

Halifax Elementary School
Student Handbook
2026-2027



[HALIFAX SCHOOL](#)
246 Branch Road Halifax, VT 05358
(802) 368-2888

✨ To access links, documents, and other materials referenced in this handbook click [this link](#) to be taken to the Halifax 2026-2027 Handbook Folder. ✨

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Halifax Elementary School Mission Statement

Halifax Elementary School creates pathways for our students to become powerful communicators, critical thinkers, and collaborators who use empathy and take responsibility for relationships, lifelong learning, and adaptability in our changing world.

Greetings Halifax Families!

We are excited to begin another year of learning, growth, and connection. Our school is a place where every student is known, valued, supported, and encouraged to do their best.

At Halifax Elementary school we believe that students learn best when they feel safe, cared for, and connected to the people around them. Our goal is to create a school environment where students can be curious, take appropriate risks, learn from mistakes, and develop the skills they need to become confident and responsible members of their community.

This handbook provides important information about our school, including expectations, procedures, policies, and resources for students and families. We encourage students and parents/guardians to review it together and use it as a reference throughout the year.

We are grateful to have you as part of our school community. We look forward to a year filled with learning, friendship, challenge, and success.

This handbook is a living document, meaning that the things you find in it are constantly changing and evolving as new laws and policies are enacted. In the event things change, we will ensure you are notified in a timely manner of such changes. Our *Weekly Update* will continue this year, please ensure that you take the time to read it, as many critical updates as well as student and staff celebrations are shared through it.

Review this handbook carefully. Educational procedures constantly change and evolve, so it is important you understand our expectations for your students and your commitment to their learning and success. Reading this handbook and ensuring you understand its contents helps make our learning community stronger through a shared understanding.

A form will be sent home with your student to be **signed and returned** by September 12th. If you have any questions about information in this handbook please do not hesitate to reach out to myself or Wendy Musiak.

Looking forward to our great year ahead!

Ross Momaney
Principal

Halifax School Faculty and Staff Directory

Title	Name	Contact Info
Principal	Ross Momaney	ross.momaney@wswsu49.org
Administrative Assistant	Wendy Musiak	wendy.musiak@wswsu49.org
Kindergarten and First Grade	Angelina Read	angelina.read@wswsu49.org
2nd and 3rd Grade	Merritt Youmell	merritt.youmell@wswsu49.org
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2nd, 3rd, 6th, & 8th Grade Math, 6th Grade Science	Sean Sullivan	sean.sullivan@wswsu49.org
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Speech and Language Assistant	Nicole Lord	nicole.lord@wswsu49.org
School Nurse	Dave Nicol	dnicol@wswsu49.org
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Library/Media Specialist	Andrea Belanger	andrea.belanger@wswsu49.org
Wellness/Guidance Counselor	Christine Stafford	christine.stafford@wswsu49.org
Special Education Paraprofessional	Tyffani Felisko	tyffani.felisko@wswsu49.org

Special Education Paraprofessional	Althea Gledhill	althea.gledhill@wswsu49.org
Special Education Paraprofessional	Amelia Nick	amelia.nick@wswsu49.org
School Maintenance	Madeline Boyington	madeline.boyington@wswsu49.org
Food Manager and Cook/Wings Site Coordinator	Kayla Hill	kayla.hill@wswsu49.org
Director of Technology	Abby Arnold	abigail.arnold@wswsu49.org
Transportation - (F. M. Kuzmeskus, Inc)	Brianna Inman, Safety/Trainer/ Transportation Coordinator	brianna@travelkuz.com
School Board		
Paul Blais - <i>Chair</i>		paulblais@halifax.wswsu49.org
Wade Ryan - <i>Vice Chair / Clerk</i>		wade.ryan@halifax.wswsu49.org
Cassandra McLaren - <i>Board Member</i>		cassandra.mclaren@halifax.wswsu49.org
Superintendent		
William Bazyk		wbazyk@wswsu49.org

Our School Guidelines

Throughout the school year, students will be challenged academically while also developing important social and emotional skills. We expect students to contribute positively to our school community by following our three simple school-wide expectations:

We take care of ourselves, each other, and our school community by making choices that keep everyone safe, treating people and things with care, and showing kindness through our words and actions.

Be Safe

Make choices that protect yourself and others. Follow directions, use materials appropriately, and keep your body and words safe.

Be Gentle

Treat people, animals, and property with care. Use calm bodies, respectful voices, and gentle hands.

Be Kind

Treat everyone with respect, compassion, and inclusion. Use kind words, help others, and make our school a welcoming place for everyone.

GENERAL DAILY SCHEDULE

7:45am-7:58	Arrival/Breakfast
8:00am	School Day Begins
12:00-12:20pm	K-4 Lunch Time
12:00-12:20pm	5-8 Recess
12:20-12:40pm	K-4 Recess
12:20-12:40pm	5-8 Lunch
2:40-3:00pm	Dismissal

ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL

Students should not arrive before 7:45. Arrival Time is anytime between 7:45- 7:58. Upon arrival students should proceed directly to their classroom. Breakfast will be available from 7:45- 7:55 in the multipurpose room. School begins promptly at 8:00.

Students who are absent from school will not be able to attend and/or participate in afterschool programs, athletics events, activities, or events on the day(s) on which they were absent. Students who have made prior arrangements for an excused absence may participate.

If parents/guardians are dropping off or picking up their child, please pull in parallel to the upper parking lot, up to the walkway leading to the school. If there is a bus or another car ahead of you, you must wait until that vehicle has moved to drop off or pick up your child. **Never** pass vehicles or backup to exit the car line.

Dismissal begins at 2:40. For the protection of the students and the parents, a student may not leave the school during school hours unless the staff at the school has written documentation that the pupil is being released at the request of the parent, guardian or other authorized individual.

If your child needs to leave school early (doctor's appointments, religious instruction, etc.), or your child will be changing his or her normal dismissal routine, **you must provide a note to the Office** at the start of the school day. Notes require parent/guardian signatures and must include the name of the person providing transportation and the reason for early departure. **Persons coming to pick up students early are to wait at the entrance of the school within view of our security camera. Students must be released to an adult, they will not be able to walk to someone waiting in a car.**

Except in emergencies, please make any **daily transportation changes for your child in the evening or before arrival at school and send a note with your child that states the changes clearly.** If you do need to make a change during the day, please give us as much notice as possible by calling and speaking, or emailing, with the administrative assistant. Leaving a message without confirming it with a school staff member is **not** recommended. **Text messaging is not an approved method of communications due to FERPA guidelines.** Students are not allowed to stay after school except by prior arrangement with school personnel.

Students who have permission to walk home are to leave school grounds promptly during dismissal. Due to safety and supervision concerns, students **should not** return to school grounds without parental/adult supervision.

Parents/guardians should pick up students at dismissal no later than 3:00 p.m. Parent pick-ups are dismissed first, followed by students riding buses. Students who are walkers are dismissed after buses have left.

ATTENDANCE

Click here for the 2026-27 [**School Calendar Link**](#)

[**ABSENCES - Guardian/Parent responsibilities**](#)

Regular attendance helps a child be successful in school. Starting the school day on time is an essential step toward meeting this goal.

Please notify the school office of any planned absences or appointments **in advance**, or at the latest, **by 8:10 a.m.** on the day of absence. The state requires written documentation of absences, early dismissal, and late arrival for our attendance records. If your child is absent for three consecutive days or six cumulative days without a phone call or written note from you, the principal may initiate a truancy investigation.

Do not send your child to school if your child is ill. We will call you to pick up your child if he or she is ill or becomes ill during the school day.

If your child is not in school because of illness, we expect that he or she will not attend after-school or evening events, including athletic events and class functions on the same day.

ATTENDANCE PROTOCOL

Regular attendance is critical for a child's educational success. All attendance data is collected and sent to the State. The school is required by law to follow up with parents and truancy officers in cases of chronic absenteeism. **Letters will be sent home when chronic absenteeism reaches a significant level (10 days of unexcused absences). The school will reach out to the parent to create a plan for ensuring that the child is attending regularly. If continued unexcused absences occur, we are required to notify truant officers, in addition to making a report to DCF.** The state requires written documentation of absences, early dismissals and late arrivals for our student records. We **cannot** excuse absences and tardiness unless there is a legitimate reason for the absences or late arrival.

TARDINESS

The School day begins at 8:00 am. Students who arrive after 8:00 A.M. will be marked tardy. Students arriving late should report to the Main Office and check in with the Administrative Assistant. State law does not let us excuse tardiness unless there is a legitimate reason for the late arrival, such as sickness, medical appointments, or attendance at family functions. If tardiness becomes an issue a parent conference will be requested.

Excused Absences are typically one of the following:

- Sickness
- Medical appointments
- Family emergencies
- Religious observances

If a child misses more than 15 days, the student may be considered for retention as per our school's attendance policy.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE SCHOOL

ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTERS and ANNOUNCEMENTS

Each full week of school families will receive our *Halifax School Update*. We strive to ensure that you receive it in a timely manner. The *Halifax School Update* will include upcoming school and community activities, articles on special events, lunch menus, and student work. Information flyers may be sent home with your child, but they will also be scanned and attached to the *Halifax School Update*. You may request a paper copy of the *Halifax School Update* to be sent home with your child.

