesting that the animal be brought to school is responsible for adhering to the "Guidelines for Animals in Schools or on School Grounds" and any other conditions established by the principal to protect the health and well-being of students.

Student Health

The health and well-being of students is the District's highest priority. Animals may cause an allergic reaction or otherwise impair the health of students. No animals may be brought to school or kept in the school, classroom, office or common area that may negatively impact the health of any student who must utilize that area. Animals that cause an allergic reaction or impair the health of students shall be removed from the school immediately so that no student shall have his/her health impaired and each student shall have full access to available educational opportunities.

Animals Prohibited from School

Rabies is a growing problem and any fur-bearing animal is susceptible to this very serious fatal disease. Infected animals can transmit this disease to students and staff. Based on the Massachusetts Departments of Health and Education recommendations, the following animals are prohibited from schools within the Fitchburg Public School District.

Wild Animals and Domestic Stray Animals – Because of the high incidence of rabies in bats, raccoons, skunks, foxes and other wild carnivores, these animals should not be permitted in school buildings under any circumstances (including dead animals).

Fur-Bearing Animals (pet dogs,* cats, wolf-hybrids, ferrets, etc.,) - These animals may pose a risk for transmitting rabies, as well as parasites, fleas, other diseases and injuries.

Bats – Bats pose a high risk for transmitting rabies. Bat houses should not be installed on school grounds and bats should not be brought into the school building.

Poisonous Animals – Spiders, venomous insects and poisonous snakes, reptiles and lizards are prohibited for safety reasons.

***Exception**: Guide, Hearing and Other Service Dogs or Law Enforcement Dogs – These animals may be allowed in school or on school grounds with proof of current rabies vaccination.

Exceptions may be made with the prior written approval of the Superintendent of Schools.

SECTION IV – ACADEMICS

Homework/Make-up Work

Students are expected to do work at home that is an extension of work done in the classroom. Homework is often used to reinforce the material that has been presented in class or will serve as a basis or foundation for the next day's classes. Hence, all students are expected to complete all assigned homework in a timely manner, as assigned by teachers.

Assignments can and do vary according to the nature of the subject, the learning activity of the lessons and the student's grade level. Homework may be assigned on a regular basis. It is the responsibility of the student to record all assignments. The amount and level of difficulty corresponds to the grade level, content area being taught and the knowledge and progress of the child.

Students are responsible for making up work that they have missed due to illness or other excused absence and should contact their teachers concerning missed work on their return to school. Assessments (tests and quizzes) must be made up within the agreed upon period between the teacher and the student (family in elementary) after the student returns to school. Any missed work must be made up as soon as possible. In the elementary school, parents may communicate with teachers to attain missing work; middle school students are responsible for asking teachers for missing work. In cases where a period of two weeks may not be enough time to complete all missed work and assessments, the guidance counselor should be consulted to help in this matter.

Extra Help

Teachers are available for extra help with prior notice. Please contact your child's teacher via email to request extra help time.

Progress Reports and/or Report Cards

Report cards will be issued based on a trimester calendar. Middle school families will receive a progress report prior to the report card. Note that the dates below may change based on school cancellations.

FIRST REPORT: Marks close in December and the report cards will be issued in December as well.

SECOND REPORT: Marks close in March and the report cards will be issued March as well.

THIRD REPORT: Marks close in late May and the final report cards will be issued the last day of school.

Reading at Home

Literacy is the key to success in education. Studies have shown that students that read regularly consistently outperform those who do not. This also includes children who are read to. Children that are read to at a young age recognize letters and numbers earlier. The administration, staff and faculty at McKay suggest having your child reading or being read to at least 20 minutes a day. Not only will your child's vocabulary and reading ability improve, but it will also give you the opportunity to connect with your child on a deeper level.

Parent Conferences

Parents are encouraged to request meetings with teachers to discuss the child's academic progress, social emotional growth or any concerns that may arise. Please email or call the teacher and leave a message, requesting a date to meet. You may also contact your child's guidance counselor to request a meeting with guidance, the teacher, or the team of teachers who teach the student.

Standardized Testing

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS 2.0) is designed to meet the requirements of the Education Reform Act 0f 1993. This law specifies that the testing program test all public school students in Massachusetts, including students with disabilities and English Language Learner students; measure performance based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework learning standards; report on the performance of individual students; schools and districts. In addition, the MCAS program is used to hold schools and districts accountable, on a yearly basis, for the progress they have made toward the objective of the No Child Left Behind Law, that all students be proficient in Reading and Mathematics. Students are expected to be in attendance at school and participate in MCAS testing. In accordance with state law, FPS students will continue to participate in mandatory state testing as prescribed by the DESE. Testing schedules will be updated yearly and available through McKay's website.

Promotion/Graduation Requirements

For students to be eligible for promotion to the following grade, they must be in good academic standing.

Home/Hospital Tutoring

The Fitchburg Public Schools will provide home or hospital tutoring consistent with 603 CMR 28.03(3)(c) and 28.04(4). To qualify for home/hospital tutoring, the student or his or her parent or guardian must obtain a written order from a treating physician verifying that a student enrolled in Fitchburg must remain at home or in a hospital, or any combination of both, for medical reasons and for a period of not less than 14 school days in any school year.

The Physician's Statement, known as Department of Elementary and Secondary Education form 28R/3, must address the following:

1. The date that the student was confined to a hospital or home;

2. The reason why the student's medical condition prevents the student from leaving his/her home to attend school;

3. The expected duration of the student's confinement to the home/hospital, including a specific return date;

4. Any medical needs of the student, which should be considered in planning the home/hospital services.

If the District receives a completed Physician's Statement which complies with the aforementioned criteria, the principal will arrange for tutoring services, in the home or hospital, with sufficient frequency to allow the student to continue his or her educational program, as long as the services do not interfere with the medical needs of the student. Tutoring will be offered in basic elementary and secondary subjects that do not require laboratories and/or special equipment and will be subject to the availability of qualified tutors. Tutoring services will be provided one hour a day within the student's home with appropriate adult supervision. In those instances when appropriate adult supervision is not available, tutoring may be provided at an alternative location to be determined by the District. Tutoring services will not be considered special education unless the student has been determined eligible for such services and those services are included on the student's Individualized Educational Plan.

Notification of Human Development Education (Health Education)

Schools are required by law (M.G.L. c. 71, 32A) to notify parents about curriculum that primarily involves human development or human sexuality issues. Prior to any classes being taught, a letter is sent home to parents about the health education curriculum that describes the sexuality lessons that may occur at each grade level. Parents do not have to give permission for their children to take these classes, but have the right to exempt their children from such classes. Parents may do so by sending a letter to the school principal requesting to remove the child from the lessons. Any parent who would like to review the material can speak with their child's teacher or school principal.

SECTION V – STUDENT LIFE

Attendance, Tardiness and Truancy

One of the keys to academic achievement is good attendance. Consistent participation in school and school-based activities is important for making a successful transition from youth to adulthood. Parents and guardians, as well as students themselves, have the legal responsibility to ensure that attendance at school is regular and timely. If a school identifies a student who is exhibiting an attendance problem, which includes tardiness, the school is required by law to address that problem. This could be as simple as notifying the parent or guardian and working together to improve that student's attendance. In extreme instances, however, it may require the school to solicit assistance from the Court or the Department of Children and Families ("DCF").

Legal Information Regarding Truancy and Attendance

School Attendance

M.G.L. c. 76, 1 states that all children between the ages of six and sixteen must attend school. A school district may excuse up to seven day sessions or fourteen half day sessions in any period of six months. In addition to this law, each school may have its own attendance policy with which parents/guardians should be familiar.

Notification and Contact Information

M.G.L. c. 76, 1A states that parents/guardians must be provided each year with the instructions for calling a designated phone number at a designated time to inform the school of the absence of a student and the reason for the absence. In addition, parents/guardians must provide the school with a home, work or other emergency telephone number so that they may be contacted during the school day so the school may call and inquire about said absence.

Supervisor of Attendance

M.G.L. c. 76, 19 states that each school committee must employ a supervisor of attendance. A supervisor of attendance has the power to apprehend and take to school any child who is truant and is required to investigate all cases where a child in the district fails to attend school.

Child Requiring Assistance ("CRA") Application

The Children in Need of Services ("CHINS") law has been changed to Families and Children Engaged in Services ("FACES"). This modification impacts schools with regard to the filing of FACES applications. A "CRA" (Child Requiring Assistance) application may be filed in court by a school district if a school-aged child who is "habitually truant," that is, who willfully fails to attend school for more than eight school days in a quarter, or who repeatedly fails to obey the lawful and reasonable regulations of his or her school. The Court's authority pursuant to a CRA petition includes the power to place the child in the custody of DCF.

Mandated Reporting

A 51A is a report of suspected child abuse or neglect that is filed with the DCF. A report can be filed on behalf of a child under the age of eighteen for educational neglect if a child is not attending school on a regular basis.

Parental Responsibility

Parents or guardians are legally responsible for ensuring that a child under their control attends school daily. It is a crime for a responsible parent or guardian not to cause such a child to attend school. If a child fails to attend school for seven day sessions or fourteen half day sessions within any six month period, the supervisor of attendance may file a criminal complaint in court against the responsible parent/guardian.

Inducing Absences

It is a crime to induce or attempt to induce a minor to miss school, or unlawfully to employ or to harbor a minor who should be in school.

Appointments, Vacations

Parents should schedule doctor, dentist, and other appointments outside of school hours. Likewise, vacations or other family trips should be taken during school vacation times and not during school hours. Parents are advised that, as set forth above, the law requires that children attend school and also limits the number of days absent that the district can excuse.

School Procedures for Tardiness and Absence

School Hours for Students are:	9:05 am – 3:25 pm
Early Dismissal:	9:05 am – 1:05 pm

Tardiness

If a student is tardy (late for school), he/she must report to the office. After three tardies to school the student will be assigned a detention for the following day. The student is responsible to inform the parent/guardian of the detention.

Absences

All students are expected to maintain an average daily attendance rate of 95%. Students are required to arrive at school on time. If the student is late, he must report to the office to attain a late pass. Students are expected to make up any work missed due to tardiness. When an absence is unavoidable due to illness, bereavement, or other family emergency**, parents or guardians are expected to inform the school by phone, the day of the absence (978) 665-4044.** Students who are habitually absent without an adequate excuse are considered truant. Parents or guardians are legally responsible for ensuring that a child under their care attends school every day. It is a crime for a responsible parent or guardian not to cause a child to attend school and a criminal complaint in court against the responsible parent/guardian may be filed.

Student Lockers and Desks

Fitchburg Public Schools provides lockers and desks to students to store their school supplies and personal belongings. Lockers and desks remain the property of the school district and it maintains the right to search lockers and desks and conduct announced and unannounced

inspections. School staff have the right to search any personal items kept inside a locker or desk. Any illegal, prohibited, or potentially dangerous items, or evidence of a crime found during a search will be given to the appropriate authorities. The school district is not responsible for the loss of property from lockers or desks.

Visitors Parking

All visitors must park in front of the school during school hours and must have a parking permit. Otherwise, Fitchburg State University's Campus Police will issue a ticket.

It is critical that all parents follow the drop off and dismissal procedures for the safety of our students and staff. Please access McKay's website for updates, http://mckay.fitchburg.k12.ma.us.

Electronic Devices

Students may not use electronic devices during class time unless it is for educational purposes and they have express permission from the teacher. At all other times, electronic devices must be put away. Unauthorized audio/video recording is prohibited.

Improper use of electronic devices will result in disciplinary action and may result in the device being confiscated from a student. If an electronic device is confiscated, parents or guardians may be required to pick them up from the main office.

All cell phones must be turned off prior to entering the building. All headphones/earbuds are to be removed prior to entering the building.

All electronic devices brought to school will be at the owner's own risk; FPS assumes no responsibility for lost or stolen student electronic devices.

Personal Appearance Policy

Students are expected to dress and groom in a manner that conforms to reasonable standards of health, safety, and cleanliness and that will not cause disruption of the educational process. The responsibility for the dress and appearance of the students will rest with individual students and parents. The administration is authorized to take action in instances where individual dress does not meet the stated requirements.

This does not mean that student, faculty, or parent groups may not recommend appropriate dress for school or special occasions, such as banquets and proms. It means that students will not be prevented from attending school or a school function, or otherwise be discriminated against, so long as their dress and appearance meet the requirements set forth above.

Students are expected to meet the following standards:

Feet must be covered (shod) at all times, meaning no bare feet, no flip flops, beach or shower style sandals or slippers allowed. Clothes must be clean, in good repair, and not disruptive. Chains (wallet, belt, large neck chains, etc.) and spiked accessories (collars, belts, bracelets) are not permitted. Hats, headbands, bandanas and any other head covering are not permitted to be

worn during school, (except for religious reasons) and for designated approved and authorized school activities.

Students may not wear clothing or accessories that:

- Have slogans, comments or designs that are obscene, lewd, or vulgar;
- Are directed towards or intended to harm, harass, threaten, intimidate, or disability, genetic information, ethnicity, sex, national origin, or sexual orientation; and/or
- Promote alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, gang activity, illegal drugs, guns, or weapons.

Clothing will be deemed inappropriate if it:

- exposed midriffs or backs (short tops)
- is shorter than mid-thigh (shorts or skirts)
- is overly revealing (low cut or see-through tops, spaghetti straps, tube tops, tank tops for boys and girls, etc.)
- is intended to serve as an undergarment
- reveals undergarments (low slung pants); pants must be worn at the waist and be able to stay up without the use of a belt; and belts must be the correct length
- is sunglasses/shades worn in the school building without permission from the administration

Students whose dress or appearance is not suitable for school will be asked to change their dress or appearance. Other disciplinary consequences may be imposed in accordance with the applicable student handbook for repeated failure to meet these standards.

