

# EASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



## **Richardson Olmsted School Student/Family Handbook 2024-2025**

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## **EASTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE 2025–2026**

Jacqueline Weisman – Chair

Lauren Loomis – Vice Chair

Kelli Pirico

Colleen Proudler

James Hamilton, III

## **EASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS**

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Lisha Cabral

Assistant Superintendent, Christine Pruitt

Director of Special Services, Craig Davidson

Director of School Business Operations, TBD

Director of School System Operations, Anthony Kopacz

Director of Human Resources, Kristina DeNapoli

Director of DEIA (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility), Carols Perez

Director of Instructional Technology, Livia Ramos

## **RICHARDSON OLMSTED SCHOOL**

**MAIN OFFICE 508-230-3227 / FAX 508-230-3244 (Nurse) 508-238-7325 (General)**

Christopher Getchell, Principal

Jodi Combs, Administrative Assistant, RO & Chris Getchell

Bryan Aries, Assistant Principal

Deena LaVallee, Special Education Coordinator

Chrissie Levine, Administrative Assistant, Student Records

Ileen Wright, Office Assistant

## **ADJUSTMENT COUNSELORS**

Jennifer Costa, Gabriella Prone, Laurie Dolan

## **SCHOOL NURSES**

Sue Male

## **SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST**

Melissa Wenz

### **Welcome!**

The policies and procedures contained in the student handbook are a great resource for students and families. The teachers and administration hope this handbook will be of assistance in making the educational experience more meaningful. The staff at Richardson Olmsted School are pROud of our school and invite you to join us in this pride. We ask you to be responsible and respectful members of our school community and to take care of our school. We also encourage you to share new ideas and ways to help our school continue to gROw, pROud and stROng!

Please note: During the course of the year, it may become necessary to make changes in the policies that appear in this handbook.

### **EPS VISION STATEMENT**

The vision of the Easton Public Schools is to empower every student and educator to excel, innovate, and thrive within a relevant and rigorous learning environment that is safe, supportive, and inclusive. Through culturally responsive instruction, deep community partnerships, and positive relationships, we strive to nurture curiosity, critical thinking, and resilience, fostering holistic growth and unity for all.

### **RICHARDSON OLMSTED MISSION STATEMENT**

To create a respectful, safe, and inclusive learning community that develops independence, academic excellence, and responsible citizenship.

### **SCHOOL HOURS**

8:25am First Bell - Students allowed into the building

8:40am Second Bell - Students must be in their classroom and be prepared to begin their day

3:00pm - Students are dismissed from school

11:35am - Early Dismissal

### **“NO SCHOOL” OR DELAYED OPENING ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Superintendent of Schools will send a message by phone, text and/or ParentSquare to all families to announce delays or cancelation of school. The following radio and television stations will carry our “no school” or delayed opening announcements:

WBZ/ Channel 4

WCVB/ Channel 5

WHDH/ Channel 7

WFXT/ Channel 25

WXBR/ 1460 AM

WRKO/ 680 AM

WROR/ 105.7 FM

WPLM/ 99.1 FM

WMJX/ 106.7 FM

Families are encouraged to use their own discretion in deciding whether to send their children to school during adverse weather conditions. Families are requested not to call the fire or police stations because this may interfere with emergency calls.

## **GENERAL POLICIES**

### **ABSENCES**

In order for a student to achieve the best possible education, regular attendance is very important. If it is necessary for a student to be absent for any reason, a student's parent or guardian must submit a note either written and sent to school upon a student's return or via email at [roattendance.k12.ma.us](mailto:roattendance.k12.ma.us).

This email/note should include the following information:

1. The student's full name
2. Date(s) and reason for absence(s)
3. Parent's or guardian's signature

If you plan to send a written note, please also call the main office on the day of the student's absence by 9:00 A.M. at 508-230-3227 and press line 1 to leave a message.

#### **Student Absences and Excuses per School Committee Policy**

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

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

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

A student's understanding of the importance of day-to-day schoolwork is an important factor in the shaping of their character. Families can help their children by not allowing them to miss school needlessly. Accordingly, families will provide a written explanation for the absence or tardiness of a child. This will be required in advance for types of absences where advance notice is possible.

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

#### **Absence Notification Policy**

(Excerpt from Easton School Committee Policy JH)

When a child is absent more than three (3) school days in a row, parents or guardians must report the illness to the school nurse. Absences of five (5) school days or longer require a doctor's note for readmission to school.

We encourage parents and guardians to keep the lines of communication open when students are out. If your child's teacher is aware of the absence (either temporary or extended), plans may be made accordingly. The teacher may set papers aside for the next day when your child returns, or books and work may be sent home through some mutual arrangement. It may also become necessary for the school to arrange for tutoring in event a student is confined to home or hospital for medical reasons for more than 14 days in a school year.

If your child is absent, an automated call is generated to alert you to the absence unless the school knows in advance your student will be absent.

### **Absences During School Vacation**

All school vacations are noted on the school calendar, which you will find in this handbook. The school calendar, which is determined by the School Committee, is published at the beginning of each school year. Each school is supplied with a copy.

The Easton School Committee requests that parents attempt to develop a positive school attendance attitude, impressing upon children the importance of attendance as paramount to success. This includes planning family vacations only during scheduled school breaks.

Teachers will not be expected to provide work in advance of a family vacation during the school year. We strongly encourage families to make vacation plans around the 180 school days each year. If a student is absent for an extended period due to family vacation, the student will receive the make-up work from the teacher upon return to school.

### **AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Easton Public Schools will make reasonable accommodations for people with ambulatory, visual, auditory impairments and other disabilities as necessary to allow access to school sponsored programs. If a student or other individual needs such assistance, please give either the principal of the school or the Central Administration sufficient prior notice so that the necessary arrangements can be made.

Richardson Olmsted School is ADA compliant with elevator access, ADA approved entrances and exits and a fully accessible playground.

### **AUTOMATIC EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATOR (AED)**

The Easton Public Schools have implemented an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) policy in accordance with guidelines from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Caritas Samaritan Medical Center and the Easton Fire Department. An AED is used to assist an individual experiencing cardiac arrest in addition to Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation, (CPR). The AED is available in AED designated schools for the faculty, staff, students and

community groups using the designated schools whenever these buildings are open to these groups, providing that there are properly trained AED providers available at the time of the cardiac arrest.

### **BICYCLES/SKATEBOARDS**

Children in grades 3-5 may ride bicycles to school. Bicycle racks are provided on both sides of our school. The law requires children through the age of twelve to wear helmets.

To ensure the safety of all children and adults, there is to be no skateboarding on school grounds. Offenders are subject to confiscation of their skateboards.

### **CAFETERIA & LUNCH PROGRAM**

Each day a period of approximately twenty-five (25) minutes is set aside for lunch. As long as the Massachusetts Free Lunch Program remains active, our school lunches will remain free for all students.. The school kitchen is a peanut-free kitchen; none of our lunches are made with any nuts. We have a cafeteria-style dining room.. At RO, lunch time follows recess times. This is the recess and lunch schedule:

Grade 3 - 11:10 - 12:10 (lunch from 11:45 - 12:10)

Grade 4 - 11:50 - 12:50 (lunch from 12:25 - 12:50)

Grade 5 - 12:35 - 1:35 (lunch from 1:05 - 1:35)

The following Code of Behavior for students has been established to ensure a cooperative, structured atmosphere which is both orderly and relaxed.

Students are expected to:

- 1) Arrive on time and with student ID's.
- 2) Conduct themselves in an orderly manner at all times;
- 3) Be in the cafeteria during their lunch period;
- 4) Be orderly in the lunch line;
- 5) Eat in the cafeteria;
- 6) Leave their tables clean and free of all litter;
- 7) Return their dishes and trays to the proper area and deposit all garbage and trash in proper receptacles;
- 8) Remain in the cafeteria in their seats until dismissed.

\* Students who fail at any time to meet these expectations will be disciplined in accordance with school regulations.

### **COMMUNICATION SYSTEM**

The Easton Public School highly encourages families to download the ParentSquare App. ParentSquare is the primary mode of communication from our schools to our families within the Easton Public Schools. ParentSquare can be used to send text messages, voice calls or

emails to families. ParentSquare also will automatically translate any message from school into a family's primary language spoken at home.

An automated voice communication system will contact parents on various occasions to inform them of upcoming events, school closings, early releases, emergencies and special notices. Email may also be used to communicate with families. Please be sure to share your primary email address with school office administrators.

### **APPROPRIATE DRESS**

Families have the right to determine how their student will dress as long as that attire complies with requirements for health and safety and does not disrupt the learning process.

Families are asked to provide clothing for the student which is compatible with existing weather conditions. If possible, clearly labeled coats, hats, gloves, boots, lunch boxes, etc. to reduce the number of items in our lost and found areas.

Families of young children should purchase clothing the child can easily put on or take off, requiring minimal assistance. Children are expected to put on their own coats, hats, boots, and mittens. They should be taught and encouraged to do the same at home.

Most of our classrooms at RO are not air conditioned. When the weather is warmer in June and in September, students should wear light clothing to school.

In the winter months, students at RO do go outside for recess when the temperature is 20 degrees or higher (with the wind chill). If there is snow on the ground, students may bring labeled snow boots and snow pants to play in the snow at recess. Students without snow pants and snow boots will play on the blacktop during the winter.

### **EARLY DISMISSAL**

A student may be dismissed during the day if a note is presented to their teacher and the office. Medical, dental, or family concerns are the usual reasons for dismissal. In order to dismiss your child at the school, you will need a copy of a valid driver's license or identification. Families are also encouraged to communicate planned dismissals with the RO Office Team using the email address: [roattendance@easton.k12.ma.us](mailto:roattendance@easton.k12.ma.us) Always include your student's first and last name, grade level and teacher name in the email.

\*Note - dismissal changes AFTER 2:00pm will likely NOT be received by the RO Attendance email or the teacher in time for dismissal. If you have a family emergency and need to dismiss your child suddenly after 2:00, please CALL the school at 508-230-3227.

## EMERGENCY DISMISSALS

Dismissal of students because of emergencies such as loss of power or weather conditions is sometimes necessary. Procedures for such dismissals will be coordinated with families at the building level by Principals. **In order to dismiss your child at the school you will need a copy of a valid driver's license or identification.**

## EMERGENCY DOCUMENTS

During the school year, it is sometimes necessary for the nurse or the Main Office to be in contact with parents during the school day. It is essential, therefore, that parents complete, in full detail, emergency documents for school. This information is only available to authorized school personnel. These documents should be updated whenever the information on them changes.

## ELECTRONIC DEVICES

(Excerpt from Easton School Committee Policy IJNDE)

### Overview

The Easton Public Schools (EPS) recognizes that technology, including use of the Internet, can be valuable in supporting student learning and enhancing instruction. EPS provides both technology devices (Chromebooks) as well an Internet Wireless Access Connection for use by students for educational purposes only.

It is the joint responsibility of both school staff and the parents/guardians of each student to inform students about their responsibilities in regards to technology and to establish expectations when using technology. The use of the EPS network is a privilege that can be revoked at the discretion of the Principal or their designee.

### Devices

Students will be provided with a Chromebook and a charger when they start school at RO. These Chromebooks are only to be used for schoolwork. **Cell phones are not allowed**, if they are seen, heard, or used during the school day, they will be confiscated and returned only to a parent or guardian. Chromebooks will be left at school over the summer vacation and returned to students at the start of school each year.

