



Thetford Elementary School
Parent & Student Handbook
2026-2027
[Thetford Elementary School](#)

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School Contact Information and Leadership Directory

Thetford Board of School Directors:

Nicholas Cook, Board Chair

Mary Chin, Board Member

Casey Necheles, Board Member

Lexi Sargent, Board Member

School Board Email: thetfordboard@oesu.org

Orange East Supervisory Union

Bradford Vermont

802-222-5216

Ms. Heather Lawler: Superintendent ext. 108

Thetford Elementary School

802-785-2426

Ms. Sarah Jalbert: Interim Principal ext. 202

Ms. Melissa Wellikoff: Dean of Students ext. 203

Mrs. Bridget Veracka: Administrative Assistant ext. 201

Mrs. Cynthia Odell: Administrative Assistant ext. 205

This handbook provides detailed information to our school community of students and parents. The information disseminated throughout is not intended to cover *all* policies, rules, and regulations used at TES. *Some* policies and administrative procedures are included in this handbook. The Policy Manual for the Thetford Town School Board is available in the Superintendent's Office or on our School Board website. *This handbook is subject to change during the academic year.*

School Board Meetings

Regular meetings of the Thetford School Board are held on the second Tuesday of each month beginning at 6:00 PM. Agendas and minutes are posted in the school lobby, in the Town Clerk's office, and at the Thetford Hill Post Office. Parents and community members are encouraged to attend.

The school board's function is to maintain a policy and oversight role. The school board policy provides the superintendent and principal with the necessary direction to operate the school. The school board is responsible for, but is not limited to, providing leadership in the following categories:

- Establishing policies and procedures
- Overseeing the administration of the school
- Managing and maintaining school property
- Maintaining an adequate financial system, including proper accounting and reporting
- Employing professionals and staff
- Executing contracts and applying for grants

It is important to emphasize that the board provides policy oversight and does not involve itself in the daily operations of the school.

Mission

Thetford Elementary School is a collaborative community that cultivates the whole child.

Vision

TES promotes a balanced approach to personal growth through a vibrant educational environment. We emphasize life-long learning, nurture individual pathways, and foster healthy, contributing global citizens.

We Value

Community. We connect our students to communities both near and far in order to help them to develop into global citizens with strong civic responsibility.

Continuous Improvement. We are committed to ongoing learning through professional learning opportunities and close collaboration.

Positive Environment. We foster a school atmosphere that is physically and emotionally safe where all members are well-known, cared for, and inspired to do their best.

Engagement. We create authentic learning experiences through an interdisciplinary approach towards state and national standards.

Individuality. We meet each student where they are and provide challenges appropriate for growth.

Creativity. We encourage our students and staff to express themselves, innovate, and approach curriculum in novel ways.

Sustainability. We encourage choices that contribute to a healthy body and mind. We strive to make TES a positive contributor to our environment by modeling sustainable practices.

TES School Hours

The school day officially begins at 8:10 a.m. This is when we expect all children to be in their classrooms ready to learn. Children may be dropped off between 8:00 a.m. and 8:10 a.m. The school day ends at 2:45 p.m. Please make sure your child knows their after-school plans and that those plans are communicated to school personnel (Main Office and Classroom Teacher) well in advance of dismissal.

Academic Program

Thetford Elementary School is a collaborative community that cultivates the whole child. Our vision is to create value for life-long learning, nurture individual pathways, and foster healthy, contributing global citizens. We use a variety of research-based methods and instructional practices to maximize student progress toward state and national standards.

Vermont is one of forty-two states to have adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). This set of K-12 national standards is research-based and designed to provide clarity and consistency across state lines. The CCSS allows flexibility for educational experts to customize and deliver instruction most suitable to their student's learning styles. The Common Core State Standards come complete with their own standardized assessment known as the SBAC (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium). If you would like more information regarding the Common Core, or to view the standards, please visit www.corestandards.org.

Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) were adopted by the State of Vermont in June 2013. The NGSS is based on the "Framework K–12 Science Education" that was created by the National Research Council. They have three dimensions that are integrated into instruction at all levels. The first is core ideas, which consist of specific content and subject areas. The second is science and engineering practices. Students are expected not just to learn content but to understand the methods of scientists and engineers. The third is cross-cutting concepts: key underlying ideas that are common to a number of topics. The NGSS gives equal emphasis to engineering design and to scientific inquiry. In addition, they are aligned with the [Common Core State Standards](#) by grade and level of difficulty.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Arrival

Student drop-off time begins at 8:00 a.m. TES staff will be on duty at that time. There is no adult supervision provided before then, so please do not drop students off any earlier. Students dropped off by car should be done so from our school parking lot. If you are dropping your child (K-3) off from a different location, please ensure that they are supervised until they are on TES property. **Please do not use the front circle as it is reserved for bus drop-off and is closed to car traffic.** Upon arrival, students should immediately report to their classrooms. Students arriving after 8:10 are considered tardy and must check in at the office before heading to classrooms.

Dismissal

Students are dismissed at 2:50 p.m.

Bus Riders - Students riding buses board the buses from the front entrance of the school.

Parent pick-up - If you plan on picking up your child please enter the school parking lot and park in line next to the basketball court. For safety reasons, please have your child's name on a tag that is visible to the TES staff on duty. Please remain in your car during this process to ensure proper traffic flow and the safety of our staff and students. In extreme weather conditions, we will dismiss students from the cafeteria.