Breakfast and Lunch Program

Fitchburg Public Schools ("FPS") is participating in the Community Eligibility Program ("CEP") through the United States Department of Agriculture. As part of FPS' participation in CEP, there will be no charge to all FPS students for breakfast and lunch. FPS participation in the CEP is subject to change. Students who do not eat the school provided breakfast must eat their breakfast at home. Breakfast food items from home or stores are not allowed in the classroom. Students must be in school between 8:15am and 9:00am to be able to have breakfast in school. Students who arrive late will not be provided breakfast.

All Monthly menus are posted on the Fitchburg Public Schools website under Nutrition Services Department Menus are posted in each school cafeteria and paper copies are provided upon request. Students who prefer to bring lunch from home may do so.

Scope of Responsibility:
Parents/Guardians: There shall be no charge for a reimbursable breakfast, lunch or dinner (where available) to any student attending FPS. If a student receives a second lunch, the student shall be charged accordingly.

Guidance and Counseling Program

Our Guidance and Counseling program provides support to all students. Our main focus is to work with students, teachers, parents, administrators, and the community for the betterment of each and every child. Counselors also work with other members in the school and community in order to provide special services for students. All counselors maintain confidentiality with all students, families, and school community members. Our guidance counselors can be reached on the main number, 978-665-3187. Guidance and Student Support Services include: Consultation with parents/guardians Monitoring student's academic progress Coordination of Homebound Instruction Educate students in Conflict Resolution Skills Consultation with School-Based Administration and Related Services Facilitation of 504 meetings Consultation with Child Study Team Coordination of School-Based and State Assessments Coordination of outside agencies conducting counseling services during school hours Assist students who are not following the school rules and expectations Support Groups or Skills-Based Groups.

Library Services

Reading is a fundamental skill builder and the benefits from reading are immense. It improves students' reading skills, increases background knowledge, improves concentration, reasoning skills, creativity and among other advantages. Students should read every day and our library offers an array of titles your child can check out. Students are responsible for keeping books and materials they check out from the library in good condition. Borrowed books must be returned by the due date or re-checked if more time is needed. Lost books must be paid in full so the book can be replaced. Students who have overdue books may not be allowed to check out other books until the overdue books are returned or replaced.

Chromebook Use

All students are responsible for reporting any issues with their assigned ChromeBook to their homeroom teacher. Any abuse or inappropriate use of the ChromeBook will result in loss of privilege and assignment to desktop models or be provided an alternative assignment. It is the responsibility of the student to return their assigned ChromeBook to their homeroom cart for charging prior to dismissal.

Technology Services

Acceptable Use of Network/Technology and Internet Safety Policy

The Fitchburg Public Schools shall provide access for employees and students to the District's electronic local area network (LAN) and access to external networks including the Internet and web-based applications and systems, for educational purposes. Educational purposes shall be described as, but not limited to classroom activities, career and professional development, lesson planning, electronic communication, data collection and reporting, assessment, web-page development, on-line forums including virtual communities and social networking, on-line/hybrid courses, and high quality self-discovery activities of an educational nature. The purpose of the system/network is to assist in preparing students for success in life and work by providing access to a wide range of information and the ability to communicate with others.

The system/network will be used to increase communication (staff/parents/student), enhance productivity, and assist staff in upgrading existing skills and acquiring new skills through a broader exchange of information. The system/network will also be utilized to provide information to the community including parents, governmental agencies, and businesses.

The use of the Internet and web-based systems has had a profound influence on education, including unprecedented access to resources, interactive opportunities of communication and collaboration across geographic, educational, social, age-driven and temporal barriers, and engagement in global and virtual communities. Students may adopt new technologies quickly but may not have the experience, judgment or knowledge to understand potential risks. On-line and virtual social networking applications present ever-changing ways to engage people in diverse social groupings. Parents, educators and community members must encourage students to take advantage of learning opportunities while assisting them to understand how to reduce associated risks. The Fitchburg Public Schools proactively promotes the Internet's instructional benefits integrated into the district's comprehensive instructional program while also providing orientation to and education about Internet safety.

This Acceptable Use Policy is in compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). The School Committee has directed the Superintendent to describe through both policy and regulation:

- Student and staff members' responsible use of the electronic system/network and Internet and web-based resources
- Information pertaining to cyber-bullying
- Appropriate confidentiality and safety procedures and expectations for supervision of students using the network/system
- Technological safety features (such as filters and other Internet safety-blocking systems) that limit students' access to inappropriate materials.

Availability

The Superintendent or designee shall implement, monitor, and evaluate the District's system/network for instructional and administrative purposes.

Access to the system/network, including Internet and web-based systems, shall be made available to employees and students for instructional and administrative purposes and in accordance with administrative regulations and procedures. Access to the system/network is a privilege, not a right. All users shall be required to acknowledge receipt and understanding of all administrative regulations and procedures governing use of the system and shall agree in writing to comply with such regulations and procedures. Noncompliance with applicable regulations and procedures may result in suspension or termination of user privileges and other disciplinary actions consistent with the policies of the Fitchburg Public Schools, student or employee handbooks, staff members' contracts or law, up to and including suspension from school (for students), termination of employment and/or prosecution.

Acceptable Use

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

Monitored Use

Electronic mail (e-mail) transmissions and other use of electronic resources by students or staff members shall not be considered confidential and may be monitored at any time by designated staff to ensure safe and appropriate use for instructional and administrative purposes. The system/network shall utilize appropriate network security and filtering measures so as to remain CIPA compliant.

Liability

The FPS shall not be liable for users' inappropriate use of electronic resources or media or violations of copyright restrictions, users' mistakes, users' negligence, or costs incurred by users. The FPS shall not be responsible for ensuring the accuracy or usability of any information found on external networks, the Internet or other web-based resources.

Student Google Accounts

The Fitchburg Public Schools uses student Google Apps for Education accounts. These accounts give students access to valuable educational tools. The suite of Google Apps for Education includes:

- Docs, which allows students to work collaboratively with teachers and other students on assignments
- Drive, which allows students to save work and access it from any computer or device with an internet connection
- Gmail, which allows students to communicate with teachers to ask questions and receive feedback

In addition, Google accounts will be used to access online tools such as Khan Academy, a self-paced learning tool that provides feedback to both the student and their teachers as to their academic progress.

These accounts will be hosted by the school district and will remain under the control of the district. District officials will be able to monitor and access data on these accounts in the event that there is concern about their use. The use of these accounts is subject to the Acceptable Use Policy as put forth in this Student Handbook. If you have questions or concerns, please contact your child's school.

In order to benefit fully in classroom activities, it is crucial that all students have access to these tools. Please return the permission form (in the form section) so that we can establish a Google account (at no cost) to be used by your child.

Interscholastic/ Intramural Sports

The Middle School Athletic Program is committed to teaching and introducing a sport to our students. Athletics are considered an integral part of a student's educational experiences. The goals of middle school athletics' program incorporate acquisition of skills, knowledge of game strategies and rules, collaboration, competition, responsibility, and a sense of school pride. Students may sign up for any Middle School sport and must have a current physical on record with the school nurse. Information on sports is sent home and Connect-Ed messages may also inform families of offerings.

Clubs and Activities

Clubs will be formed in response to students' interest and staff availability and will vary from year to year. After school clubs may include piano lessons, robotics, math club, drama, track, etc. Families will be notified of new clubs and activities via letters and Connect-Ed calls. Some after school activities offer limited space and students may be placed in a waiting list.

After School Participation

In order for students to participate in afterschool activities (i.e. clubs, music lessons, sports, dances) students are required to be in attendance during the school day. (Refer to School Committee Policy 5109). Students who are dismissed by the nurse for illness are not allowed to return to school activities for 24 hours. Students, who are dismissed for a doctor's appointment, are required to bring a doctor's note in order to participate in afterschool activities.

School Council

A School Council is a representative; school building-based committee composed of the principal, teachers, parents, community members and, at the secondary level, (middle school & high school) students, required to be established pursuant to M.G.L. c.71, s.59C.

SECTION VI – STUDENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Student Rights

Access to Student Records

Under Massachusetts law, a parent of any student, or a student who has entered ninth grade or who is at least 14 years old, has the right, upon request, to inspect the student's record. The parent or eligible student should receive the student record no later than ten days after the request, and may ask to have the record interpreted by a qualified professional or amended by the principal.

Non-custodial Parents Right of Access to Student Records

In order to obtain access, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student record to the school principal. Upon receipt of the request the school must immediately notify the custodial parent by certified and first class mail, in English and the primary language of the custodial parent, that it will provide the non-custodial parent with access after 21 days, unless the custodial parent provides the principal with documentation that the non-custodial parent is not eligible to obtain access as set forth in 603 CMR 23.07 (5)(a). The school must delete all electronic and postal address and telephone number information relating to either work or home locations of the custodial parent from student records provided to non-custodial parents. In addition, such records must be marked to indicate that they shall 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 shall notify the non-custodial parent that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial parent.

Release of Information to Military Recruiters, Prospective Employers, Colleges and Universities

A provision of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, a federal law, requires secondary schools, upon receipt of a request, to release the names, addresses and telephone numbers of students attending the high school to United States military recruiters, colleges, universities and other educational institutions and prospective employers. Secondary school students and their parents/guardians have the option of requesting that secondary schools not release their basic information when such requests are received. If, however, secondary school students and/or their parents/guardians do not take this affirmative step to block the release of the information, the law requires that the contact information be released when a request is received. If you do not want this information released without your consent, you must notify the principal of your school in writing by September 15 of each school year or within 10 days of enrollment.

Notification of Rights under FERPA

Under federal law, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

(1) The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should submit to the School principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

(2) The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the School to amend a record should write to the School principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

(3) The right to privacy of personally identifiable information in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Committee; a person or company with whom the School has outsourced services or functions it would otherwise use its own employees to perform (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the School also discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer. (FERPA requires a school district to make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request.)

(4) The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Notice for Directory Information: The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that the District, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, the District may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the District to the contrary in accordance with District procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the District to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production;
- The annual yearbook;
- Honor roll or other recognition lists;
- Graduation programs; and Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members.
- School Photos

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks, yearly school photo companies. In addition, two federal laws require local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the following information -names, addresses and telephone listings - unless parents have advised the LEA that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent. [1]

If you do not want the District to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the District in writing by September 15th or within 10 days of enrollment. Fitchburg Public Schools has designated the following information as directory information as directory information:

● Student's name	● Address	● Telephone listing
● Email address	● Photograph	● Grade level
● Homeroom	● Dates of attendance	● Major field of study
● Date and Place of birth	● Degrees, honors and awards received	● Weight and height of members of athletic teams
● Participation in officially recognized activities and sports	● The most recent educational agency or institution attended	● Student ID number, user ID, or other unique personal identifier used to

[1] These Laws are: Section 9528 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 7908) and 10 U.S.C. § 503(c).

		communicate in electronic systems that cannot be used to access education records without a PIN, password, etc. (A student's SSN, in whole or in part, cannot be used for this purpose.)

If you do not want this information released without your consent, you must notify the principal or your school in writing by September 15 of each school year or within 10 days of enrollment.

Notification of Rights under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

The 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:

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 –

- 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.

Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of –

- 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.

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

The District 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 in 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 be 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. Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution.
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

Parents who believe their rights under the PPRA 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

Student Complaints & Grievances - Policy 5402.01 (August 19, 2014)

The School Committee recognizes that there may be conditions in the school system that are in need of improvement and that students should have some means by which their concerns may be effectively expressed, considered, and dealt with fairly. Such means, if well conceived and understood in advance, can do much to maintain harmonious relationships among the schools and the students and community. The traditional "open door" policy in the public school system will be continued. Students--and their parents and/or guardians--who believe that a student has received unfair treatment may bring forward their grievance. Appeals of individual disciplinary cases will be required to follow the district's policy on student discipline. Any applicable provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws or federal law will be followed by

school officials in conducting hearings and reviews of student grievances. In general, procedures will begin with the authority imposing the penalty (for example, Principal or teacher) and may ultimately be referred to the Superintendent and on to the School Committee if a policy needs to be approved or changed. Every attempt will be made to seek a satisfactory solution to any legitimate grievance in a friendly and informal manner.

SOURCE: MASC
CROSS REF: JIC Student Discipline

Special Education Services

The Fitchburg Public Schools will provide special education programs and services to every eligible student with one or more disabilities who qualifies for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) and the Massachusetts Special Education Laws (M.G.L. 71B). In accordance with state requirements, the District will provide specially designed instruction and/or related services to all children with such disabilities from the ages of three (3) through twenty-one (21), meaning up until an individual's 22nd birthday, who have not attained a high school diploma or its equivalent.

In the event of a question, disagreement concerning diagnosis, individualized education plans (IEP), or placement, the parents/guardians will be accorded the right of due process by the District. Please contact your child's teacher, guidance counselor or Principal.

Students with Disabilities Requiring 504 Plans

It is the practice of the Fitchburg Public Schools to provide reasonable accommodations to known physical and mental impairment of students. Requests for Section 504 accommodations for students can be made directly to the principal or 504 Coordinator at the student's school. A copy of the District's 504 Handbook is available in your school's office. It includes procedures, safeguards and complaint procedures. Please contact your Principal to review a copy.

Section 504 protects qualified individuals with disabilities. Under this law, individuals with disabilities are defined as persons with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. People who have a history of, or who are regarded as having a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, are also covered. Major life activities include caring for one's self, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, performing manual tasks, and learning.

Section 504 requires an evaluation and written accommodation plan subject to proper notice requirements describing placement and services. Decisions must be based on information drawn from a variety of sources and all information must be documented, and must be made by a group of persons knowledgeable about the child, about the meaning of the evaluation data, and about the placement/service options. A student who is eligible under Section 504 would also have a periodic review of his/her plan.

Additionally, school districts are responsible for providing programs and activities that are accessible to students with disabilities, and must ensure that students with disabilities have meaningful opportunities to participate in all aspects of school on an equal basis with students without disabilities.

