

WHEELER HIGH SCHOOL/ WHEELER MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT HANDBOOK 2026-2027

HOME OF THE LIONS
297 Norwich-Westerly Road
North Stonington, CT 06359
www.northstonington.k12.ct.us

School Phone Numbers

Main Office: (860) 535-0377
Counseling: (860) 535-0377 x2150
Fax: (860) 535-1117
Attendance: (860) 535-0377 x8
Superintendent: (860) 535-2800
Special Services: (860) 535-4451
Facilities: (860) 535-2800 x2177
M&J Bus Co: (860) 535-8051
Aramark Food Services: (860) 535-2800 x4305

School Hours

Normal: 7:45 am - 2:25 pm
Early Closing: 7:45 am - 12:00 pm
Two Hour Delay: 9:45 am - 2:25 pm

Significant North Stonington Board of Education Policies/Programs

All North Stonington Public School Policies are posted on the North Stonington Board of Education website. If you do not have access to a computer, please contact the Central Office at (860) 535-2800.

Administration follows all Board of Education policy. The policies reflected in our handbook are selected because they are the ones that most significantly affect our students and families. Please understand though, that all policy components may not necessarily be present in this handbook but that at any time, full language can be located on the district website. **Please also understand that administration still creates regulations as needed that support policies but are specific to each school building.**

Dear Wheeler Students and Families,

Welcome to another exciting school year at Wheeler Middle/High School! To our returning Wheeler families, welcome back! To our newest students and families, including our incoming 7th graders and those joining us from Preston and Voluntown, we are thrilled that you have chosen to become part of the Wheeler community. We look forward to getting to know you and helping you discover all that makes Wheeler such a special place to learn, grow, and belong.

At Wheeler, our size is one of our greatest strengths. As a small school, we are able to build meaningful relationships with every student while offering opportunities that rival those of much larger schools. Our students benefit from personalized support, dedicated educators, and a learning environment where every individual is known, valued, and encouraged to reach their full potential.

The essence of our mission remains the same: to partner with families and our community to provide an educational experience that prepares students for lives of purpose, accomplishment, and fulfillment in an ever-changing world. This mission comes to life each day through engaging instruction, meaningful relationships, and authentic learning experiences that extend beyond the classroom.

One of the things that makes Wheeler truly unique is the breadth of opportunities available to our students. Whether students are exploring career pathways through internships, participating in work-study experiences, earning college credit through our Dual Enrollment partnership with New England Institute of Technology, competing in athletics, performing in the arts, or engaging in leadership and extracurricular activities, every student has the opportunity to discover their passions and prepare for life after graduation. We also continue to place a strong emphasis on developing the whole child. Alongside academic excellence, our school-wide Academic and Social/Civic Expectations help students build the skills necessary to become thoughtful learners, responsible citizens, effective collaborators, and compassionate members of our community. These expectations guide our work every day and prepare students not only for college and careers, but for life.

This past year, Wheeler had the privilege of participating in our Collaborative Conference with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). The visiting team recognized the dedication of our students, staff, families, and community, while celebrating the collaborative culture and innovative programming that define Wheeler. Their positive feedback affirmed what we already know, that Wheeler is a remarkable school where students are supported, challenged, and inspired to succeed.

As we begin the new school year, we encourage every student to get involved, challenge themselves, and take advantage of the many opportunities available. Whether you are entering middle school, preparing for graduation, or somewhere in between, this is your school and your journey. We are committed to helping you make the most of every opportunity along the way. Our faculty and staff are here to support you every step of the way. Whether you need assistance from a teacher, counselor, coach, advisor, or administrator, know that someone is always ready to help. We believe that strong partnerships between school and home are essential to student success, and we encourage families to stay connected and engaged throughout the year. Please take time to review the Student Handbook together. It outlines the expectations, policies, and procedures that help us maintain a safe, respectful, and positive learning environment where everyone can thrive. We are excited for all that lies ahead and can't wait to see what this year will bring. Thank you for being part of the Wheeler community. Let's make it a year filled with learning, growth, achievement, and memorable experiences.

Have a wonderful school year, and remember—make every day count!

#WeAreWHEELER

Kristen St. Germain
Principal

Allison Reyes
Associate Principal



WHEELER ATTENDANCE NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

RESPECT • RESPONSIBILITY • RESILIENCE



To report your child's absence, please use **ONE** of the options below. This helps us better monitor call outs and ensure accurate records.