Students who have not been picked up by 3:00 p.m. will be brought to the office to wait for the arrival of a parent/caregiver.

Dismissal for Independent Walkers

Students in **4th grade and above** may be dismissed to walk home, to the Latham Library, or to Thetford Academy with parent/guardian permission.

Once dismissed, these students are expected to **promptly leave school grounds**. Students dismissed as independent walkers **are not permitted to remain on school property without supervision** and may not stay for the afterschool program (TASP) unless officially enrolled.

Supervision is not provided after dismissal, and students must follow all expectations related to safe and timely departure from school property.

Afterschool playground play

Parents are more than welcome to park their vehicles, socialize with other parents, and let their child(ren) play on the playground under their supervision. For safety and accountability reasons, please let your child's teacher know you are taking your child.

Attention: There must be a written note from a parent or guardian explaining any change in the regular pickup routine. (Please see additional expectations in the section on Bus and Transportation Expectations.) **Please notify the school of changes as early in the school day as possible.** Children who are released from school to someone other than their parent/caregiver need written or direct personal consent of parents, and the person picking up the child will be asked to provide TES staff with a photo ID.

The **BUS DROP-OFF AREA WILL BE CLOSED FROM 8:00 – 8:15 AND FROM 2:45 – 3:05.** Remember to drive and park safely. We ask that you please adhere to the “no parking” and handicapped parking spaces. Please be sure that you do not park in the designated "Fire Lanes" (including in the front driveway of the school) where in an emergency situation it is crucial to be able to bring in emergency vehicles. We work collaboratively with the Thetford Police and Fire Department to ensure that all safety regulations and laws are enforced.

Transportation and Bus Violations

Bus Routes and Drop Off

Bus Routes: *Riding a bus is a privilege, not a right.* Busing is available for all TES students. A schedule of bus routes will be provided to families at the beginning of the school year.

Changes in Bus Drop Off: If children are to be dropped off at a stop other than their regular stop they must have a signed note with specific instructions from the parent/guardian. Notes need to go directly to the child's classroom teacher and will be passed on to bus drivers.

Kindergarten, first, second, and third-grade students who ride the bus in the afternoon **must** have an adult in sight or the bus driver will not leave the child. They do not have to be at the bus stop, just visible and able to wave to the bus driver so the bus driver can see them. If the bus driver does not see an adult, he/she will bring them back to school.

Bus Violations

Bus Violations: Safe and appropriate behavior is expected of students at all times.

The following rules are enforced by the Butler Bus Company and TES:

- Follow the bus driver's directions the first time they are given
- Observe all school rules at all times
- Be kind, safe, and responsible to each other while boarding, while on the bus and while disembarking the bus
- Do not eat or drink on the bus
- Waste paper and other articles are not be thrown on the floor or out of the windows
- Do not damage or tamper with bus equipment

- Be safe by staying seated
- Be safe and responsible by keeping the body to self
- Be safe and responsible by maintaining an indoor voice

With some flexibility for the age of the child and severity of the offense...

Verbal Warning: When a rider causes a distraction to the driver by improper or excessive noise, getting out of the proper riding position, improper language or gestures, or impolite actions toward other riders, a verbal warning is given to the rider by the bus driver.

First Offense: A warning notice describing the incident will be sent home. This must be signed by the child's parent and returned to the principal. A first offense of sufficient seriousness may, at the principal's discretion, be treated as a second or third offense.

Second Offense: A warning notice clearly labeling the offense as a second offense will be sent home. The child will be suspended from riding the bus until the parent, child, and principal have met in order to address the incident.

Third Offense: A third offense notice (so labeled) will result in the suspension of the child's bus privileges for a period of time to be determined by the principal, up to the balance of the school year.

Idle-Free-Zone

TES is working to maintain an "idle-free zone" around the school and we ask for your help in doing so. Please observe this protocol by shutting off car engines when they are parked on school property. "Remember the Rule- No Idling at School. We'll all breathe a little easier! " Thank you for your support of this.

Attendance Procedures and Protocols

Attendance

Students are expected to attend school for all the days (177 school days) and hours in which school is in session. Please contact the TES front office as soon as possible to report any absences/delays in arrival/early pick-up.

The State of Vermont has a truancy law that states that any unexcused absences count will be counted as such. Parents will be alerted when a child has missed ten school days. The Superintendent will be notified after a student has accumulated fifteen absences and may involve the local truancy officer. Please note that our procedure includes not only "days school is in session" but "hours school is in session."

A student who is out of school for 18 days or who has missed 10% of school will not be evaluated by Student Services for a specific learning disability

Please make every effort to have your child to school on time, well-prepared, and in attendance for the duration of the school day.

Thetford Elementary School Attendance Procedure

Regular school attendance is required by law for children ages 6 to 16. A record of attendance is kept with the following procedures to account for absences from school and to be used to ensure the safety of all students. In accordance with the District's policy on Student Attendance and Truancy, these rules have been developed to ensure the effective implementation of that policy. Our goal is for students and families in our District to have support in obtaining the maximum benefit from public education through regular attendance.

5 Absences

5 Excused and/or Unexcused Absences
An initial absence letter will be sent by the School Administrator or designee.

10 Absences

10 Unexcused Absences

- This meets the legal definition of truancy.
- A certified absence letter will be sent or hand-delivered by the District Truancy Officer.
- The school may require the parent/guardian to attend a conference with school staff and/or community agency representatives.