English Language Learners

The School District will identify students whose dominant language may not be English through home language surveys that identify a primary home language other than English, observations, intake assessments, and recommendations of parents/guardians, teachers and other persons. Identified students will be assessed annually to determine their level of proficiency in the English language.

In accordance with Federal law, State law, and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regulations and guidance, the Fitchburg Public Schools will provide an instructional program for all identified English language learners (ELL) in grades kindergarten through 12 that is designed specifically to assist them in learning English and in learning subject matter content.

Married and/or Pregnant Students

Pregnant students will be encouraged to continue to attend school. Every effort will be made to see that the educational program of the student is disrupted as little as possible, that return to school after delivery is encouraged, and that every opportunity to complete high school is provided. In accordance with Federal law and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regulations and guidance, a student who is pregnant in the Fitchburg Public Schools is permitted to remain in regular classes and participate in extracurricular activities throughout her pregnancy. After giving birth, a student is permitted to return to the academic program in which she was enrolled and is permitted to participate in extracurricular programs. The District does not require that a pregnant student obtain certification from a physician that she is physically and emotionally able to continue in school unless certification is required for all students with other physical or emotional conditions requiring the attention of a physician.

McKinney-Vento Education Assistance Act (Homeless Students)

The Fitchburg Public Schools complies with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and intends that homeless children have equal access to all educational programs and services offered by the District. To the extent practical and as required by law, the District will work with homeless students and their families to provide stability in school attendance and other services.

The Superintendent, with the approval of the School Committee, will develop protocols ensuring that enrollment and transportation are provided to homeless students in a manner required by law. The Superintendent will also designate an appropriate staff person to be the District's liaison for homeless students and their families. A parent/guardian or representative of a student who has a question regarding the enrollment or transportation of a homeless student may request a meeting with the liaison. If the issues are not resolved at this level, a meeting with the Superintendent may be requested.

Definition of Homelessness: 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 campgrounds, 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. Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings. Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designated for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation. Migratory children and unaccompanied youth, a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

Homeless students and their families have the following rights:

- To attend school no matter where they live. They must be given access to public education and pre-school as provided to all other children.
- To remain in their original or last school even if they move to another school district. Homeless students have the right to stay in the school they attended prior to their loss of housing, or to remain in the school they were last enrolled in, (school of origin) unless the parent or unaccompanied youth chooses otherwise.
- To get transportation to their original school. School districts must arrange transportation for students in homeless situations so that students can stay at their school of origin, even if students move to a different town/city or school district. Call Fitchburg Public Schools Transportation Department, 978-345-3200, ext. 312.
- To immediately enroll in a new school. Homeless students who move and need to enroll in a new school where they reside while homeless may do so immediately, without proof of residency, immunizations, school records or other papers.
- To automatically receive free breakfast and lunch. Based on verification, Food Services must provide these meals.
- To receive Title I services.
- To receive all available educational and supplemental services that all other children are receiving.

If there is an enrollment dispute, the student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The parent or guardian shall be informed of the District's decision and their appeal rights in writing. The District's liaison will carry out dispute resolution as provided by state rule. Unaccompanied youth will also be enrolled pending resolution of the dispute.

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT POLICY – approved by S.C. 03/18/2024

The Fitchburg School Committee is committed to the regulations set forth by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as it applies to the use of physical restraint on students at publicly funded elementary and secondary schools. This policy and regulations applies to all students including regular education students, and students with disabilities.

Restraint Prevention and Behavior Support Policy and Procedures

(Based on 603 C.M.R. 46.00, effective January 1, 2016, and

DESE Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2016-1, July 31, 2015)

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I. OVERVIEW

The Fitchburg Public Schools ("the District") seeks to ensure that every student is free from the use of physical restraint that is inconsistent with the requirements of 603 C.M.R. 46.00. Physical restraint is an emergency measure of last resort. It may be administered only when necessary to protect a student and/or school community member from assault or imminent, serious physical harm. When, based on this standard, physical restraint is necessary, staff will strive to prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of physical restraint. The District will annually review its Restraint Prevention and Behavior Support Policy and Procedures, provide it to all District staff, and make it available to parents of enrolled students.

II. DEFINITIONS

Mechanical Restraint: the use of any device or equipment to restrict a student's freedom of movement. The term does not include devices implemented by trained school personnel, or utilized by a student that have been prescribed by an appropriate medical or related services professional, and are used for the specific and approved positioning or protective purposes for which such devices were designed. Examples of such devices include: adaptive devices or mechanical supports used to achieve proper body

position, balance, or alignment to allow greater freedom of mobility than would be possible without the use of such devices or mechanical supports; vehicle safety restraints when used as intended during the transport of a student in a moving vehicle; restraints for medical immobilization; or orthopedically prescribed devices that permit a student to participate in activities without risk of harm.

Medication Restraint: the administration of medication for the purpose of temporarily controlling behavior. Medication prescribed by a licensed physician and authorized by the parent for administration in the school setting is not medication restraint.

Physical Escort: a temporary touching or holding, without the use of force, of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a student who is agitated to walk to a safe location.

Physical Restraint: direct physical contact that prevents or significantly restricts a student's freedom of movement. Physical restraint does not include: brief physical contact to promote student safety, providing physical guidance or prompting when teaching a skill, redirecting attention, providing comfort, or a physical escort.

Principal: instructional leader of a public school education program or his or her designee.

Prone Restraint: a physical restraint in which a student is placed face down on the floor or another surface, and physical pressure is applied to the student's body to keep the student in the face-down position.

Seclusion: involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area from which the student is physically prevented from leaving. Seclusion does not include a time-out as defined below.

Time-Out: a behavioral support strategy, developed pursuant to 603 CMR 46.04(1), in which a student temporarily separates from the learning activity or the classroom, either by choice or by direction from staff, for the purpose of calming. During time-out, a student must be continuously observed by a staff member. Staff shall be with the student or immediately available to the student at all times. The space used for time-out must be clean, safe, sanitary, and appropriate for the purpose of calming. Time-out shall cease as soon as the student has calmed.

DESE's *Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2016-1*, issued on July 31, 2015, provides the following additional definitions pertaining to time-out:

> *Inclusionary time-out*: when the student is removed from positive reinforcement or full participation in classroom activities while remaining in the classroom.
>
> *Exclusionary time-out*: the separation of the student from the rest of the class either through complete visual separation or from actual physical separation.

III. PROHIBITIONS

Mechanical restraint, medication restraint and seclusion are prohibited in all public school education programs.

IV. SPECIFIC RIGHTS

Neither 603 C.M.R. 46.00 nor this policy prohibits: (1) any teacher, employee or agent of the District from using reasonable force to protect students, others or themselves from imminent, serious, physical harm; (2) any individual from reporting to appropriate authorities a crime committed by a student or other individual; (3) law enforcement, judicial authorities or school security personnel from exercising their responsibilities, including the physical detainment of a student or person alleged to have committed a crime or posing a security risk; or (4) an individual from reporting neglect or abuse to the appropriate state agency, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 119 § 51A.

V. DESE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ON USE OF TIME-OUT

DESE's *Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2016-1*, issued on July 31, 2015, explains the differences between "inclusionary time-out" and "exclusionary time-out" as follows:

"Inclusionary time-out": when the student is removed from positive reinforcement or full participation in classroom activities while remaining in the classroom.

> The use of "inclusionary time-out" functions well as a behavior support strategy while allowing the student to remain fully aware of the learning activities of the classroom. "Inclusionary time-out" includes practices used by teachers as part of their classroom behavior support tools, such as "planned ignoring," asking students to put their heads down, or placing a student in a different location within the classroom. These strategies, used to reduce external stimuli in the student's environment while keeping the student physically present and involved in learning, have proven to be useful tools for classroom management.
>
> If the student is not "separated from the learning activity" or the classroom, the student will be in "inclusionary time-out" and the requirements that accompany the use of "exclusionary time-out," listed below, do not apply. A student is not "separated from the learning activity" if the student is physically present in the classroom and remains fully aware of the learning activities.
>
> "Inclusionary time-out" does not include walled off "time-out" rooms located within the classroom; use of those is considered to be "exclusionary time-out."

"Exclusionary time-out": the separation of the student from the rest of the class either through complete visual separation or from actual physical separation.

The following requirements apply to the use of "exclusionary time-out":

- "Exclusionary time-out" may be used only for the purpose of calming;
- During "exclusionary time-out," the student must be continuously observed by a staff member;

· The staff member will either be with the student or immediately available to the student at all times;

· The space used for "exclusionary time-out" must be clean, safe, sanitary and appropriate for calming;

· *Unless it poses a safety risk, a staff member must be physically present with the student who is in an exclusionary time-out setting;*

· If it is not safe for the staff member to be present with the student, the student may be left in the time-out setting with the door closed. However, in order to ensure that the student is receiving appropriate support, a school counselor or other behavioral support professional must be immediately available outside of the time-out setting where the individual can continuously observe and communicate with the student as appropriate to determine when the student has calmed;

· *Students must never be locked in a room*;

· For students displaying self-injurious behavior, a staff member must be physically present in the same setting with the student;

· An "exclusionary time-out" must be terminated as soon as the student has calmed; and

· An "exclusionary time-out" may not extend beyond thirty (30) minutes without the approval of the Principal. A Principal may grant an extension beyond thirty (30) minutes based only on the individual student's continuing agitation.

VI. REQUIREMENTS FOR USE OF PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

Legal Standard for Use

Physical restraint is considered an emergency procedure of last resort. This means that it may be used only when the student's behavior poses a threat of assault or imminent, serious, physical harm to self and/or others; *and* the student is not responsive to verbal directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions, or such interventions are deemed to be inappropriate under the circumstances.

Physical restraint may never be used for punishment. Physical restraint may not be used as a response to a student's property damage, disruption of school order, refusal to comply with rules/directions, or verbal threats, unless the above harm standard is also met.

Brief physical contact to promote safety is not considered a restraint. DESE's *Question and Answer Guide to Implementation of 603 CMR 46.00, The Regulations for the Prevention of Physical Restraint and Requirements if Used,* issued on July 31, 2015, states that "brief physical contact to promote safety refers to measures taken by school personnel consisting of physical contact with a student for a short period of time solely to prevent imminent harm to a student, for example, physically redirecting a student about to wander on to a busy road, grabbing a student who is about to fall, or breaking up a fight between students."

Physical restraint may not be used as a standard response for any student. No IEP or written behavioral plan may include physical restraint as a standard response to any behavior.

Safety

To ensure student safety, staff will review and consider a student's medical and psychological limitations, known or suspected trauma history, and/or behavior intervention plans. Physical restraint will not be used when it is medically contraindicated for reasons including, but not limited to, communication-related disorders, asthma, seizures, cardiac condition, obesity, bronchitis, or risk of vomiting.

During a physical restraint, staff will continuously monitor the student's physical status, including skin temperature, color and respiration, and make certain that the student is able to breathe and to speak. Staff will use the safest physical restraint method available and appropriate for the situation, and will use only the amount of force necessary to protect the student or others from physical injury or harm. Whenever possible, another adult who is not a participant in the restraint will witness the administration of the restraint.

Duration

A physical restraint must be terminated as soon as the student is no longer an immediate danger to himself or others, or the student demonstrates or expresses significant physical distress (e.g., difficulty breathing, sustained or prolonged crying, sustained or prolonged coughing). If a student demonstrates or expresses significant physical distress, staff will release the restraint and seek medical assistance immediately. For any student to be restrained for more than twenty (20) minutes, staff must obtain the Principal's approval. This approval must be based on the student's continued agitation justifying the need for continued restraint.

Follow-up

Follow-up procedures will be implemented after the release of the student from physical restraint. These will include reviewing the incident with the student to address the precipitating behavior, reviewing the incident with staff who administered the restraint to discuss whether proper restraint procedures were followed, and considering whether any follow-up is appropriate for students who witnessed the incident.

Prone and Floor Restraints

Prone restraints are prohibited, except on an individual basis and when all of the following conditions, which require specific documentation, are met: (1) the student has a documented history of repeatedly causing serious self-injuries and/or injuries to other students or staff; (2) all other forms of physical restraint have failed to ensure the safety of the student and/or others; (3) there are no medical contraindications, as documented by a licensed physician; (4) there is psychological or behavioral justification for the use of prone restraint and no psychological or behavioral contraindications, as documented by a licensed mental health professional; (5) the program has obtained consent to use prone restraint in an emergency as set out in 603 CMR 46.03(1)(b), and the use of prone restraint is approved in writing by the Principal; and (6) the program has documented all of the above before using prone restraint and maintains the documentation. The only staff authorized to administer a prone restraint are staff who have received in-depth restraint training in accordance with 603 C.M.R. 46.04(3).

Floor restraints are prohibited unless the staff administering the restraint have received in-depth training in accordance with 603 C.M.R. 46.04(3), and these trained staff members determine that such method of restraint is required to provide safety for the student or others.

VII. REPORTING PHYSICAL RESTRAINT USE

All physical restraints, regardless of duration, will be reported.

Reporting within School and to Parents

The reporting process within the school and to the student's parents is as follows: The staff will immediately verbally inform the Principal, and the Principal will make reasonable efforts to verbally inform the student's parents within 24 hours of the restraint. The staff will file a detailed written report no later than the next school day, and the Principal will e-mail or mail the written report to the parents within three (3) school days of the restraint. There are no individual waivers permitted for these reporting requirements.

Report Contents

The report will include: name of student, names and job titles of those involved, including observers; date and time the restraint began and ended; the name of the administrator who was verbally informed; the name of the Principal or designee who approved extending the restraint beyond twenty (20) minutes, when such approval was obtained; what was happening before the restraint; the efforts staff used to prevent escalation of the student's behavior, including the specific de-escalation strategies that the staff used; the alternatives to restraint that staff attempted; the justification for initiating the restraint; a description of the holds used and why they were necessary; a description of the student's behavior and reaction during the restraint, and any medical care given; documentation of injury to the student and / or staff, if any during the restraint. How the restraint ended and information regarding any further actions the school has taken or may take; and information regarding opportunities for the student's parents to discuss the restraint with the school.