OPTION 1



USE THE PARENTHUB APP

The easiest and fastest way to report your child's absence.

Download the ParentHub App today!

OPTION 2



CALL THE ATTENDANCE HOTLINE

Call our main line
860-535-0377
and select
EXTENSION 8

OPTION 3



EMAIL US

Send an email to:
**wmhsattendance@
nostoschools.org**



**PLEASE DO NOT CALL
BUILDING SECRETARIES**
or email them personally.



**NO TEXTING
OF ABSENCES TO
ANY STAFF MEMBER.**



Your cooperation helps us better support your child and keep accurate attendance records.



EVERY DAY COUNTS.



EVERY LION MATTERS.

WHEELER HIGH SCHOOL WHEELER MIDDLE SCHOOL HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT School Year 2026-2027

THIS FORM IS COMPLETED DIGITALLY THROUGH A GOOGLE FORM.

- I have reviewed the online version of the Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School Handbook;
- I understand that the Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School Handbook contains a number of rules governing student behavior and provides that students may be disciplined for violating many of these rules, including being suspended or expelled from school;
- I have had a chance to read and review the Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School Handbook;
- I have reviewed and discussed the Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School Handbook with my child; and
- I understand and accept the contents of the Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School Handbook.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Student Name: _____

NORTH STONINGTON STONINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT
North Stonington, Connecticut

Internet User Agreement and Parent Permission Form
THIS FORM IS COMPLETED DIGITALLY THROUGH A GOOGLE FORM.

Wheeler Middle/High School

After reading the Board of Education's Network/Internet Acceptable Use Policy, please complete this form to indicate that you understand and will comply with the terms and conditions outlined therein. The signatures of both the student and the parent/guardian are mandatory before access may be granted to the North Stonington School District's Internet service and any other electronic information retrieval systems. This document, which incorporates the Board's policies and procedures, reflects the entire agreement and understanding of all parties.

As a user of the North Stonington School District's computer systems and electronic retrieval services network, I have read and hereby agree to comply with the Board's policies and procedures. I understand that I have no expectation that my use of the North Stonington School District's computer systems is private. I understand that the North Stonington Board of Education, as owner of the computer and electronic systems, reserves the right to monitor my use of such systems in order to ensure compliance with the North Stonington Board of Education's policies and guidelines.

Student Signature

Date

Student Name (Please Print)

Grade

WEBSITES / APPLICATIONS / CHROMEBOOK LETTER AND CONSENT FORM

THIS FORM IS COMPLETED DIGITALLY THROUGH A GOOGLE FORM.

During the school year, your child may have the opportunity to use district supported websites and applications (for example, Google Classroom) that may require student registration prior to use. Because your child may be under 13 years of age, we are seeking your consent before registering your child as a user of these websites and applications. The district will follow all recommendations in The Children's Online Privacy and Protection Act (COPPA) when establishing student accounts. By agreeing to the consent form below with this letter, you are allowing your child's teacher to indicate during the registration process that you have consented to the use of each of the supported websites and applications, and that you agree to the terms of service and privacy policies as enumerated on each website.

The North Stonington Public School District is committed to the safety of our students, especially when it comes to young students using online resources. We will work to help our students develop into responsible digital citizens by regularly teaching students about appropriate online interactions. We also recognize that there are a number of excellent online educational resources that would benefit our students. Online resources such as blogs, wikis, youtube and other interactive learning websites provide some of the most compelling new educational tools for students. Access is monitored though wifi filtering.

All students in grades 5-12 will be issued a Chromebook to use at school and at home. Students are required to bring it to school each day.

Please review, read and agree to the following:

- ☐ I agree to allow my child to use the supported educational websites and/or applications for instructional purposes.
- ☐ I understand that some personally identifiable information for my child may be used to login to the support websites and applications.
- ☐ I understand and agree to the Chromebook guidelines and insurance policies outlined in the One to One Device Program Handbook
- ☐ I agree to follow all school rules and policies regarding acceptable use of technology
- ☐ *I opt out of the above*

My student will be accepting a school-issued Chromebook for educational use and is aware to the responsibilities associated with usage:

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Chromebook Protection Plan:

- ☐ I will be taking the school Chromebook Protection Plan
- ☐ *I will not* be taking the school Chromebook Protection Plan and am aware that I am responsible for any damages

Child's Name: _____

School: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

WHEELER DAILY SCHEDULES

During the school year, we understand that you may need to schedule medical and/or other appointments for your child. Below, please find our daily schedule to help in your planning. We encourage you to bring back any medical notes for such appointments so they can be filed in your child's attendance folder. These excused absences need to be documented for the state. We also ask that you avoid pulling your child out of school too often, as there are strict rules about attendance and credit that may have an impact on your child's graduation status.