### **Apple Watches/Smart Watches**

Students who choose to bring their own electronic devices to school must keep them turned off and out of sight in classrooms, labs, the library, and other such locations unless using them for assigned educational purposes. In addition, even when using the devices in other circumstances (such as before/after school, during an athletic event, etc.) the student is responsible for avoiding use that may be disruptive to an appropriate educational environment. If the smartwatch is causing a distraction to the learner or to the learning environment, then our staff will ask the student to put the device in the backpack. If the device continues to be a distraction, and/or calls and/or messages are being sent or received, during the school day, the watch (or cell phone) will be kept in the office and a parent or guardian will be asked to retrieve the device. Please note, technology that does NOT have call/text capabilities (FitBit, etc.) are still able to be worn at school.

We would prefer that our students at RO NOT wear Apple Watches to school. If you would like your student to have one for tracking/dismissal/coming home reasons, then please remind your student to keep the Apple Watch in the backpack during the school day. Thank you.

### **Internet Access**

EPS supplies an Internet Wireless Access Connection to all students.. All Internet traffic is filtered for compliance with the Child Internet Protection Act (CIPA). All Internet traffic is logged, and any students found trying to bypass the filter or “firewall” in order to gain access to restricted/unauthorized websites or who otherwise access content not necessary or appropriate for educational purposes may not only lose the privilege of using the network, but will also be subject to discipline.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

On occasion, field trips are planned for a learning level, class or school. Permission slips must be returned to the coordinating teacher prior to going on the trip. Students going on trips are to be dressed as representatives of the Easton Public Schools. All chaperones will need to submit to a CORI check before being allowed to go on field trips. Information on CORI checks can be found in the “Important Legal Items” section. Students who have exhibited poor behavior in class or on previous field trips may not be allowed to attend.

## **FIRE DRILLS**

Quick, quiet response to directions is required during a fire drill. Directions for fire exits are posted in each room. When a fire drill signal sounds, all windows are to be closed. The first students(s) to arrive at the exit doors are requested to hold those doors to enable students to pass. Silence should be maintained by all students during the exiting of the building.

## **GET ACQUAINTED/ BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT**

Each school year parents are invited to school in September to meet with their child's teacher. This is an opportunity to get acquainted with the teacher and to discuss procedures and programs for the coming year. The dates and times of each back to school night are usually posted on the RO Calendar in early August and are also accessible on the RO Website.

## **GRADING SYSTEM**

Report cards are issued to all students in grades K-5, on or around the 60th, the 120th and the 180th day of each school year. In addition, regularly scheduled conferences are planned twice a year for grades K-5. Families will be notified well in advance as to the dates and times. Both in person and virtual parent teacher conferences are available.

Report Cards at the K-5 level are standards-based report cards. End of year learning standards are listed for each subject area and students are graded on their progress toward independent mastery of each standard. Therefore, a grade of 'M' for 'Meets standard' is not expected until the end of the school year. During the first two trimesters, grades of 'P' (Progressing toward the standard) and 'T' (on target for meeting the end of year standard) are more common.

Families need not wait for these scheduled conferences if they have any questions in regard to their child's progress. A telephone call, email or note asking to confer with the teacher is all that is necessary to request an appointment. Please contact the school first as a teacher may have a previous commitment.

Communication between the home and the school is extremely important. Minor concerns can be handled quickly and efficiently. Keep in contact with your child's teacher.

Consistent with Massachusetts regulations, 603 CMR 26.05(1), the Easton Public Schools, through its curricula and materials, encourages respect for the human and civil rights of all individuals, regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation. In accordance with district guidelines, families may request information from the building principal on available accommodations related to curriculum content.

## **HEALTH EDUCATION**

A comprehensive health education curriculum, designed to promote the health and well-being of all students, is taught in grades K-6. The curriculum covers the following topics: Nutrition; Safety; Substance Abuse; Disease Prevention; Growth/Development; and Social Competency.

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71 Section 32A, parents/guardians have the right to exempt their children from the portion of the curriculum in grade 5 that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues by sending a letter to the school principal requesting an exemption. Any student who is exempted by request of the parent/guardian may be given an alternative assignment. In addition, parents have the right to inspect and review instructional materials for these curricula. Parents/guardians may contact the school principal to schedule a time to review the materials at the school.

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework gives students the opportunity to practice skills without the pressure of time and to apply principles based upon work started in the classroom. A goal of homework is to encourage individual initiative and personal responsibility, while maintaining enthusiasm for learning. Homework also encourages students to organize their time, work independently, use good study skills and develop self-discipline.

Due to the differences in age levels and modes of instruction between the elementary and secondary schools, homework expectations will differ. Listed below are the responsibilities of teachers, students and parents with regard to homework.

### Teacher Responsibilities:

- assign homework that is meaningful and useful to individual students
- provide appropriate and timely response to all homework assignments
- monitor long-term assignments in order to avoid last minute student efforts
- inform parents of their role in supervising homework
- give clear, concise directions; allow time for student questions; consider availability of materials; provide legible worksheets when used
- ensure that students who are absent know how they may makeup homework
- avoid the assignment of homework on religious holidays, in accordance with Easton School Committee Policy: “Because many religious observations often involve family activities, students should not be expected to complete homework, study for tests, or do other school work during their absence” (IMK).

### Student Responsibilities:

- record the directions for homework
- ask questions when necessary to clarify assignment
- seek help from teachers and/or parents to complete difficult assignments successfully
- take the initiative to follow-up with teachers when work demands seem overwhelming or several long-term projects are due at the same time
- hand in on time neat, accurate, and meaningful products
- plan time for completion of long-term assignments
- secure and complete homework assigned during absence

### Parent Responsibilities:

- provide a suitable place for study

- help students develop routine home study habits
- encourage, supervise and assist but not do the actual work
- be aware of long term assignments and assist students in learning to budget their time accordingly
- notify the teacher if a student experiences extreme difficulty or routinely takes longer to complete homework than the times suggested below
- contact the teacher if he/she observes an absence of homework or if students regularly report that there is no homework

There are many other learning activities in the life of a student aside from homework. Such things include participating in school activities or athletics, pursuing cultural interests, participating in family living, and exploring personal interests. Thus teachers will consider these factors as well as the benefits of homework when planning assignments. Homework is not designed to be and should not serve as a form of discipline or punishment.

### **Grades K-5**

Because the time individuals may require to complete assignments varies, homework activities must be planned to meet each student's individual learning profile. Though it is impossible to predict the time necessary for all students to complete assignments because of different learning rates and age levels, the following time allotments are suggested for the elementary grades:

|         |                              |
|---------|------------------------------|
| Grade 1 | up to 2 hours per week       |
| Grade 2 | 1/2 hour to 2 hours per week |
| Grade 3 | 1 hour to 3 hours per week   |
| Grade 4 | 2 hours to 4 hours per week  |
| Grade 5 | 3 hours to 5 hours per week  |

Please click the links below (also in appendix) to read the homework agreements for each grade level teacher team at RO:

[Grade 3 Homework Expectations](#)

[Grade 4 Homework Expectations](#)

[Grade 5 Homework Expectations](#)

### **IDENTIFICATION CARDS**

Identification cards should be worn at all times during the school day. Identification cards are necessary for checking out books in the library, ordering cafeteria lunch, signing in late, being dismissed, etc. Replacement costs for Identification cards are: \$5.00 for the picture I.D. and \$2.00 for the lanyard.

## **INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC**

Instruments can be rented or purchased beginning in fourth grade. Parents are notified at the beginning of the school year and arrangements can be made at this time for children's instrumental music. Questions about instrument rental or access can be directed to David Chace, RO Music Teacher, at [dchace@easton.k12.ma.us](mailto:dchace@easton.k12.ma.us)

## **LAVATORIES**

Lavatories for student use are located throughout the building. RO has both single gender and universal bathrooms for students. Students are not permitted in faculty bathrooms.

## **LOST & FOUND**

Lost articles are displayed outside of each office, near the stairwell. Students should check these areas periodically. Unclaimed articles are eventually donated. To avoid having belongings end up in the lost and found, we recommend labeling items with the student name, where appropriate. Articles of personal value, such as keys and eyeglasses, etc. are held in the main office.

Students should refrain from bringing valuables to school.

## **NATIONAL RESOURCE TRUST (NRT)/SHEEP PASTURE**

Sheep Pasture is a former estate of 155 acres where the late Elise (Ames) Parker grew up. The greater part of the estate has been given to the Natural Resources Trust for the purposes of preserving open space and providing environmental education programs. Through a cooperative venture of the NRT and the school department, educational programs and activities are provided for the school children of Easton in kindergarten through grade six.

## **RO PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)**

The purpose of the RO PTA is to foster positive home-school relationships and work to enrich the school experience for all students at RO. Families are encouraged to attend the meetings, which are held on a monthly basis throughout the school year. More information about our PTA can be found on the RO Website.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Each student participates in physical education. It is important that each child is dressed appropriately for class:

1. Properly fitting sneakers (cros and sandals are prohibited)

2. Clothing which allows freedom of movement.
3. No wide belts, jewelry or similar articles.

If a child has a physical condition that may require precautions during physical activity, please notify the nurse and teacher so these may be appropriately addressed.

### **PLAYGROUND RULES**

The playground is for the use and enjoyment of everyone. Playing non-contact sports is encouraged. 'Keep Away,' tackle football, etc. is prohibited for safety reasons. Students must stay on school property. There are several playground aides supervising and working to ensure the safety of all students during recess time. See the agreements on the RO Constitution linked within this document and in the Appendix to see what behavior is expected at recess and how unexpected behavior is responded to by RO Staff.

### **PHOTOGRAPHS**

A photography company comes to the Richardson Olmsted once a year to take your child's picture. You will be notified in advance. Pictures are used for the yearbook and for student identification cards.

In addition, pictures of students and/or their school work may be used to document educational programs and/or inform the community of the wonderful things taking place at our schools. These photographs, video recordings, and/or electronic pages may be used in the form of printed reports/brochures, posting on bulletin boards, news articles/broadcast or on school web pages.

Please complete the Student's Image and School Work Permissions and Consents section of the Student's Emergency Information within X2/Aspen. This will be kept within X2/Aspen for the school year and will be updated annually.

### **RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS**

In recognition of the fact that certain holy days occur during the school year, the Easton School Committee hereby adopts the following policy to ensure fair and sensitive treatment for all students:

1. Excused absence will be allowed on major religious days to enable students to participate in their religious activities. The exercise of conscience is a personal matter and should not be a matter of public discussion.
2. Every pupil who is absent for a legitimate reason, including absence for religious reasons, is allowed to make up, within a reasonable time period, the work covered and the

assignments made during their absence.

3. Long-term reports or special projects which are due on one of the major religious days are to be submitted to the teacher at a mutually agreed upon date following the pupil's return to school, with no penalty for late filing.
4. Teachers are expected to exercise sound judgment in carrying out work when some students may be absent because of a religious holy day. Provisions should be made for students who expect to be absent to get assignments that might be necessary ahead of time and to have class work reviewed by the teacher. In no situation should a student be made uncomfortable because he or she chooses to exercise their religious convictions. Because many religious observances often involve family activities, students should not be expected to complete homework, study for tests, or do other school work during their absence.
5. Out of respect for the diversity of the community, efforts will be made to avoid scheduling major events on notable holidays.
6. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of the School Principal.

## **SCHOOL BUS REGULATIONS**

### ***General***

Students will be entitled to transportation to and from school at the expense of the public schools when such transportation conforms to applicable provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws. The Easton Public Schools will transport all students who reside beyond the mile and a half walking limit.

The School Committee and its staff share with students and their families the responsibility for student safety during transportation to and from school. To ensure the safety of all students who ride buses, it may occasionally be necessary to reassign a student's seat to the front of the bus for closer supervision or, in repeated occurrences of disruptive behavior, it may be necessary to revoke the privilege of transportation from a student who abuses this privilege. Families of children whose behavior and misconduct on school buses endangers the health, safety, and welfare of other riders will be notified that their children face the loss of transportation privileges in accordance with regulations approved by the School Committee. Students are expected to obey the following rules to ensure a safe ride to and from school:

Students are the responsibility of the parent, guardian, family member or caretaker once they get off the bus. Students in Grades 3-5 will be allowed off the bus even when an adult is not present. If you would like your student to be brought back to the school in the event that you or your designee are not at the bus stop, please provide us with a written request for them to be brought back to school. If this occurs, your student will be brought back to the school after the bus route is completed.