Reporting to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

The reporting process to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is as follows: The District will report to DESE all restraints that result in any and all injury to either a student or a staff member within three (3) working days of the restraint. Additionally, the District will provide DESE with an annual report of its physical restraint use.

VIII. ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS OF PHYSICAL RESTRAINT USE

Two types of administrative reviews will be conducted in regards to the use of physical restraint. The Principal will conduct a Weekly Individual Student Review and a Monthly School-Wide Review.

Weekly Individual Student Review

A Weekly Individual Student Review will be conducted in regards to any student who has been restrained multiple times during the week. The Principal will convene a review team to assess the progress and needs of any such student, with the goal of reducing or eliminating future restraint. This team will review and discuss the written restraint reports, analyze the factors that led to the restraint, consider the factors that may have contributed to the escalation of the student's behavior, and develop a written action plan.

Monthly School-Wide Review

A Monthly School-Wide Review will also be conducted by the Principal. In this review, the Principal will consider patterns of restraints, number of restraints, duration of restraints and any injuries caused by restraints. The Principal will assess whether the restraint prevention and management policy needs to be modified and/or whether there is a need for additional staff training on restraint reduction and restraint prevention strategies.

IX. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

General Training

The Principal will ensure that all staff receive training on the District's Restraint Prevention and Behavior Support Policy and Procedures and the requirements for the use of restraint. This training will comply with the requirements of 603 C.M.R. 46.04(2).

In-Depth Training

The Principal will identify and authorize certain staff to serve as a school-wide resource to assist in ensuring the proper administration of physical restraint. These identified staff will participate in an in-depth training that complies with the requirements of 603 C.M.R. 46.04(3) and 603 C.M.R. 46.04(4).

X. SPECIFIC PROCEDURES

The Superintendent or his/her designee will develop procedures identifying:

- Appropriate responses to student behavior that may require immediate intervention

· Training and methods for preventing student violence, self-injurious behavior, and suicide including crisis planning and de-escalation of potentially dangerous behaviors among groups or students or individuals.

· Descriptions and explanations of alternatives to physical restraint as well as the school's method of physical restraint for use in emergency situations.

· Methods to engage parents in discussions about restraint prevention and the use of restraint solely as an emergency measure.

· A statement prohibiting: medication restraint, mechanical restraint, prone restraint unless permitted by 603 CMR 46.03(1)(b), seclusion, and the use of physical restraint in a manner inconsistent with 603 CMR 46.00

· Process for obtaining Principal approval for time out exceeding 30 minutes

Restraint Complaint Procedure

Any individual, who wishes to file regarding physical restraint practices, should immediately report their concern promptly to the school principal or designee. If the school principal receives the report, he or she will notify the Superintendent or his/her designee of the complaint. The Superintendent or his/her designee will promptly investigate the complaint and provide the complainant notification of the outcome of the complaint within a reasonable time period of receipt of the complaint.

Legal Authority:

603 C.M.R. § 46.00

DESE Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2016-1, July 31, 2015

Effective 1/1/16

Anti-Discrimination/Anti-Harassment Policy and Grievance Procedures

The Fitchburg Public Schools (the "District") is committed to maintaining and promoting an educational environment free from all forms of discrimination, including harassment. Discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, genetic information or testing, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age or disability (hereinafter "membership in a protected class") will not be tolerated. Retaliation against any student or other individual who has complained of discrimination, including harassment, or individuals, who have cooperated with an investigation of such a complaint, is also unlawful and will not be tolerated. The District will promptly investigate, remedy any harm,

seek to prevent recurrence of such conduct, and will also develop procedures to accomplish this end.

This policy applies to conduct directed toward students by all other persons associated with the educational community including, but not limited to, students, District employees, School Committee members, school volunteers, vendors and independent contractors.

I. What Is Discrimination, including Harassment?

A. Discrimination: Treating persons differently, or interfering with or preventing them from enjoying the advantages or privileges afforded to others because of their membership in a protected class.

B. Harassment: Oral, written, graphic, electronic, or physical conduct relating to a person's actual or perceived membership in a protected class that is sufficiently severe, pervasive or persistent so as to interfere with or limit that person's ability to participate in the District's programs or activities by creating a hostile, humiliating, intimidating, or offensive educational environment.

Harassing conduct based on protected status may include, but is not limited to:

- Degrading, demeaning, insulting, or abusive verbal or written statements;
- Taking personal belongings, taunting, teasing, name-calling, or spreading rumors;
- Drawing or writing graffiti, slogans, visual displays, or symbols on school or another's property;
- Telling degrading or offensive jokes;
- Unwanted physical contact of any kind;
- Physical violence, threats of bodily harm, physical intimidation, or stalking;
- Threatening letters, emails, instant messages, or postings to websites that come within the scope of the District's disciplinary authority;
- Defacing, damaging, or destroying school or another's property.

II. Sample Conduct Which May Constitute Specific Types of Harassment

The following is not intended as an inclusive list of conduct that may violate this policy.

Disability Harassment:

Unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct directed at a person based on his/her disability or perceived disability, including damaging or interfering with use of necessary equipment, imitating manner of movement, using disability-related slurs, or invading personal space to intimidate.

National Origin Harassment:

Unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct directed at a person based on his/her national origin, ancestry, or ethnic background such as negative comments about surnames, customs, language, accents, immigration status or manner of speaking.

Racial Harassment:

Unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct directed at a person based on his/her race or color, including racial slurs or insults based on characteristics of a person's race or color, racial graffiti or symbols, hostile acts based on race, nicknames based on racial stereotypes, negative comments about appearance, imitating mannerisms, taunting, or invading personal space to intimidate.

Religious Harassment:

Unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct directed at a person based on his/her religion, including derogatory comments about religious beliefs, traditions, practices (includes non-belief), or religious clothing.

Sexual Orientation Harassment:

Unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct, directed at a person based on his/her actual or perceived sexual orientation, such as anti-gay slurs or insults, imitating mannerisms, taunting, or invading personal space to intimidate.

Sexual Harassment:

Quid pro quo sexual harassment occurs when a person in a supervisory position explicitly or implicitly conditions participation in a program or activity or bases a decision concerning another on the other person's submission to unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, whether or not the other person submits to the conduct. Quid pro quo sexual harassment, occurs, for example when a school employee causes a student to believe s(he) must submit to sexual advances to receive a better grade than deserved, or is threatened with a loss of a promised college application recommendation unless the student dates the employee.

Hostile environment sexual harassment occurs when unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature by a student, a school employee, or third party on school property or at a school related activities is sufficiently severe, pervasive or persistent so as to interfere with or limit a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the District's programs or activities by creating a hostile, humiliating, intimidating, or offensive educational environment. A victim may also be someone affected by conduct directed toward another individual. (Sexual harassment may occur adult to student, student to student, student to adult, adult to adult, male to female, female to male, female to female, and male to male.)

Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:

- Verbal forms of sexual harassment, including repeated unwanted requests for dates, sexual rumors, sexually explicit jokes, howling, whistles, catcalls, soliciting conversation

regarding sexual activity and experiences, making unwanted gender-based references to a person's physical characteristics;
- Written forms of sexual harassment, including offensive gestures following or stalking another, cornering or blocking a person, leering, pressuring for sexual activities;
- Nonverbal forms of sexual harassment, including offensive gestures, following or stalking another, concerning or blocking a person, leering, pressuring for sexual activities;
- Visual forms of sexual harassment, including displaying sexually suggestive or sexually provocative photographs, pictures, objects, cartoons, or posters; or
- Unwelcome physical touching, including grabbing, groping, squeezing, sexual fondling, kissing, brushing against another's body, body hugs, and other unwelcome contact.

Hate Crime

A hate crime is a crime motivated by hatred or bias or where the victim is targeted or selected for the crime at least in part be because the person is a different race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation from the perpetrator or because the targeted person has a disability. A hate crime may involve a physical attack, threat of bodily harm, physical intimidation, or damage to another's property.

Indicators that a crime may constitute a hate crime include:

- Use of racial, ethnicity, religion or anti-gay slurs;
- Use of symbols of hate, such as a swastika or burning cross;
- Similar behavior toward others who are members of the same protected class;
- The perpetrator's protected class is different from the victim's;
- The incident occurs while the victim was promoting a racial, religious, ethnic/national origin, disability, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation group, such as attending an advocacy group meeting, or participating in a students' gay-straight alliance, or a disability rights demonstration.

III. Responsibilities of all Persons Associated with Educational Community

Each member of the educational community is personally responsible for ensuring that his/her conduct does not in any way harass or discriminate against any other person that he/she has contact with in the performance of his/her duties or studies or while acting as a member of the school community. In addition, each member of the educational community is required to fully cooperate in any investigation of alleged discrimination, including harassment. Further, District employees are obligated to intervene and stop any discrimination, including harassment they witness and to immediately report to the appropriate party instances of discrimination, including harassment that are reported to them or of which they otherwise learn.

IV. Designated Officials for Addressing Discrimination and Harassment Complaints

In each school building, the Principal is responsible for receiving reports and complaints of violations of this Policy at the school level. Individuals may file a report or complaint of discrimination, including harassment, with the Principal. If the complaint involves allegations of discrimination based on disability, the person filing the complaint also has the option to file

his/her complaint with the school building 504 coordinator. (A report or complaint of a violation involving the Principal should be filed with the Superintendent.)

V. Procedure for Discrimination and Harassment

The following complaint procedure has been established to ensure prompt and effective investigation into allegations of discrimination, including harassment.

A person who believes that he or she had been discriminated against, including being harassed may, to the extent that they feel comfortable, immediately:

1. confront the harasser(s) or person believed to be discriminating against him/her;
2. state the conduct that he/she objects to;
3. indicate that he/she finds such conduct offensive, intimidating and/or embarrassing;
4. insist that the person(s) engaging in the conduct stop the conduct immediately; and
5. report the conduct immediately to the Principal/Vice-Principal;

If the individual with the concern is not comfortable with such a confrontation, or feels that such a confrontation is unsafe and/or otherwise inappropriate, he/she should instead report the situation to the Principal. Reports/complaints are to be filed within ninety (90) days after the conduct complained of occurred or within the time the individual reasonably becomes aware of the conduct. (Note: this filing period may be extended for good cause.) The report can be written or oral and should consist of the following:

1. the specific conduct objected to,
2. the date(s) and time(s) such conduct took place,
3. the name(s) of the alleged harasser(s) or person believed to be discriminating against them,
4. the location(s) where the conduct occurred,
5. the name(s) of any witness(es),
6. action sought to remedy the situation, and
7. any other details or information requested by the designated official.

In addition, the person should provide the Principal with any documentation (emails, notes, pictures, etc.) or other information in support of the allegation of discrimination, including harassment.

VI. Investigation of Complaints

Upon receipt of a report or complaint, the Principal should conduct a prompt investigation. The investigation must allow for the complainant, the subject of the complaint, the alleged harasser, and any other appropriate party to provide information, including witnesses or other evidence, relevant to the consideration and resolution of the complaint. The Principal will also endeavor to promptly interview and obtain detailed written statements from potential witnesses. If further documentation or information is necessary, the Principal will notify the appropriate party, asking that the information be provided within ten (10) school/working days.

A written determination regarding the complaint and any resolution will be provided by the Principal to the complainant within thirty (30) school/working days of the complaint.

The complainant may request reconsideration of the determination and/or resolution of a complaint by notifying the Superintendent in writing or verbally within seven (7) school/working days of receipt of the written determination of the Principal. The Superintendent or his/ her designee will respond to such a request within (30) thirty school/working days of receipt of the request for reconsideration; his/her decision is final.

If a violation is found to have occurred, the District will take steps to prevent recurrence of the violation and correct its discriminatory effect on the person(s) affected. Such steps may include appropriate disciplinary action, counseling, development of a safety plan and other remedies, as appropriate.

VII. Consequences of Violating Policy - Discipline & Discharge

Any employee who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action consistent with the contractual provisions governing his/her employment. In appropriate circumstances, the District may also refer the matter to law enforcement officials for possible prosecution.

Any student who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action which may range from detention, suspension from schools, or expulsion from school. (Note: students with disabilities will be subject to the applicable disciplinary procedures under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973.) In appropriate circumstances, the District may also refer the matter to law enforcement officials for possible prosecution.

VIII. Confidentiality

Investigations of discrimination, including harassment complaints shall be conducted in such a manner as to disclose information only to those with a need to know or those who may have information pertinent to the investigation. Please note, some level of disclosure may be necessary in the course of conducting interviews in connection with investigation of any complaint under this policy. The Fitchburg Public Schools shall endeavor to keep such information as confidential as it can without compromising the thoroughness of the investigation.

IX. State and Federal Authorities

In addition to the process described above, the complainant may, at any time, file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, or other appropriate federal or state agency charged with enforcement of state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination, including harassment based on membership in a protected class.

U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights
John W. McCormack Building
Post Office Square
Boston, MA 02109
Telephone: (617) 289-0111
http://www.ed.gov

Program Quality Assurance Services
75 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA 02148-4906
Telephone: (781) 338-3700
http://www.doe.mass.edu

Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination ("MCAD")
Boston Office
One Ashburton Place, Room 601
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 994-6000

Bullying Prevention & Intervention Policy - Policy 5714 (August 19, 2014)

The Fitchburg Public Schools is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. 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.

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

This policy applies to conduct directed toward students by other students or members of the school staff, including but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity, or paraprofessional. When bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation are alleged, the full cooperation and assistance of students and parents/families are expected.