Halifax Elementary School now uses ParentSquare for all communications.

With parent square you can

- Choose how and when you receive messages
- Reply to messages from staff
- View calendars and sign-ups
- Fill out permission slips and forms
- And more!

If you haven't already, download the free ParentSquare app for iOS or Android, or log in at www.parentsquare.com.

Please contact our Administrative Assistant if you would like to receive a paper copy, or be added to our weekly update email list, or need help accessing ParentSquare

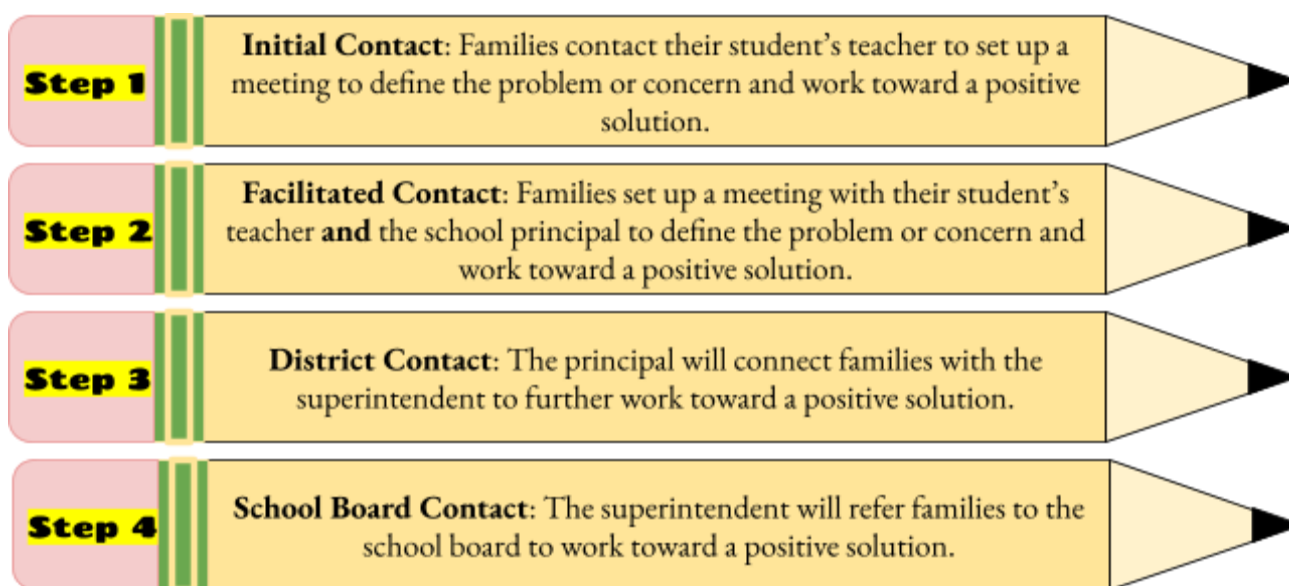
PARENT CONFERENCES AND COMMUNICATION

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year. One during the fall and the other in the spring. These conferences are an opportunity to discuss your child's educational progress and review samples of their work. Attending your child's conferences is the best way to connect with their classroom teacher to understand where they are on their learning journey.

If at any time you have concerns or questions about your child's progress, please contact the teacher first. If your needs are not met or resolved, contact the principal.

Many times questions arise concerning practices, procedures and programming within the school. These issues are addressed using a step-by-step approach. Families should always first speak to their child's teacher when they have concerns with classroom issues. The principal should be contacted first when issues are school-wide or when they have a question or concern.

An informal conversation can typically provide the correct information needed, clarity on a particular situation, or make the space for families and the teacher to create a plan to reach a positive resolution to a problem or concern. If a concern persists, families will follow the procedures detailed in the **flowchart below**.



An exception to the above chart is when there is a concern or question about school-wide issues. If this occurs, contact the principal by phone or mail.

Halifax Elementary School uses a [Parent-Teacher Conference Form](#) to facilitate an instance when a parent or family member, teacher, and student are working together to define and resolve a problem.

When requesting a meeting, keep in mind that a school is a busy place. Families will not be able to come to school and talk with someone immediately about their concerns. Teachers have many demands on their time both before and after school. If you would like to discuss an issue, it is best to agree on a time for an appointment through phone or email. Doing so also ensures more privacy.

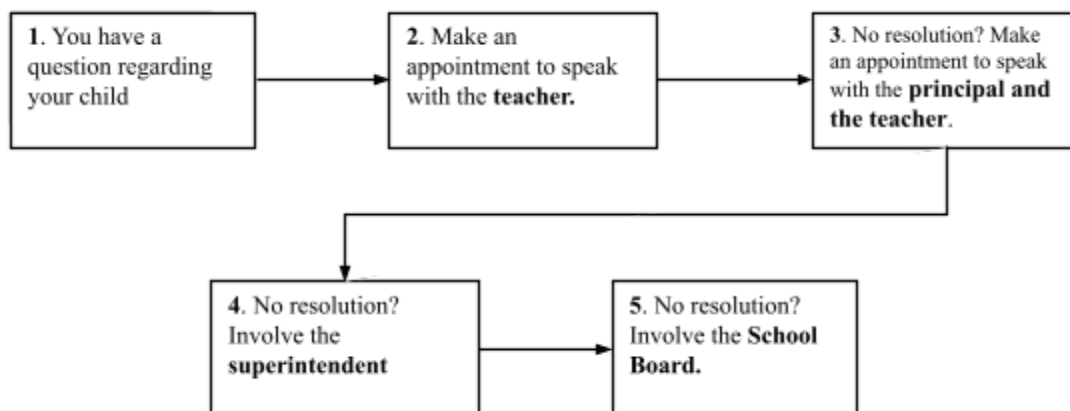
We feel strongly that keeping you informed and asking you to work with us is the most effective way to help your children be successful. When families and school staff work together on establishing common expectations and prevention strategies, while also addressing problems that do occur, the benefits on student learning and achievement are limitless. Talking together about our children is one of the most important things we can do. Without teamwork, we are all much less effective in reaching positive outcomes. Working together with parents is vital to the success of our students and our school community as a whole. Establishing partnerships with parents and having you and your children feel welcome is one of our top priorities.

COMMUNICATION PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

As referenced above, if you need to contact the school about a classroom problem, we ask that you contact the TEACHER FIRST. If you do not resolve the issue at that level, the SECOND STEP is to

have a meeting of the TEACHER, PARENT, and SCHOOL PRINCIPAL. Continued inability to resolve the situation leads to STEP THREE, involving the SUPERINTENDENT, and finally STEP FOUR, involving the SCHOOL BOARD.

Communication Procedure Chart



SCHOOL BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

The Halifax Elementary School Board meets in the school library for a business session, unless otherwise noted. Meeting times are available on the district and school website. All meetings are open to the public at all times, except during an Executive Session. If you wish to be put on the agenda, please contact the superintendent's office the Friday before the meeting. Board meetings are held at 6:00pm on the third Wednesday of each month.

GENERAL INFORMATION

THE SCHOOL'S REPORT CARD

The educational teams of Halifax Elementary reflect on student data, and continue to address student proficiency issues. We communicate not only our improvement steps, but also the steps that the state will take to support schools across Vermont in addressing meeting proficiency. The State of Vermont issues every school a Report Card that publicly notes how the school is performing. The following link will direct you to the report card for our school: [Halifax Elementary School](#).

COMPUTER USE

Halifax Elementary School offers 1:1 technology for all students, providing an iPad and a charger for each student to use during the school year. Technology use forms are required to be signed by parents and students prior to receiving the device. Devices are stored in the classroom for daily use at school, and with permission, may be signed out for academic use overnight. The use of computers and wireless networks provide our students with quality, equitable, and cost-effective information and communication resources, and the opportunity for researching and reporting information in ways that are consistent with our district-wide educational goals. Students will only use technology when directed by a teacher to supplement their classroom learning. Appropriate and safe use of the internet will be taught prior to use of computers in a student's individual class. Students may never take photos of themselves, students, or staff unless directed to do so for an educational purpose by a staff member.

Parents are responsible for replacement of lost or damaged technology.

HOMEWORK

The daily expectation for all students attending Halifax Elementary school **is to read or be read to for twenty minutes every night**. Reading is one of the strongest predictors of student success. Helping your child develop a strong vocabulary and comprehension begins with reading.

Homework is sometimes given by teachers at Halifax School as an extension or practice of the day's lessons. Homework also serves as a means of developing student responsibility in bringing material home and back again. Homework is sometimes an expectation for students who did not work at the pace of their peers during the day, and need to finish up expected class work to keep on track with their work the following day. Homework is one way to develop parent-teacher/home-school partnerships.

We ask that you support your child by establishing a regular routine for homework, including a dedicated spot to complete homework at home, such as the kitchen table or a desk. Establishing a specific time such as right before or after dinner to complete homework helps support students' ability to establish independent routines. Most students benefit greatly from a parent being nearby to help answer questions or to encourage them to stay on task. If you have questions concerning the amount or types of work, please contact your child's teacher for information, clarification, or support.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards are sent home twice a year. Our school year is divided into two terms. We will offer student-led conferences twice a year, one in the fall and one in the spring. We recognize that all children are different and progress meeting academic goals at varying speeds. A report card's goal is to inform you of how your child is performing according to his or her ability and how his or her work demonstrates proficiency of the grade level expectations.