Students will only be transported on the bus to which they are assigned. If a student needs to be dropped off at a different bus stop on the route, a written note or email to [roattendance@easton.k12.ma.us](mailto:roattendance@easton.k12.ma.us) must be provided in advance.

### ***Boarding and Exiting the Bus***

1. Riders must be at the bus stop at the designated time. Bus drivers will not wait.
2. Instructions and directions of the driver must be followed by the riders when entering or leaving the bus.
3. Riders will enter or leave the bus at assigned bus stops only.
4. Orderly behavior and respect for private property is expected at the bus stop.

### ***Required Conduct aboard the Bus***

1. Riders are expected to obey and cooperate with the bus drivers.
2. Riders must not distract the driver with loud noise or boisterous behavior.
3. Riders must remain in seats when the bus is in motion.
4. Riders must not litter or throw objects within the bus.
5. Riders may not consume food or beverages on the bus.
6. In the event any window is open, riders will not project limbs or throw objects out of them.
7. Smoking is prohibited.
8. Riders may not damage or deface any part of the bus.

Repair of any damage that occurs will be the financial responsibility of the pupil or their parent/guardian.

### ***Bus Cameras***

There are cameras on all buses for the safety of our students and bus drivers. The video footage will only be viewed by school administration, police, and the bus company, when necessary.

## **SCHOOL COUNCIL**

The Education Reform Act of 1993 calls for the establishment of a school council at each elementary, secondary, and independent vocational school in the Commonwealth. At the elementary level each council is to include: a principal who serves as one of two co-chairs; teachers at the school; parents/guardians of students attending the school; and community members who are not parents or teachers at the school.

Councils serve in an advisory capacity to the principal to assist in: adopting educational goals for the schools; identifying the educational needs of students attending the school; reviewing the annual budget; and formulating a school improvement plan.

## **TARDINESS**

Any child who is tardy must stop at the office with a note before being admitted to class. If a student is tardy more than three (3) times without an acceptable excuse, they may receive a letter in the mail from building administration as a warning to improve timeliness. If unexcused tardies persist, then a detention from the office may be given as a consequence. Acceptable excuses are those things which are unavoidable and which are not the fault of the student. Running errands, oversleeping, missing the bus etc. are not valid excuses.

Students must be in their classrooms, ready to learn, at 8:40am each day. Bus and Vehicle Drop Off occurs between 8:20 - 8:39am each morning.

### **TESTING PROGRAM**

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), which is a mandate of the Education Reform Act of 1993, is administered on an annual basis. The purpose of this program is to evaluate curricula and student performance in the overall school educational program. Students in grades three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine and ten will be tested in various disciplines. Specific details about the testing program and the dates of administration will be sent to the families of all students being tested in advance of the test administration.

Families are urged to communicate with the school whenever questions arise relative to the testing program. Please call your child's principal and arrange an appointment with the appropriate staff members.

### **THEFT**

The school will not tolerate theft of any kind. Easton Public Schools considers theft to be: stealing (taking or appropriating another student's property without permission), dishonestly or unlawfully buying or receiving stolen property, or extortion (the act of getting money or items by using threats and intimidation.).

### **TRANSFERS**

The School Administrative Assistant of Student Records for Richardson Olmsted should be notified of a child's withdrawal from Easton Public Schools as soon as you know the approximate date you will be moving to a new location outside of Easton. Families will be asked to complete a Student Withdrawal Form with the new address and the name of the new school your child will be attending. The form should then be submitted to the Administrative Assistant of Student Records in order for all records to be released to the new school.

### **TUTORING**

Section 502.7 of the Chapter 766 Special Education regulations specifies the school system's responsibility to provide home-based tutoring. Tutoring services are available to any student who, with the written verification of their physician, will be out of school for no less than fourteen(14) days or more than sixty (60) days during the school year.

Referrals for home tutoring services may come from parents, guidance counselors, school psychologists, physicians, and teachers.

In order for a child to receive this service, Special Education Form 16 (“the blue form”) must be completed and signed by the physician in charge of the student’s medical problem. This form can be sent directly to the physician from the Special Education Office, or the parent can pick it up and take it to the doctor for signature.

Tutors are arranged through the Guidance Department at the secondary level. If the student’s current teachers are not available, the Special Education Office advertises within the system and from the substitute teachers’ list. The teachers who then become involved contact parents directly regarding hours of tutoring and subject area provided. The maximum hours are nine (9) per week, three (3) per subject, unless the doctor specifies a different number. Teachers send a written report every two (2) weeks to the Special Education Office stating the work content addressed and progress noted.

## **VISITORS**

All visitors to the building must report directly to the main office with their driver’s license or state issued identification. Once the visitor’s id is checked through our Raptor system, they will receive a pass that must be worn while in the building. Visitors who work regularly with students as volunteers or who otherwise have direct and unmonitored contact with children will need to submit to a Criminal Offender Record Information (C.O.R.I) and/or fingerprint background check before being allowed to work in the building. Information on such checks can be found in the “Important Legal Items” section.

## **HEALTH & SAFETY**

It is important for the School Nurse to have up-to-date emergency information and medical records. If there are any changes or updates to your students’ medical history, please update the health office to include::

- Recent hospitalizations
- Health problems
- Physicals
- Recent immunizations
- Allergies
- If your student has been absent for five consecutive days, please contact the school nurse and provide them with a doctor’s note.
- As with any confidential information, medical information will be disclosed only to school personnel who have a need to know such information in order to provide services to students and otherwise perform their responsibilities.

## **HEALTH INSURANCE**

- Mass Health is available for parent(s)/guardian(s) as well as children. For more information, call 1-800-841-2900. The Children's Medical Security Plan is for children up to age 19.

#### MASK GUIDANCE

- Masks are not mandated for students and staff but they may opt to wear a mask.

#### CONCUSSIONS

- The school nurse must be contacted if your student has been diagnosed with a concussion. This includes concussions sustained over the summer and other times the student was not in school.
- These documents are reviewed by the nurse and kept in the student's paper health file in the health office.
- Please provide the school nurse with MD documentation with diagnosis of concussion including physical activity restrictions and/or academic accommodations.
- All students must be cleared from previous concussions, in writing, by health care provider as per Department of Public Health (DPH) regulations.

#### CONTAGIOUS DISEASES

- Students may return to school or school sponsored events with the proper medical documentation as per state regulations for each specific communicable disease.
- Parents are responsible to notify the school nurse and provide the school with medical documentation and clearance from their Health Care Provider.
- When appropriate, the school nurse is mandated to notify the Easton Board of Health and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

#### HEAD LICE (PEDICULOSIS)

- Head lice are a common problem of school age children. Head lice are transmitted from person to person.
- The major symptom is itching, with frequent scratching of the head, back of the neck and/or behind the ears.
- The management of head lice should not disrupt the education process. Per the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Students diagnosed with live head lice do not need to be sent home early from school; they can go home at the end of the day, be treated, and return to class after appropriate treatment has begun."
- Please visit this link from the CDC for more information  
<https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/schools.html#print>.

#### LIFE THREATENING ALLERGY POLICY

- Food/Insect Sting Allergies may be life threatening.
- As a district, Easton Public Schools is committed to responding to the needs of students with life threatening allergies.
- This policy represents Easton's plans to educate and support families, students, and school personnel and establish a comprehensive and proactive program to address life-threatening allergies in the school setting.

- If your child has any food allergies, please contact your child's school nurse with documentation from a medical provider.
- Every student with a diagnosed life-threatening allergy and a prescription for epinephrine that is renewed each school year by their primary provider and a consent form filled out by parent or guardian.

## EPINEPHRINE

- The Easton Public Schools will register with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, as defined in 105 CMR 210.100, and meet the conditions governing the administration of Epinephrine for the limited purpose of permitting unlicensed, properly trained school personnel to administer Epinephrine (by auto-injector) to students diagnosed with a life-threatening allergic condition when a school nurse is not immediately available.
- After receiving Epinephrine parents will be notified, and the student will be transported by ambulance to the local hospital.

## MEDICATION

- The school department does attempt to assist the parent and family physician as much as possible with the administration of medications, without interfering with the major responsibility which is educating the students. Here are the important guidelines to follow:
  - To avoid taxing the limited health resources of the school department only long-term medication, essential to the student's ability to learn and to his/her well-being will be considered. For example, antibiotics, acne medications, daily morning doses of long acting attention medicine in most instances, can be administered at home.
  - Examples of medication which will be administered by the nurse are physician prescribed seizure controllers, insulin coverage, and afternoon boost doses of psychotropic/ADHD medications.
  - All parents who request that their children receive medications during school hours are to contact the school nurse to set up an appointment to review medication forms and delivery of the medication. If the drug is a prescribed medication, both the physician and the parent must complete and sign the school forms.
  - All medications that are to be administered by the nurse must be delivered to the nurse by the parent/guardian or their adult delegate. Absolutely no medication is to be brought to the school by the child.
  - Medication is to be in its original labeled container that will remain in the health office. Prescription medication must be labeled from the pharmacy with the name of the student, name of the drug, dosage of the drug, instructions on administration, the doctor's name and the date of the prescription.
  - Medication orders must be submitted to the Nurse each year.

## SELF-ADMINISTRATION

- Students may carry on their person and self-administer specific prescription medications provided that certain conditions, outlined by the Massachusetts Department Public of Health (105 CMR 210.006).
- The school nurse must deem that a self-administration plan is safe and appropriate.
- Examples include prescription inhalers for asthma and other respiratory diseases, enzyme supplements for cystic fibrosis, and glucose monitoring tests and insulin delivery systems used by diabetics.

## HEALTH CARE PROVIDER NOTES

- A note/order from the health care provider must be presented to the school nurse in order to:
  - Process physical education and recess excuses
  - Permit the use of crutches/ use of the elevator
  - Initiate home tutoring
  - Administer medication

## RETURN TO SCHOOL/ HEALTH CARE PROVIDER NOTE

- Your child must have no episodes of vomiting/diarrhea/fever (without fever-reducing medicine) for 24 hours prior to returning to school.
- If your child has an infectious illness, they must be on antibiotics/treatment for 24 hours before returning to school.
- A note from your child's health care provider is required upon return to school if your child is absent from school for five (5) or more consecutive school days due to any illness or injury.
- Please ask your physician to state any specific restrictions due to the illness or injury on the note.
- This will allow the school nurse to monitor and care for your child appropriately, and keep them informed of illness trends occurring within the school building.

## IMMUNIZATIONS

- Massachusetts General Law requires students to be fully immunized to enroll in school.
- Students entering school must have up-to-date immunizations.
- Students who do not have up-to-date immunizations must be excluded from school until they present their immunization record.
- Immunizations may only be waived if a student has a written Medical or Religious exemption.
- When a case of a vaccine-preventable disease emerges, susceptible individuals (including those with medical or religious exemptions) who are not vaccinated will be excluded for the appropriate time periods as outlined in state regulation, Reportable

Diseases, Surveillance and Isolation & Quarantine Requirements (105 CMR 300.000).

#### PHYSICAL EXAMS

- Massachusetts General Law requires periodic physical exams for all students.
  - New students enrolling in school
  - Grade 3 students must present a current physical exam to the school nurse.