Bullying, Cyber-bullying, and Retaliation "Bullying" is the repeated use by one or more students or of a member of the school staff, of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

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

“Cyber-bullying” means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a:

- wire
- radio
- electromagnetic
- photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

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

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

Bullying is prohibited:

- on school grounds;
- on property immediately adjacent to school grounds;
- at school-sponsored or school-related activities;
- at functions or programs whether on or off school grounds;
- at school bus stops;
- on school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the school district; or,
- through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the Fitchburg Public Schools.

Bullying is prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the Fitchburg school district if the act or acts in question:

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

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 this policy requires the district or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

Prevention and Intervention Plan

The Superintendent and/or his/her designee shall oversee the development of a prevention and intervention plan, in consultation with all district stakeholders, which may include teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians, consistent with the requirements of this policy, as well as state and federal laws. The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be reviewed and updated at least biennially.

The Principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the bullying prevention and implementation plan within his or her school.

Reporting

Anyone, including a student, parent or guardian, or school staff member can report bullying or retaliation.

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

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

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

Each school shall have a means for anonymous reporting by students of incidents of bullying. No formal disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Investigation Procedures

The Principal or their designee, upon receipt of a viable report, shall promptly contact the parents or guardians of a student who has been the alleged target or alleged aggressor of bullying. The actions being taken to prevent further acts of bullying shall be discussed.

The school principal or a designee shall promptly investigate the report of bullying, using a Bullying/Cyber-bullying Report Form. The investigation may include interviewing the alleged target, alleged aggressor, staff members, students and/or witnesses.

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

Confidentiality shall be used to protect a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or is witness to or has reliable information about an act of bullying. Confidentiality shall be maintained to the extent consistent with the school's obligations under law.

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

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

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

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

DESE's Problem Resolution System

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

Student Assistance

The Fitchburg Public Schools shall provide counseling or referral to appropriate services, including guidance, academic intervention, and protection to students, both targets and aggressors, affected by bullying, as necessary.

Training and Assessment

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

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

At least once every four years beginning with the 2015/16 school year, Fitchburg Public Schools will administer a Department of Elementary and Secondary-developed student survey to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in our schools. Additionally, the school or district will annually report bullying incident data to the Department.

Publication and Notice

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

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

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

The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be posted on the Fitchburg Public Schools website.

REFERENCES: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan
SOURCE: MASC August 2013
LEGAL REFS.: Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended
Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO Commission
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
603 CMR 26.00, MGL 71:37O, MGL 265:43, 43A, MGL 268:13B, MGL 269:14A

Anti-Hazing Policy

Hazing is a violation of the Massachusetts Anti-Hazing law. (See full text of the statute in the Appendix.) Hazing is defined as any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization (such as a club or sports team) that endangers the physical or mental health of any person. Such conduct includes whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to affect the physical health or safety of any person or subject them to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

Consent of the person being subjected to the conduct is not a defense to a charge of hazing. Any student determined by the Principal to have engaged in hazing activity will be subject to disciplinary action. Any student who is present at or observes what appears to them to be the activity of hazing another student should report such information to the Principal. Failure to do so may also result in disciplinary action.

Search, Seizures and Interrogation Policy

Searches by Staff

The right of inspection of students' school lockers is inherent in the authority granted school committees and administrators. This authority may be exercised as needed in the interest of safeguarding children, their own and school property.

Nevertheless, exercise of that authority by school officials places unusual demands upon their judgment so as to protect each child's constitutional rights to personal privacy and protection from coercion and to act in the best interest of all students and the schools.

Searches by school officials of students' automobiles or the student will be conducted in a way that protects the students' rights consistent with the responsibility of the school system to provide an atmosphere conducive to the educational process.

Interrogations by Police

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

1. When law enforcement officials find it necessary to question students during the school day or periods of extracurricular activities, the school Principal or his/her designee will be present when possible. An effort will be made to contact the student's parent or guardian so that the responsible individual may be notified of the situation.
2. If custody and/or arrest are involved, the Principal will request that all procedural safeguards, as prescribed by law, be observed by the law enforcement officials.

Gang Activity/Secret Societies

The goal of the School Committee is to keep District schools and students free from the threats or harmful influence of any gang. For purposes of this policy, gang is defined as any group, secret society, organization or association that advocates drug use, violence, ethnic intimidation, or illegal behavior. The Principal or his/her designee shall maintain supervision of school premises to deter intimidation of students and confrontations between members of different gangs. Fraternities, sororities and/or secret societies shall not receive District or building recognition in any manner.

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

The Superintendent shall provide in-service training to help staff members identify gangs and gang symbols, recognize early manifestations of disruptive activities, and respond appropriately.

Staff members shall be informed about conflict management techniques and alerted to intervention measures and community resources that may help students.

Symbols

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

Prevention Education

The School Committee realizes that students may become involved in gangs without understanding the consequences of such membership. Early intervention is a key component of efforts to break the cycle of such memberships. Therefore, gang violence prevention information shall be made available in the elementary, middle, and high schools as appropriate. A student may be disciplined for failure to comply with the provisions of this policy.

Vandalism

The School Committee recognizes that acts of vandalism committed against public and private property are costly and require positive action through educational programs. Consequently, the Committee will support various programs aimed at reducing the amount of vandalism. In addition, students who engage in any act of vandalism in connection with a school-related activity, whether on or off school grounds, will be subject to discipline as set forth in the student handbook.

Every citizen of the town, staff members, students, and members of the police department are urged by the School Committee to cooperate in reporting any incidents of vandalism to property under control of the school department, and providing the name(s) of the person or persons believed to be responsible. Each employee will report to the Principal of the school every incident of vandalism known to him/her and, if known, the names of those responsible.

The Superintendent or his/her designee, is authorized to sign a criminal complaint and to press the charges against perpetrators of vandalism against school property, and is further authorized to delegate, as he/she sees fit, authority to sign such complaints and to press charges.

Parents and students will be made aware of the legal implications involved. Reimbursement will be sought for all or part of any damages.

Relations with the Police Authorities - Policy 1401 approved (June 18, 2018)

Cooperation with law enforcement agencies is essential for the protection of students, for maintaining a safe environment in the District schools, and for safeguarding all school property. For this purpose, the School Committee shall enter into a "Memorandum of Understanding" on an annual basis.

Relationships between the schools and officials of law enforcement agencies in investigative matters concerning pupils will take into consideration the respective roles of the schools and law enforcement agencies in assisting and protecting the interests of the community, and ensuring the rights of all concerned.

The School Committee also recognizes the potential enrichment that law enforcement agencies can make in the educational program. In that vein, the School Committee supports the use of community resource officers.

Efforts should be made to develop and maintain a healthy attitude toward law enforcement agencies and personnel to promote better understanding and communication.

STUDENT CONDUCT & DISCIPLINE

Student Discipline SC Policy #5402 approved 8/19/2014

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

The implementation of the general rules of conduct is the responsibility of the Principal and the professional staff of the building. In order to do this, each school staff in the District shall develop specific rules not inconsistent with the law nor in conflict with School Committee policy. These building rules shall be an extension of the District policies by being more specific as they relate to the individual schools. Any such rules or codes shall be approved by the Superintendent or a designated district official and will be made available to students and their parents/guardians in a manner consistent with this Policy.

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

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

General Principles

The goal of student discipline is to teach students to behave in ways that contribute to academic achievement and school success, and to support a school environment where students and staff are responsible and respectful. When disciplinary action is necessary, it shall be administered

with fairness and shall relate to the individual needs and the individual circumstances. Successful school discipline is guided by the following principles:

- Effective and engaging instruction and classroom management are the foundation of effective discipline.
- School discipline is best accomplished by preventing misbehavior before it occurs, and using effective interventions after it occurs.
- School safety and academic success are formed and strengthened when all school staff and personnel build positive relationships with students.
- School staff should promote high standards of behavior by teaching, modeling, and monitoring behavior, and by fairly and consistently correcting misbehavior as necessary.
- School discipline that is paired with meaningful instruction and guidance offers students an opportunity to learn from their mistakes and contribute to the school community, and is more likely to result in getting the student re-engaged in learning.
- Effective school discipline maximizes the amount of time students spend learning and minimizes the amount of time students are removed from their classrooms due to misbehavior.
- If a situation should arise in which there is no applicable written policy or rule, School staff shall be expected to exercise reasonable and professional judgment.

Strategies In Using Interventions

Teachers and administrators should consider utilizing different types of strategies, or multiple strategies simultaneously, to deal with misbehavior, especially for 2nd or 3rd instances of the same misbehavior.

Reasonable Consequences

Students violating any of the policies on student conduct will be subject to disciplinary action. The degree, frequency, and circumstances surrounding each incident shall determine the method used in enforcing these policies. In all instances, school discipline should be reasonable, timely, fair, age-appropriate, and should match the severity of the student's misbehavior.

School staff will make reasonable efforts to correct student misbehavior through school-based resources at the lowest possible level, and to support students in learning the skills necessary to enhance a positive school environment and avoid misbehavior. Most of the situations which require disciplinary action can be resolved within the confines of the classroom or as they occur by reasonable but firm reprimand, and/or by teacher conferences with the student and/or parents or guardians.

Use Of Out-of-School Suspensions Should Be Minimized

All students have a right to a high quality education. Punitive measures that result in the loss of valuable instructional time should be reserved for infractions that cannot be appropriately addressed through other interventions and disciplinary responses.

Relevant Factors In Making Discipline Decisions

When choosing consequences for students' misbehavior, teachers, administrators, and staff must consider the following factors:

- Age, health, and disability or special education status of the student;
- Student's academic program;
- Student's prior conduct and record of behavior;
- Student's willingness to repair the harm and accept responsibility
- Seriousness of the offense and the degree of harm caused; and
- Impact of the incident on the overall school community.

Suspension

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

Notice of Suspension

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

Emergency Removal

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Superintendent’s Hearing

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

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

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

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

The Superintendent shall conduct a hearing to determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense of which the student is accused, and if so, what the consequence shall be.

The Superintendent shall arrange for an audio recording of the hearing, a copy of which shall be provided to the student or parent upon request. The Superintendent shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made of the hearing and a copy will be provided to the student and parent upon request. The student shall have all the rights afforded the student at the Principal's hearing for long-term suspension.

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

Expulsion

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

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

Academic Progress

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

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

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

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

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

Reporting

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

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

Non-Discrimination

School staff responsible for implementing this Policy shall do so without discrimination based on ethnicity, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, or disability.

SOURCE: MASC
LEGAL REF: M.G.L. 71:37H; 71:37H ½; 71:37H3/4; 76:17; 603 CMR 53.00
Model School Discipline Policy, Advancement Project Inc., Washington DC, 2012
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Advisory Opinion on Student Discipline, January 27, 1994

Discipline Policy for Students with Disabilities - Policy 5403 (August 19, 2014)

Students with disabilities, as defined by federal and state law and regulations, shall be subject to the provisions of the student handbook except as otherwise provided by this policy or by the student's IEP or 504 Plan. The IDEA and M.G.L. c.71B requires that additional provisions be made for students who have been found by an evaluation TEAM to have special needs and whose individualized program is described in an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP).

Students Identified as Having Special Needs

The IDEA and M.G.L. c. 71B allow school personnel to move a student with disabilities to an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) for up to 45 school days, if that student is in possession of a dangerous weapon at school or a school function or on school property, is in possession or uses a controlled substance or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school or a school function or on school property, or inflicts serious bodily injury on a person, including him/herself. The appropriate IAES shall be determined by the IEP TEAM.

The IDEA and M.G.L. c. 71B also allows school personnel the option of asking a hearing officer or a court to move children with disabilities to an IAES for up to 45 school days, if they are substantially likely to injure themselves or others in their current placement.

When a special needs student has been suspended for more than ten (10) consecutive or cumulative days in a school year, such that a substantial change in placement is occurring or will occur, the IEP TEAM will meet to conduct a manifestation determination. Relevant members of the TEAM meet for the manifestation determination, and they answer two questions, after reviewing relevant documents and the misconduct of the student:

1. Is the misconduct the direct result of the District's/school's failure to implement the student's IEP?
2. Is the misconduct caused by, or does it have a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability/disabilities?

A summary of the manifestation determination review will be written and a copy provided to the Parent(s)/guardian(s) as soon as possible after the review, but no later than five (5) school days after the review.

If the TEAM finds that the misconduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, then the student may be disciplined according to the discipline policy in the student handbook. The student will receive educational services during this period of suspension or exclusion. If the TEAM finds that the misconduct was a manifestation of the student's disability, then the school may still be able to implement an IAES (see above). If the IAES is not possible, then the student will remain in his/her current placement, and the TEAM will arrange for a functional behavioral assessment (if one has not been conducted on the student) and the development or modification of a behavior intervention plan.

The Principal (or designee) will notify the Special Education Office of the suspendable offenses of a special needs student and a record will be kept of such notices.

If a parent/guardian disagrees with the result of a manifestation determination hearing, or if school personnel are concerned that the student's placement may result in injury to others, they may request a hearing with a Bureau of Special Education Appeals hearing officer.

Students Identified As Having a Disability and Provided with a Section 504 Plan

A student on a Section 504 plan may be disciplined like any other non-disabled student. However, if the student is going to be suspended for ten (10) or more consecutive days, expelled or suspended for more than ten (10) cumulative days (and there is a change in placement as a result), then a manifestation determination review shall be conducted. The student's 504 Team shall convene, and answer two questions, after reviewing relevant documents and the misconduct of the student:

1. Is the misconduct the direct result of the District's/school's failure to implement the student's 504 Plan?
2. Is the misconduct caused by, or does it have a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability/disabilities?

A summary of the manifestation determination review will be written and a copy provided to the Parent(s)/guardian(s) as soon as possible after the review, but no later than five (5) school days after the review.

If the TEAM finds that the misconduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, then the student may be disciplined according to the discipline policy in this handbook. Upon returning from his/her suspension/expulsion, the TEAM will arrange for a functional behavioral assessment (if one has not been conducted on the student) and the development or modification of a behavior intervention plan.