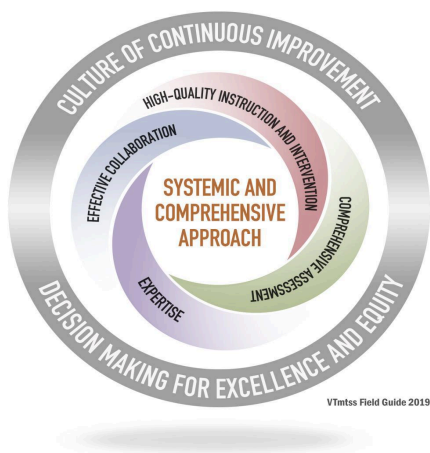


<u>Academic Performance Skills Indicators</u>
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- 4 - **Mastery beyond proficiency:** Student deeply understands the concept or process, applying beyond the standard performance criteria.
- 3 - **Proficient:** Student demonstrates command of the concept or process, meeting the standard performance criteria.
- 2 - **Partially Proficient:** Student demonstrates some command of the concept or process, showing progress toward the standard performance criteria.
- 1 - **Not Yet Proficient:** Student struggles with the concept or process, and has yet to show significant progress toward the standard performance criteria.
- / - **Standard not assessed** at this time.

We are a proficiency based educational system and report card scores use a number to show mastery toward specific performance criteria, these are skills, goals, and expectations that are outlined in the Common Core State Standards. During conferences, student work is reviewed with families as well as grade-level academic expectations so that you know the progress of your student in meeting grade specific learning goals. Teachers will keep parents informed of students' academic and behavioral progress through conferences, calls home, and at times in writing, as each term progresses.

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES



MTSS: The [Vermont Multi-tiered System of Supports](#) (VTmtss) is a systemic approach to decision-making for excellence and equity within a culture of continuous improvement. It focuses on successful outcomes for all students. This systemic approach supports the collaboration of all adults to meet the academic, behavioral, social and emotional needs of all students and provides a layered system of high-quality, evidence-based instruction, intervention, and assessment practices that are matched to student strengths and needs. It relies on the effective and timely use of meaningful data, and engages and develops the collective expertise of all involved.

SCHOOLWIDE TITLE I

Halifax School is considered a schoolwide Title I school. We will hold an annual meeting in the fall, informing families of their rights, and reviewing/revising the [home school compact](#). We will share how the Title funds are being used, asking for input on school improvement concerns and initiatives. [Title I presentation](#).

EDUCATION SUPPORT

We are committed to the successful education of every student. In order to maximize each student's success we provide a wide range of learning opportunities at the school. This includes

differentiated instruction, accommodations and support through the EST (Educational Support Team). Students who have documented learning challenges may qualify for services through Special Education or be protected under Section 504.

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT TEAM (EST)

EST members engage in collaborative problem-solving to determine whether additional support is needed for a student to make appropriate progress, and to monitor that progress. This may include academics, attendance, behavior, or enrichment activities. The team can offer suggestions for student support that may not have been considered in previous planning efforts. An EST has standing members and meets regularly, typically weekly or bi-weekly and an EST Plan will result in assigned action steps. Halifax's Educational Support Team consists of the general education teacher, the special education teacher, the student's parents, and any other staff members that may contribute to the team. A parent or teacher may make a referral for this support service by contacting the EST or principal.

➤ [WSWSU EST FORM](#)

SECTION 504/SPECIAL EDUCATION

In compliance with Section 504 and Special Education Law, we offer all students who have a documented disability equal access to education and all related activities offered at the school. Referrals are initiated through the student's parents, teacher or school principal. If you feel your child qualifies for this support/service and the school team disagrees, you will be given the parental rights and procedure from the principal or his/her designee.

➤ [Section 504 Manual for Families and Schools](#)

SCHOOL SERVICES

FOOD SERVICE

We ask that you pay special attention to the **Household Income Form (HIF)** that is sent home at the beginning of the year. Filling out and returning this application promptly is one of the best ways to help us insure the success of our meal program. **All information contained on your application is confidential. Please look at the income guidelines. You are strongly encouraged to apply if you qualify. This information helps the school on many levels, one of them being financially, please consider filling out the form even if you think you might not qualify.** You may apply at any time, and you may change your application any time your income changes. The school will provide menus at the beginning of each month. They will be attached to the weekly newsletter, and posted on the school website.

HEALTHY SNACKS

The school schedule builds in a short snack time for each grade. Students are welcome to bring snacks from home, ensuring they follow our nut-free guidelines. In addition, students can also opt to

participate in the school-wide healthy snack program offered daily. Families should strive to make every effort to send their student with healthy snacks.

Healthy snacks that would support a successful school day for your student include the following:

- ❖ Fruits
- ❖ Vegetables
- ❖ Cheese
- ❖ Crackers
- ❖ Yogurt

These foods will help your child be more alert and attentive throughout the school day and sustain the energy needed to be academically successful. Please avoid sending in drinks in glass bottles. *With the exception of the rare “teacher treat,” we **do not allow** candy, caffeinated drinks, energy drinks and/or soda during the school day.*

PARENT/TEACHER GROUP (PTG)

We are always looking for parents and family members who are interested in joining our Parent Teacher Group (PTG). The PTG is essential in fundraising for school field trips, and other school based activities. The programs and events they are able to offer help make the Halifax Elementary School an exceptional learning community. *Please contact the main office, or Amanada Ryan if you are interested in joining.*

TRANSPORTATION

Students who are authorized to ride the bus will be provided with bus transportation. The school will notify parents at the beginning of each year where the student’s bus stop is and approximately when the bus will arrive. Students will be picked up only at their assigned stop. If you have specific instructions for your child that differs from his/her regular routine, please write a note and send it in with your child before the routine change occurs, or email the office.

If you are planning an after-school event that requires transporting extra children, please make arrangements ahead of time.

Failure to follow the rules listed on the “Bus Expectations” (located below) will lead to meetings between the parent and the principal. For the safety of everyone, we will suspend students from taking the bus who make poor behavior choices. The suspension is made at the discretion of the principal in consultation with the bus driver. Families are responsible for making other arrangements to get the child to and from school for the duration of the bus suspension.

Behaviors that result in suspension of bus riding privileges include, but are not limited to:

- Fighting
- Assault
- Threats and intimidation
- Spitting

- Throwing objects
- Repeated and persistent rule-breaking
- Severe and dangerous behavior

The primary responsibility of the bus driver is to safely drive the bus. All students riding the bus are expected to monitor their own behavior. Let's work together to keep bus riding a safe, pleasant experience for all!

Please review the “Bus Expectations” with your child about being safe, responsible, and respectful and following directions.

BUS EXPECTATIONS

Be Safe

Stay seated, face forward, and follow the driver's directions.

Be Gentle

Keep your hands, feet, and belongings to yourself.

Be Kind

Use respectful words, include others, and help keep the bus a positive place.

FIELD TRIPS

During the year, we plan field trips as a way to extend classroom learning. Parental permission is required for all field trips that take students off school property. Your child's teacher will send home specific, detailed permission slips prior to any field trips that require travel. We need your help and cooperation in order to be able to provide these enriching and exciting experiences for your child. We will be calling on families to help us transport and supervise these trips. Transportation for field trips is by teacher and parent/guardian cars, unless we have funding for a bus. To be a field trip chaperone, parents and family members are required to be fingerprinted and provide proof of vehicle insurance.

Our school believes that field trips are privileges for students in good standing academically and behaviorally. Students who are not in good standing academically or behaviorally will not be permitted to go on the field trip and will remain at school for the duration of the field trip.

Additional field trip emergency/medical information forms can be accessed via the school's website, listed on the Health and Wellness Page.

RECESS

Students go outside for recess unless it is raining or the temperature is 10° F or below.

All children are expected to go outside for recess except for the following reasons:

- a parent sends a doctor's note requesting that the student stay inside due to illness or injury

- a student has specific parent and teacher permission to do school work.

Recesses are approximately 20 minutes long. Recess expectations include:

- Staying outside for the entire time unless a student is given permission from a supervising adult to return to the building
- Staying within the eyesight of the supervising staff member, on the playing fields and/or playground, and out of the bushes.

Please be sure your child dresses appropriately for outdoor play. If your child is not dressed properly, they will not be able to participate in recess. Recess is an important part of the day to release energy and have access to the fresh outdoors.

In the fall and spring, students should wear jackets, sweatshirts, etc., and in the winter, children should have heavy coats, hats, gloves/mittens, snow pants, and boots. This requirement is for **all grades K-6**. If there is a need for any winter outdoor gear; coats, hats, gloves/mittens, snow pants, or boots, please notify the Principal or school nurse for assistance in obtaining such items. We are happy to help make sure your student is equipped with what they need to have a fun-filled recess!