#### SCREENINGS

- Massachusetts General Law requires routine health screenings for students.
- Parents will be notified prior to their student being screened and will have the option to opt out
- EPS screenings are completed in the following grades
  - Vision- Grades 1-5, 7, 11
  - Hearing- Grades 1-3, 7, 11
  - Height, Weight and Body Mass Index (BMI)- Grades 1,4,7,10
  - Scoliosis (postural)- Grades 5-9
- Parents/Guardians will be notified of any screening results that need follow-up by their primary care provider or a vision specialist.
- If parents/guardians need help or guidance to complete the referral please call the school nurse promptly. All completed referral results must be returned to the school nurse.

### **IMPORTANT LEGAL ITEMS**

#### **NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION**

Applicants for admission and employment, students, parents, employees, sources of referral of applicants for admission and employment, and all unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with the Easton School District are hereby notified that this institution does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status, handicap, disability or homelessness in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities. Any person having inquiries concerning the Easton School District's compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, Section 504 or Massachusetts Law Chapter 622 are directed to contact the Assistant Superintendent 48 Spooner Street, Easton, MA, 02356, or telephone (508) 205-5900. In addition any person may write to:

Office of Civil Rights  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor, 5 Post Office Square  
Boston, MA. 02109-3921

#### **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE: WHERE TO FILE A COMPLAINT.**

Any student or employee who believes that Easton Public Schools has discriminated against or harassed her/him because of her/his race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion, or sexual orientation in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its services, programs, and activities may file a complaint with **Carols Perez, the Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA)**. If the Director of DEIA is the person who is alleged to have caused the discrimination or harassment, the complaint may be filed with the Superintendent. Complaints against the Superintendent may be filed with the Chair of the School Committee. Each can be reached at Easton Public Schools, 48 Spooner Street, North Easton, MA 02356, (508)-230-3200

**Complaints of Harassment by Peers:** In the event the complaint consists of a student's allegation that another student is harassing them based upon the above-referenced classifications, the student should, in the alternative, file the complaint with the principal or their guidance counselor.

**Complaints of Discrimination based on Disability:** A person who alleges discrimination on the basis of disability relative to the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a person, who because of a handicap needs or is believed to need special instruction or related services, pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Chapter 766, and/or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, must use the procedure outlined in the Massachusetts Department of Education's Parents' Rights Brochure rather than this Grievance Procedure. A copy of the brochure is available from **Carols Perez, Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA)**, Easton Public Schools, 48 Spooner Street, North Easton, MA 02356, 508-205-5900

## STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCIES

The Easton Public Schools urges all individuals in the school community to bring any concerns or complaints of harassment or other discrimination to the attention of school personnel so that they can address the issue as appropriate. The federal agency responsible for enforcing laws prohibiting harassment for students is the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 33 Arch Street, Boston, MA 02110 t. 617-289-0111 (TTY: 1-877-521-2172) The state agencies responsible for enforcing such laws are the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 135 Santilli Highway, Everett, MA 02149 (telephone 781-338-3000) (TTY 1-800-439-0183) or the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination at One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108 (telephone 617-994-6000) (TTY 617-994-6196).

Generally, a grievant may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights:

1. within 180 calendar days of alleged discrimination or harassment, or
2. within 60 calendar days of receiving notice of Easton Public School's final disposition on a complaint filed through Easton Public Schools, or
3. within 60 calendar days of receiving a final decision by the Massachusetts Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education Appeals, or

4. instead of filing a complaint with Easton Public Schools.

### **C.O.R.I./CRIMINAL HISTORY REQUIREMENTS**

It is the policy of the Easton Public Schools to obtain all available Criminal Offender Record Information (C.O.R.I) from the criminal history systems board of prospective employee(s) or volunteer(s) of the school department including any individual who regularly provides school related transportation to children, who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children, prior to hiring the employee(s) or to accepting any person as a volunteer. The Superintendent, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent, or their certified designees may also have access to Criminal Offender Record Information for any subcontractor or laborer who performs work on school grounds, and who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children, and shall notify them of this requirement and comply with the appropriate provisions of this policy. Employees and other persons who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children may also be subject to fingerprint based state and national background checks.

CORI's can be completed at either RO or Administration @ 48 Spooner Street (new Blanche Ames - Administrative Office entrance). All CORI's are processed at Blanche Ames so the timeframe to process them is shorter than coming to RO. Also, you must be present to fill out the form and provide your driver's license or state issued ID. Email and paper copies sent in with students are not accepted. Please see the following link to the CORI form.

<https://eastonmaschools.org/human-resources/>

### **DISCIPLINE and POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL SYSTEMS**

Our schools strive to provide a climate in which mutual respect and trust are evident. Every student is expected to function as a responsible citizen who respects the rights of others. Students are expected to follow the rules and regulations of their schools as established in this handbook and at the individual building level. Teachers establish guidelines for appropriate student behavior within the classroom and school-wide standards are established by each school's faculty and principal.

The Richardson Olmsted Constitution is drafted every other school year in a collaborative effort between students and staff. The following four agreements provide common language and shared expectations across our school:

*We the people of Richardson Olmsted School will do our best to follow these agreements so that we can all gROw at RO:*

1. *Respect our school and our school community.*
2. *Be safe with our body and use kind words.*
3. *Be inclusive and accepting of others.*
4. *Be honest; accept responsibility for our actions.*

A variety of positive behavioral interventions and systems (i.e. pROud paws, Citizen of the Month, morning shout outs, school mentoring program, monthly community meetings, and the careful, conscious development of trust and respect among our school community) are the primary ways in which we shape behavior, gROw and strengthen our mental health, and promote our school agreements and values.

### **What happens when an RO Constitution Agreement is Broken?**

Please review the final two pages of this handbook to view how our staff at RO responds to behavior, including the kinds of logical consequences that are used for specific behaviors.

Students who violate the student conduct policies or otherwise engage in conduct that is disruptive to an appropriate educational environment will be subject to disciplinary action. The age of the student, the degree, frequency, and circumstances surrounding each incident will be considered in determining consequences. The teachers/staff who are witness to the behavior help determine and implement the consequence. As seen in the chart linked above, and in the Appendix, repeated concerns and more safety concerns are reported to building administrators and consequences are provided.

Many of the situations can be addressed 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.

Conduct of a repeated or serious nature may result in principal's detention and also, if appropriate, a conference which will include the parent(s) and /or guardian, student, appropriate staff and the principal. If, after the parent conference, there is no improvement in the student's behavior, she/he may be suspended. Students may also be suspended for a single incident of a serious nature using the procedures listed below. Examples include weapons, controlled substances etc. Students may also be suspended for serious incidents such as those involving weapons, controlled substances, use of force towards staff or students, bullying, harassment or hazing, vandalism, fire setting and use of tobacco products on school facilities, grounds, and buses.

If a student's behavior is deemed not to be a manifestation of a disability, then to reengage a student successfully back into a safe learning environment staff may develop Functional Behavior Analysis (FBAs) and behavioral intervention services to support the student.

### **Office Detention**

1. Principal's detention is held after school hours on the day(s) and time designated by each school principal.
2. All students will be given 24 hours notice prior to being assigned office detention.
3. Guidelines for the detention period will be developed at the building level.

### **Suspension**

Students may be suspended at the discretion of the assistant principal or the principal, subject to applicable procedural requirements as described below, which may include appeal to the Superintendent. Except in the case of the “Statutory Offenses” as described in M.G.L. ch. 71, §37H and 37H1/2 and set forth below, students may not be suspended more than 90 days in a school year, and school staff will avoid suspensions of more than 10 days until alternatives such as positive behavioral interventions and supports have been tried as appropriate. Alternatives may include the use of evidence-based strategies and programs such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive behavioral interventions and supports.

Any student who is suspended from school will be required to make up the school work as needed to make academic progress. If the student is excluded from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days the student will have an opportunity to receive education services in order to make academic progress through the school-wide education service plan.

If a student in preschool or in grades K through 3 is to be suspended, the principal will provide written notice to the superintendent and explain the reasons for imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the suspension takes effect.

Parental conference will be scheduled prior to a student's readmission to school following any suspension.

## **PROCEDURES RELATING TO SUSPENSION FOR CONDUCT OTHER THAN STATUTORY OFFENSES**

### **A. In-School Suspension For Less Than 10 Cumulative Days During A School Year**

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

1. The administrator will inform the student of the disciplinary offense charged, the basis for the charge, and provide the student an opportunity to respond. If the administrator determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the administrator will inform the student of the length of the student’s in-school suspension, which may not exceed 10 days, cumulatively or consecutively, in a school year.
2. On the same day as the in-school suspension decision, the administrator will make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding that the student committed the infraction, and the length of the in-school suspension. The administrator will also invite the parent(s) or guardian(s) to

a meeting to discuss the student's academic performance and behavior, strategies for student engagement, and possible responses to the behavior. Such a meeting will be scheduled on the day of the suspension if possible, and if not, as soon thereafter as possible. If the administrator is unable to reach the parent after making and documenting at least (2) attempts to do so, such attempts will constitute reasonable efforts for purposes of orally informing the parent of the in-school suspension.

3. The administrator will send written notice to the student and parent about the in-school suspension, including the reason and the length of the in-school suspension, and inviting the parent to a meeting with the administrator to discuss the student's academic performance and behavior, strategies for student engagement and possible response to the behavior. Such a meeting will be scheduled on the day of the suspension if possible, and if not, as soon thereafter as possible. If the administrator is unable to reach the parent after making and documenting at least (2) attempts to do so, such attempts shall constitute reasonable efforts for purposes of orally informing the parent of the in-school suspension.
4. The administrator will send written notice to the student and parent about the in-school suspension, including the reason and the length of the in-school suspension, and inviting the parent to a meeting with the principal for the purpose set forth above, if such a meeting has not already occurred. The administrator will deliver such notice on the day of the suspension by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or by other method of delivery agreed to by the administrator and the parent.

An in-school suspension of more than 10 cumulative days in a school year will be subject to the procedures for long-term suspension.

#### **B. Procedures For Short-Term, Out-Of-School Suspensions (10 Cumulative Days Or Less In A School Year)**

Except in the case of an Emergency Removal, prior to imposing a short-term out-of-school suspension (10 days or less in a school year) an administrator will provide the student and their parent oral and written notice and an opportunity to participate in an informal hearing.

1. Notice: The written notice to the student and the parent will be in English and in the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate and will include the following:

- a) the disciplinary offense;
- b) the basis for the charge;
- c) the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension;
- d) the opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the administrator concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and for the parent to attend the hearing;
- e) the date, time, and location of the hearing;

- f) the right of the student and the student's parent to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate;

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

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

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

4. Decision: The administrator will provide written notice to the student and parent of their determination and the reasons for it, and, if the student is suspended, the type and duration of suspension and the opportunity to make up assignments and such other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal. The notice of determination may be in the form of an update to the original written notice of hearing.

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

Except in the case of an Emergency Removal provided, prior to imposing a long-term suspension (more than 10 days of suspension, whether in-school or out-of-school, whether consecutive or cumulative for multiple offenses during a school year), an administrator will follow the procedures for short-term suspension plus additional procedures as follows:

1. Notice: The notice will include all of the components for a short-term suspension in Section C above, plus the following:
  - a) In advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the administrator may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not;
  - b) the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's/parent's expense;
  - c) the right to produce witnesses on their behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so;

- d) the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;
- e) the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the administrator, and a copy of the audio recording provided to the student or parent upon request; and
- f) the right to appeal administrator's decision to impose long-term suspension to the superintendent.

2. Format of Hearing: The Hearing will afford the rights set forth in the notice above. The administrator will also provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the administrator should consider in determining consequences for the student.