The Principal (or designee) will notify the Student Support Services Office of the suspendable offenses of Section 504 students and a record will be kept of such notices.

If a parent/guardian disagrees with the result of a manifestation determination hearing, or if school personnel are concerned that the student's placement may result in injury to others, they may request a hearing with a Bureau of Special Education Appeals hearing officer.

Students Not Yet Determined to be Eligible for Special Education or Accommodations under Section 504

The law applies to general education students if the school system had knowledge prior to the misconduct that the student was disabled. Under the law, a school district is presumed to have "had knowledge" that a general education student was disabled if the student's:

- Parent(s)/guardian(s) has "expressed concern in writing" to the school distinct that the student is in need of special education and related services;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) has requested a special education evaluation of the child; or
- District staff have "expressed concern" directly to the special education direction or other supervisory personnel specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the student.

If there was no knowledge, the parent(s)/guardian(s) may request an expedited evaluation. During this period, the student may be suspended or expelled under normal School Committee policy. Students determined to have a disability must receive appropriate educational services.

If a parent/guardian disagrees with the result of a manifestation determination hearing, or if school personnel are concerned that the student's placement may result in injury to others, they may request a hearing with a Bureau of Special Education Appeals hearing officer.

Student Conduct - Policy 5401 approved (August 19, 2014)

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

The School Committee shall approve and the Superintendent shall publish the District's policies and rules pertaining to the conduct of students. These policies and rules shall apply to any student who is on school property, who is in attendance at school or at any school sponsored activity, or whose conduct at any time or any place interferes with or obstructs the mission or operations of the school district or the safety or the welfare of students or employees.

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

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

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

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

SOURCE: MASC
LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:37H; 71:37H1/2; 71:37H3/4; 71:37L; 76:16; 76:17; 603 CMR 53.00

Suspension or Expulsion for Weapons, Controlled Substances, Assaults on School Personnel, Felony Charges or Convictions

M.G.L. c. 37H and 37H1/2 provide that students may be subject to expulsion by the Principal for any of the following actions:

- Found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon or a controlled substance.
- Assault of a teacher, administrator or other school staff member on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events including athletic games.
- Conviction of a felony or adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony delinquency if the principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

Any student charged with violation of above provisions shall be notified in writing of the charges and of his/her due process rights, including the right to appeal. When a student is expelled under these sections, no school or school district within the commonwealth shall be required to admit such student.

Students may also be subject to suspension or other disciplinary measures for violation of the other rules and regulations included in this handbook.

School-based Rules

McKay Elementary School's students engage in the democratic process of creating a school-wide constitution. The constitution delineates the expected behaviors of responsible school citizens and the rules that all students are to follow in our school. Although the rules in the constitution may vary from year to year, its premises stem from the following beliefs:

- Students' conduct will be conducive to a positive, respectful and constructive learning environment.
- Students will put forth their best effort to do their best work.
- Each student will be considerate of the rights of the other members of the school community.
- Each student will show respect for school personnel, school property and the personal property of others.

In addition, students are expected to:

- Abstain from the use of obscene, abusive or improper language.
- Refrain from threatening, creating, or carrying out any action that is potentially harmful to others or themselves.
- Report as scheduled to class and activities.
- Secure permission from the teacher or adult in charge prior to leaving the classroom.
- Stay in school or school grounds as scheduled and required.
- Refrain from bringing to school any objects or substances that are inappropriate to a school setting.

Any violation of these standards will result in firm corrective or disciplinary action that can include a combination of academic penalties, mediation, loss of privileges, detentions, parent involvement, suspension and even expulsion from school. Any act, not herein specified, which is unfavorable to the best interests of the school and its community may result in disciplinary

action including suspension. The discipline policy in this handbook will be followed and parents will be notified by teachers and/or administrators.

Disciplinary Responses

Students violating any of the policies on student conduct will be subject to disciplinary action. The degree, frequency, and circumstances surrounding each incident shall determine the method used in enforcing these policies. In all instances, school discipline should be reasonable, timely, fair, age-appropriate, and should match the severity of the student's misbehavior.

School staff will make reasonable efforts to correct student misbehavior through school-based resources at the lowest possible level, and to support students in learning the skills necessary to enhance a positive school environment and avoid misbehavior. Most of the situations which require disciplinary action can be resolved within the confines of the classroom or as they occur by reasonable but firm reprimand, and/or by teacher conferences with the student and/or parents or guardians.

*Corporal punishment is prohibited by statute in all public schools of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Procedures for Suspensions and Expulsions

A "suspension" is when a student has *temporarily* lost the right to go to school. Suspensions can be either short or long term or in or out-of-school. An "expulsion" is a *permanent* exclusion from school.

When a student is to be suspended, a phone call will be made to the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) informing him/her that the student is suspended and that he/she is going to be sent home. If the administration is unable to reach the parent(s) or legal guardian(s), the student will remain in the building until regular dismissal time.

<u>Short-term Suspension (10 days or less)</u>
Students who are subject to short-term suspension will be provided with an informal hearing consisting of the following:

- oral or written notice of the charges against him;
- an explanation of the evidence; and
- the opportunity to present his side of the story to an impartial decision-maker (such as a school administrator).

A letter will be mailed/delivered to the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) on or before the next school day that includes the reasons for suspension and the day(s) of the suspension.

<u>Long-Term Suspension (more than 10 days) or Expulsion</u>
Students who are subject to long-term suspension or expulsion will be provided with a more formal hearing. (If the principal believes that the student is a threat to school property, school employees, or other students, a student may be temporarily suspended before the formal hearing.)

Before the hearing the student and his/her parent or guardian will be provided with:

- written notice of charges (the rule or law that the school believes that the student violated and a description of the nature of the evidence and supporting the allegation(s) against the student);
- written notice of the hearing (stating the time, date, and place of the hearing)

The student and his/her parent or guardian will also be notified of the rights they have at the hearing, which include:

- the right to representation by a lawyer or advocate during the hearing;
- the right to bring witnesses and evidence (the student can have witnesses attend or bring evidence to prove the student's case);
- access to the school's evidence against the student (the student can look at the school's evidence against him/her and question the school's witnesses; in some cases, the need to protect an individual may outweigh a student's right to cross-examine a witness, for example when the witness is another student);
- an impartial decision maker (if the principal is a witness against the student, another person can substitute for the principal);
- the right to a record of the hearing (tape recorded or recorded in some other way).

Following the hearing, the student and his/her parent(s) or legal guardian(s) will receive a written notice of suspension or expulsion from the principal explaining why the decision was made and indicating the length of the suspension.

A student has the right to appeal the decision of the principal to the superintendent. The student has ten days to notify the superintendent in writing that he or she wants to appeal. The superintendent will hold another hearing about the matter. The student has the same rights at the superintendent's hearing as he or she did at the principal's hearing. An appeal to the superintendent does not stay the exclusion of the student from school.

Please consult your Principal regarding implementation on the new process and regulation about Ch. 222

APPENDIX

M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 37H

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 37H ½

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 reasons for such suspension prior to such suspension taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such suspension; provided, however, that such suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

The student shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent in writing of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the suspension. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent 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 such student.

Massachusetts Anti-Hazing Law M. G. L. c. 269, sections 17-19

Section 17. Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing, as defined herein, shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or both such fine and imprisonment.

The term “hazing” as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical 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.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

Section 18. Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars.

Section 19. Each institution of secondary education and each public and private institution of post-secondary education shall issue to every student group, student team or student organization which is part of such institution or is recognized by the institution or permitted by the institution to use its name or facilities or is known by the institution to exist as an unaffiliated student group, student team or student organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen; provided, however, that an institution’s compliance with this section’s requirements that an institution issue copies of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations shall not constitute evidence of the institution’s recognition or endorsement of said unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations.

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

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

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post-secondary education shall file, at least annually, a report with the board of higher education and in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education, certifying that such institution has complied with its responsibility to inform student groups, teams or organizations and to notify each full time student enrolled by it of the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen and also certifying that said institution has adopted a disciplinary policy with regard to the organizers and participants of hazing, and that such policy has been set forth with appropriate emphasis in the student handbook or similar means of communicating the institution’s policies to its students. The board of higher education and, in the case of secondary institutions, 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.

FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLAN
M. G.L. c. 71 §37O

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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IV. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES……

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Fitchburg Public Schools is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyber-bullying, where all school community members treat one another with respect and appreciate the rich diversity in our schools. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process.

The Fitchburg Public Schools will take specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in our school community. We will provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to identify, prevent, respond to and/or report bullying, harassment or teasing. We will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying or cyber-bullying, or retaliation towards any member of the school community who reports such actions. We will not tolerate this behavior in our school buildings, on school grounds, or within any school-related activities. We will promptly investigate all reports and complaints of bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation. We will take prompt action to end inappropriate behavior and restore the sense of safety so necessary for the learning process. We will support this commitment in all aspects of school life, including curricula, instructional programs, staff professional development, extra and co-curricular activities and programs, field trips, and through parental/guardian outreach.

The Fitchburg Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is a comprehensive approach to addressing these issues. We are committed to working with students, families, staff, law enforcement and other community agencies, and the community at large to prevent issues of violence. We have developed this Plan in consultation with these varied stakeholders. While each school's Principal and the building Administration team, is responsible for oversight and implementation of many aspects of this

Plan, it is the responsibility of each member of the school community to insure that bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation are addressed through preventative education and fair and just responses.

I. LEADERSHIP

A. Public involvement in developing the Plan.

As required by M.G.L. c.71, §370, the Fitchburg Public Schools bullying and prevention and Intervention Plan (the "Plan") has been and will continue to be developed and reviewed in consultation with all interested constituencies, including representatives from the following groups:

- teachers (from primary and secondary education levels),
- school staff (elementary, middle and high school level adjustment counselors)
- professional support personnel (related service providers and paraprofessionals),
- school volunteers (after school programs),
- administrators (principals, assistant principals, nursing/health leadership, human resources administrator),
- community representatives (school committee member/s, church/religious leaders, LUK, Inc., local community and college/universities),
- local law enforcement agencies (school resource officer),
- students (representation from GLBTQ,NHS, student rep. Or any student that would like to participate.)
- parents, and guardians (from elementary, middle and high school levels).

Representatives of these constituencies have and will continue to be involved by meeting as an Bullying Prevention and Intervention Advisory Committee (the "Committee") to review, shape, and inform the Plan. In addition, representatives of these constituencies will be involved in public meetings regarding the Plan as well as on-going task force meetings. Finally, the Health Advisory Council/Wellness and McKinney-Vento Homelessness Committees will be instrumental with planning and implementation during quarterly meetings held each school year to be coordinated by nurse/health leader.

B. Assessing needs and resources.

FPS school leaders, with input from families and school staff, will: review and assess the adequacy of programs, policies and procedures; review and assess data on bullying and behavioral incidents; and review and assess resources including curricula, training programs and behavioral health services. This information will be used to identify patterns of behaviors and areas of concern, and will inform decision-making for prevention strategies including, but not limited to, adult supervision, professional development, age-appropriate curricula, and in-school support services.

FPS will use the following methods to conduct this ongoing needs and resources assessment.

- The Committee has and will continue to review current policies and procedures including, the Harassment Policy, the Acceptable Use Policy and the current disciplinary procedures in place at each school and make recommendations for revision or additional policies to the FPS School Committee's Policy Subcommittee as needed.
- At the beginning of each school year, Schools will review the previous years bullying data (State level data reports, internal documentation and reporting apps to establish baseline data on bullying/behavioral incidents to establish new practices and training that may be needed.
- Ongoing review of student discipline by the schools student support teams (STAT, START, ILT) to determine and mitigate bullying.

Data will be analyzed by each school administrator and final summaries will be presented to the Superintendent, School Committee, and community each year as part of the annual budget and school improvement presentation.

B. Planning and oversight.

In the Fitchburg Public Schools, the following parties will be responsible for the following aspects of the Plan:

1) School based Administration will continue to receive and will conduct the initial investigation of the bullying/behavioral incident reports, coordinate services with school resource officers, local law enforcement, or other agencies as applicable.

2) Data collection, reporting systems (apps) and interpretation will continue related to bullying/cyber-bullying reporting and follow-up intervention. The Principal and/or his/her designees, including but not limited to school-based Assistant. Principals, Student Program Support Admin. (SPSA), ILT school teams and Director of Pupil Services and Director of Nursing . Prevention and intervention plan development and implementation, based on alignment with this data, will be on-going via school-based programming pertaining to improving school climate, teaching staff and students about aspects of the law and the district Plan, and providing educational experiences/curriculum that address skill-building in this area.

3) Recording and tracking bullying and cyber-bullying incidents will be through established behavior incident reporting activities for which building administration teams are responsible and properly recorded within the student data management system.

4) Ongoing professional development will be through staff training from site-based trainers, legal experts and specialty presenters with contemporary information annually, in areas as noted in the professional development plan section of the Plan. The Assistant Superintendent and/or the Director of Pupil Services will coordinate these activities.

5) Yearly, the Director of Pupil Services and/or his/her designee will

   - Use existing data (as cited above) to assess the behavioral health needs of FPS students at the elementary, middle and high school levels. This information will be used to identify patterns of behaviors and areas of concern, and will inform decision-making for planning purposes. Individual student support services recommendations will be a function of the existing Student Teacher Assistance Response Teams (START) and fall under the Tiered System of support. At each school, a Guidance Counselor, School Adjustment Counselor, Clinical Interventionist and/or BCBA will be available to assist administration and staff in interviewing and developing safety plans as a result of the team recommendations.

   - Assess Guidance Counselors, School Adjustment Counselors and Clinical Interventionists schedules for frequency and duration of time spent on bullying related issues and resulting impact on costs associated with behavioral health assessments at the school level for following year(s). This analysis will inform staffing and professional development decisions so as to support effectively addressing student needs.