10 Cumulative Excused Absences

- An absence letter will be sent.
- A parent meeting will be scheduled if necessary.

15 Absences

15 Cumulative Excused and Unexcused Absences

- This meets the legal definition of truancy.
- A certified absence letter will be sent or hand-delivered by the District Truancy Officer.
- The school may require the parent/guardian to attend a conference with school staff and/or community agency representatives.

20 Absences

20 or More Unexcused Absences

- Continued unexcused absences and failure of prior interventions constitute truancy.
- A certified absence letter will be sent or hand-delivered by the District Truancy Officer.
- The school may require the parent/guardian to attend a conference with school staff and/or community agency representatives.

Residency Requirements

Our school serves all students who live in the Thetford community (and the towns that send students here). To make sure every student who attends TES has the right to be here, we do ask families to show proof of residency when enrolling.

Residency means *where your child lays their head at night*—the home where they actually live. If your family is in a temporary living situation but intends to make your home here, that still counts as residency.

What Families Need to Provide

When enrolling, families will be asked to show proof of residency. You may also be asked again if you move or if questions come up.

If your child lives with a parent/guardian, you'll need to provide:

- One of the following: property tax bill, lease agreement, rent receipt, or mortgage statement, or
- Two of the following: voter registration, automobile registration, a letter from your employer with your current home address, mail sent to your home (not a P.O. Box), or a utility bill from the last 30 days.

If your child lives with one parent, we will need a copy of the custody agreement. At least one parent must live in town and show proof of residency.

If your child lives with a legal guardian, the guardian must provide proof of residency and the court order showing the type of guardianship and their responsibilities.

Families in Transition

We know some families face housing transitions or instability. If this applies to your family, please reach out to the principal. Students in temporary or uncertain housing may be entitled to additional support, and we want to make sure all children can attend school without barriers.

Class Placement

In making class placements, the staff considers academic and social strengths. We attempt to create balanced class groupings of students as outlined in the TES Student Placement Procedure. Parents are invited to complete a Parent Input Form that is sent electronically during the spring semester to share any information about their child that would be helpful in making placement decisions. However, final placement decisions are at the discretion of the school administration.

Academic/Class Placement for Transfer Students

For students transferring to TES from another school, class placement decisions are based on Vermont state laws regarding age eligibility and the student's academic and social needs. Kindergarten enrollment requires that children turn 5 years old on or before September 1st of the school year. While some students may begin early enrollment in private settings, TES will determine placement based on state regulations and our assessment of the child's readiness and

best interests. Final decisions regarding class placement remain at the discretion of school administration to ensure an appropriate and supportive learning environment.

Cell Phone, Technology & Personal Communication Devices

Cell phones and other personal communication devices (*a personal communication device is any device that can create two way communication*) are expected to be off and away for the day, in a student's backpack. In the event that a parent/caregiver needs to contact their child(ren) during school hours it is expected that they communicate with the main office. If for any reason your child(ren) needs to contact you throughout the day we welcome them to utilize the main office phones.

Cell phones and other personal communication devices will not be allowed in the classroom unless otherwise instructed by the classroom teacher:

1. **1st Offense-** the device will be confiscated and brought to the main office. Parents will be contacted by the classroom teacher and the student can pick up the device in the main office upon leaving for the day.
2. **2nd Offense-** the device will be confiscated and parents will be contacted to pick up the device at their earliest convenience.
3. Any additional infraction will be followed up with a meeting request with the parent/caregiver, the student, and an administrator.

Child Abuse and Neglect

All employees are mandated by law to report to the Department of Children and Family Services for any known or suspected child abuse within 24 hours of notification or suspected abuse. Parents or caregivers who wish to file a complaint against a school employee or person that they suspect has engaged in abuse of a child at a school may contact the district office. The parent or caregiver may also file a formal report with the Department of Children and Family Services.

Custody Concerns

Custody disputes must be handled by a court of law. The school has no legal jurisdiction to refuse a biological/adoptive parent to access their child(ren)'s school records. The only exception to this is when a signed restraining order, proper divorce papers or a parentage order, which specifically states visitation limits, are on file in the school office. Any student release situation which leaves the student's welfare in question will be handled at the discretion of the administrator or designee. Should any such situation become a disruption to the school, law enforcement will be contacted and an officer will be asked to intervene. Parents are asked to make every effort not to involve the school in custody matters. The school will make every effort to reach the custodial parent when a parent or any other person not listed on the emergency card

attempts to pick up the child(ren).

Dress Code

Students and Staff are expected to wear clothing appropriate to the work environment at school. **Clothes, including shoes, are not to be a health or safety hazard.** Items of clothing may also be deemed inappropriate if they cause interference with or disruption to the educational environment.

Some examples of **unsafe** clothing include:

- Shoes that present a safety hazard, either inside the building or outside on school grounds (such as wheeled shoes, extremely high heels or soles)
- Potentially dangerous objects or fashion accessories (such as wallet chains, spiked collars etc.)