3. Decision: Based on the evidence, the administrator will determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to long-term suspension, what remedy or consequence will be imposed, in place of or in addition to a long-term suspension. The administrator will send the written determination to the student and parent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the school and the parent. If the administrator decides to suspend the student on a long-term basis, the written determination will:

1. Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place and the participants at the hearing;
2. Set out the key facts and conclusions reached;
3. Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school;
4. Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of removal from school (if more than 10 cumulative days);
5. Inform the student of the right to appeal the administrator's decision to the superintendent or designee. Notice of the right of appeal will be in English and the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate, and will include the following information stated in plain language:
  - a) 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

- b) the long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the superintendent decides to reverse the administrator's determination on appeal.

No long-term suspension will last more than 90 school days in a school year nor extend beyond the end of the school year in which such suspension is imposed.

#### **D. Exception For Emergency Removal**

Notwithstanding the provisions for short or long-term suspension set forth above, a student who is charged with a disciplinary offense may be removed temporarily from school if the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the administrator's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption.

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

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

- Make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student's parent of the emergency removal, the reason for the need for emergency removal, and other applicable matters;
- Provide written notice to the student and parent as provided in Section C or D above, as applicable;
- Provide the student an opportunity for a hearing with the administrator, as applicable, and the parent an opportunity to attend the hearing, before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for hearing is otherwise agreed to by the administrator, student, and parent.
- Render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day.

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

#### **E. Appeal To The Superintendent**

If a decision by an administrator, following the parent meeting, results in suspension of a student for more than 10 cumulative school days for the school year, the student may appeal the decision to the superintendent. In order to do so the student or parent must file a notice of appeal with the superintendent within five (5) calendar days with a seven (7) day

postponement option. The superintendent must hold the hearing within three (3) school days of the student's request, unless the student or parent requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days. If the appeal is not filed within this time frame, the superintendent may deny the appeal, or may allow the appeal in their discretion, for good cause.

The following apply:

- The superintendent will make a good faith effort to include the parent in the hearing. The superintendent will be presumed to have made a good faith effort if he or she has made efforts to find a day and time for the hearing that would allow the parent and superintendent to participate. The superintendent will send written notice to the parent of the date, time, and location of the hearing.
- The superintendent will conduct a hearing to determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense of which the student is accused, and if so, what the consequence will be. The superintendent will arrange for an audio recording of the hearing, a copy of which will be provided to the student or parent upon request. The superintendent will inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made of the hearing and a copy will be provided to the student and parent upon request.
- The student will have all the rights afforded the student at the administrator's hearing for long-term suspension as described in Section D above.
- The superintendent will issue a written decision within five (5) calendar days of the hearing which meets the requirements for a long-term suspension as described in Section D above. If the superintendent determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than the administrator, but will not impose a suspension greater than that imposed by the administrator's decision.

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

#### **F. STATUTORY OFFENSES – PRINCIPAL'S AUTHORITY for EXPULSION**

**Mass. Gen. Laws, Chapter 71 Section 37h (Controlled Substances, Dangerous Weapons And Assaults On Educational Personnel) states as follows:**

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

3. Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal. After said hearing, a principal may, in their discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b).
4. Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the Superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the Superintendent of his appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the Superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.
5. Any school district that suspends or expels a student under this section shall continue to provide educational services to the student during the period of suspension or expulsion under section 21 of chapter 76. If the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to the school or provide educational services to the student in an education service plan, under section 21 of chapter 76.

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

- a. The informal hearing will be in the form of a conference between the student and the principal or designee. At this conference, the student (1) shall be informed of the reason for the conference and an explanation of the evidence against them; (2) shall be given the opportunity to present their side of the story, and (3) shall be given a decision on the suspension. If the administrator deems delay of the hearing necessary to avoid danger or substantial disruption, this process may occur immediately after, rather than before, the suspension. (*Goss vs. Lopez*, 419 U.S. 565, 1975).
- b. Prior to putting a suspension into effect, the principal or designee shall make a reasonable effort to telephone and inform the student's parent or guardian of the impending suspension; this shall include attempts to contact the parents or guardian at home and at work. Parents may contact the school for additional information regarding the suspension.
- c. A letter will be mailed to the parent/guardian of the suspended student stating:
  - a) The reason for the suspension
  - b) A statement of the effective date and duration of the suspension

- c) A statement regarding whether or not the Principal will schedule a formal hearing to consider further discipline, up to and including expulsion from school in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, §37H

**Mass. Gen. Laws, Chapter 71 Section 37h1/2 (Felony Complaints And Felony Convictions) States As Follows:**

Notwithstanding the provisions of section eighty-four and sections sixteen and seventeen on 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(s)/guardian(s) within three (3) calendar days of the student's request for an appeal. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The Superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The Superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days of the hearing. Such a decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the suspension.
2. Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony delinquency, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may expel said student if such principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and reasons for such expulsion prior to such expulsion taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such expulsion; provided, however, that the expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the Superintendent. The student shall have the right to appeal the expulsion to the Superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent, in writing, of his request for an appeal no later than five (5) calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the

student and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) within three calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal; or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such a decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the expulsion. Upon expulsion of such students, no school or school district shall be required to provide educational services to such students.

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

When considering a suspension/expulsion of a student charged with/convicted of felony, the Principal will use the standards and procedures set forth in M.G.L. c.71, §37H1/2 above. In addition, prior to initiating such procedures, the Principal may meet informally with the student and/or his parents to review the charge and the applicable standards if the Principal deems appropriate.

## **DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY**

Drug and alcohol use by students poses a serious threat not only to their own well being, but also to the wellbeing of the school system. Students are strictly prohibited from the below-listed actions involving drugs and alcohol during school hours, on school property, or at any school-sponsored activity or event.

1. attempt to purchase drugs or alcohol
2. use of drugs or alcohol
3. presence under the influence of drugs or alcohol
4. possession of drugs or alcohol
5. intention or attempt to sell or distribute drugs or alcohol
6. sale or distribution of drugs or alcohol
7. possession of drug paraphernalia

In addition to alcohol and drugs, this policy applies to controlled substances, including prescription medicine, as defined in M.G.L. c. 94C (including but not limited to marijuana, cocaine, and heroin), as well as restricted drugs such as prescription or over-the-counter medications when misused, steroids, and products misused for the purpose of mind altering effects (aerosols, solvents, etc.).

### ***Drug/Alcohol Policy Administrative Procedures***

1. Drug/alcohol use or possession: Teachers and staff will report to the principal or

designee and/or nurse any direct knowledge of drug/alcohol use or suspected use by students. In the event medical treatment appears necessary, the principal or designee will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) as soon as possible and initiate emergency medical treatment when necessary.

2. In a situation that involves the school nurse, the student must cooperate with the nurse's professional requests and recommendations. A failure to do so may serve as the basis for disciplinary action.
3. Where the principal/designee has a reasonable basis for believing that a student is currently under the influence of alcohol or drugs at school or a school sponsored event, he may require the student to undergo a breathalyzer test and/or a physical examination by the nurse or other health care provider.
4. Where a student is determined to have, or reasonably suspected of, using alcohol or drugs, the principal/designee may direct the student to undergo a physical examination by a physician and/or to schedule an appointment with the school psychologist or guidance counselor (to discuss the specific incident, student rights, and possible referral to a treatment center or group therapy). In addition, the principal/designee may schedule one or more conferences, designed to address the rights and future health and welfare of the student and to achieve parental participation, to include some or all of the following:
  - a) student
  - b) parent(s)/guardian(s)
  - c) a member of the school administration (to discuss the status of the student, both academic and disciplinary)
  - d) a physician (to discuss the health aspects of drugs/alcohol use)
  - e) a representative of the police department (to discuss penalties applying to illegal drug/alcohol use or possession)
  - f) the psychologist and or guidance counselor (as deemed appropriate by the psychologist or guidance counselor)
5. Students who engage in the conduct listed in items 1 through 7 above, at school or school-sponsored events, shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from school. (See also M.G.L. c.71 §37H at page [39] providing for expulsion by the principal based upon possession of a controlled substance.) School officials, at their discretion, may consider a student's cooperation and participation in the activities described in Section 4 above as a mitigating factor in determining the disciplinary action to be imposed.
6. In addition to any disciplinary action, students involved in drug/alcohol situations will be placed on administrative probation. A student placed on administrative probation shall be forbidden to attend school sponsored activities or be on school grounds after school for any reason except for authorized makeup work or detention.

**Easton Public Schools**  
**Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy and Plan**  
**Revised May 2024**

## **Easton Public Schools Bullying Prevention Policy**

The Easton Public Schools district is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyber-bullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process. The district takes specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community. We provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to identify, prevent, report, and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

The Easton Public Schools does not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. We investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to end such behavior and restore a safe environment. We support this commitment in all respects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent or guardian involvement.

### **Intervention and Prevention Plan**

#### **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.

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.

## **DEFINITIONS**

Aggressor - a student or staff member who engages in bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation towards a student.

Bullying - (defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O) the repeated use by one or more students or staff members 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.

Cyber-bullying - 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 - (defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O) 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 - 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, paraprofessionals, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, lunch/playground aides, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff and substitutes.

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

## I. LEADERSHIP

Leadership at all levels plays a critical role in developing and implementing Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plans in the context of other whole school and community efforts to promote positive school climate. Leaders have a primary role in teaching students to be civil to one another and promoting understanding of and respect for diversity and difference. Leadership is provided at the building level by principals and assistant principals, an adjustment counselor, psychologists, nurses, and guidance counselors. Leadership is provided at the district level by the health educator, adjustment counselors, school resource officer and the assistant superintendent. This leadership is responsible for setting priorities and for staying up-to-date with current research on ways to prevent and effectively respond to bullying. It is also the responsibility of leaders to involve representatives from the greater school and local community in developing and implementing the Plan.

**A. Public involvement in developing the Plan:** The Easton Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan was developed in consultation with, but not limited to the following parties: teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents, and guardians.

**B. Assessing needs and resources:** This Plan is the district's blueprint for enhancing capacity to prevent and respond to issues of bullying within the context of other healthy school climate initiatives. As part of the planning process, school leaders, with input from families and staff, assess the adequacy of current programs; review current policies and procedures; review available data on bullying and behavioral incidents; and assess available resources including curricula, training programs, and behavioral health services. Based on these findings, the district continually revises or develops policies and procedures; establishes partnerships with community agencies, including law enforcement, and sets priorities.

**C. Planning and oversight:**

Responsibilities of the District Leader responsible for oversight will include:

- receiving reports on bullying
- collecting and analyzing building- and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes;
- creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports, and for accessing information related to targets and aggressors;
- planning for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law;
- planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors;
- choosing and implementing the curricula that the school or district will use;
- developing new or revising current policies and protocols under the Plan, including an Internet safety policy, and designating key staff to be in charge of implementation of them;

- amending student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct to, among other things, make clear that bullying of students by school staff or other students will not be tolerated;
- leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials; and
- reviewing and updating the Plan each year, or more frequently.

Responsibilities of the Principal or their designee include:

- Receive reports on student interaction incidents
- Report alleged bullying in a timely manner and make a determination of the finding
- Develop a safety plan where appropriate and communicate the results of the investigation to stakeholders
- Document and track student interaction incidents

**D. Priority Statement:**

The Easton Public Schools recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to become targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, or sensory, disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. The school or 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.

**II. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O requires all school districts to provide ongoing professional development for all staff in various areas.

- A. Annual staff training on the Plan - Annual training for all school staff on the Plan will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the principal or designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades throughout the school or district. Staff members hired after the start of the school year are required to participate in school-based training during the school year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years.
- B. Ongoing professional development - The goal of professional development is to establish a common understanding of tools necessary for staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences. Professional development will build the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to

bullying. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the content of schoolwide and district wide professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:

- developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
- research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
- information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and
- Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying

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

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

### **III. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES**

A key aspect of promoting positive school climates is ensuring that the underlying emotional needs of targets, student aggressors, families, and others are addressed. Strategies for providing supports and services necessary to meet these needs are available throughout the Easton Public Schools. In order to enhance the school's or district's capacity to prevent, intervene early, and respond effectively to bullying, available services reflect an understanding of the dynamics of bullying and provide approaches to address the needs of targets and student aggressors.