Wheeler High School Daily Schedule 2026-27

Times	Monday
7:45-8:27 (42 min)	1
8:30-8:45 (15 min)	Break/Adv
8:48-9:30 (42 min)	2
9:32-10:13 (41 min)	3
10:16-10:57 (41 min)	4
11:00-11:41 (41 min)	5
11:43-12:56 <i>HS Lunch 1</i> <i>11:43-12:13</i> <i>HS Lunch 2</i> <i>12:26-12:56</i>	6
12:58-1:40 (42 min)	7
1:43-2:25 (42 min)	8

Times	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7:45-9:05 (80 min)	1	5	3	7
9:08-9:43 (35 min)	Break	Advisory	Break	Break
9:46-11:06 (80 min)	2	6	1	5
11:09-1:00 (81 min) <i>HS Lunch 1</i> <i>11:50-12:20</i> <i>HS Lunch 2</i> <i>12:32-1:02</i>	3	7	4	8
1:05-2:25 (80 min)	4	8	2	6

Wheeler Middle School 8th Grade Daily Schedule 2026-27

Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday	
Times	Class	Times	Class	Times	Class	Times	Class	Times	Class
7:45-8:00 (15 min)	Adv	7:45-8:20 (35 min)	Adv	7:45-8:20 (35 min)	Adv	7:45-8:20 (35 min)	Adv	7:45-8:20 (35 min)	Adv
8:03-8:45 (42 min)	Core A	8:23-9:16 (53 min)	Core A	8:23-9:16 (53 min)	Core D	8:23-9:43 (80 min)	PE/Music	8:23-9:43 (80 min)	Elective
8:48-9:30 (42 min)	Core B	9:18-10:11 (53 min)	Core B	9:18-10:11 (53 min)	Core A	9:46-10:39 (53 min)	Core C	9:46-10:39 (53 min)	Core B
9:32-10:13 (41 min)	PE/Music	10:13-11:06 (53 min)	Core C	10:13-11:06 (53 min)	Core B	10:40-11:06 (26 min)	Core D Split	10:40-11:06 (26 min)	Core C Split
10:16-10:57 (41 min)	WL	11:09-11:39 (30 min)	Lunch	11:09-11:39 (30 min)	Lunch	11:09-11:39 (30 min)	Lunch	11:09-11:39 (30 min)	Lunch
10:59-11:29 (30 min)	Lunch 1	11:42-1:02 (80 min)	PE/Music	11:42-1:02 (80 min)	Elective	11:42-12:21 (39 min)	WL	11:42-12:21 (39 min)	WL
11:31-12:12 (41 min)	Core C	1:05-1:44 (39 min)	WL	1:05-1:44 (39 min)	WL	12:23-1:02 (39 min)	FLEX	12:23-1:02 (39 min)	FLEX
12:15-12:56 (41 min)	Core D	1:46-2:25 (39 min)	FLEX	1:46-2:25 (39 min)	FLEX	1:05-1:31 (26 min)	Core D Split	1:05-1:31 (26 min)	Core C Split
12:58-1:40 (42 min)	Elective					1:32-2:25 (53 min)	Core A	1:32-2:25 (53 min)	Core D
1:43-2:25 (42 min)	FLEX								

