



MANCHESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL/PARENT-GUARDIAN HANDBOOK 2025-2026

The different schools in Manchester each have their own personality and culture. However, all of our schools operate according to policies determined by our Board of Education, and we have highlighted some key policies (and common practices) in this student/parent-guardian handbook, which is updated periodically as needed. To see the complete set of board policies, [please click here](#). Also, please note that every school has much more information on its webpage -- in some cases including a handbook supplement.

-- Superintendent Matt Geary

ATTENDANCE

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential if students are to properly benefit from teaching and learning. Connecticut state law places the responsibility for ensuring that students attend school with the parent or other persons having legal control of the student. When your child is going to be absent, please call the office and leave a message on our answering machine if necessary. Calls can be made at any time, including before and after school hours. Please give your child's full name, teacher and reason for absence(s). If your child is absent and no message is left on the answering machine, you will receive a phone call from the office staff so that we may determine the reason for the absence. On the day your child returns to school, please send a note to his/her teacher explaining why s/he was absent. If we do not hear from you the absence will be considered unexcused.

- For an overview of our attendance policy, [please click here](#)
- For the complete BoE policy, [please click here](#).

BEFORE AND AFTER-SCHOOL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

There is programming available before and after school at every elementary school through our partnership with the Manchester Early Learning Center. Note also: Various after school activities are held throughout the year that are sponsored by our PTA and/or the staff. If a student is absent from school on the day of an activity, s/he may not attend the after school activity. The behavior policies that govern the school day also govern after school activities.

BEHAVIOR

Schools throughout the district share the following core practices:

- Teaching and upholding common expectations for student behavior across our school
- Using common language to communicate expectations
- Implementing a systematic approach to reinforce positive behaviors
- Ensuring equitable, logical consequences and opportunities for restorative and collaborative practices when negative behaviors occur.

In order to bring greater consistency to this area of our work, the district has created a document outlining expected behaviors aligned with a range of appropriate interventions.

- To see the expected behavior matrix (along with an explanatory letter from Superintendent Geary), [please click here](#).

BULLYING

There are significant changes to Connecticut's bullying law for the 2025-2026 school year. The law now defines "bullying" as "unwanted and aggressive behavior among children in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, that involves a real or perceived power imbalance." The new law also establishes a new and related term, "challenging behavior," defined as "behavior that negatively impacts school climate or interferes, or is at risk of interfering, with the learning or safety of a student or the safety of a school employee." Along with these new definitions is a new form that students, parents or guardians of students enrolled in the school, and school employees, can use to report any alleged challenging behavioral incidents. You'll find the form [here](#) and can also refer to the [Manchester Public Schools Safe School Information page](#) for a complete explanation of district policies regarding our commitment to providing a safe school climate for all students.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Riding the bus is a privilege earned through appropriate behavior. Board policy states that transportation services may be suspended for conduct while awaiting or receiving transportation to and from school which endangers persons or property or violates a publicized policy of the Board of Education.

Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring the safety of their children (1) until they board the bus and after they disembark the bus, if the children use school transportation to travel to and from school and/or (2) until they arrive at school and after they are released from the school's supervision, if the children travel to and from school by means other than school transportation.

- The district's Transportation Coordinator is Barbara Walz. She can be reached at bwalz@mpspride.org.
- To see the board's Transportation Handbook, [please click here](#).

CELEBRATIONS

Our district is committed to establishing a healthy learning environment that positively influences students' general well-being, eating behaviors, physical capacity and learning ability to succeed academically. Regarding celebrations:

- Students are allowed to bring party invitations to school as long as every child in their class is invited to the party.
- By board policy, classroom birthday celebrations will be food and snack free.
- To see the district's school wellness policy, [please click here](#).

DISCIPLINE

The school board has detailed information regarding student discipline including consequences for various infractions.

- To see the school board's discipline policy, [please click here](#).

DRESS CODE

Please support your child in choosing clothes that are appropriate for school. Clothing ought to be comfortable, and free of any language or pictures that may be offensive or distracting to the school community. Ultimately it is the right of the administration to determine whether or not an article of clothing is appropriate for school.

A note regarding footwear: We also strongly discourage students from wearing flip-flops to school. Also, in order for your child to participate in PE, s/he must wear sneakers. This is due to safety concerns. [Click](#) to see the district dress code policy.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES

The Board of Education supports phone free schools. The revised policy will be forthcoming. Schools will share the process for creating phone free schools directly with parents and families.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

The Board of Education believes that a student's education is a responsibility shared by the school, parents or guardian, family members, other significant adults in the child's life, and the community. All must work together as knowledgeable partners to educate all students up to their capacity. Our schools are committed to this work as is our Family and Community Partnership office.

- To see the board policy on parent/family involvement, [please click here](#).

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

Many of our schools have a full time Family Resource Center (FRC), each with its own coordinator. The role of the FRC is to support families in a variety of ways with the overriding objective of improving student achievement.

- To learn more about the FRCs (including contact information for the FRC at your school), [please click here](#).

FIELD TRIPS

The school board encourages and supports student field trips that provide unique educational learning experiences to students. The board also is committed to ensuring that all students, regardless of socioeconomic status, are able to participate in grade level guaranteed experiences.