- A. Identifying Resources - The Easton Public Schools is actively using Social Emotional Learning Programs in grades PK-8. Social interventions are ongoing throughout all grades and schools.
- B. Counseling and Other Services - The Easton Public Schools have dual certified Adjustment Counselors in each building to support the emotional needs of targets, student aggressors and families. In addition, the Town of Easton has access to [Interface Referral Service](#), which is a mental health and wellness referral Helpline available **9am to 5pm on Mondays, Wednesdays**

**and Fridays and 8am to 6pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays (excluding holidays), at 888-244-6843 (toll free).** This is a free, confidential referral service for residents of Easton. Callers are matched with licensed mental health providers within 2 weeks of their call to INTERFACE. Each referral best meets the location, insurance, and specialty needs of the caller including cultural and linguistic needs.

- 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.

#### **IV. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES**

The Easton Public Schools provides age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention in each grade that is incorporated into the school's or district's curricula. The curriculum is evidence-based. Effective instruction includes classroom approaches, whole school initiatives, and focused strategies for bullying prevention and social skills development.

- A. Specific bullying prevention approaches - Bullying prevention curricula is 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 or school staff 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 cybersafety, 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.
- B. General teaching approaches that support bullying prevention efforts - The following approaches are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment. These underscore the importance of the Easton Public Schools bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:
- setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;

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

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

To support efforts to respond promptly and effectively to bullying and retaliation, the Easton Public Schools put in place policies and procedures for receiving and responding to reports of bullying or retaliation.

**A. Reporting bullying or retaliation:** 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 or to the superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, any possible 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 (See appendix A), voicemail, and email.

Use of an Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report. The school or district: 1) includes a copy of the Incident Reporting Form in the beginning of the year packets for students and parents or guardians; 2) makes 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 provides the school

community, including but not limited to 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, and the superintendent or designee is 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 must report immediately to the principal or designee, or to the superintendent or designee when the principal or the assistant principal is the alleged aggressor or to the superintendent or designee when the principal or the assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, or to the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor when he/she witnesses or become 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 Students, 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, or to the superintendent or designee when the principal or the assistant principal is the alleged aggressor. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. 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, or superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor.

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

### **1. Safety**

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal or designee takes 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 limiting access to the target. The principal or designee takes additional steps to promote safety and a review process during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The principal or designee implements 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. A developmentally appropriate student review plan is developed on an individual basis for the aggressor, the target or the bystander as needed.

**Throughout the process, the District will work to sense of safety for a target or aggressor and assess needs for additional support / safety measures. This shall include, but is not limited to:**

- Assure the parents/guardians as to the adherence to district-wide procedures for responding to reports of bullying
- Hold a meeting with the students, his/her parents/guardians, classroom teacher and principal
- Create an action plan
- Empower the victim to be responsible for reporting any further incidents
- Encourage the parents/guardians to report any somatic changes
- Recommend participation in school social group if deemed necessary
- Develop a check-in and follow up plan
- Adjust schedule where necessary
- Notify faculty/bus drivers/cafeteria workers/School Resource Officer/Substitute Teachers

## **2. Obligations to Notify Others**

- a. Notice to parents or guardians:** Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee must 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 must 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 must 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 notifies the local law enforcement agency. Notice must 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 must, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school or district policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.

- C. Investigation:** The principal or designee investigates promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, considers 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 must, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The principal or designee reminds 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, as appropriate. Given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the principal or designee maintains confidentiality during the investigative process. The principal or designee maintains a confidential written record of the investigation.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation are consistent with school or district policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the principal or designee consults with legal counsel about the investigation.

- D. Determinations:** The principal or designee makes a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is

substantiated, the principal or designee takes 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: 1) determines what remedial action is required, if any, and 2) determines 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 must 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. Notice must be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 such that a principal may not disclose information from a student record of a target or aggressor to a parent unless the information is about the parent's own child.

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

## **E. Responses to Bullying:**

### **1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building**

Upon the principal or 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/district's anti-bullying curriculum;
- providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with guidance counselors 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 plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills; and
- making a referral for evaluation.

## 2. Taking Disciplinary Action

If the principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action is 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 must be consistent with the Plan and with the school's or district's code of conduct as defined in the student handbook.

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**

Resources for families and communication with them are essential aspects of effective collaboration. Our Plan includes provisions for informing and educating

parents or guardians about the bullying prevention and intervention curricula used by the school district or school including:

- how parents and guardians can reinforce the curricula at home and support the school or district plan;
- the dynamics of bullying; and
- online safety and cyber-bullying.

Parents and guardians will be notified in writing each year about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. The school and district post the Plan and related information on their respective websites.

## **VII. PROBLEM RESOLUTION SYSTEM**

Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014 amended Section 37O of chapter 71 of the General Laws to include (g) (v): The Plan shall inform parents or guardians of the target about the Department’s problem resolution system and the process for seeking assistance or filing a claim through the problem resolution system. This information will be made available in both hard copy and electronic formats:

Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seeking assistance outside of the district may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Resolution System (PRS). That information can be found at: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/prs/>, emails can be sent to [compliance@doe.mass.edu](mailto:compliance@doe.mass.edu) or individuals can call 781-338-3000. Hard copies of this information are also available at the Superintendent’s office.

## **VIII. 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, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. 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, M.G.L. c. 71, §§41 and 42, M.G.L. c 76 § 5, or other applicable laws, or local school or district policies, or collective bargaining agreements, in response to

violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

## **POLICY PROHIBITING AND ADDRESSING HARASSMENT**

The Easton Public Schools is committed to maintaining a school environment free of harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. Consistent with our Policy Prohibiting and Addressing Bullying, Easton Public Schools specifically prohibits all conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile environment for others. However, such conduct based upon the protected classifications described above requires particular attention.

### **A. Definitions**

**Harassment** includes communications such as jokes, comments, innuendoes, notes, display of pictures or symbols, gestures, or other conduct which offends or shows disrespect to others based upon race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability, when such communication or conduct is sufficiently serious to deny or limit the ability of an individual to participate in or benefit from their educational programs or school sponsored-events.

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

**Sexual Harassment** includes not only the types of conduct listed above that is based upon gender, but can also includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

### **B. Harassment and Retaliation Prohibited**

Harassment in the school environment is unlawful and is absolutely prohibited. This includes harassment of or by administrators, certified and support personnel, students, vendors and other individuals in school or at school related events. In addition, retaliation against any individual who has filed a complaint of harassment or who cooperates in an investigation of possible harassment is unlawful and is prohibited. Persons who engage in harassment or retaliation may be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to

reprimand, suspension, termination/expulsion or other sanctions as determined by the school administration and/or school committee, subject to applicable procedural requirements.

### **C. Reporting & Investigating Incidents of Harassment**

If you believe that you may have been harassed, or if you witness or learn about the harassment of another individual, you should inform the Principal, his/her designee, or a Guidance Counselor as soon as possible. If you do not wish to discuss the issue with them, or if he/she does not address the problem in an effective manner, you should inform the Superintendent or his designee. Any allegation of harassment by the Superintendent should be addressed to the Chair of the School Committee. The Superintendent's/School Committee's office is located at 48 Spooner Street, North Easton, MA 02356. The telephone number is 508-205-5900.

The Easton Public Schools will promptly investigate every complaint of harassment. Confidentiality will be maintained in the investigative process, to the extent consistent with the school department's need to address the alleged conduct.

If the Easton Public Schools determine that harassment or retaliation has occurred, appropriate steps will be taken to end the conduct and to ensure that it is not repeated, which may range from counseling to discipline, including suspension or expulsion. The Easton Public Schools will further take steps to ensure that the targeted student is not restricted in their participation in the school department's educational programs.

In certain cases, harassment of a student may constitute child abuse under Massachusetts law. The Easton Public Schools will comply with all legal requirements governing the reporting of suspected cases of child abuse.

When an investigation has been completed, school personnel will inform the complainant of the results and file a report with the Assistant Superintendent.

Nothing in this policy is intended to restrict the Easton Public School's authority to address conduct that is inappropriate for a school setting, whether or not it meets the definition of harassment.

### **STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCIES**

The Easton Public Schools urges all individuals in the school community to bring any concerns or complaints of harassment or other discrimination to the attention of school personnel so that they can address the issue as appropriate. The federal agency responsible for enforcing laws prohibiting harassment for students is the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 5 Post Office Square, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, Boston, MA 02109 (telephone 617-289-0111) (TTY: 1-800-877-8339). The state agencies responsible for enforcing such laws are the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 135 Santilli Highway, Everett, MA 02149 (telephone 781-338-3000) (TTY

1-800-439-2370) or the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination at One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108 (telephone 617-994-6000) (TTY 617-994-6196).

## **HAZING**

No student shall engage in the activity of hazing a student while on or off school property, or at a school sponsored event regardless of the location. No organization that uses the facilities or grounds under the control of the School Committee shall engage in the activity of hazing any person while on school property.

Any student who observes what appears to them to be the activity of hazing another student or person should report such information to the Principal, including the time, date, location, names of identifiable participants and the types of behavior exhibited. Students and employees of the Easton Public Schools are obligated by law to report incidents of hazing to the police department.

Any student who is present at a hazing has the obligation to report such an incident. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action by the school against that student and could involve suspension from school for up to three days.

Any student who participates in the hazing of another student or other person may be subject to suspension from school.

In all cases relating to hazing, students will receive procedural due process.

## **TECHNOLOGY - ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

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

### **Availability**

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

Access to the system/network, including external networks, shall be made available to employees and students for instructional and administrative purposes and in accordance with administrative regulations and procedures.

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

### **Acceptable Use**

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

### **Monitored Use**

Electronic mail transmissions and other use of electronic resources by students and employees shall not be considered confidential. Network administrators may review communications to maintain integrity system-wide and ensure that users are using the system responsibly for instructional and administrative purposes. All communications including text and images may be disclosed to law enforcement officers or other third parties without prior consent of the sender or the receiver.

### **Liability**

The Easton Public Schools shall not be liable for users' inappropriate use of electronic resources or violations of copyright restrictions, users' mistakes or negligence, or costs incurred by users. The Easton Public Schools shall not be responsible for ensuring the accuracy or usability of any information found on external networks.

### **Safety Issues**

Use of the Internet has potential dangers. The following are basic safety rules pertaining to all types of Internet applications.

- Never reveal any identifying information such as last names, ages, addresses, phone numbers, parents' names, parents' employers or work addresses, or photographs.
- Use the "back" key whenever you encounter a site that you believe is inappropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable.

- Immediately tell the Principal of the building if you receive a message that you believe is inappropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable.
- Never share your password or use another person's password. Internet passwords are provided for each user's personal use only. If you suspect that someone has discovered your password, you should change it immediately and notify the Principal of the building.

## **PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT**

The Easton Public Schools adheres to the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), a federal law that affords parents and eligible students (those who have reached the age of 18) certain rights regarding the conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. An overview of these rights follows:

A. Consent to federally funded surveys concerning "protected information." Schools must obtain written consent of the parent or eligible student prior to requiring the student to participate in a survey that is funded in whole or in part by a program of the United States Department of Education (USDOE) if the survey concerns one or more of the following protected areas of Information ("protected information survey"):

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parents;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or families; or
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

B. Opt out of certain surveys and exams even if not federally funded. Families and eligible students must receive notice of any of the following activities and have the right to opt out of them.

Any protected information survey, regardless of funding.

Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening that is 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.

Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for the purposes of marketing or selling or otherwise distributing the information to others.