Wheeler Middle School 7th Grade Daily Schedule 2026-27

Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday	
Times	Class	Times	Class	Times	Class	Times	Class	Times	Class
7:45-8:00 (15 min)	Adv	7:45-8:20 (35 min)	Adv	7:45-8:20 (35 min)	Adv	7:45-8:20 (35 min)	Adv	7:45-8:20 (35 min)	Adv
8:03-8:45 (42 min)	Core A	8:23-9:16 (53 min)	Core A	8:23-9:16 (53 min)	Core D	8:23-9:16 (53 min)	Core C	8:23-9:16 (53 min)	Core B
8:48-9:30 (42 min)	Elective	9:17-9:43 (26 min)	Core B Split	9:17-9:43 (26 min)	Core A Split	9:18-10:11 (53 min)	Core D	9:18-10:11 (53 min)	Core C
9:32-10:13 (41 min)	Core B	9:46-11:06 (80 min)	Elective	9:46-11:06 (80 min)	PE/Music	10:13-11:06 (53 min)	Core A	10:13-11:06 (53 min)	Core D
10:16-10:57 (41 min)	FLEX	11:09-11:39 (30 min)	Lunch	11:09-11:39 (30 min)	Lunch	11:09-11:39 (30 min)	Lunch	11:09-11:39 (30 min)	Lunch
10:59-11:29 (30 min)	Lunch 1	11:42-12:08 (26 min)	Core B Split	11:42-12:08 (26 min)	Core A Split	11:42-12:21 (39 min)	FLEX	11:42-12:21 (39 min)	FLEX
11:31-12:12 (41 min)	Core C	12:08-1:02 (52 min)	Core C	12:08-1:02 (52 min)	Core B	12:23-1:02 (39 min)	WL	12:23-1:02 (39 min)	WL
12:15-12:56 (41 min)	PE/Music	1:05-1:44 (39 min)	FLEX	1:05-1:44 (39 min)	FLEX	1:05-2:25 (80 min)	Elective	1:05-2:25 (80 min)	PE/Music
12:58-1:40 (42 min)	Core D	1:46-2:25 (39 min)	WL	1:46-2:25 (39 min)	WL				
1:43-2:25 (42 min)	WL								

Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School Faculty and Staff

Board of Education

Christine Wagner, Chair
Judith Main, Vice Chair
Bryan Burdick
Laura Mello
Patrick Austin
Stanley Stefanowicz
Jamie Towle-Weicksel, Secretary
Amy Friend

Administration

Dr. Jeanine Rose, Superintendent
Kristen St. Germain, Principal,
Wheeler High/Middle School
Allison Reyes, Associate Principal,
Wheeler High/Middle School
Robert Cillino, Principal, North
Stonington Elementary School
April Christiansen, Director,
Special Services

Director of Instruction and Learning

Kimberly Haggerty

Athletic Director

Bern Macca

Secretarial Staff

Cara Salegna, Administration
Secretary
Melissa Mowry, PT Attendance
Secretary
Emily Knowles, Counseling
Secretary/PowerSchool Coordinator

BCBA

Patty Mastriano

Paraprofessional Staff

Stephanie Forbes
Kim Harrington
Deb Karpinski
Karla McAdams
Jessica Ward, RBT
Paula Tuma

School Nurse

Jessica Kessler, RN

Special Services/Counseling

Nancy Liner, School Counselor
Jayme Hansen, School Counselor
Carley Higginbotham, School
Psychologist
Cailin Sorder, Social Worker
Nicole Scovish, Special Education
Amy Tobin, Special Education
Kevin Noonan, Special Education
Natasha Zannelli, Special
Education Leader, **Program
Supervisor**

English Department

Jessica Cawley
Joseph Cawley
Kristine Charles
Kathryn McGuire
Faith Jalal
Marybeth Tavares, **Program
Supervisor**

Science Department

Rebecca Costello
Meghin Mason
Andreas Nicolaou
Michael Shugrue, **Program
Supervisor**
Jen Welborn

Social Studies Department

Shannon Curioso, **Program
Supervisor**
William Heughins
Seth Mann
Madison Sylvestre
Marc Tardiff

Math Department

James Cervini
Tom Dinoto
David Grande, **Program
Supervisor**
Adrianna Lublin
Maya Brody
Jennifer Mitchell, Math
Interventionist
Kim Amara

World Language Department

Paloma Autran
Elyse Yanusas
Cheryl Dutrumble

Fine and Applied Arts Department

Sarah Booker, Art
Haley Smith, Art
Carl Weber, Physical Education/
Health
Baylee Brackett, Physical
Education
Stephan Bailey, Physical
Education/Health
Liz McCusker, Computer/Business
Education
Christopher Zyrilis, Business
Education
Matthew Mendolia, Technology
Education
Noel Devine, **Technology
Education, Program Supervisor**
Melissa Mowry, Library Media
Specialist
Kaitlyn Neumann, Chorus
Alex Sanders, Band

Building Substitutes

Sarah Champlin
Seth Schoner
Nick Johnson



**A North Stonington
Public School Graduate**
*demonstrates aptitude in the following
school-wide expectations:*

**ACADEMIC
EXPECTATIONS**

Analysis
Collaboration
Communication
Literacy

**SOCIAL/CIVIC
EXPECTATIONS**

Resilience
Respect
Responsibility

MISSION

The Mission of Wheeler, in partnership with families and the community, is to provide students with the education that will best help them to live lives of accomplishment and satisfaction in a complex and changing world.