GENERAL PLAYGROUND GUIDELINES

*The goal of recess is for students to have a positive outdoor experience, maximizing health and fitness by playing and interacting in a way that is safe for all. **If an activity does not look safe, teachers will intervene.***

Be Safe

Use equipment correctly, stay in designated areas, and follow adult directions.

Be Gentle

Keep your hands, feet, and objects to yourself and use equipment with care.

Be Kind

Include others, take turns, and use respectful words and actions.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

After-school activities for students may occur throughout the year depending on the availability of volunteers and student interest. Thanks to a federal grant and support from the town, Halifax Elementary School has an afterschool program from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., on select days. The program includes a variety of activities which will include homework help, tutoring, and enrichment.

Students register in advance for these activities with signed parent permission. There is a suggested fee for each session of after-school activity. *The school's philosophy regarding extracurricular activities is that these are privileges for students in good standing academically and behaviorally. If a student has not been able to participate in class during the day, they may not be eligible to participate in afterschool programming that day.*

LOST and FOUND

We strongly encourage families to put their child's name on articles of clothing that could be left at school. Year in and year out, hundreds of articles of clothing find their way to our lost and found box. Articles not claimed at the end of the school year will go to a local charity.

SAFETY

EMERGENCY DRILLS

Emergency drills are conducted periodically to provide maximum safety of all students and faculty evacuating the building during all drills and emergencies. When the alarm signal sounds, everyone within the school will leave the building immediately in an orderly and quiet manner.

Directions are posted in each room as to which direction to go. Students are to remain with their groups and follow teachers' instructions. As part of the school's crisis management plan, lockdowns and fire drills will be practiced regularly.

We will notify parents at least a week in advance to a drill, allowing students prior notification to expect an upcoming drill. We will be sharing changes and notifications with parents and guardians in our weekly Update, or through electronic communications.

LOCKDOWNS / EVACUATIONS

In the event of an emergency involving a lockdown or evacuation of the building, do not call the school or clog any emergency access to the building. When it is safe to do so, you will get all the relevant information necessary. Our first priority is ensuring the safety of the students and staff. Calling the school or impeding emergency access to the building puts everyone at risk.

If necessary, we will evacuate students to a safe location. We **will not** release any student to a parent or guardian until students and staff are accounted for, and an "all clear" has been given.

The best and safest way to have a full understanding of any developing situations is to listen to the local radio for news and instructions and wait for messages from the ParentSquare system. ParentSquare is an automatic telephone/email calling service to inform parents of snow days, school closings, important information, and emergency situations. The system will automatically call ALL of the numbers you have listed with the school. Make sure that we have the most up to date contact information so you can ensure you will receive all notifications.

Thank you for your cooperation in keeping our school safe.

EMERGENCY CLOSING/EARLY DISMISSAL

We handle emergency or weather-related closings with an automated phone call to each family. The Superintendent makes the decision to cancel the school day as early as possible in the morning. The process involves a consultation among the road commissioner, board chairs, and principals. Each cancellation adds another day on to the end of the school year.

In the event of an early dismissal, **we will call** parents at the numbers indicated on PowerSchool. Please make sure to keep your emergency contact information and your child's health information up-to-date. If we cannot contact you, we will try to reach the person(s) you authorize as your emergency contact(s) to make arrangements for your child.

VISITORS/PARENTS and GUARDIANS

- ❖ All visitors to the school must check in at the office when they enter the school building.
- ❖ Visitors will be asked to sign into an electronic messaging system.
- ❖ During the regular school day, visitors must remain in the office until escorted to the classroom or until your child comes to the office.

Parents, community members, or media representatives who would like to arrange for extended classroom visitations or to come for a specific purpose should call ahead to determine a specific date and time.

ITEMS PROHIBITED AT SCHOOL

The following guidelines are for the safety and success of all the students and staff at Halifax.

Students may not bring the following items to school:

- ❖ **Money:** unless it is for a specific purpose. Money brought in for a specific purpose should be placed in a sealable plastic bag and labeled with the amount, name, and grade of your student.
- ❖ **Toys, pets, iPads, electronic tablets, electronic gaming devices, and trading cards** to school unless they have special permission from the teacher or school principal.
- ❖ **Wheeled vehicles**, such as: **bikes, skateboards, rollerblades**, etc. may not be used during the day.
- ❖ **Cell phones** are not allowed to be used during the day, unless for a teacher approved academic purpose. If a student is caught using a cell phone during the day, it will be turned into the office and must be picked up by a parent or guardian at the end of the day.
 - You are welcome to contact your child by calling the school at any time during the day, our number is (802) 368-2888. Your child is welcome to contact you using the school phone at any point in the day. **Do not text or call your child on their cellphone during the school day.**

In the event students violate any of these rules, the items **will be confiscated and returned only to a parent/guardian. We cannot be responsible for lost, broken or stolen items.**

Weapons, explosives, and other illegal and dangerous items are not allowed on school property, and such instances will be referred to law enforcement.

FIDGETS AT SCHOOL

Fidgets may be used at school to support student focus, regulation, and participation in learning. To ensure that fidgets do not become a distraction or interfere with learning, the following expectations apply:

- ❖ **One fidget per student:** Students may bring **one fidget** to school each day.
- ❖ **Appropriate fidgets only:** Fidgets must be small, quiet, and safe for classroom use.
- ❖ **No poppable fidgets:** Fidgets designed to be repeatedly popped, snapped, or made to produce distracting sounds are not permitted.
- ❖ **No liquid-filled fidgets:** Fidgets containing liquid, gel, or other loose substances are not permitted.
- ❖ **Learning comes first:** Fidgets may be used only when they support the student's ability to focus, regulate, or participate. They should not interfere with the student, classmates, or instruction.
- ❖ **Teacher discretion:** Teachers may ask a student to put away a fidget if it becomes distracting, is being misused, or interferes with learning.
- ❖ **School-provided alternatives:** When appropriate, staff may provide an alternative fidget or sensory tool that better meets a student's needs.

Students are responsible for bringing an appropriate fidget, keeping track of it, and using it appropriately. Students who violate our guidelines around fidgets will face the following progressive consequences:

First Offense

- Fidget(s) is/are confiscated and held in the classroom for the duration of the day.
- Student receives a reminder of the guidelines.

Second Offense

- Fidget(s) is/are confiscated held in the office for the duration of the day.
- Parent/guardian is notified.
- Fidget(s) returned to the student at the end of the school day.

Third Offense

- Fidget(s) is/are confiscated.
- A parent or guardian must retrieve the fidget from the school.

Fourth and Subsequent Offenses

- Fidget(s) is/are confiscated.
- Parent/guardian conference may be required.

- Additional disciplinary consequences may be assigned in accordance with the school's student conduct policy.

Students who refuse to surrender an inappropriate fidget when directed by a staff member are considered insubordinate and may receive additional disciplinary consequences, including in-school suspension or other consequences consistent with the Student Code of Conduct.

Fidgets are personal items and should not be shared, traded, or used by other students without permission.

When in doubt, ask a teacher before bringing a fidget to school.

Cell Phone and Personal Electronic Devices in School

To promote a safe, respectful, and distraction-free learning environment, students are expected to keep their full attention on instruction and school activities during the school day. Personal electronic devices can interfere with learning, social interaction, and student well-being. Therefore, the following policy applies to all middle school students.

Personal Electronic Devices

Personal electronic devices include, but are not limited to:

- ❖ Cell phones
- ❖ Smart watches and wearable communication devices
- ❖ Wireless earbuds and headphones
- ❖ Tablets and personal laptops
- ❖ Cameras and other internet-enabled electronic devices

Daily Expectations

Students are strongly encouraged to leave personal electronic devices at home.

Students who bring a cell phone or smartwatch to school must turn it in to their homeroom/advisory teacher or the main office immediately upon arrival. Devices will be secured and returned at dismissal, **students are responsible for collecting their devices each day.** The device may not be accessed at any time during the entirety of the school day without permission from school administration or supervising staff.

Wireless earbuds and headphones must also be turned into their homeroom/advisory teacher or the main office immediately upon arrival each school day unless specifically authorized by a staff member for an educational activity or as part of an approved accommodation.

The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal property.

Appropriate Use

Students may use personal electronic devices only:

- ❖ Before entering the school building (if permitted by staff supervision);
- ❖ After dismissal once the school day has ended; or
- ❖ During the instructional day only when specifically authorized by a teacher or administrator for an educational purpose or when required by an approved accommodation or health plan.

The use of social media, texting, gaming, streaming, or personal internet browsing during the school day is prohibited.

Using any personal electronic device or school-issued device to photograph, video record, or audio record students, staff, or school activities is prohibited unless specifically authorized by a staff member for an educational purpose. Unauthorized recording or distribution of images, video, or audio may result in additional disciplinary action.

Parent Communication

To minimize classroom disruptions, parents and guardians should not call or text students during the school day. If you need to contact your child during school hours, please call the main office at (802) 368-2888. Office staff will promptly relay urgent messages. Students who need to contact a parent or guardian during the school day may do so through the main office.

Violations of the Policy

Failure to follow this policy will result in progressive consequences.

First Offense

- Device is confiscated and held in the office until the end of the school day.
- Student receives a reminder of the policy.