6) Choosing and implementing curricula: The FPS district will align the existing prevention programs and specialized curriculum with additional prevention, skills-based curriculum as noted further in this Plan. The Assistant Superintendent will facilitate and coordinate curriculum alignment and review committees as needed.

7) New and revised policies, specifically for bullying and cyber-bullying prevention and internet safety, have been created and will continue to be reviewed in accordance with Fitchburg School Committee procedures. These policies will be disseminated (with concomitant training) by each school's Principal and by the Superintendent. They will also be available on the District website.

8) Each school's student/parent/guardian handbook and FPS staff handbook will include a summary of the law (Appendix A and B) and other information as required. All such handbooks will be reviewed and updated annually by a building administrator, the Director of Human Resources, Director of Pupil Services and the Director of Nursing.

9) School Administrator's will offer informative educational sessions for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula, the plan and any social competency curricula used by the schools. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the PTO, PTA, School Councils, Special Education Parent Advisory Council and during Open House Events. These programs will be sponsored by and/or presented by the school administration and his/her designee. Parent / family engagement will be enhanced through recruitment in committees via school newsletters, district website, postings, PTO and PAC meetings/trainings. Parent participants on the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Planning Team and building-based parent liaisons will disseminate information through school-based venues.

10) Each year or at least bi-annually, the Assistant Superintendent, Director of Pupil Services and the District's legal counsel will review and update the Plan. This review and any updates will be shared with the entire staff, student body and their parents through revised student and staff handbooks and their dissemination during the opening days of school; via the District web-site; and through faculty meetings during the opening days of the school year. Additionally, quarterly meetings throughout the school year will be conducted by the district Nurse Administrator, or Superintendent's designee, to include reconvening the Bullying Prevention Advisory Council, for the purpose of reviewing any updates, changes, or other data-driven or legal requirements and advising on the revision of this Plan.

II. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A. <u>Annual staff training on the Plan.</u>

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

- an overview of the law;
- a description of staff duties and responsibilities under the Plan;
- an overview of the steps that the principal or designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, including forms and data collection specific to FPS; and
- an overview of the bullying prevention curricula and educational programming to be offered at all grades throughout the district.

Each school and/or department will have trainers (trained by staff from the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center) from among that school's administrators and/or teaching staff who will be responsible for conducting staff training. Athletic coaches, under the supervision of the Athletic Director, must participate in such school-based training pertaining to the grade level of their coaching responsibilities. Specialized after-school program advisers will be trained by their program administrators. The Director of Human Resources will be responsible for training bus drivers, central office staff and administration and will consult with the Director of Food Services and the Director of Buildings and Maintenance for cafeteria worker and custodian training. The Director of Pupil Services and the Director of Special Education will ensure that all paraprofessionals are trained in conjunction with the staff in the schools to which they are assigned.

Staff members hired after the start of the school year will be required to participate in a web based training during the school year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years.

B. Ongoing Professional Development

Ongoing professional development will be provided for all staff including but not limited to: educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to co/extra-curricular activities and paraprofessionals. The goal of professional development is to establish a common, foundational understanding of and skills in using the tools necessary for the staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, civility, and respect for differences , so as to provide students with skills, knowledge, and strategies to identify, prevent, respond to and/or report bullying, harassment or teasing. Professional development will build the skills of staff members to identify, prevent, respond to and/or report bullying and cyber-bullying as well.

This on-going professional development will occur during District-wide professional development days and/or through school-based faculty meeting sessions. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the content of school-based and district wide professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:

(i) Developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;

(ii) Developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;

(iii) Information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;

(iv) Research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;

(v) Information on the incidence and nature of cyber-bullying; and

(vi) Internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying.

Professional development will also address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing a students Individualized Education Program (IEP), including a particular focus on students with autism or other disabilities that impacts social skills development. The Director of Pupil Services/Special education or designee will be responsible for such professional development.

Additional areas identified by FPS for professional development for all levels of staff include:

- promoting and modeling social skills development as foundational for further bullying prevention skill-building, through the use of the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA K-12), Devereux Early Childhood Assessment(DECA), RULER- Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence and Responsive Classroom program;
- using positive approaches to behavioral health including collaborative problem solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, restorative practices, school-based counseling and other pro-social and behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
- constructively managing classroom behaviors and students' developing steps to self-control;
- applying skills from the tiered system of support for social and emotional learning
- teaching students various skills including positive communication, anger management, violence prevention, and empathy for others through guidance groups, academic Health and Wellness instruction, the Responsive Classroom, RULER, DESSA, DECA and the Second Steps Violence Prevention program;

- maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students

C. Written Notice to Staff

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

III. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

A. Identifying resources.

The Fitchburg Public Schools currently provides counseling and support to students through key staff members. Students often access these key staff members through their teachers, related service providers, nurses, or administrators. FPS determines the appropriateness of services based on individual need as assessed through the Tiered System of Support intervention model.

FPS currently provides all students with curricula on pro-social skills and behavior through such programs as RULER: Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, Second Steps (Step to Respect), and Devereux Student Strengths Assessment and curriculum, which are Tier 1 interventions. RULER is a systemic approach to SEL developed at the Center for Emotional Intelligence. RULER aims to infuse the principles of emotional intelligence into the immune system of preK to 12 schools, informing how leaders lead, teachers teach, students learn, and families support students. RULER is an acronym for the five skills of emotional intelligence (recognizing, understanding, labeling, expressing, regulating). Devereux Student Strengths Assessment and curriculum is a suite of assessments and curriculum based on the CASEL standards that include self-management, responsible decision making, relationship skills and self-awareness. Second Step (Steps to Respect) teaches students to identify, refuse, and report bullying and promotes the development of friendships at school.

The Principal will designate school personnel who will identify, and/or observe, and/or interview a student and/or review his or her cumulative file and key instructional staff members who work with this student once an allegation of bullying or cyberbullying has been received.

For the student who is a target of bullying or cyberbullying::

A parent and/or guardian will be contacted to discuss the allegations and bullying process to make certain the parent has the understanding that their child will be engaging in the following possible procedures:

- Will be interviewed
- May be observed
- May be screened using appropriate tools to determine the impact of the incident, the level of distress and the skill deficit that must be addressed

If the student presents with significant areas of distress as indicated above:

- A safety plan will be developed (as outlined elsewhere in the Plan)
- A referral will be made to the Student Teacher Assistance response Team (START) to begin the Response to Intervention (RTI) process
- For students who have an identified disability requiring 504 accommodations or special education services, a Team meeting will be scheduled to discuss the impact of the incident on the student's educational programming.

For the student who is identified as having displayed the bullying or cyber-bullying behavior, they:

- Will be interviewed
- May be disciplined in accordance with the student handbook/code of conduct (and their IEP if applicable)
- May be observed

- May be screened using appropriate tools to determine the impact of the incident, the level of distress and the skill deficit that must be addressed

If a student presents with significant areas of distress as outlined above:

- A safety plan will be developed (as outlined elsewhere in the Plan)
- A referral will be made to the Student Teacher Assistance response Team and engage in the Multidisciplinary Tiered System of Support (MTSS)
- For students who have an identified disability requiring 504 accommodations or special education services, a Team meeting will be scheduled to discuss the impact of the incident on the student's educational programming.

The Committee has developed the following recommendations to consider in the implementation of the Plan:

- The Principal or his/her designee will serve as the Bullying Prevention Liaison at the elementary, middle, and high school levels to assist support staff and teachers to implement the Plan with a focus on prevention of bullying behavior. The role of the bullying prevention liaison should be filled by an individual with experience in and knowledge regarding bullying and cyber-bullying, its impact on targets, aggressors and bystanders, prevention models, and the protocol for reporting (including anonymous reporting) and response to bullying complaints.
- The Principal will develop and institute a student concern planning team for bullying in order to discuss the climate in the building in a proactive manner. As the Bullying Prevention Liaison, the Principal and/or his designee will be a member of this team. This team should meet regularly to review occurrences of bullying/cyber-bullying within the building, discuss progress with current interventions, and develop appropriate safety plans for students within the building who have become victims of bullying related incidents.

B. Counseling and other services.

FPS endeavors to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate support to its students and families. FPS employs a Bilingual Liaison and FPS Family & Community Engagement Coordinator who is available to support Spanish speaking students and families with translation, attendance at meetings, and connecting with community supports. . FPS is conscious of the need for further culturally and linguistically appropriate support for families and works to reach out to all students and families and has connected with a translating company called Loinsbridge that is able to provide translation support to any staff member.

FPS is currently linked with a number of community based organizations and Community Service Agencies (CSA), including: LUK, Inc., Community Healthlink (CHL), Wachusett Counseling Associates, Communities of Care (COC), Families and Communities Together (FCT), the Mobile Crisis Team through the Child Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI), the Cleghorn Neighborhood Center, Riverfront Counseling Associates, the Counseling and Assessment Clinic (CAC), Inc., Youth Opportunities Upheld (YOU) Inc, The Public Schools Stewards group (NewVue), the Department of Children and Families (DCF), the Montachusett Regional YMCA, and a number of other area organizations or agencies that provide students and their families with support outside of school.

Within schools, the Principals' designees are involved in the facilitation of groups, crisis intervention, development of safety plans, communication with outside service providers, law enforcement, and families, making referrals to appropriate resources, the development of behavior intervention plans, and the implementation of the Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) model. School-based administrators are involved in providing input and recommendations to students, their families, outside service providers, and law enforcement.

C. Students with disabilities.

As required by M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing. The Team will also discuss the specific accommodations, modifications, goals, and services required to meet the student's needs specific to the development and generalization of skills and include these in the student's IEP.

D. Referral to outside services

Parents/students will be provided with referrals to outside resources when needed (refer to page 8, Access to Resources and Services). Referral to outside agencies may also be recommended under (but not limited to) the following special circumstances:

- Student, parent or school personnel reports suicidal or homicidal ideation, abuse, neglect or other safety issues (for all reports of abuse and neglect, the school staff member is obligated to file a mandated report with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) which is done without parental permission);
- Student demonstrates extreme behavior, psychological issues, or medical concerns (example: active hallucinations)
- Parent contacts the school to report serious concerns about their child

Outside counseling services and arrangements are made between the parent/guardian of a student and/or by the student directly for a student aged 18 or older with the outside agency. The district does not cover the cost of these services.

IV. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

Specific bullying prevention approaches will include both developmentally appropriate student skill-building in the areas of foundational social competencies and as well as instruction using evidence-based, research-based bullying prevention curricular. The table below indicates such programs, curricular products, supporting programs and the anticipated grade levels where they will be implemented. Prior to implementing curriculum products, professional development will be provided to appropriate staff members.

GRADE	PROGRAM or CURRICULUM	BULLYING PREVENTION HIGHLIGHTS
Reingold - Prek-4 SSES - PreK-4 Crocker -PreK-4 Memorial 5-8 Longsjo 5-8	RULER - Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence	RULER is an approach to social and emotional learning (SEL) that teaches emotional intelligence to people of all ages, with the goal of creating a healthier, more equitable, innovative, and compassionate society. The RULER approach works on teaching emotions. Recognizing emotions in oneself and others, understanding the causes and consequences of emotions, labeling emotions with a nuanced vocabulary, expressing emotions in accordance with cultural names and social context and resulting emotions with helpful strategies.
All Schools K-12	DESSA-Devereux Student Strengths Assessment	Devereux Student Strengths Assessment and curriculum is a suite of assessments and curriculum based on the CASEL standards that include self-management, responsible decision making, relationship skills and self-awareness.
PreSchool	DECA- Devereux Early Childhood Assessment	Devereux Student Strengths Assessment and curriculum is a suite of assessments and curriculum based on the CASEL standards that include self-management, responsible decision making, relationship skills and self-awareness at the preschool age level.
K-GRADE 8	SECOND STEP VIOLENCE PREVENTION CURRICULUM	This curriculum helps students develop strong bonds to school, solve problems without anger, and treat others with compassion. Research-based, the SECOND STEP program includes scripted lessons, and DVDs leading to thought-provoking role plays, engrossing discussions, and positive results in the classroom. While this is not a specific bullying prevention or intervention program, it is helpful in laying a foundation.
GRADE 3/4 - 6	STEPS TO RESPECT BULLYING PREVENTION CURRICULUM	This curriculum aims to reduce bullying and improve school climate. STEPS TO RESPECT is research-based and teaches students to recognize, refuse, and report bullying, be assertive, and build friendships. A recent study found that the program led to a 31 percent decline in bullying and a 70 percent cut in destructive bystander behavior. STEPS TO RESPECT lessons can help students feel safe and supported by the adults around them so that they can build stronger bonds to school and focus on academics. The program supports staff as well, with schoolwide policies and training
McKay School (PreK-8)	RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM PROGRAM	Developing a safe classroom climate and social competencies, especially in grades K-2/3, in CARES: Cooperation, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy, and Self-control—key social skills children need to learn and practice if they are to succeed socially and academically. Opportunities for using the CARES words and living by those values arise naturally in the process of making classroom rules, learning to put these rules into action in the classroom, and practicing respectful behavior in the lunchroom and other common areas. These social competencies create a foundation for further bullying prevention skill development.
GRADE 3-12 *	Michigan Model for Health	.The Michigan Model for Health is a curriculum that involves improving or maintaining positive health behaviors and reducing health risk behaviors. The Michigan Model has merged the Social Cognitive Theory, Social Influence Theory, and Social Behavioral Theory into an adapted health belief model consisting of four factors that contribute to behavior change: knowledge, skills, self-efficacy and environmental support.