CORE VALUES

We are committed to the belief that ALL children are capable and have a fundamental right to attain high levels of educational achievement so they can lead rewarding lives and demonstrate responsible citizenship.

We believe that in order to have the largest impact upon student learning and to provide opportunities for high-level achievement, it must start with the instructional core, specifically through:

- **transforming** the learning process through innovative instruction, to encourage life-long learning;
- **implementing** a complex and culturally-responsive curriculum;
- **nurturing** a sense of belonging in order to ensure that ALL students feel safe and valued; and
- **assessing** student work using our school-wide rubrics and using data to drive instruction across ALL grade levels and departments.

We believe that in order to ensure an environment for continuous improvement, we must constantly review and improve systems and structures.

Social Civic Expectations: RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY AND RESILIENCE

DOMAINS	PROFICIENCY	RATING	Teacher Evidence
Respect	- During class/advisory time, student respects self and all rules, persons/property/ opinions and differences of others	Approaching Meets Exceeds	
Responsibility	- Student shows an ability to act independently and is accountable for all actions including completing classwork and assigned homework, and participating in all class/advisory requirements	Approaching Meets Exceeds	
Resilience	- Shows an ability to adapt appropriately both socially and academically to situations as they occur throughout the semester	Approaching Meets Exceeds	

OVERALL SCORE	Description
Exceeding	Went above and beyond the expectation
Meeting	Met the expectation
Approaching	Approaching the expectation

Student Rating	Student Self-Reflection
☐ Exceeding ☐ Meeting ☐ Approaching	Why did you rate yourself the way you did and be sure to provide specific examples that address your respectfulness, responsibility and resilience this semester:

SCHOOL-WIDE ACADEMIC RUBRICS

Academic Expectation: ANALYSIS

DOMAINS	PROFICIENCY	RATING			EVIDENCE
Usage of Resources	- Able to select a variety of appropriate resources/strategies to use to arrive at a solution for a question, task or problem	Approaching	Meets	Exceeds	
Application and Analysis	- Analyzes key information, questions/tasks and problems - Makes inferences based on background knowledge, observations and/or information to arrive at a solution	Approaching	Meets	Exceeds	
Organization and Evaluation	- Evaluates according to a given set of criteria - Collects, organizes and communicates information in an appropriate format	Approaching	Meets	Exceeds	
Synthesis and Reflection	- Evaluates process and validity of results to create new ideas and/or draws appropriate conclusions based upon knowledge and experiences from several areas	Approaching	Meets	Exceeds	
Utilization of Technology (if applicable)	- Demonstrates an appropriate use of technology to address an objective or task when applicable	Approaching	Meets	Exceeds	

OVERALL SCORE	Description	Other	
Exceeds	Went above and beyond the expectation	Work was completed independently	Y N
Meets	Met the expectation		
Approaching	Approaching the expectation	Assessment at grade level	Y N

Academic Expectation: COLLABORATION

DOMAINS	PROFICIENCY	RATING			EVIDENCE
Awareness of Self	- Monitors and adjusts own behaviors in order to contribute to group success	Approaching	Meets	Exceeds	
Awareness of Others	- Works interdependently toward the achievement of group goals	Approaching	Meets	Exceeds	
Accountability	- Demonstrates awareness of social expectations - Exhibits appropriate behavior	Approaching	Meets	Exceeds	
Application of Technology (if applicable)	- Understands the capabilities of technology in collaboration - Demonstrates skill in its use when applicable	Approaching	Meets	Exceeds	

OVERALL SCORE	Description	Other	
Exceeds	Went above and beyond the expectation	Work was completed independently	Y N
Meets	Met the expectation		
Approaching	Approaching the expectation	Assessment at grade level	Y N

NEW DRAFT OF OUR COMMUNICATIONS RUBRIC. Last year it was a work in progress but this year it will replace our old one and will be used by staff in the 26/27 school year.

Communication Rubric Changes

Why the change?