Second Offense

- Device is confiscated.
- Parent/guardian is notified.
- Device is returned to the student at the end of the school day.

Third Offense

- Device is confiscated.
- A parent or guardian must retrieve the device from the school.

Fourth and Subsequent Offenses

- Device is confiscated.
- Parent/guardian conference may be required.
- Additional disciplinary consequences may be assigned in accordance with the school's student conduct policy.

Students who refuse to surrender a device when directed by a staff member are considered insubordinate and may receive additional disciplinary consequences, including in-school suspension or other consequences consistent with the Student Code of Conduct.

Emergency Situations

During a school emergency, students should follow staff directions and school safety procedures. Parents and guardians should communicate with the school through established emergency communication channels rather than contacting students directly by personal device.

Exceptions

Exceptions may be made for:

- ❖ documented medical needs;
- ❖ assistive technology required by an IEP, Section 504 Plan, or other approved accommodation;
- ❖ other circumstances approved in advance by school administration.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action consistent with school procedures and Vermont law.

CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

Our code of conduct serves to create a clear understanding of the behavioral and learning expectations of each student at Halifax Elementary School. The Code serves to promote a safe and equitable learning environment for all students and holds everyone accountable for their actions.

PHILOSOPHY OF DISCIPLINE

Our goal is to promote and instruct students in creating a positive, safe, secure, civil, and orderly learning environment for everyone in the school community. This will be achieved through a system of classroom and school management practices, supported by consistent, clear, and fair disciplinary procedures. The foundation of our school culture is caring and kindness, which help build a comfortable, safe, and productive community.

Discipline policies apply not only at school but also during school-sponsored activities and on school-provided transportation, whether on or off school grounds. We believe in teaching students that they are responsible for their own behavior, including respecting the rights of others. Effective discipline procedures focus on developing positive, pro-social attitudes and conduct, and encourages self-discipline, self-regulation, and accountability.

These policies are designed to promote respect for oneself, others, and the school environment and community. As part of the process, reasonable efforts will be made to help students gain the skills and motivation needed to improve their behavior. Establishing school-wide expectations empowers students to make thoughtful, responsible choices.

We have developed these discipline policies and plans pursuant to Vermont educational law, article 16 V.S.A. § 1161a.

STUDENT STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR

Students are required to follow our School Guidelines cooperatively and consistently. Our guidelines lines are:

- **Be Safe**
- **Be Gentle**
- **Be Kind**

[Page 6](#) of this handbook covers the School Guidelines in more detail.

DEFINITION OF BEHAVIORS and CONSEQUENCES

In any event a student engages in any of the following behaviors, the school is obligated to respond fairly and consistently at all times.

FIGHTING

Physical aggression and fighting are very serious offenses, which we will not tolerate. Students involved in a fight or act of physical aggression will be subject to suspension or other disciplinary action. While every effort is made to be fair, virtually every fight involves shared responsibility. As a result, each student involved will be subject to disciplinary action. In addition to other disciplinary action, a student involved in physical aggression/fighting must complete a conflict resolution assignment or similar activity designed by the principal, the student's teacher, or other designee.

Often, students know the factors leading to a fight in advance. A student who suspects that another student may draw her/him into a fight should seek assistance from a teacher or other adult in preventing the fight.

Assault, physical abuse, making threats of bodily harm, or inappropriate gestures directed at students or staff will result in disciplinary actions. Taunting, baiting, inciting and/or encouraging a fight, verbal abuse, swearing, spitting at others, disruptions or other violations of school rules will also result in disciplinary actions.

INSUBORDINATION

Insubordination is the refusal of a student to obey a reasonable request made by a staff member or other adult regarding their behavior. Insubordination is unacceptable and will result in suspensions.

VANDALISM

Students who deface, break or otherwise damage school property or the property of others face disciplinary action and will be expected to repair or pay for such property.

SMOKING

The possession and/or use of cigarettes or any other tobacco products (including vaping and electronic cigarettes) are prohibited at all times at Halifax Elementary School. This prohibition includes all students, staff and guests and includes the school building, grounds, vehicles, field trips and other school-sponsored activities. In addition, students are not to smoke on public property, including roadways, adjacent to school property. In accordance with state law, any student found using and/or in possession of tobacco products will be reported to the police.

DRESS CODE

Halifax School encourages students to dress in a respectful, practical manner according to the time of year and weather conditions. Clothing should allow students to participate in a wide variety of activities without revealing private portions of their bodies. Clothing should not obscure the ability for staff to reasonably identify a child at any time, especially in the event of an emergency, unless it is part of traditional/religious practices or an approved costume for an event. Please label whatever your child brings to school with the child's name. Halifax Elementary School will not tolerate T-shirts with sexually suggestive slogans, drug/alcohol advertising, or hateful or other inappropriate messages. Halifax School may ask students whose attire does not meet the guidelines, as stated for school, to call home for a change of clothing or to cover up in some way. **Students will remove hats and lower hoods while inside the school building.**

Students Accessing the Bathroom During Instructional Time

Each classroom has a clear procedure for students to access the bathroom during the day. Students are always encouraged to use the restroom during non-instructional times. Teachers will never punitively withhold a bathroom visit request from a student.

Helpful Links Related to our Code of Conduct and Discipline

Definition of Behaviors and Consequences

- contains the above information *plus* our disciplinary procedure chart

Terms and Descriptions of Behavior Expectations

- contains definitions and descriptions of behaviors

DUE PROCESS PROCEDURES:

Parent notification and due process procedures apply to all these types of removal from school.

- ➔ For removal from school, the administration will contact parents/guardians or their designated emergency and ask them to accompany the student home. If the principal cannot notify the parent/guardian or emergency contact, we will detain the student at school or at another safe and secure setting for the remainder of the school day.

- Parents will have the opportunity for a hearing with the principal or her/his designee. The principal will give notice to the student of the charges and proposed consequences, an explanation of the evidence against the student, an opportunity for the student to tell her/his side of the story **and** for the parent/guardian to be heard. A final decision will be made available in writing to the parent/guardian. In the event of removal from school, the parent/guardian will participate in a reentry conference as grounds for the student to return to the regular classroom.
- For a student with a disability or other qualifying condition, there are the following additional due process steps according to Vermont Board of Education Rules 4313, 2362 and 2365:
 - The principal and/or the LEA will determine if the conduct (misbehavior) is related to the disability or the other qualifying condition.
 - If the behavior is determined by the EST to be related to the disability or other qualifying condition, the EST may decide, in the best interests of the student, to change placement or program.
 - If the behavior is determined by the EST not to be related to the disability or other qualifying condition, then disciplinary consequences are enforced just as they would be for a student without that disability or other qualifying condition.

HARASSMENT, HAZING AND BULLYING

The Halifax Elementary School District intends to provide an orderly, civil, and positive learning environment. The school must be safe, comfortable, and free from intimidation, hostility or other offenses. **Harassment, hazing, or bullying will never be tolerated.** Formal complaints of harassment, hazing, or bullying should be reported to Mr. Ross Momaney or Mr. Joel Howes.

Reports of harassment, hazing and bullying will be thoroughly investigated and parents will be notified when investigations are initiated and when they are complete. For violations of any harassment, bullying, hazing, or discrimination policy, there will be a meeting with parent, student and principal and/or their designee.

If harassment, hazing or bullying is substantiated, consequences will range from education to serious discipline, depending on the ages of the students and the nature of the offense. Students who knowingly falsely accuse others of harassment, hazing or bullying are also subject to discipline. Please note that the law now states that principals may issue consequences for:

misconduct not on a school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity where the misconduct can be shown to pose a clear and substantial interference with another student's right to access educational programs. (VT School Law 16.1162)

Harassment is defined as an incident or incidents of verbal, written, visual, or physical conduct based on or motivated by a student's or a student's family member's actual or perceived membership in a protected category: **race, creed, color, national origin, marital status, disability, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity**, that happens **over a period of time and is repeated**,

or a single severe incident. (VT School Law 16.11) Please note that the law has been amended to include protection from harassment done by “electronic means.” Sexual harassment is also a form of unlawful harassment. See Halifax School Board Policy #4.9/F24 for more detail.

Hazing means any act committed by a person, whether individually or in concert with others, against a student in connection with pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization which is affiliated with an educational institution; and which is intended to have the effect of, or should reasonably be expected to have the effect of, humiliating, intimidating or demeaning the student or endangering the mental or physical health of a student. Hazing also includes soliciting, directing, aiding, or otherwise participating actively or passively in the above acts. Hazing may occur on or off the campus of an educational institution. (VT School Law 16.11)

Bullying means any overt act or combination of acts directed against a student by another student or group of students and which: happens over a period of time and is repeated; is intended to ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate the student; and occurs during the school day on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity, or before or after the school day on a school bus or at a school-sponsored activity. Can be based on attributes such as weight, clothing, residence, height, socioeconomics, and age. (VT School Law 16.11) Please note that the law has been amended to include protection from bullying done by “electronic means.” Feel free to contact the school office for more information.