Some examples of **inappropriate** clothing include:

- Any clothing that refers to sex, drugs, unacceptable language or violence
- Clearly visible undergarments (to include tank tops, boxer shorts, singlets, sports bras, bralettes, etc.)
- Belly Shirts that expose the midriff (abdomen)

Hats and hoods may be worn on campus provided that:

- The student's eyes are clearly visible unless otherwise stated via a teachers classroom expectations

When any adult determines that a student may be violating the dress code, they will address the student away from other students.

The student will be given the opportunity to change into appropriate clothing or call home if they need to get clothing. If the student refuses to wear additional/alternate clothing, a parent/caregiver/guardian will be contacted (Tier 1 behavior).

Dress Code violations that are repetitive will be considered an office-managed behavior

Extra-Curricular Activities and Special Programs

Each year, there are special programs and events at school. These include times during school, after school, and events in the evening. Notice of these events is communicated to parents through the principal's newsletter, weekly electronic announcements, and classroom updates. Our art program provides opportunities for a creative expression of student learning through

performance. In addition, we bring authors and artists to the school, sometimes in residence, for special programs. TES offers a concert band program for students in grades 4-6. There are a variety of instruments to choose from, including Flute, Clarinet, Saxophone, Trumpet, Euphonium, Trombone, Bass Guitar, and Percussion. Parents/guardians are responsible for instrument rentals. Scholarships are available for families in need.

In addition to school-related programs, Thetford Elementary School partners with local organizations to provide a number of community activities for children. Among these are the following offerings:

Winter Ski Program: Which includes alpine skiing, snowboarding, and cross-country skiing at the Dartmouth Skiway. This program is run by the Thetford Recreation Program. For more information about this program, please contact the Recreation Coordinator, Amy Fahey, at 802-785-2922 ext. four or recreation@thetfordvt.gov.

Thetford After School Program (TASP) is a fee-for-service after-school program for K-6 graders. It is based in the TES cafeteria and operates from 3:00 - 5:30 PM. Monday through Friday. For further information, please reach out to the TASP Director, Robin Brown, at directortasp@gmail.com

Field Trips

Thetford Elementary School recognizes the value of learning experiences that cannot be provided on campus. All field trips are designed and approved on the basis of educational value, feasibility, safety, and liability in accordance with our Field Trip Policy. An approved field trip is considered an integral part of the educational program at TES. As such, students are expected to attend. There may be fundraising or a fee attached to a field trip. However, no child will be excluded from any such trip because of the inability to pay.

Field Trips are a privilege and, if necessary, the Administration may determine eligibility based on a student's behavior infractions. If a student has demonstrated behaviors that could interfere with a field trip experience, the student may be kept from the trip or required to have a parent present on the trip.

Parents/Caregivers will be notified ahead of time of trips off campus and permission slips will be sent home. Please make certain that permission slips are signed and returned to school in time. If we do not receive a signed note and are unable to contact you, the teacher will make alternative arrangements for your child while his/her/their class is away. If you have concerns about a trip, please talk with your child's teacher.

For more information on volunteering for field trips please see the "Volunteer" Section in this handbook.

Food Service

Students need healthy meals to learn. Thetford Elementary offers healthy meals every school day. **In School Year 2026-2027, all students will receive free breakfast and lunch at school.** The State of Vermont has provided money to do this for one year through the Universal School Meals Act.

This year breakfast will be provided until 8:10. If a child is tardy we will make every effort to serve them breakfast.

We need your help to keep **providing free meals to all students** in future years. **Please fill out the application** for free and reduced-price school meals, even if you believe your family doesn't qualify. The more applications we receive, the more money from the federal government is provided for free school meals now and in the future. We will **also** receive more money for **other school programs**.

Caffeinated & Carbonated Beverages

In keeping with our commitment to student health and wellness, caffeinated and/or carbonated beverages (such as soda or energy drinks) are not permitted during the school day. Seltzers and sparkling waters are allowed. We encourage students to make healthy, nourishing choices that support focus and well-being throughout the day.

Food Sharing

To support student health and safety, students are not permitted to share food during the school day. This helps us protect students with allergies, dietary needs, and food sensitivities while promoting respectful and inclusive practices.

Health Office

Our Health Office is open five days a week. The school nurse delivers appropriate medical care and screenings for students throughout the school day. Severe injuries or health related incidents will be referred to through appropriate medical professionals. We consult with parents, when necessary, to determine the severity of a child's condition. If a child is injured, every attempt is made to contact parents immediately. We take appropriate steps to ensure your child's health and safety. **At least one *current* emergency contact (person and phone number) must be provided for each child.** In the event that school personnel have decided that a child should not be in school for health reasons, it is the responsibility of the parent to make arrangements for transportation within one hour of notification.

For health concerns: please contact the School Nurse directly.

Insurance and Student Injuries

Thetford Elementary School does not provide medical insurance coverage for school accidents. This means that parents/caregivers are responsible for all medical bills (including ambulance expenses) if your child is injured during school activities.

Medication and Medical Information

If a student has a health condition that requires medication to be given during school hours, or requires emergency medication to be on hand, it shall be kept in a locked cabinet in the health office. *We cannot dispense any medication unless it is in the original prescription bottle with written instructions from the prescribing doctor and we have written permission from a parent or guardian.* These instructions should include the name of the medication, its strength, and how often the dose should be administered. Please only send the dose(s) needed at school. Doses for off-school hours should be retained at home. The nurse will keep a medical log. All medical information will be kept in confidence and will be available only to personnel who need to know. Additionally, the school nurse is not responsible for dispensing medication to a child after school hours particularly in cases where a child is going to a different household.