Grades 6-12	Ripple Effect	Ripple Effects for Teens (grades 6-12) is a comprehensive intervention that addresses both behavior challenges and the reasons behind them – from simple skill deficits to cultural alienation, from personal trauma to systemic injustice – with safeguards for student confidentiality built in. The 430 interlinking, personalized tutorials are engaging, culturally inclusive, learner-directed, and proven to work, especially with students who have multiple risk factors for school failure. Students can track their progress with a built-in Scorecard, and a Data Viewer makes it easy for educators to track individual and group student progress.
Grades 9-12 FHS	SEL Edgennity	This curriculum is aligned to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) competencies, Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). The instructional topics include restorative practice/justice, bullying and cyberbullying, building healthy relationships, overcoming peer pressure and anger and temper management.
ALL GRADES	MARC BULLYING and CYBER-BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAM	The Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center provides free and low-cost programs, services, research and resources to schools, families, and professionals, in the United States and beyond. Our focus is on social and emotional adjustment in children, including bullying and cyberbullying, fighting, bias and diversity, peer relationships, and screen and social media usage. FPS has two trainers in the district to train staff on the usage of the MARC program.

All bullying prevention and intervention curricula will be informed by current research, which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:

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

Teaching students about the student-related sections of the District Plan will occur through Morning Meetings (gr. K-8), All-School meetings (gr. K-8),small social skills groups and/or Advisory (high school) .

B. <u>General teaching approaches that support bullying prevention efforts.</u>

See above table and list of teaching approaches that support bullying prevention practices.

V. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING RETALIATION

A. <u>Reporting bullying or retaliation.</u>

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing. A school or district staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously. The school or district will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, an Incident Reporting Form, a voicemail box, a reporting app., and an email address.

Use of an Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report. The school or district will: 1) include a copy of the Incident Reporting Form in the beginning of the year packets for students and parents or guardians; 2) make it available in the school's main office, the counseling office, the school nurse's office, and other locations determined by the principal or designee; and 3) post it on the school's website. The Incident Reporting Form will be made available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents or guardians.

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

1. Reporting by Staff

A staff member will report immediately to the principal or designee when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to the principal or designee does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school or district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

2. Reporting by Student, Parents or Guardians, and Others

The school or district expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or designee. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. A software program such as Aspen X2, Stop It app., or its equivalent will be available for anonymously reporting at the school level. The school administration to identify school-based processes for accessing a computer or translator to facilitate reporting. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written 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 designee.

B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation.

1. Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a "safe person" for the target; and altering the aggressor's schedule and access to the target. The principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

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

2. Obligations to Notify Others

a. Notice to parents or guardians.

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

b. Notice to Another School or District.

If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

c. Notice to Law Enforcement.

At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the principal or designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

In making this determination, the principal will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school or district policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer, if any, and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.

When to involve the police:
1. If the behavior involves criminal activity, threats, or violence.
2. If the behavior involves electronic or physical stalking.

C. Investigation.

The principal or designee will promptly investigate all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.

During the investigation the principal or designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or

guardians, and others as necessary. The principal or designee (or whoever is conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Interviews may be conducted by the principal or designee, other staff members as determined by the principal or designee, and in consultation with the school counselor and/or school social worker as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the principal or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The principal or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with school or district policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the principal or designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

D. Determinations.

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

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

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

E. Responses to Bullying.

This section enumerates the schools' or district's chosen strategies for building students' skills, and other individualized interventions that the school or district may take in response to remediate or prevent further bullying and retaliation.

1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building

Upon the principal or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the school or district use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O(d)(v). Skill-building approaches that the principal or designee may consider include:

- offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the school's/districts' anti-bullying and social/emotional curricula;
- providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with guidance counselors, school adjustment counselors and/or Clinical Interventionist and other appropriate school personnel;
- implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand prosocial ways to achieve their goals;
- meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home;
- adopting behavioral and safety plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills; and
- participating in the START(Child Find) process/making a referral**.**

2. Taking Disciplinary Action

If the principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the Plan and with the school's or district's code of conduct.

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

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

3. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

The principal or designee will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others as well. One strategy that the principal or designee may use is to increase adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur.

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

VI. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

A. Parent education and resources.

Principals will offer informative educational sessions for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula, the Plan and any social competency curricula used by the schools. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the PTO, PTA, School Councils, Special Education Parent Advisory Council and during Open House Events. These programs will be sponsored by and/or presented by the school administration and/or his/her designee.

B. Notification requirements.

The Fitchburg Public Schools will inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about the anti-bullying curricula through the distribution of the Plan summary that will include information about anti-bullying curricula, the dynamics of bullying, including cyber-bullying and online safety. The schools or district will provide all parents and guardians a written notice of the District's Internet Safety Policy upon enrollment or annually in student handbooks.

The Fitchburg Public School will include the Plan summary in each school's Handbook and the staff Handbook or code of conduct.

All notices and information made available to parents or guardians will be in hard copy and electronic formats and will be available in the language(s) most prevalent amongst Fitchburg's parents or guardians. The school or district will post the plan and related information on its website. Additionally, any organization distributing their program information through the schools will receive a copy of the Bully Prevention / Intervention Plan (i.e., City of Fitchburg sponsored sports programs, etc.)

VII. 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 this Plan requires the district or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

VIII. DEFINITIONS

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 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.

IX. 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.

The school principal or designee will comply with all requirements of this Plan including reports to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) or law enforcement as necessary. FPS will obtain parental consent prior to the sharing of school records or having open communication with outside agencies unless otherwise mandated by a court of law. Copies of parental consents will be kept with the student's record and may be revoked by a parent upon the parent's written request to the Principal.

APPENDIX A: MA DESE SUMMARY FOR STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

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

These requirements will be included in the school's or district's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan ("the Plan"), which

must be finalized no later than December 31, 2010, The Plan will include the requirements of the new law, and also information about the policies and procedures that the school or school district will follow to prevent bullying and retaliation, or to respond to it when it occurs. In developing the Plan, schools and districts must consult with school and local community members, including parents and guardians.

Definitions

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

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

Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings.

Hostile environment is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the student's education.

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

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

Prohibition Against Bullying

Bullying is prohibited:

- on school grounds,
- on property immediately adjacent to school grounds,
    - at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program, whether it takes place on or off school grounds,
    - at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school,
    - through the use of technology or an electronic device that is owed, leased or used by a school district or school (for example, on a school computer or over the Internet using a school computer),
    - at any program or location that is not school-related, or through the use of personal technology or electronic devices, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the target, infringes on the rights of the target at school, or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

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

Reporting Bullying

Anyone, including a parent or guardian, student, or school staff member, can report bullying or retaliation. Reports can be made in writing or orally to the principal or another staff member, or reports may be made anonymously. *[Amend to include local information about reporting procedures and resources here, and contact information for the principal or designee who receives reports.]*

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

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

Professional Development for School and District Staff

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

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

Additional information about the school's or district's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will be made available when it is finalized.

APPENDIX B: MA DESE SUMMARY FOR STAFF HANDBOOK

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

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

These requirements will be included in the school's or district's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, which must be finalized no later than December 31, 2010. The Plan will include the requirements of the new law, and also information about the policies and procedures that the school or school district will follow to prevent bullying and retaliation, or to respond to it when it occurs. In developing the Plan, schools and districts must consult with school and local community members, including staff, and parents and guardians.

Definitions

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

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

Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings.

Hostile environment is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the student's education.

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

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

Prohibition Against Bullying

Bullying is prohibited: (i) on school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is owned, leased, or used by a school district or school and (ii) at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the target, infringes on the rights of the target at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Nothing contained herein shall require schools to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

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

Responsibility of Staff to Report Bullying

A member of a school staff is required to report immediately any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the principal or to the school official identified in the Plan as responsible for receiving such reports, or both. . *[Amend to include local information about reporting procedures and resources here, and contact information for the principal or designee who receives reports.]*

Staff includes, but is not limited to, an educator, administrator, counselor, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional.

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

Professional Development

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

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

Additional information about the school's or district's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will be made available when it is finalized.

APPENDIX C: ASSESSING FOR A POWER IMBALANCE AND REPETITION

Assessing for a Power Imbalance & Repetition

The new law in Massachusetts specifies that faculty and staff must be trained in the role of power imbalances and repetition in the incidence of bullying and cyber bullying. Those who investigate alleged bullying and cyber bullying problems need to assess for these. This document is intended to assist investigators in that process.

Elements that should be assessed when considering the presence of a power imbalance between two students:

Different levels of popularity or social success between the students
Students who differ in their personal self-confidence, especially around peers
Students who differ in their athletic, academic, or other achievements
Students who belong to a group that is frequently targeted and is generally low-power (e.g., GLBT students; special education students; ELLs; etc.)
Students who differ in the degree to which adults like and admire them
(Sometimes) Students who differ markedly in personal appearance
(Sometimes) Students who differ markedly in physical size
Online behaviors that consistently target one student

Assessing for repetition:

Before this incident, what was your relationship to this “bully”?
Have you had any electronic contact online or through texting?
Any contact (electronic or in person) with his/her friends, teammates, etc.?
Do your families socialize together outside of school?
Do you see him/her in any extracurricular activities or places?
Have you had problems in the past with any of his friends?

Have you initiated any contact with him/her before these incidents?
Have you ever been in a fight with him/her?

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APPENDIX D: 7 ACTION STEPS

7 Action Steps

These actions could be taken *regardless* of the disruption to the school environment (or lack of it) caused by an incidence of bullying or cyber-bullying:

1. ***Have an educational discussion with the bully and with -bystanders***. Ideally, this should take place in the Principal's Office. It may be important to point out that this discussion is *not* discipline; it is educational, about the dangers of bullying and the fact that everyone is now aware of the situation. If relevant, discuss future legal problems the child may incur if they continue with these behaviors. You can involve an SRO or other police officer in the discussion, and the child's parents, if possible.

2. ***Immediately inform the bullies and cyber-bystanders about the consequences for bullying or cyber bullying in school.*** If the bully or bystanders engage in any bullying or cyber bullying in school, follow through on consequences immediately.

3. ***Be sure that a target has a Safety & Comfort Plan***. This should include a Safe Person in school – someone who the child likes and can go to, and the child's teachers must be told that this child has the freedom to go see their Safe Person at any time. Initially, do not be concerned if a target appears to exploit their Safe Person as a way to avoid schoolwork. Focus instead on the child's sense of safety and comfort. Eventually, when the situation appears to be resolved, you can address a child who exploits the situation (if necessary).

4. ***Inform all relevant adults*** – teachers, coaches, counselors, and bus drivers – about the situation between the two children. Ensure that they are aware of the potential for bullying and that they keep a very sharp eye open. Have a checklist of relevant people and check off each adult as they are informed.

5. ***Have a plan for less structured areas***, such as buses and lunchroom. The target should never be left to hope that they find a safe seat. A seat should be reserved in advance near friends.

6. ***Follow up with parents, especially parents of targets***. Do not wait for them to call you; call them to let them know that the above actions are being taken. Many parents want to know what disciplinary actions are being taken against a bully and you may need to educate them about confidentiality laws. Be sure that they know you are not merely refusing to furnish information because you personally wish to protect a bully.

7. ***Consider creating a Response Team to implement all these responses***. The Response Team should consist of counselors, SROs, administrators, and teachers. The Response Team can also handle communications with parents and document that all above steps have been taken. Response Teams are valuable for tracking children who are frequently involved as either bullies or targets.

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APPENDIX E: FPS BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

Forms may be pick up at your child's school in the main office

Forms

Acknowledgment Form

Parent/Guardian must complete this form and return it to the school office.

Student Name: Liyah Ciares

School: McKay Elementary

Grade: _____

1.) Student Handbook Acknowledgment

I hereby acknowledge that I have read the handbook carefully with my child. I understand that the handbook has been prepared to ensure that each and every student in the Fitchburg Public Schools has a safe and enjoyable school experience. By signing below, I hereby acknowledge that we understand the rules and regulations set forth therein and agree to abide by them.

Student Handbooks are located on the FPS website: parents.fitchburg.k12.ma.us

I have read the student handbook carefully with child. **Yes** _x___ **No** _____

2.) User Agreement for Participation in the Fitchburg Public Schools Electronic Communications System – (Section 5 of the Student/Parent Handbook.)

I have read the FPS's District's Acceptable Use Policy and Administrative Procedures and reviewed them with my child. In consideration for the privilege of using the District's system/network, and in consideration for having access to the public networks, I, on behalf of myself and my child, hereby release the District, its operators, and institutions with which they are affiliated from any/all claims and damages of any nature arising from my child's use of, or inability to use, the system/network, including, without limitation, the type of harm or damage identified in the FPS District Acceptable Use Policy and Administrative Procedures.

I have read the FPS's District's Acceptable Use Policy. **Yes** _x____ **No** _____

3.) Consent for Google Apps for Education Account

Note: consent is only required for students under the age of 13.

(Section 5 of the Student/Parent Handbook: any questions or concerns see your child's school administration or designee)

I consent for my child to have a Google Apps for Education account. **Yes** _x____ **No** _____

I consent for my child to participate in the FPS District's system/network. **Yes** __x___ **No** _____

Parent/Guardian Name (print): Charlie Ciares_____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Student Name: _____

School: _____ Grade: _____

Notice of Use of Student Information/Media Release – FPS Policy #5503

Occasionally, students are recognized for activities, sports, honors, awards and class projects in local or school newspapers/newsletters, or on the FPS websites. Under state and federal law, FPS may release names, photographs or images, and other personal identifiable information from students' education records. See the FERPA policy in Section 6 of the Student/Parent Handbook.

I consent to the following releases*:*

To include my child's name, photo or image involving

school activities, honors & award programs. **Yes** ___x_ **No** _____

FPS websites and social media platforms. **Yes** X_____ **No** _____

Local newspapers/schools newsletters. **Yes** _____ **No** _____

Parent/Guardian Name (print): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Field Trip Permission – FPS Policy #5215

I give permission for my child to be involved in all field trips during the school year. I understand that neither the school nor the City of Fitchburg is able to assume legal responsibility for my child. All students will be supervised by responsible adults.

I understand I will be notified prior to any field trip with information explaining the event and trip details. I also understand I will have to complete an additional form updating my child's medical information. (Section 2 of the Student/Parent Handbook)

Parent/Guardian Name (print): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____