SECLUSION AND RESTRAINT

The Vermont State Board of Education rules on seclusion and restraint went into effect on August 15, 2011. These rules require public schools to annually inform parents of enrolled students of the policies’ pertaining to the use of physical restraint and seclusion, the intent to use positive behavioral strategies and support and its intention to avoid the use of physical restraint or seclusion to address targeted student behavior. For more information, see school policy D-15.

DANGEROUS INSTRUMENTS & WEAPONS

Dangerous instruments and weapons (including, but not limited to, knives and bullets) are prohibited. The school will confiscate any dangerous instrument or weapon and turn it over to the police. Students are prohibited from bringing smoke bombs, firecrackers, or any other type of explosive device onto school grounds. Students violating any part of this prohibition will be subject to disciplinary actions as well as criminal proceedings. Possession of a gun or other weapon will lead to an immediate suspension, and expulsion hearing before the school board, and referral to law enforcement. These policies are to be in compliance with the federal Gun Free Schools Act of 1994, and the following statutes: 13 V.S.A. §4016, 16 V.S.A. §1166, and Section 921 of Title 18 of the United States Code.

SCHOOL AND OFFICIAL NOTICES

The following policies and procedures relate to enrollment, student registration, parent/guardian rights, and confidentiality.

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT & REGISTRATION

All students who are new to Halifax Elementary School must provide the school with proof of age, academic records, immunization records, and student emergency information forms. We require proof of guardianship for students who are not living with their natural parents. All kindergarten entrants are subject to the following enrollment policy:

“A student must attain the age of five years, as of September 1st. All incoming students will be screened, evaluated and recommended for placement. Parents have the right to appeal to the School Board any decision made by the principal and his/her staff.”

PARENTS’ RIGHTS and RESPONSIBILITIES

Public Law 94-142 assures a free and appropriate public education for all children and assures that the rights of these children and their parents are protected.

Parents have the right to:

- ❖ A free and appropriate public education for their child including an individualized program
- ❖ Informed consent before any major change is made in the educational program for their child
- ❖ Examine and challenge their child’s record
- ❖ Have their child educated in the least restrictive school setting
- ❖ Question their child’s educational program
- ❖ Be informed of due process procedures
- ❖ Have their child properly tested in their child’s main language and in a way which does not discriminate against their child
- ❖ Full knowledge about special education programs for their child
- ❖ And the responsibility to:
 - Make sure their children between the ages 7 and 16 attend school regularly
 - Correct, or request assistance in correcting, physical and other conditions that impair the pupils learning
 - Be **involved** in the planning of their child’s individual education program.

CHILD FIND NOTICE

Under Public Law 94-142 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, all children need, deserve, and have a right to a public education. Federal law states that the Windham Southwest Supervisory Union and Halifax Elementary School, have a duty to ensure that this right to a free education should also be available to all handicapped children with disabilities. The Windham

Southwest Supervisory Union along with the Halifax Elementary School District need to know if there are handicapped children, or children or youth with disabilities, between the ages of 3 and 21 years who are out of school and not receiving any education at all. In addition, Windham Southwest Supervisory Union and Halifax Elementary School wish to locate all infants 0- 2 years 11 months who may be disabled and in need of an evaluation. If there is such a handicapped child, or a child with disabilities, in your home or neighborhood, please write or phone: Dr. Valerie Ray, Director of Special Education, 1 School Street Wilmington, VT 05363, 802-464-1300.

Federal and State laws require written notice to a parent of a student with a disability within a reasonable period of time before the school district proposes to initiate or change the identification, evaluation or educational placement of the student or the provision of a free, appropriate, public education to the student, or whenever it refuses to do the same. Southern Valley Schools follow rule 2365.1.1 of the Vermont State Board of Education Manual of Rules and Practices.

Federal and State laws require the provision of a notice of “procedural safeguards” whenever a child is initially referred for a special education evaluation, whenever an Individual Education Plan meeting is called, whenever a reevaluation is sought, and whenever a due process complaint has been filed.

1. The types of directory information that will be released;
2. The right to refuse to let the school release particular or all directory information on their own children; and
3. The period of time within which the parent has to notify the school that he or she does not wish to have the school designate some or all of the information about the parent’s child designated as directory information.

STUDENT RECORDS & CONFIDENTIALITY

Each child at Halifax Elementary School has a permanent record folder that is stored securely on site. These records include information such as copies of report cards, achievement test results, and other related school materials. If at any time you would like to look through your child’s records, please call the school to set up an appointment to do so. Parents have the right to inspect and review their child’s records, seek amendment of the record if it is inaccurate or misleading, consent to disclosure of personally identifiable student information except as provided for in the law, and file a complaint with the United States Department of Education if they believe the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) has been violated.

A parent wishing to amend the record of a student will bring the matter to the principal for review, explain the reason for any desired changes, and provide the new information. The principal will decide if the changes in question are necessary or legitimate and amend the records accordingly. Parents unsatisfied with these changes may follow the [Communication Procedure](#).

Any school employee with legitimate reasons to review a student’s record must receive official approval to do so by the principal. The principal will keep a written record of each record review, including the name of the reviewer, the name of the student whose records are reviewed, and the dates of the review. Personnel may remove records from the principal’s office to another secure location for

brief periods of time (*i.e.*, to a classroom with locked storage, such as a desk or file drawer), but records MUST remain in the building at all times until moved to another permanent location, such as a new school. Special Education records reside permanently in the Windham Southwest Supervisory Union central office. Building case managers will keep any special education records in a secured locked file within the school building.

FERPA POLICIES

34 C.F.R. Part 99 (the federal regulations promulgated pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g et seq.) requires an annual notification to parents of their rights under the Act. Such notice must include that parents have the right to:

- ❖ Inspect and review their children's records;
- ❖ Seek amendment of the record if it is inaccurate or misleading;
- ❖ Consent to disclosure of personally identifiable student information except as provided in 34 C.F.R. §99.31; and
- ❖ If they believe the Act has been violated, file a complaint with the Family Policy Compliance Office of the United States Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington D.C., 20202.
- ❖ In addition, the annual notice must include:
 - The procedure for exercising the right to inspect and review education records,
 - The procedure for requesting amendment of the records, and
 - The criteria the school uses for disclosing student records to persons within the school who have legitimate educational interests in reviewing the records.
- ❖ Finally, if the school does disclose "directory information" (e.g. names and addresses of students, date of birth, field of study, academic or other honors attained, participation on sports teams, etc.), and most schools do in some form or another, the school must notify parents of:
 - The types of directory information that will be released;
 - The right to refuse to let the school release particular or all directory information on their own children; and
 - The period of time within which the parent has to notify the school that he or she does not wish to have the schools designate some or all of the information about the parent's child designated as directory information.

PROTECTION OF PUPILS RIGHTS ACT: SURVEYS, SCREENINGS, AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

- ❖ Parents have the right to inspect surveys created by a "third party" (meaning not federally funded) before administration of the survey.
- ❖ The school will notify parents in advance of such surveys, and they can arrange through the principal's office to read the surveys on school premises. Parents are not to copy surveys or take them out of the building.

- ❖ The school will administer surveys of sensitive material in such a way that students may not see the responses of others, and in such a way that those administering the survey may not observe identifiable student responses.
- ❖ Parents may review instructional materials used as part of the educational curriculum with individual teachers by appointment.
- ❖ The school will notify parents in advance of any physical examinations or screenings; the collection or disclosure of student information for marketing purposes; parents have the right to inspect such screening instruments for health or marketing in advance of their use by making an appointment with the principal.
- ❖ Parents may opt out of having their children participate in third party surveys, collection of personal data for marketing purposes, and non-emergency, invasive physical examinations or screenings by informing the principal in writing of this decision.

HEALTH SERVICES

SCHOOL NURSE

The school nurse, David Nicol, a PPCNP-BC, PMHS, is licensed by the VT Board of Nursing and the Department of Education. School nurses help families acquire the most out of the school experience. School nurses provide an important link between your child, yourself, and your physicians. The nurse is a resource person and consultant to students, parents, faculty/staff, and the community.

Examples of health and wellness services provided at the school include: first aid/emergency care, chronic disease management, assisting families to acquire health and dental services; including locating physicians/dentists and assistance in obtaining insurance as needed, and development of health plans. Other services include medication administration, management of health records, monitoring and updating immunization records, providing hearing and vision screenings, and preparing school nurse reports.

Mr. Nicol will be available at Halifax Elementary School one day a week. His schedule will be shared after the start of school. He can be contacted via phone at at Halifax Elementary School at 802-368-2888, or via email at dnicol@wswsu49.org

HEALTH AND WELLNESS PAGE ON SCHOOL WEBSITE

Parents/guardians are encouraged to visit the updated Health and Wellness Page located on the school website. The Health and Wellness Page consists of live links to review and print school related health forms, quick links to educational health sites, guidelines of when to keep your child home related to illness, and a list of health resources/services available in our community.

TRANSGENDER AND GENDER NONCONFORMING STUDENTS

All students deserve a safe and supportive school environment to progress academically and developmentally. The [Continuing Best Practices for Schools Regarding Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students](#) are laws and guidelines which provide direction for our school and families

so that we can address situations that may arise concerning the needs of transgender and gender nonconforming students.