Parent Conferences and Report Cards

Conferences

Parent conferences are scheduled twice per school year in accordance with our trimester schedule (see school calendar). Classroom teachers will contact each family to set up a meeting time. School staff will make every reasonable effort to accommodate your schedule needs. Additional conference times can be scheduled with teachers at the request of families or the school. Parent-teacher conferences are a vital part of your child's success in school. This is a time to learn about curriculum and instruction, review student work, and discuss student successes and challenges.

Report Cards

Student report cards are completed three times throughout the year, coinciding with the end of each trimester (see school calendar). Paper copies of report cards will no longer be sent home. Report cards will be available online through our Infinite Campus platform. Our reporting system is standards-based, which means that students are graded on their progress toward end-of-year standards. Please contact your child's teacher or school administration for more information on our reporting system. If you need a printed copy of a report card please contact the main office.

Parent Involvement

The Thetford School Board believes that parents should have an opportunity to become involved in the planning, and implementation of their child's learning program. To that end, parents are informed at parent conferences, Open House, and at special conferences. Teachers are accessible to parents, at mutually convenient times, to further discuss programs. Parents are also encouraged to observe school programs and to participate whenever their schedules allow. Please make arrangements with the classroom teacher if you would like to observe classroom programs.

Parents are notified in a timely manner when school personnel are thinking of tailoring a special program to a child's individual needs. This can be as specific as participation in the Reading Assistance Program (RAP), special education, or special enrichment opportunities. It could also mean working in a small group with the librarian or the art teacher or as a "Peer Partner" with a student who needs extra support. Parents are always welcome to the decision-making team.

School Wide Expectations & Procedures

PBIS at TES

We are...

Safe

Kind

Responsible

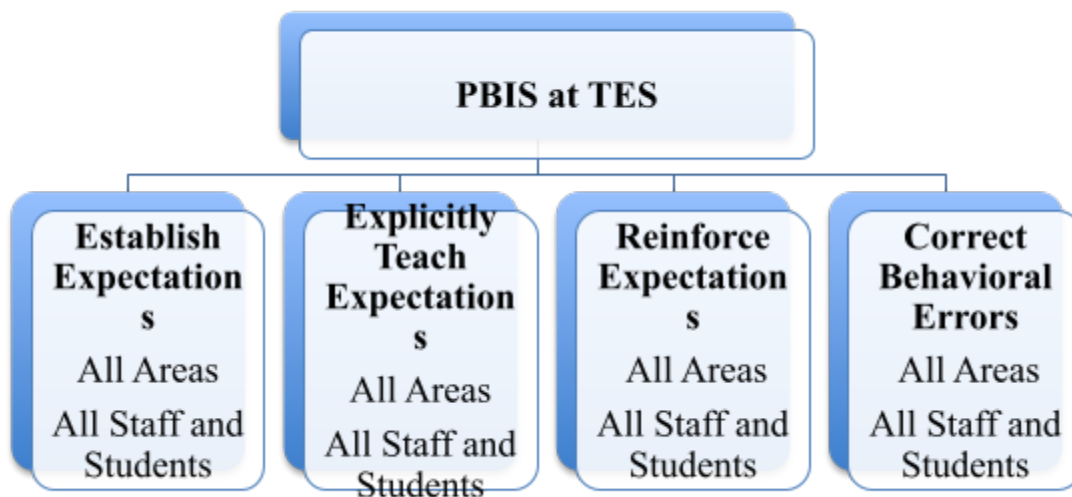
Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) is an evidence-based, data-driven framework that provides support for behavioral intervention. PBIS focuses on teaching, modeling, rewarding, and recognizing positive behaviors.

At TES, our school-wide expectations are centered around being Safe, Kind, and Responsible. When students demonstrate these behaviors, they receive "pawesome" tickets, which are accumulated both within the classroom and throughout the entire school. Monthly and annual goals are established to foster classroom and school-wide celebrations that acknowledge and promote Safe, Kind, and Responsible behaviors.

The tiered framework of PBIS enables educators and administrators at TES to offer universal, targeted, and individualized behavior interventions and support. To facilitate this, we utilize a data collection model known as the School-Wide Information System (SWIS). SWIS involves gathering behavior data through behavior referral forms, which are regularly analyzed. This data analysis empowers us to make informed decisions that benefit all students and their behavioral development.

When it is necessary, school administrators and teachers will follow a progressive discipline process. The response will be in proportion to the severity of the event and will take into account the student's educational history, the age of the student, and other relevant factors.

Disciplinary actions are designed to teach, support, and restore student behavior.