*Note:* Mass. Gen. Laws Chapter 71, §57 requires schools to conduct physical examinations

(of students) to "ascertain defects in sight or hearing, postural or other physical defects tending to prevent his receiving the full benefits of his school work and to ascertain physical defects of the feet which might unfavorably influence the child's health or physical efficiency."

*Note:* Personal information is defined as individually identifiable information including a student or parent's first and last name; home address; telephone number, or social security number 20USC §123h(c)(6)(E).

*Note:* The requirements concerning activities involving the collection and disclosure of personal information from students for marketing purposes do not apply to the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the exclusive purpose of developing, evaluating, or providing educational products or services for, or to, students or educational institutions, such as the following: college or other post-secondary education recruitment, or military recruitment; book clubs, magazines, and programs providing access to low-cost literacy products; curriculum and instructional materials used by elementary schools and secondary schools; tests and assessments used by elementary schools and secondary schools to provide genitive, evaluative, diagnostic, clinical, aptitude or achievement information about students; the sale by students of products or services to raise funds for school-related or educational-related activities; student recognition programs.

C. Inspect certain materials. Upon request, parents and eligible students have the right to inspect the following before the school administers or uses them:

1. Protected information surveys of students;
2. Surveys created by a third party;
3. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes and
4. Instructional materials used as part of the educational curriculum.

***Note:* The term "instructional materials" is defined as instructional material that is provided to the student, regardless of format, including printed or representational materials, audio visual materials (such as materials accessible through the internet.) The term does not include academic tests or academic assessments. USC §1232h(c) (6) (A).]**

D. Receive notification of the district's policies on the PPRA. After consultation with parents, the Easton Public Schools has adopted the following policies to implement the PPRA

*Notice of Rights:* The Superintendent will arrange for direct notice to parents and eligible students of this policy at the beginning of each school year, either through the U.S. Mail or handbooks, and will provide updates within a reasonable time period after any substantive changes. The Superintendent may also include notice of this policy along with other routine legal notices in one or more local newspapers.

Notice of Activities: The building principal will arrange for direct notice to parents/eligible students at least annually at the beginning of the school year of the activities or surveys identified in the PPRA that the Easton Public Schools anticipates conducting. The building principal will provide parents/eligible students with consent forms or the opportunity to opt a child out of activities, if applicable.

Inspection of Materials: Families or eligible students who wish to exercise their right to inspect surveys and instructional materials as identified in the PPRA may do so by sending written notice to the Superintendent of Schools or the School Principal. The Superintendent/Principal will respond to requests within ten calendar days. Opportunity for inspection of applicable materials will be provided at the school or district administrative offices.

Protections of Student Privacy: The Superintendent will ensure that procedures are in place to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and in the collection, disclosure or use of personal information for marketing, selling or other distribution purposes.

Families or eligible students who believe their rights under the PPRA have been violated may file a complaint within the district by contacting Christine Pruitt, Assistant Superintendent.

Complaints may also be filed with:  
Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-4605

### **PHYSICAL RESTRAINT POLICY**

The primary intervention options used by staff when a student exhibits escalating behavior are designed to assist the student to regain behavioral control, such as providing verbal redirection and setting reasonable limits. Therapeutic time-out or an emergency counseling session may also prove helpful.

However, when a student's behavior poses a threat of imminent, serious harm to self and/or others and other less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate, staff may restrain the student. Physical restraint is not to be used as a form of punishment or as a response to property destruction, disruption of school order, a student's refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive, or verbal threats that do not constitute a threat of imminent, serious physical harm.

Physical restraint is defined as the use of physical contact that prevents or significantly restricts a student's freedom of movement. It 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.

In the event a student is restrained, the student's parent/guardian will be notified as provided by Massachusetts law. Additional information regarding the District's Policies and Procedures regarding restraint can be obtained from the office of the Principal or Superintendent. Any concerns or complaints regarding implementation of restraint should be referred to the Principal.

## **SMOKING AND TOBACCO**

Students are prohibited from possessing and/or using the following within school buildings, school facilities, on school grounds, in school buses or in other school vehicles, and at all school sponsored functions:

- Tobacco (including chewing tobacco, cigarettes, cigars, electronic cigarettes, juuls any other products containing tobacco and nicotine, vapor cigarettes)
- Devices that are designed and used for tobacco consumption, including juuls, whether or not they actually contain tobacco or nicotine

### **Investigation**

All suspected violations of the above should be brought to the attention of the building principal. The Easton Public Schools will promptly investigate and, if a violation is found, take reasonable and effective steps to prevent its recurrence.

### **Consequences**

Students who violate the above may be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to suspension, or other sanctions as determined by the school administration, subject to applicable procedural requirements.

The school administration has the discretion to reduce or limit discipline in circumstances where a student elects to participate in a smoking cessation program and/or diversionary educational program relative to the hazards of tobacco use.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS AND DISCIPLINE**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), and related regulations provide eligible students with certain procedural rights and protections in the context of student discipline. A brief overview of rights under the IDEA is provided below.

In general, special education students may be excluded from their programs, just as any other student can be, for up to ten school days per year. However, when a special education student is excluded from their program for more than ten school days in the school year, the school district may be required to provide alternative educational services for the student. In addition, in many instances, the student's Team must convene to determine whether the student's behavior was a direct result of their disability (a "manifestation determination").

If the Team determines the behavior was not a direct result of the student's disability, the school may discipline the student according to the school's code of student conduct, except that the district must continue to provide the student with educational services during the period of suspension or expulsion as determined by the Team. However, if the Team determines that the behavior was a direct result of the disability, as a general matter, the student may not be excluded from the current educational placement (except in the case of weapons, drugs, or serious bodily injury) until the Team develops and the parent(s)/guardian(s) consent(s) to a new IEP. The Team must also conduct a functional behavior assessment and develop or revise a behavioral plan for the student.

However, in the event a student possesses uses, sells or solicits a controlled substance or possesses a weapon, or seriously injures an individual at school or a school function, a school may place a student in an interim alternative education setting for up to 45 days. Hearing officers may also order the placement of a student in an appropriate interim setting for up to 45 days upon determination that the current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others.

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

Similar procedures apply to eligible students with disabilities as defined by Section 504.

Additional information regarding the procedural protections for students with disabilities can be obtained from Craig Davidson, EPS Director of Student Services, who can be reached at [cdavidson@easton.k12.ma.us](mailto:cdavidson@easton.k12.ma.us).

### Discipline of Students Not Yet Determined Eligible for Special Education

The IDEA protections summarized above also apply to students who have not yet been found eligible for IEPs if the school district is deemed to have knowledge that the students were eligible for IEPs before the conduct that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred. The IDEA provides that a school district is "deemed to have knowledge" if: (1) the child's parent had expressed concern in writing to district supervisory or administrative personnel or the child's teacher that the child needs special education and related services; (2) the child's parent had requested an evaluation of the child to determine eligibility for special education services; or (3) the teacher of the child or other school district personnel had expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior by the child directly to the district's director of

special education or to other supervisory personnel. However, a school district is not “deemed to have knowledge” if the district evaluated the student and determined that the child was not eligible for special education services or the child’s parent refused an evaluation of the child or IDEA services.

If the school district has no knowledge that a student is an eligible student under the IDEA before taking disciplinary measures against the student, the student may be disciplined just as any other student may be. If, however, a request is made for an evaluation to determine eligibility while the student is subject to disciplinary measures, the district must conduct the evaluation in an expedited manner. Pending the results of the evaluation, the student must remain in the educational placement determined by school authorities, which may include suspension or expulsion with services provided through the school-wide education service plan as applicable to all students. If the student is determined eligible for an IEP as a result of the evaluation, the school district must provide the student with special education and related services in accordance with the IDEA.

### **SPECIAL SERVICES**

Easton Public Schools offers a wide array of special education services to students who are deemed eligible. The Special Services Department is one aspect of a continuum of services that facilitate a responsive educational environment for students. The following specialized services are provided for those students who require specialized instruction in order to access the general curriculum and to make meaningful educational progress: behavioral support/counseling; consultation with specialists (vision and hearing); occupational therapy; speech/language therapy; physical therapy; academic support (resource room, inclusion, vocational and self-contained); early childhood programs (integrated and self-contained).

#### **Special Education Administrator**

Each public school in the district houses a special education administrator who leads the special education team and chairs all IEP meetings at RO. This position is an administrative position and this person coordinates special education services with the other special education administrators and with the Director of Student Services.

The special educator administrator at RO ensures that all of our IEPs are aligned with state and federal law and meet the individual needs of each student.

### **STUDENT INTERVENTION TEAMS**

Each school has established a Student Intervention Team, composed of a variety of professional personnel. The Student Intervention Team, which is chaired by RO's Assistant Principal, serves as a resource to the classroom teachers to assist in helping all students succeed in the classroom. The goal of the Student Intervention Team is to ensure that students can succeed in the mainstream of education with appropriate modifications and accommodations as deemed necessary, and to provide a regular, consistent forum in which the status of students can be addressed.

The Student Intervention Team is not a special education referral committee, but rather a means to differentiate between students who can be helped within the scope of general education and those who require the comprehensive evaluation involved in the special education referral process. Student's response to targeted intervention will become part of the evaluation process.

The Student Intervention Team meetings have two components. The first component of the meeting is primarily to assist classroom teachers by providing a model which will facilitate the opportunity to collaborate and problem solve when there are presenting concerns regarding a specific student. The second component of the meeting is to provide the opportunity for student informational updates and any other additional information to be shared in a brief, concise manner. The District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) has recently been updated to provide teachers and teams with a wide variety of interventions and strategies to support students who are struggling in select areas of school.

### **School Psychologist**

Our staff includes the services of a school psychologist, whose function is varied. Primarily emphasis of the psychologist's role rests with the identification, evaluation, and remediation of problems which impede development, adjustment, and learning process of children. To facilitate this role, the psychologist serves as a member of the school's Evaluation Team and serves as a resource for classroom teachers in developing prescriptive educational objectives for children with special needs.

Appropriate services are offered upon request or recommendation individually or on a group basis. The psychologist consults with parents, teachers, administrators, and various specialists in order to maximally enhance the student's overall development, adjustment and educational progress.

### **Speech/Language Therapist**

The Speech/Language Therapist is a licensed speech pathologist (SLP) who is available to children in the Easton Public Schools who have been identified with language disorders and/or speech problems, articulation problems, voice disorders, fluency problems or certain language acquisition or language development difficulties. Services are also available to preschool children. Any child may be referred by the parent or teacher at any age or grade level.

Children are evaluated, and if services are required, children are seen by the speech/language therapist in small groups or in the classroom. Children diagnosed with speech language problems work on a variety of activities in the areas of syntax, vocabulary, reactive language, expressive language and articulation problems.s.

### **Adjustment Counselor**

School Adjustment Counselors provide services to students that address academic, social and emotional issues related to positive school adjustment. Services are generally provided in small groups. The School Adjustment Counselor consults with parents, teachers, administrators and specialists in order to enhance a positive school experience.

### **Occupational Therapist**

Occupational therapy (OT) services are available to students who have been identified as having needs in this area. Occupational therapy can support students to improve function between mind and body. For example, our OT commonly assists students with executive functioning, self-monitoring, moving safely through spaces, sensory diets, movement breaks, sustaining attention, developing stamina, etc. Children are evaluated and if services are required children are seen by the Occupational Therapist in a small group or in a classroom. Occupational Therapists provide consultation to classroom teachers, administrators and specialists.

### **Physical Therapist**

Physical therapy services (PT) are available to students who have been identified as having needs in this area. Children are evaluated and if services are required children are seen by the Physical Therapist in a small group or in a classroom. Physical Therapists provide consulting to classroom teachers, administrators and specialists.