MANDATED REPORTING

As educators and mandated reporters, it is our duty to help protect students from abuse and neglect. Act 60 of 2015 provides that any mandated reporter who **reasonably suspects** abuse or neglect of a child shall report in accordance with the provisions of Section 4914 of this Title within 24 hours of the time information regarding the suspected abuse or neglect was first received or observed. 33 V.S.A. § 4913(c). Parents may [Review the joint memo from VDH and AOE regarding Mandated Reporting.](#)

NEW AMERICANS

We have a responsibility to ensure that all of our students feel safe and supported. This occurs when we create school cultures that are responsive to the needs of the children in our care, and our families.

Under Federal law, undocumented children and young adults have the same right to attend public primary and secondary schools as do U.S. citizens and permanent residents (Plyler vs. Doe, 457 U.S. 202 (1982.)). And, under state law, all Vermont children, including undocumented children are required to attend school until the mandated age of 16. Meeting this obligation means going beyond telling families to enroll their student(s). It includes working proactively to ensure they feel safe, supported and welcomed.

Public schools may not:

- ❖ Deny or terminate a student's enrollment on the basis of actual or perceived immigration status.
- ❖ Treat a student differently to verify legal residency in the United States.
- ❖ Engage in any practices that have the effect of discouraging students from enrolling or attending school based on their immigration status.
- ❖ Require students or their parents to disclose their immigration status or inquire of students or parents in ways that may expose their undocumented status.
- ❖ Deny or terminate a student's enrollment due to the student's or parent's failure to provide a social security number.

STUDENT HEALTH/EMERGENCY FORMS

Student Health/Emergency Forms must be updated annually and submitted at the beginning of every school year. These forms not only provide updated emergency contact information in the event of illness, they also serve, in the event of an emergency, as medical history and consent to treat. Please inform the school nurse throughout the school year of any changes in your child's medical status, major injuries, immunizations, and changes of address/phone #'s. Home-schooled students participating in any school program must also have this form on file.

BRIGHT FUTURES GUIDELINES: Yearly Well Child Exams Recommended

The American Academy of Pediatrics' Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children and Adolescents (4th Ed. <https://brightfutures.aap.org/materials-and-tools/guidelines-and-pocket-guide/Pages/default.aspx>) is a primary building block for assuring the wellness of all of Vermont's children. It promotes the medical/dental home model (having 'familiar' providers who know you and your family). It promotes the medical/dental home model (having 'familiar' providers who know you and your family). Per these guidelines, an annual comprehensive well care exam is highly recommended for all children and also those who want to play competitive sports. The mission of Bright Futures is to promote and improve the health, education, and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, families, and communities. The four goals of an annual well-care visit are disease detection, disease prevention, health promotion, and anticipatory guidance. **All major health insurance companies in Vermont pay for one complete well exam per year.** A visit with your provider for sickness or an injury is not considered a well care exam.

LOOKING FOR HEALTH INSURANCE?

Families in need of health insurance can visit **VERMONT HEALTH CONNECT** online at <https://portal.healthconnect.vermont.gov/VTHBELand/welcome.action> or call toll-free at 1-855-899-9600. A personal Health Navigator is also available to help you find the right health coverage for your family. To make an appointment or to ask questions, please call our local Health Navigator-Southeastern Vermont Community Action via phone at 802-722-4575 ext. 153. If you have any questions or would like assistance with this, please contact the school nurse.

DENTAL HOME RESOURCE CENTER

Establishing a Dental Home means that your child's oral health care is delivered in a comprehensive, continuously accessible, coordinated and family-centered way by a licensed dentist. Families can request assistance with establishing a dental home by contacting the school nurse. To learn more about dental homes, visit the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry website at <http://www.aapd.org/advocacy/dentalhome>. Further information regarding Vermont's Dental Periodicity Schedule (recommendations of preventative pediatric oral health) can be found on the Health and Wellness Page on the school website.

FIRST AID

We take every possible precaution for the safety of the students, but sometimes accidents occur. In the case of minor accidents, first aid is administered by the school nurse or delegated staff. If a more serious injury or illness occurs, an ambulance will be called first, then the student's primary caregiver. Every attempt will be made to contact a parent/guardian after medical services have been contacted. If we are unable to contact a parent/guardian, a call will be made to the emergency contact person listed on the health form. If it is deemed necessary for the student to be seen for further medical evaluation, the student will be transported to the emergency room. *Students should try to visit the school nurse for non-urgent matters in between classes or during a break period.*

ACCIDENT INSURANCE

Accident insurance for students is available at low cost. Students participating in after-school activities will need either school insurance or coverage from another source. Information is available upon request.

ILLNESS

Keeping your child home when they are too sick to participate comfortably at school or might spread a contagious disease to other students is essential for their success and the health and wellbeing of others. If your child has been diagnosed with a *contagious disease* (strep throat, pink eye, chickenpox, etc.), please contact/notify the school nurse or staff so other students' parents and school staff may be alerted of the symptoms. Deciding when a child should stay home from school can be difficult to determine at times. If unsure, please keep your child home and call the school nurse or delegated staff once school has started to consult and decide if they can come to school. Remember that we cannot provide care to significantly ill children. Parents are to keep children home and resting until they are well, including a full 24 hours on an antibiotic if one was prescribed and 24 hours free from fever, vomiting and/or diarrhea. You will be called to pick up your child if he/she becomes ill during the school day.

GUIDELINE OF WHEN TO KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME DUE TO ILLNESS:

- **Fever of 100 or above-** children need to be fever free for 24 hours **without** the use of fever reducing medication before returning to school
- If the student has been on **antibiotics for less than 24 hours**-requires to be on antibiotic for 24 hours before returning to school
- **Diarrhea or Vomiting in the last 24 hours**
- **Fever with a rash**
- **Eye Discharge/Pink Eye/Bacterial Conjunctivitis-** thick green/yellow eye drainage may be contagious, if diagnosed as Pink Eye-requires to be on antibiotic for 24 hours before returning to school
- **Strep throat-** requires to be on antibiotic for 24 hours before returning to school
- **Sore Throat/Swollen Glands in Neck-** especially with fever (may be strep throat and should be seen by healthcare provider)
- **Chickenpox-** child must stay out of school until all lesions have crusted over
- **Frequent or persistent cough**
- **Frequent or persistent complaints of pain-**child should be seen by healthcare provider
- **Green nasal discharge-** child should be seen by healthcare provider as this condition is sometimes contagious and may require treatment

MEDICATIONS AT SCHOOL

For the safety of all children, students are not allowed to be in possession of any medications of any type at school, including over the counter medications (unless proper paperwork is on file, like a self

carry inhaler). All medications must be directly delivered, by an adult, to the school nurse or school staff.

School Stock of Medications

School stock of medications include: Tylenol (Acetaminophen), Motrin (Ibuprofen), Tums/Antacid, Aloe Vera Gel, Triple Antibiotic ointment, Sunscreen, Vaseline (Petroleum Jelly), Ophthalmic Eye Wash, and Benadryl (Diphenhydramine). Benadryl is for allergic reactions ONLY (unless a signed medication form is on file by the student's healthcare provider).

Emergency Epinephrine Auto-Injectors are available in the event that a student or any other person within the school develops an unknown/undiagnosed allergic reaction. School stock medications will only be provided if a parent/guardian signed permission for (area on annual health form) or gave verbal consent at time of need, with the exception of emergency epinephrine, which will be administered if it is thought the student or any other person within the school is having an allergic reaction.

Prescription and Non Prescription Medications

Prescription medications must be delivered TO and FROM school by an adult and handed in to the school nurse or school staff. Students who are on prescription medications are not allowed to carry medications back and forth from school, as this is a safety hazard to all children and will not be allowed (medications will not be allowed to be sent home with students on bus). Please make arrangements for an adult to deliver and pick up prescription medications from school for refills, school vacations, etc. **As a reminder, many pharmacies will provide 2 labeled prescription bottles, free of charge, for prescriptions such as ADHD medications or antibiotics, so medications can be divided with one bottle for home and one bottle supplied to school.** Prescription Medication Forms must be filled out annually and are required to be signed by the parent/guardian and healthcare provider, prior to the first day of school, for the medication to be administered. Prescription Medication Forms need to be filled out each time there is a change in medication, dose, route, or frequency. For those with a history of asthma or an allergy, an action plan is recommended in addition to the Prescription Medication Form. Action plans are described below. It is best practice to have medications, epi-pens, and inhalers picked up at the end of every school year.

Any over the counter medication other than the available school stock requires a Non Prescription Permission Form to be signed and on file by a parent/guardian, before the medication can be administered. **The student must receive the first dose of any medication, prescription or non prescription, at home to determine that there are no side effects or undesired reactions to the medication.** Prescription, Non Prescription, and Asthma/Allergy Action Plan Forms can be provided upon request or printed by visiting the Health and Wellness Page on the school website.

ASTHMA AND ASTHMA ACTION PLANS

Asthma is a serious chronic disease that inflames and narrows the airways in the lungs. Asthma can cause recurring attacks of wheezing, chest tightness, shortness of breath, and coughing. Asthma affects

people of all ages, but it most often starts during childhood. Asthma can be controlled by taking medicine and avoiding the triggers that can cause an attack.