TES School-Wide Behavior Matrix

EXPECTATIONS	LOCATIONS					
All Spaces	Cafeteria	Hallway	Bathroom	Playground	Assemblies	Bus
Safe • Safe bodies • Be aware of others	• Walk • Stay seated at your table • Carry tray with careful hands	• Walking feet • Stay to the right • Face forward • Classes walk in single-file lines	• A grown up knows where you are • Wash your hands	• Follow playground rules. • Listen for the whistle • Hands and Bodies to yourself	• Stay seated in your own space. • Walk into and out of the gym.	• Follow bus rules • Stay in assigned seat • Keep aisle clear • Quiet voice
Kind • Kind words • Be an upstander • Include others	• Use a quiet voice • Talk to people at your table • Use manners	• Be friendly • Hold doors • Think of others' learning	• Take turns. • Help those around you if needed. • Be respectful of people's privacy	• Respect other people's creations • Invite others to play • Share • Be a good sport	• Support the presenters • Listen with your whole body	• Be careful of others and their belongings • Use manners
Responsible • Listen to adult directions • Keep our school clean • Take care of your	• Use cafeteria materials appropriately • Eat your meal • Keep the	• Stay with your class • Go directly to your destination • Quiet voices	• Return to class as soon as possible. • Use a quiet voice. • Keep the bathroom	• Put away what you use or find • Be prepared with what you need (equipment,	• Have a still body and calm voice • Be a good audience member	• Be prepared for your stop • Take care of your belongings • Keep the

own belongings	cafeteria clean and organized		clean.	weather ready)		bus clean
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Individual classroom teachers create and develop their own classroom expectation matrices specific to the school year and the makeup of their classroom.

Behavior Management Procedures

Classroom managed referrals

Any minor acts of misconduct which interfere with orderly school procedures, school functions, extracurricular programs, approved transportation, or a students own learning process. These behaviors are usually handled by an individual faculty or staff member but can sometimes require the intervention from Student Support Team members. Faculty and staff may utilize any of the following disciplinary management techniques appropriate for the situation, including, but not limited to the following:

Student Offense	Procedural Responses	Behavioral Intervention Options
Disruption Off Task Inappropriate Language Lying/Cheating Physical Contact/horseplay Dress Code Violation Technology Violation	Immediate intervention by the adult who is supervising the student or who observed the behavior Repeated behavior requires that a parent/caregiver be contacted by the teacher and/or the Administrator/designee A conference with the parent/caregiver may be arranged with the involvement of other school personnel including the school counselor/psychologist and an administrator A proper and accurate record of the offense and disciplinary action is maintained by the staff member through SWIS	Reteach expectations Verbal Warning Redirection Restorative notes/drawings/circles FLEX room opportunity for classroom break or safe space Seating adjustment Alternate work completion options Detention before, during or after school Restitution Loss of recess or other free choice time Lunch in a designated area

		Student participation in a conference with the parent/caregiver and teacher
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Office Managed Referrals

Combination of classroom managed (minor) and office managed (major) referrals. These are classified as consistent acts of misconduct that require both classroom and administrative intervention. These acts include but are not limited to, repeated acts of classroom-managed misconduct and behaviors directed against persons or property that do not seriously endanger the health, safety or well-being of others. Consideration of necessary behavior support services should be given, if not already provided. In collaboration with faculty and staff, administration may utilize any of the following disciplinary management techniques appropriate for the situation including but not limited to:

Student Offense	Procedural Responses	Behavioral Intervention Options
Continuation of repeated Level I behaviors	The student is referred to the main office through a referral for on SWIS as well as calling the main office for support	Student participation in conference with parent/caregiver, teacher and/or Principal/Dean of Students
Disruptive classroom behavior		
Technology/personal device violation	An investigation is initiated to respond to the infraction	Functional behavioral assessment (FBA)
Defiant behavior	The Principal or Dean of students meets with the student and teacher	Educational Support Team referral (EST)
Inappropriate location/Out of bounds		Referral to Little Rivers for additional mental health supports
Disrespect	The teacher remains informed of the steps taken as appropriate and applicable	
Harassment/Hazing/Bullying	An accurate record of discipline is maintained through SWIS	Detention before, during, or after school
Aggression with intent to harm		Partial/Full day in school suspension (ISS)
Inappropriate language	A parent/guardian is contacted by the Principal or Dean	Out of School Suspension (OSS) up to three school days, which shall include any
Vandalism		

Multiple minor referrals (more than 2) that are causing a disruption to the learning environment		time during which the student was subject to suspension pending investigation Financial restitution/community service
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Personal Property

Each student is provided with a desk or cubby in which to store personal belongings. There are no locks. Except on special occasions, valuables should not be brought to school. Electronic games or devices are not allowed at school without permission from the classroom teacher. When something special is brought to school, it may be left with the teacher. Items such as lunch boxes, backpacks, boots, mittens, and coats should be clearly marked. Lost and found items are collected and stored in the gymnasium corridor.

Policies

The Thetford Elementary School District maintains school policies that are regularly reviewed by the Board at meetings. All policies (including Facilities Use, Student Records, Harassment, Pupil Privacy Rights, and Hazing policies, as well as information on FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) can be viewed in the school library and are available electronically on our district website, www.oesu.org.

Protocol for Discussing Concerns

Thetford Elementary School staff and administration work hard to promote open and kind communication with families. Please allow up to *4 school days* for a response. If a parent has a concern with a student, teacher, or teaching issue in a classroom, the protocol below should be followed:

1. Parent/Caregiver communicates with the appropriate classroom or specials teacher.
 - In the case of a social-emotional concern, the School Counselor or SEL Coordinator/DoS may be the appropriate contact
 - The School Nurse should only be contacted for health concerns and updates
2. If unresolved, then the parent/caregiver communicates with the Principal
3. If the concern is still unresolved, then the parent/caregiver should contact the Superintendent of Schools.
4. If the situation is still unresolved, then after following all of these steps, the parent/caregiver may ask for consideration by the Thetford Town School District School Board.