- To see the board policy on field trips and excursions, [please click here](#).

FOOD (AND NUTRITION)

The district is committed to establishing a healthy learning environment that includes food and nutrition. Please note the following:

- All schools offer healthy lunch options including fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Birthday celebrations are food and snack free.
- Classrooms are nut-free. All snacks eaten in the classroom must be nut-free.
- A nut-free cafeteria table is available for lunch.
- Healthy snacks and non-sugary drinks are encouraged.
- Food may be used to commemorate a cultural event or activity, or support a curriculum related project with the approval of the principal and in accordance with Health Department protocols
- Teachers will provide information to parents regarding allergy issues in the classroom so that snacks or activities involving food can be safe for students with allergies.
- Healthy party menus will be used.
- Food is not used as a reward.
- Students may not trade food with others.
- Eating on buses is prohibited.
- To see the district's school wellness policy, [please click here](#).

GREEN CLEANING PRODUCTS

To reduce exposure of school building occupants to potentially hazardous chemical contaminants, the district has a 'green cleaning' policy.

- To read the policy pertaining to hazardous materials in school, [please click here](#).

HEALTH/MEDICATIONS

If a prescription or over-the-counter medication is required to be given during the school day, a medication authorization form must be signed by the child's physician and parent/guardian. These forms are available in all Manchester physicians' offices, walk-in clinics and school health offices. Medications must be delivered to the school nurse by an adult and be in a pharmacy prepared container. Medication orders must be renewed annually. There is an exception to this policy which allows school nurses to dispense Tylenol (or its generic form) and Ibuprofen with the written permission of the parent or guardian. Permission forms are available from the school nurse.

HOMEWORK

Homework is an important part of every student's education. Parents should ask their children about assignments daily. Your encouragement and enthusiasm are powerful motivators.

- To see the board policy on homework, including grade-level expectations, [please click here.](#)

NO IDLING

Per CT DEEP regulation 22a-174-18 Manchester follows a no idling policy. Car exhaust releases pollutants that are harmful to health (especially to children) and the environment. Pollution from idling vehicles can also enter a facility, thus affecting the indoor air quality inside the school. Please turn your vehicle off when waiting for long periods in our parking lots, except if vehicles need to idle in extreme heat or cold to maintain interior or engine temperatures. This will help reduce exposure of our children to exhaust fumes that can enter our building and outdoor play spaces. Please note that this policy extends to our school buses as well. For more information please visit the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environment Protection website.

MEALS

Every child has access to healthy and nutritious meals, regardless of the socio-economic status of a family.

NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Our district is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons and we do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability (including, but not limited to, intellectual disability, past or present history of mental disorder, physical disability or learning disability), genetic information or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws.

For the district policy on non-discrimination, [please click here](#).

PERSONAL ITEMS

Items that cause a distraction to the learning environment should be left at home. If an item is determined to be a distraction, school personnel will take it and send it to the office to be picked up by the parent or guardian. We are not responsible for personal items brought to school.

STUDENT PRIVACY

In accordance with federal law, the Board of Education has a variety of provisions regarding student privacy, with information on searches, surveys and more.

- To read the board policy on student privacy, [please click here](#).

Note: Parents/guardians are also asked each year whether they give permission for their student's name, image, voice, age, grade, school, school activity, achievements and school work to be published or displayed on school or district websites; class pictures; student yearbooks; newsletters; public media; graduation, theater, athletic, and music programs; etc. For more information please check with the main office at your child's school.

STUDENT SAFETY

The safety and security of our students is everyone's priority. At the same time, we encourage parents and family members to be involved and active in all aspects of our schools. To accommodate both of these important aspects of our school, our expectations for parents and other visitors as they enter the building only by ringing the doorbell at the main entrance and then proceeding to the office to sign in and get a visitor's badge. (We have more information below in the Visitors section.) After signing in, please be sure to wear a visitor's badge while in the building to identify yourself. Upon leaving, please sign out also. All doors of the school remain locked at all times.

THERAPY DOGS

The school district supports the use of therapy dogs for the benefit of its students. Therapy dogs can help students with reduced stress, improved physical and emotional well being, decreased anxiety, and increasing the likelihood of successful academic achievement by the student.

- To see the board policy on therapy dogs, [please click here](#).

TITLE IX

Title IX is a federal law that states: “No person in the United States shall on the basis of sex be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal assistance.” Report any violation of this policy to the district’s HR director: Iris Gomero, 45 North School Street, Manchester, CT 06042.

TRANSPORTATION

Please see ‘bus transportation’ above.

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE

Having carefully weighed and balanced the rights of privacy of students and staff against the district’s duty to maintain order, discipline, safety and security, the Board of Education finds that it is appropriate to provide for the use of video camera surveillance in its transportation vehicles and on school grounds [as outlined in this policy](#).

VISITORS

The Board of Education encourages visits by citizens, taxpayers, and parents/guardians to all school buildings. However to ensure a safe and productive educational environment all visitors must receive prior approval from the school principal. Also the board reserves the right to limit visits in accordance with administrative regulations.

- To read the district policy on school visitors, [please click here](#).

NOTE:

Some schools also have much more information on their school website in some cases including a school-specific 'handbook supplement' that addresses subjects such as parking, student drop off/pickup, etc.