People with asthma should routinely check in with their healthcare provider and develop an **Asthma Action Plan**. Asthma Action Plans are used to help identify triggers in the environment to change or avoid, recognize symptoms, reinforce when and how to use medications, and determine when to seek medical attention. Students with a documented history of asthma, with the use of an inhaler, are recommended to have a signed Asthma Action Plan on file for guidance of management. This form is required to be signed by both the parent/guardian and healthcare provider. Please visit the Health and Wellness Page on the school website for further education regarding asthma, including proper use of a metered dose inhaler, links to resources for those who want to quit smoking, and Asthma Action Plan Forms. **If a child has outgrown asthma or an allergy, please have the child's doctor notify the school nurse in writing.**

ALLERGIES AND ALLERGY ACTION PLANS

Please notify the school nurse of any known allergies; including food, bees/insects, medications, latex, or other. Further education regarding allergies is located on the Health and Wellness Page of the school website. Students with a documented allergy with an epi-pen prescription, are recommended to have a signed **Allergy Action Plan** on file for guidance of management and treatment. This plan is required to be signed by both the parent/guardian and healthcare provider. Education about allergies and access to Allergy Action Plan Forms are available on the Health and Wellness Page on the school website or upon request. **If a child has outgrown an allergy, please have the child's doctor notify the school nurse in writing.**

IMMUNIZATIONS

Vermont's Immunization Rule, adopted pursuant to 18 V.S.A. 1123, requires that before entry to school, **students must have the required immunizations**. The purpose of the immunization requirements for school entry are to protect students, staff, and the visiting public against vaccine preventable diseases within schools. Medical or religious exemption forms are available and must be signed annually. Vermont's Immunization Rule requires vaccination of all children enrolled in center based or family child care, public or independent kindergarten, and elementary and secondary schools. An official immunization record must be presented to the school upon admission. If a student does not meet the vaccine requirements, or have a current school year exemption on file, the student may be temporarily admitted only after the approval of a school nurse or administrator. Vermont's Immunization Rule can be accessed at the following website:

http://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2016/12/REG_immunization.pdf.

Further education and information regarding immunizations is provided on the Health and Wellness Page on the school website. Parents/ guardians are encouraged to visit this site to verify what immunizations are required for school entry and to confirm that their child is up to date. Any questions or concerns regarding immunizations can be forwarded to the school nurse. **Failure to meet immunization requirements may result in exclusion from school.**

CONCUSSION AND OTHER HEAD INJURIES- NEED TO KEEP

All athletes, parents, and guardians can access concussion guidelines through the following link: <http://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-healthy-safe-schools-concussion-guidelines.pdf>. Each youth athlete and parent/guardian shall annually sign a form acknowledging receipt of the concussion and other head injury guidelines. Coaches and referees of a contest are all required to be trained on how to recognize the symptoms of a concussion or other head injury. Training is also provided to school staff on how to recognize the symptoms of a concussion or other head injury. For further education regarding concussions and other head injuries, visit the Health and Wellness Page on the school website.

VISION AND HEARING SCREENINGS

Vermont law requires schools to test the vision and hearing of students. Vision screenings are performed for Preschool, Kindergarten, 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th, and 12th grades. Hearing screenings are performed for Preschool, Kindergarten, 1st, 3rd, 5th, and 7th grades. In addition, hearing screenings are also required for grades 7, 9 and 12 and will be determined upon the school that the student transfers to.

If you think your child is having problems with vision or hearing and your child is in a grade not due to be tested, please notify the school nurse to arrange for a screening. If the nurse has any concerns regarding the results of a student's vision or hearing screening, a letter of referral will be sent home. Home-schooled students are not routinely screened unless special arrangements are made in advance by the parent/guardian with the school nurse.

HEAD LICE

Head lice can be a nuisance but they have not been shown to spread disease. However, per the National Association of School Nurses (NASN), secondary bacterial infections of the skin resulting from contaminated scratching and related lesions can occur. Personal hygiene or cleanliness in the home or school has nothing to do with getting head lice. Head lice do not jump or fly but crawl very fast.

Per updated guidelines from the Centers 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. Nits may persist after treatment, but successful treatment should kill crawling lice. Older "No Nit" policies that included mass screenings of students and "head lice outbreak" letters are no longer recommended and are shown to increase community anxiety and increase social stigma, causing embarrassment of the affected student.

If a student is suspected of having head lice, a call will be placed to the parent/guardian and he/she can determine whether to pick the student up early from school to start treatment or if the child should go home at the end of the day. If your child is thought to have head lice, the school nurse will provide education and treatment options. Parents/guardians are encouraged to check and comb student's hair every 2-3 days for up to 2-3 weeks to help decrease the risk of reinfestation, per CDC

recommendations. Head to head contact and sharing of hats and combs are a known way to pass head lice from one person to another, therefore hat and comb sharing are discouraged.

LOCAL SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY

Each local educational agency (LEA) that participates in the National School Lunch Program or other Federal Child Nutrition programs are required by federal law to establish a local school wellness policy for all schools under its jurisdiction. To learn more about healthy snacks, healthy fundraisers, “fit and healthy kids”, screen time and activity, and more about your child’s Local Wellness Policy, visit the Health and Wellness Page on the school website. Information regarding your Local Wellness Policy can be found [here](#).

FRAGRANCE FREE FACILITY

Please be aware that staff and students might have allergies or sensitivities to certain fragrances, we ask that staff, parents, and students respect these conditions by not wearing cologne, perfumes, lotions, ect. which may trigger such reactions at school.

NUT FREE GUIDELINES

According to the CDC, 1 in every 13 children has some kind of food allergy, for Halifax, this could mean that there is at least one student in each classroom that has a food allergy. In an effort to ensure our school is a safe environment for those with allergies, our school is **peanut free**. Our nut free guidelines cover **only peanuts**, not other types of tree nuts (walnut, almond, hazelnut, pecan, cashew and pistachio).

The following **can not** be brought into school at any time:

- ❖ Peanut butter or peanuts
- ❖ Any food product that contains peanuts
- ❖ Any food product where peanut is an ingredient or states “contains peanuts” or “may contain traces of peanuts”

The following **can** be brought into school at any time

- ❖ Soy butter, sun butter and non-peanut nut butters
- ❖ Packaged foods with labels that do not have peanuts listed in the ingredients
- ❖ Any food product that lists a tree nut as an ingredient or states “contains tree nuts” or “may contain traces of tree nuts”

Keep in mind that we are joining a growing large number of nut-free schools. Every three minutes, someone enters an ER due to a food-allergy reaction. On average, 300,000 children visit the doctor for treatment of food allergy symptoms. **Children are most likely to have their first food reaction at school.** To keep all our students safe to the best of our ability, Halifax is striving to be a nut-free school.

Halifax Home School Compact

This compact is a voluntary agreement made by all school community members. It describes how our school, parents, and students will work together in fostering a positive relationship with the common goal of academic success and emotional well-being. For students to do well in school, it is important for families and their school to work together. This compact outlines each of our roles in this partnership.

Principal/Teachers agree to the following:

- Create a welcoming, safe and supportive learning environment by demonstrating awareness, consideration, validation, respect, honesty, sensitivity and care
- Provide data-driven, high-quality instruction that supports each student
- Hold students accountable to high standards for their academics, social engagement, and behavior throughout the day
- Be respectful, responsible, safe, and ready to engage students each day
- Communicate regularly and proactively with parents regarding student progress
- Demonstrate agility, creativity, flexibility in thought and actions while taking into consideration various views, roles, and situations
- Be available to listen and respond effectively, to answer questions and discuss concerns
- Provide opportunities for improvement by demonstrating care through conflict resolution and repair of harm
- Inspire empathy by listening to, engaging with, and caring for the feelings, emotions, and experiences of others

We ask Students to agree to the following:

- Be respectful, responsible, safe and ready to learn each day
- Come to school every day and on time
- Give their best effort at school and with their homework
- Listen to and care for the feelings, emotions, and experiences of others by being aware, considerate, sensitive and respectful
- Practice being flexible and creative in my thoughts and actions, while applying themselves to the best of their ability to complete all work
- Be honest, demonstrate care, honor commitments and seek help as needed
- Participate in debates while seeking diverse perspectives by listening and responding respectfully
- Set the intention to share about their daily experiences in school

We ask Parents and Guardians to agree to the following:

- Ensure that their child is present, on time, and prepared for school
- Communicating absences in a timely manner

- Check their child's backpack each day and return necessary paperwork as soon as possible
- Connect with the school by attending conferences, school events and communicating with teachers regularly
- Be involved in their child's learning by asking questions and providing feedback when appropriate
- Communicate any changes in their child's life or routine when possible
- Regularly talk to their child about their school experiences on a regular basis
- Refrain from communicating through use of cell phones during the school day

Helpful links

- ❖ [Halifax School Website](#)
- ❖ [Parent/Teacher conference form](#)
- ❖ [Continuing Best Practices for Schools Regarding Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students](#)
- ❖ [Review the joint memo from VDH and AOE regarding Mandated Reporting.](#)

- ❖ Definition of Behaviors and Consequences [LINK](#)
- ❖ Discipline Procedures Chart [LINK](#)