Some concerns are better discussed in person and parents/caregivers may be asked to attend an in-person meeting or schedule a phone conference.

Playground

The objective of recess time is to allow for exercise and explorative and cooperative play. Recess has been a favorite time of day for generations of schoolchildren. Navigating social interactions is a skill often learned during recess. For children to be successful on the playground, they must follow the basic rules of thoughtfulness, fairness, and kindness. Behavior expectations are discussed in classrooms. Staff members on duty are there to monitor safety and reinforce healthy play.

Students should always be appropriately dressed for the season and weather. Temperature and wind chill are monitored to ensure children are not sent out in dangerous weather conditions. Please know that if the temperature is above ten, including the wind chill factor, the children are likely to go outside for recess. Please label all outdoor clothing with your child's name.

In the spring and fall, our playground can become quite muddy. These messy places are often among the children's favorite play spaces. There may be times when children are restricted to certain areas due to field conditions and appropriate attire. Our Health Office has many clothes that children may borrow if necessary.

Please be aware that the welfare of children who arrive early or stay after school to play is the responsibility of parents. Our playground is a public park used by many visitors.

School Closings

The OESU Superintendent coordinates weather-related school closings with Thetford Academy, the Thetford Road Commissioner, and our bus company. The major concern is always child safety. If it is deemed unsafe for school buses to operate on the roads, the school will be closed for the day.

Families will be notified of delays or cancellations through our automated communication service by phone and email. We also broadcast school cancellations or delayed starts through the Vermont Broadcasters' centralized system on both the radio and television.

If school is delayed two (2) hours the school day will begin at 10:10.

School Safety

School Visitors

To provide a safe environment for staff and students our doors will be locked during the school day (8:15 A.M.– 2:50 PM). Visitors to the school may gain access using our buzzer system located at the lobby entrance. All visitors must check in at the main office. Visitor passes will be distributed to guests to let our staff know that you have registered at the office.

Emergency Drills

Fire and Emergency Drills: Each month an emergency drill is held to practice emergency evacuations or lock-down scenarios. The first two will be held with advance warning for the younger children. This safety measure is required by law and is practiced to teach good emergency techniques.

We work collaboratively with the Thetford Police to ensure that all safety regulations and laws are enforced.

Prohibited Substances

Vermont law prohibits the possession or use of illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vaping products, or other prohibited substances on school property or during any school-sponsored activity, trip, or event. If a staff member has reason to believe a student may be in possession of or using one of these substances, the concern will be reported to the principal and addressed in accordance with school policy and Vermont law.

In situations where there is reasonable suspicion that a student may have an item that violates school rules or could pose a safety concern, school administrators may search a student's backpack or other belongings. Whenever possible, the student will be informed and given the opportunity to be present during the search. If there is reason to believe an item presents an immediate risk to the safety of students or staff, a search may occur without prior notice.

Sensitive and Controversial Curriculum

Thetford Elementary School recognizes that some of the material covered in our curriculum may be sensitive for some individuals or families. Public schools, however, are charged with the responsibility to educate children broadly for a diverse society. Within that responsibility, we believe that parents/guardians have a right to inform us of aspects of their value system which may be compromised by such a charge. Furthermore, we believe that parents have a right to ask that their children not participate in particular content if it is in conflict with their values.

We have established the following procedures to help with communications so parents are aware of topics under discussion and can communicate if there is a concern.

1. **Teacher Communication:** Teachers will make a concerted effort to keep parents/guardians informed of classroom affairs. They will inform parents/guardians of upcoming lessons that might be sensitive.
2. **Prior Notification:** If you can anticipate an area that might cause you or your child significant distress, please send us a letter stating the concern. We will keep your letter in your child's permanent file for subsequent teachers to review.
3. **Informational Meetings:** In the case of units where we can realistically predict parental concerns, the school will hold informational meetings about the topic and the instructional approach. These meetings provide parents with an opportunity to ask questions and to review materials.
4. **Permission to Participate:** For material that is considered a potentially controversial addition to the regular curriculum, we will ask parental permission. In these cases, if we do not receive permission, students will not be allowed to participate.
5. **Right NOT to Participate:** You may ask to have your child withdrawn from a particular lesson or unit. We will usually try to speak with you about our reasons for including the material in the curriculum but will respect your final decision.
6. **Parental Appeal:** As with any school concern, parents should follow the "chain of command" listed on page 13.

Specials

Students at Thetford Elementary School participate in the following specials classes. This includes direct instruction with specialist teachers, a minimum of

Physical Education	45 minutes 2x/week
Art, Library & Technology, Music	45 minutes 1x/week

Special Education

Thetford Elementary School abides by all laws and regulations pertaining to the education of students with disabilities. Please contact school personnel to learn more about special education programs and requirements. For information that may not be available through school personnel, contact Randall Gawel, Superintendent, or John Barone, Assistant Superintendent at Orange East Supervisory Union headquarters in Bradford, Vermont.

A Nondiscriminatory School: Section 504

It is the policy of Thetford Elementary School not to discriminate in educational programs, activities or employment practices on the basis of race, language, sex, or handicapping condition under the provisions of Title VI of the 1972 Educational Amendments; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1997. For a complete version of this policy, you may visit the U.S. Department of Education Website at

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/leg/edpicks.jhtml?src=ln>

Student Records

All of your child's records are available for inspection. If you wish to see them, you may arrange for a time when someone can go over them with you and answer any questions you may have. Please know that school records are held in strict confidence and only personnel with a legitimate educational interest has access to them. We **do not** share any of these files with other schools or with outside professionals, such as doctors or therapists, without written consent from parents/guardians.