### **Special Education Teacher**

The special education teachers work directly with children according to Chapter 71B. These teachers screen children referred to the program, participate in TEAM evaluation and reevaluation meetings and the writing of educational plans, and provide individualized programs within the most appropriate and least restrictive environment. In some instances, special education teachers are referred to as Learning Specialists. Learning specialists are embedded in the mainstream classrooms providing inclusion services in collaboration with classroom teachers and paraprofessionals. Learning specialists at RO have an adjoining classroom to the two classrooms they support and can provide more intensive, specialized services, outside of the classroom, when a student may need additional services in a particular area.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Massachusetts Student Records Regulations ("Regulations") together provide families and eligible students (those who have reached the age of 14 or who have entered ninth grade) certain rights with respect

to the student's education records. A general overview of those rights is provided below. Families and students may obtain a complete copy of their rights under the Massachusetts Student Record Regulations by contacting the building principal.

- (a) The right to access the student's education records. Families or eligible students should submit their request for access to the building principal. Access is generally provided within 10 days of a request. However, Massachusetts General Laws c.71, §34H ("Section 37H") law provides specific procedures that must be followed prior to release of records to a family who does not have physical custody of a child. These procedures include submitting a written request and other documentation to the principal on an annual basis. Information about these procedures can be obtained from the building principal.
- (b) The right to request amendment of the student's education records. Families or eligible students should direct their request to the principal, clearly identifying the part of the record they wish to have amended, and why.
- (c) The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA and the Massachusetts regulations authorize disclosure without consent. One exception that permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interest in the records. Such school officials include professional, administrative and clerical staff who are employed by or under agreement with the Easton Public Schools and who need access to a record in order to fulfill their duties. Such school officials may also include a volunteer or contractor outside of the school who performs an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with regard to the use and maintenance of education records. The Easton Public Schools also discloses student records without parent/eligible student consent to officials of other elementary or secondary schools in which a student enrolls, or seeks, intends, or is instructed to enroll upon receipt of a request from such school officials so long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer.

In addition, the Easton Public Schools has a practice of releasing directory information without consent. Directory information consists of the following: the student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance, weight and height of athletic teams, class, participation in recognized activities and sports, honors and awards, and post-high school plans. In the event a family or eligible student objects to the release of any of the above information, the parent/eligible student may state that objection in writing to the building principal. Absent receipt of a written objection, the directory information will be released without further notice or consent. For a deadline date for the written objection, contact the school administration.

Release of information to Vocational Technical Schools:

In order to provide students and their families with information on the availability of vocational technical education, a school shall release the names and addresses of grade 7 and grade 8 students no later than October 15 of each year to authorized school personnel of a

regional vocational school district if the city or town in which the school is located is a member of the regional vocational school district; provided that the school shall give public notice that it releases this information and allows families and eligible students, as defined by 603 CMR 23.02, a reasonable time after such notice to request that this information not be released without the prior consent of the eligible student or parent.

(d) The right to file a complaint concerning alleged failure by the District to comply with the regulations and laws governing student records. Complaints may be filed at the

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
135 Santilli Highway, Everett, MA 02149

In addition, complaints relative to federal statutes and regulations governing student records may be filed with the

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

## **WEAPONS POLICY**

Any student found in possession of a dangerous weapon at school or school-related events is subject to expulsion by the principal. If such a weapon is a firearm, the student must be excluded from the Easton Public Schools for a period of not less than one year, except as determined by the Superintendent on a case-by-case basis. The definition of a “firearm” includes, but is not limited to, guns (including a starter gun), bombs, grenades, rockets, missiles, mines, and similar devices, as set forth in the Gun Free Schools Act.

Students should also be aware that the possession of a firearm or certain other dangerous weapons in any building or on the grounds of any elementary or secondary level school is a crime punishable by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or by imprisonment for not more than one year, or both. School department personnel are required by statute to file written reports on any incidents, regardless of whether they occur during school hours, involving a student’s possession of a dangerous weapon on school premises. Under the statute provisions, the principal will file copies of such reports with the local chief of police, the Department of Social Services Office (DSS), the Special Services Office, and the School Committee.

## **APPENDIX**

### **Third Grade Homework Agreements at Richardson Olmsted School**

*Updated August 2024*

*The third grade team will assign up to 40 minutes of homework for each student on Mondays - Thursdays each week. As a teaching team, we will prioritize independent*

*reading, writing, as well as daily math practice when we assign homework. This is a shared priority across all third grade classrooms. On occasion, students might be given unfinished or missed class work to complete at home. This will be in addition to their nightly homework. (This might be due to missed classwork, or if students need more time to complete an assignment.)*

*Homework will not be due on Mondays, with the exception of long term projects or incomplete work. We ask parents/guardians to assist and support students at home to build positive and consistent homework habits and study skills which will promote future student success in years to come.*

*If your child is taking more than 40 minutes per night on homework, and your child is focused and attentive on the homework during the time he/she is working, and is consistently experiencing frustration while doing homework, please contact your child's teacher and he or she will work with you to make homework more successful for your child.*

*When students are absent, the work from that missed time may be added to their homework.*

*Teachers are not required to provide work prior to an extended absence. Upon return, parents are expected to pick up any missed work. Make-up work will not be sent home with the student. With the assistance of the parent, the student is responsible to make up all work that is missed within an equal number of school days plus one (1) with a minimum of ten (10) school days including tests and quizzes.*

We ask of parents, regarding homework in third grade, that they:

- provide a suitable place for study
- help students develop routine home study
- encourage, supervise and assist but not do the actual work
- be aware of long term assignments and assist students in learning to budget their time accordingly
  - notify the teacher if a student experiences extreme difficulty or routinely takes longer to complete homework than the times suggested below
  - contact the teacher if he/she observes an absence of homework or if students regularly report that there is no homework.

#### **Fourth Grade Homework Agreements at Richardson Olmsted School**

*Updated August 2024*

*The fourth grade team will assign between 30 - 50 minutes of homework for each student on Mondays - Thursdays each week. As a teaching team, we will prioritize independent reading, writing as well as daily math practice when we assign homework. This is a shared priority across all fourth grade classrooms. In addition, there may be long term assignments*

*when students may need to use weekends. We ask parents/guardians to assist and support students at home to build positive and consistent homework habits and study skills which will promote future student success. The expectation is that parents will work together with the teachers and their children, to ensure quality work, as well as review and support of homework is provided as needed until independence is achieved.*

*If your child is taking more than 50 minutes per night on homework, and your child is focused and attentive on the homework during the time he/she is working, and is consistently experiencing frustration while doing homework, please contact your child's teacher and he or she will work with you to make homework more successful for your child.*

*When students are absent, the work from that missed time may be added to their homework.*

*Teachers are not required to provide work prior to an extended absence. Upon return, parents are expected to pick up any missed work. Make-up work will not be sent home with the student. With the assistance of the parent, the student is responsible to make up all work that is missed within an equal number of school days plus one (1) with a minimum of ten (10) school days including tests and quizzes.*

We ask of parents, regarding homework in fourth grade, that they:

- provide a suitable place for study
- help students develop routine home study
- encourage, supervise and assist but not do the actual work
- be aware of long term assignments and assist students in learning to budget their time accordingly
  - notify the teacher if a student experiences extreme difficulty or routinely takes longer to complete homework than the times suggested below
  - contact the teacher if he/she observes an absence of homework or if students regularly report that there is no homework.

### **Fifth Grade Homework Agreements at Richardson Olmsted School**

*Updated August 2024*

*The fifth grade team will assign between 40 - 60 minutes of homework for each student on Mondays - Thursdays each week. As a teaching team, we will prioritize independent reading, writing as well as math practice when we assign homework. This is a shared priority across all fifth grade classrooms. We ask parents/guardians to assist and support students at home to build positive and consistent homework habits and study skills which will promote future student success in years to come.*

*If your child is taking more than 60 minutes per night on homework, and your child is focused and attentive on the homework during the time he/she is working, and is*

*consistently experiencing frustration while doing homework, please contact your child's teacher and he or she will work with you to make homework more successful for your child. When students are absent, the work from that missed time may be added to their homework.*

*Teachers are not required to provide work prior to an extended absence. Upon return, parents are expected to pick up any missed work. Make-up work will not be sent home with the student. With the assistance of the parent, the student is responsible to make up all work that is missed within an equal number of school days plus one (1) with a minimum of ten (10) school days including tests and quizzes.*

*We ask of parents, regarding homework in fifth grade, that they:*

- provide a suitable place for study*
- help students develop routine home study*
  - encourage, supervise and assist but not do the actual work*
- be aware of long term assignments and assist students in learning to budget their time accordingly*
  - notify the teacher if a student experiences extreme difficulty or routinely takes longer to complete homework than the 40 - 60 minute time expectation for homework*
  - contact the teacher if he/she observes an absence of homework or if students regularly report that there is no homework.*

## RESPONDING TO BEHAVIOR

### What happens when an RO Constitution Agreement is Broken?

|                       | <b>Looks Like</b>   | <b>Consequence</b>  |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| <b>Small Problem</b>  | <p>Minor and brief disrespectful behavior</p> <p>Work Refusal or ignoring staff</p> <p>Being silly or fooling around in class / hallway/ bathroom</p> <p>Not using materials appropriately, including technology misuse</p> <p>Actively excluding peers or spreading rumors</p> <p>Minor Noncompliance</p>  | <p>Any one or combination of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brief verbal or written reminder of expectations / constitution</li> <li>• One-on-one check-in to reflect and reset expectations. Check out at the end of day.</li> <li>• Break Station or Calming Corner</li> <li>• Teacher sends email to family or calls home</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Medium Problem</b> | <p>Repetition or increased severity of the “small problems” in same period of time or across multiple days</p> <p>Swearing / intentional exclusion</p> <p>Name calling or teasing</p> <p>Throwing or breaking items, out of frustration</p> <p>Leaving classroom without permission</p> <p>Verbally disrespecting staff (i.e. ignoring, name calling, talking back)</p> | <p>Must Include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) X2 Conduct Referral ~ leave note if for “documentation only”</li> <li>2) One on one check-in to reflect and reset expectations. Check out at the end of day.</li> <li>3) A Logical Consequence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Apology of Action / Reparation of Relationships</li> <li>○ You break it / you fix it (i.e. restore)</li> <li>○ Loss of privilege or activity</li> </ul> </li> <li>4) Teacher Contacts Home</li> <li>5) Administrator Contacts Home (as needed)</li> </ol> |
| <b>Big Problem</b>    | <p>Repetition or increased severity of the “medium problems” in same period of time or across multiple days</p> <p>Major Property destruction</p> <p>Racist/ Sexist Hate Speech or Writing</p> <p>Physical Aggression towards peers</p> <p>Verbal Threats / Verbal Aggression</p>   | <p>Must Include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) X2 Conduct Referral ~ admin follow up</li> <li>2) Logical Consequence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Apology of Action / Reparation of Relationships</li> <li>○ You break it / you fix it (i.e. restore)</li> <li>○ Loss of privilege or activity. May include detention or suspension.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3) Admin Contacts Home</li> </ol>  |

|                                    |   |   |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
|                                    | <p>Incident of suspected Bullying or Harassment</p> <p>Two or more major escalations within one week</p>  | <p>4) Behavior or Support Plan Created</p>  |
| <p><b>Major Safety Concern</b></p> | <p>Repetition or increased severity of the “big problems” in same period of time or across multiple days</p> <p>Bolting (out of building)</p> <p>Physical Aggression towards staff</p> <p>Possession of a weapon or drugs</p> | <p>Call to Administrator. Removal from class.</p> <p>X2 Conduct Referral ~ admin follow up</p> <p>Working in the office until calm</p> <p>Consequence (most likely to include after school detention and suspension).</p> <p>Admin Contacts Home, Safety Plan Created</p> |