DOMAINS	PROFICIENCY	RATING			EVIDENCE
Audience	- Understands and responds to the needs of the audience - Connects the message to the criteria and purpose	Approaching	Meets	Exceeds	
Clarity	- Uses specific and concise language, including content area terminology - Organizes thoughts and supports ideas with evidence	Approaching	Meets	Exceeds	
Variety	- Utilizes multiple modes of communication to strengthen the message	Approaching	Meets	Exceeds	
Adaptability	- Is capable of reflection and ongoing improvement through feedback - Acknowledges differing perspectives and provides constructive feedback	Approaching	Meets	Exceeds	
Implementation of Media (If applicable)	- Effectively implements media and technology	Approaching	Meets	Exceeds	

OVERALL SCORE	Description	Other
<i>Exceeds</i>	Went above and beyond the expectation	Work was completed independently Y N
<i>Meets</i>	Met the expectation	
<i>Approaching</i>	Approaching the expectation	Assessment at grade level Y N

Academic Expectation: **LITERACY**

DOMAINS	PROFICIENCY	RATING			EVIDENCE
Purpose and Focus	- Clearly states main idea - Focus is maintained throughout content-area assessment	Approaching	Meets	Exceeds	
Comprehension and Evidence	- Understands key concepts in content-area reading - Draws inferences and conclusions - Supports interpretation with a variety of sources	Approaching	Meets	Exceeds	
Analysis and Explanation	- Uses evidence to make inferences and support ideas - Explains and interprets main ideas in oral/written form - Synthesizes material to support ideas	Approaching	Meets	Exceeds	
Organization and Structure	- Sequence of ideas is clear and coherent in written and/or oral expression	Approaching	Meets	Exceeds	
Presentation and Media	- Work is presented correctly with proper mechanics - Special attention given to overall presentation using technology when applicable	Approaching	Meets	Exceeds	

OVERALL SCORE	Description	Other	
Exceeds	Went above and beyond the expectation	Work was completed independently	Y N
Meets	Met the expectation		
Approaching	Approaching the expectation	Assessment at grade level	Y N

GENERAL SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ADVISORY PROGRAM

The mission of *The Advisory Program of Wheeler High School/Middle School* is to create an environment where every student feels empowered and connected to the school community by providing the structure, lessons, and activities that support our school-wide expectations of collaboration, respect, responsibility, and resilience.

The Advisory Program at Wheeler recognizes the importance of building positive relationships between students and staff to nurture a strong climate and culture where everyone feels valued. To meet this goal, our Advisory schedule runs on Wednesdays and includes lessons and activities that support our students in setting and meeting goals, increase their collaboration skills, and support our social/civic expectations. Additionally, Advisory will provide opportunities for students to mentor and work collaboratively with other students and staff members, receive extra academic support, and participate in extracurricular clubs and activities. All students must be present in their assigned Advisory classrooms during the scheduled Advisory times; the administration will deal with unexcused absences.

AFTER-SCHOOL TIME

Students who remain after school beyond 2:25 pm must be **supervised by an authorized adult**. All school rules apply during this time period. A late bus is available two days a week for those students staying after school for an authorized activity. Students may not leave school grounds and then return to ride the late bus. Middle School students participating in athletics should report immediately to practice after school. If practices are at a later hour, students should plan to stay with a teacher, or go home until their scheduled practice begins. Students may not wait in the Gymnasium for practices to begin. ALL STUDENTS MUST BE SUPERVISED!

ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY POLICIES

Attendance Connecticut state law requires parents to cause their children, ages five through eighteen inclusive, to attend school regularly during the hours and terms the public school is in session. Parents or persons having control of a child five years of age have the option of not sending the child to school until ages six or seven. Mandatory attendance terminates upon graduation or withdrawal with written parent/guardian consent at age seventeen.

A student is considered to be "in attendance" if present at his/her assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school (e.g., field trip), for at least half of the regular school day. A student who is serving an out-of-school suspension or expulsion should always be considered absent. A student not meeting the definition of "in attendance" shall be considered absent.

Classroom learning experiences are the basis for public school education. Time lost from class is lost instructional opportunity. The Board of Education requires that accurate records be kept of the attendance of each child, and students should not be absent from school without parental knowledge and consent.

Chronically absent child: An enrolled student whose total number of absences at any time during a school year is equal to or greater than ten percent of the total number of days that such student has been enrolled at such school during such school year.