Student Services

Thetford Elementary School employs a full-time School Counselor and 504 Coordinator/School Counselor. Our school counselor visits TES classrooms weekly to lead social skills instruction. This program is called School Counseling Curriculum or SCC. Student Services employees provide consultation on student planning teams and are available for crisis intervention. Individual and small-group counseling can be arranged with parental consent. Please call our school counselor, Sara Bailey, if you have concerns about your child's emotional or social welfare. This is also a valuable resource if you would like confidential help with a parenting difficulties.

Testing

The State of Vermont requires that elementary students in grades 3-6 participate in the state testing program. This includes Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program (VTCAP) spring assessments for grades 3-6 in reading and mathematics. You can check out the Thetford results of state testing by looking in the annual Thetford School Report or by logging on to the Vermont Department of Education website. www.education.vermont.gov

Visitors

We recognize the value of constructive school visits and want to encourage them. Such visits must be planned in advance to coordinate with the daily schedule. All visitors must report to the school office upon arrival and are invited to address comments and questions to the principal at the conclusion of their visit. Children who are visiting must obtain the permission of both the teacher and the principal before the day of the visit.

Volunteers

We truly appreciate volunteer help. Volunteers, however, are not expected to replace or do teachers' work. The intent is to provide enhanced opportunities for children and to utilize the many talents available in the community. Expectations surrounding behavior in a professional community and federal law regarding confidentiality require that we impose certain limitations on volunteering in the school. There is a change to the volunteer process in the 2025-2026 school year. More information will be provided.

Please note that all volunteers need to go through the background check process which includes fingerprinting. Fingerprinting must occur at designated locations. Please see the OESU website for additional information regarding the fingerprinting process.

What Can I, as a Parent, Do?

General

1. Ask questions. Don't let small problems grow into giant ones. If you have a problem or concern, talk directly to the person(s) involved. Use the chain of command if necessary. The chain of command is: classroom teacher, principal, superintendent, school board.
2. Visit and participate in classroom activities whenever your time permits. The more familiar your child's program becomes the better you and your child's teacher will be able to communicate about strengths and weaknesses.
3. Let us know what we can do to help you.

Specific

1. Find ways to work on schoolwork with your children at home.
2. Visit the school for special activities.
3. Volunteer, if you can.
4. Join committees.
5. Participate in the PTO.
6. Attend school board meetings.
7. Run for the School Board
8. Vote
9. Reach out to other families in the community.

Thetford Elementary School Home & School Compact

[Compacts are voluntary agreements between families and schools.]

Our School envisions the "highest level of success for every student." To accomplish this, parents, teachers, and students must collaborate in a spirit of cooperation and collaboration. The following are agreed-upon roles and responsibilities that we, as partners, will carry out to support student success in school and life.

As a Teacher, I will: Carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability:

- Teach classes through interesting and challenging lessons that promote student achievement.
- Endeavor to motivate my students to learn.
- Have high expectations and help every child to develop a love for learning.

Communicate regularly with families about student progress. Get to know my students and encourage families and students to share out-of-classroom interests, issues, or circumstances that may impact and influence student learning and success. Provide a warm, safe, and caring learning environment. Participate in professional development opportunities that improve teaching and learning and support partnerships with families and the community. Actively participate in collaborative decision-making and consistently work with families and my school colleagues to make schools accessible and welcoming places for families, which helps each student achieve the school's high academic standards. Respect the school, students, staff and families.

As a Student, I will: Carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability:

Come to school ready to learn and work hard. Bring necessary materials, completed assignments, and homework. Know and follow school and class rules. Communicate regularly with my parents and teachers about in-school and out-of-school experiences so that they can help me to be successful in school. Limit my screen time and instead study or read every day after school. Respect the school, classmates, staff and families.

As a Parent/Guardian and Family Member, I will: Carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability:

- Provide a quiet time and place for homework and monitor TV viewing
- Read to my child or encourage my child to read every day (20 minutes K-3, and 30 minutes for grades 4-8).

Ensure that my child attends school daily, gets adequate sleep, regular medical attention, and proper nutrition. Get to know my child's teacher(s) and share interests, issues, and circumstances that may impact and influence my child's ability to learn and be successful in school. Regularly monitor my child's progress in school. Participate at school in activities such as school decision-making, volunteering, and attending parent-teacher **conferences**. Communicate the importance of education and learning to my child. Respect the school, staff, students, and families.

Notices from OESU

[General OESU Information](#)

[Educational Support System](#)

[Notice of Non-Discrimination](#)

[Notice Regarding Student Records](#)

[Asbestos Management Plans](#)

[Annual Public Notice of Non-Discrimination](#)

[Annual Notification Designation of Directory Information & Right of Refusal](#)

This handbook provides detailed information to our school community of students and parents. The information disseminated throughout is not intended to cover *all* policies, rules, and regulations used at TES. Some policies and administrative procedures are included in this handbook. The Policy Manual for the Thetford Town School Board is available in the Superintendent's Office or on our School Board website. *This handbook is subject to change during the academic year.*