Excuses Note: The use of the state approved definitions of "excused" and "unexcused" absences are for state purposes for the reporting of truancy. Districts are not precluded from using separate definitions of such absences for their internal uses such as involving decisions on areas such as promotion and grading. A student's absence from school shall be considered "excused" if written documentation of the reason for such absence has been submitted within ten (10) school days of the student's return to school and meets the following criteria:

- A. For absences one through nine, a student's absences from school are considered "excused" when the student's parent/guardian approves such absence and submits appropriate documentation to school officials.
- B. For the tenth absence and all absences thereafter, a student's absences from school are considered excused for the following reasons:
 1. Student illness (must be verified by a licensed medical professional to be deemed excused, regardless of the length of the absence);
 2. Student's observance of a religious holiday;
 3. Death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family;
 4. Mandated court appearances (documentation required);

5. The lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends (no parental documentation required);
 6. Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by District administration and to be in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidance.
- C. A student's absence from school shall be considered unexcused unless:
1. The absence meets the definition of an excused absence and meets the documentation requirements; or
 2. The absence meets the definition of a disciplinary absence, which is the result of school or District disciplinary action and are excluded from these State Board of Education approved definitions.

When the school in which a child is enrolled receives no notification from a parent or other person having control of the child is aware of the child's absence, a reasonable effort shall be made by school personnel or volunteers under the direction of school personnel to notify by telephone and by mail such parent or other person having control of the child.

Unexcused Absence

An unexcused absence occurs when a student is out of school beyond the first nine (9) absences, parent documentation is not provided for the first nine (9) absences and the absences does not meet one of the excused absence reasons listed above.

Truancy

"Truant" shall mean a student age five to eighteen, inclusive, who has four unexcused absences in any one month, or ten unexcused absences in one school year.

Tardy to Class

If a student is more than twenty-five (25) minutes late for class, other than because of a school-sanctioned event, he or she will be considered absent from class.

Limit on Total Number of Absences

No student will receive course credit after having been absent from that course for more than 20 class periods for a full year course and 10 class periods for a semester course during the school year excluding excused absences. Mental Health and Medical Excused absences do not count toward the totals. Family vacation days DO count toward the total number of absences.

Notification Procedures

Parents/guardians will be notified when a student is considered chronically absent or truant as well as when a student has accumulated one-half (10) full year or five (5) half year, of the maximum allowed number of total absences for a particular course excluding excused absences.

Using PowerSchool., it is the responsibility of the student and parent to monitor student attendance.

Appeal Procedures

1. Any student who has accumulated more absences than allowed under this policy, and who is thus threatened with loss of credit in a particular course or courses, may appeal to the attendance committee, which consists of the Associate Principal, school nurse, attendance secretary, and four other faculty members for a waiver of the applicable provisions of this policy. A student must make up the seat time for the number of absences over the allotted amount before appealing. A statement of the reason or reasons, which the student feels, warrants the waiver, shall accompany the appeal. Upon receipt of the appeal, the committee will meet with the student, and if requested, the student's parents/guardians. Any information, which the student feels justifies the granting of the appeal, may be presented to the committee for consideration. The committee, in determining whether a waiver is justified, shall determine whether the student has exhibited outstanding effort or performance in the class and also shall consider the reasons for the absences, state and federal law and the need to accommodate disabilities and other factors deemed relevant.

2. Any student whose appeal of a loss of course credit has been denied by the committee may request a review of such denial by the building Principal.

Seniors that appeal credit will lose end-of-year Senior Privileges.

Applicability to Students with Disabilities

This attendance policy applies to all students. For students with disabilities who are eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, attendance-related accommodations or modifications shall be determined on an individual basis through the student's IEP or Section 504

Plan, as appropriate, in accordance with applicable federal and Connecticut law.

Middle School Attendance (Grades 7 – 8)

A maximum of twenty (20) absences (excused or unexcused) will be permitted without academic penalty. Students who exceed the maximum twenty (20) days may be considered for non-promotion. In an effort to inform parents/guardians of the importance of regular school attendance the school will:

1. Inform the parent/guardian in writing after ten (10) absences are recorded.
2. A meeting will be scheduled with the parent/guardian after fifteen (15) absences are recorded and a student plan will be created.
3. A letter will be sent to the parents/guardians after twenty (20) absences have been recorded, indicating that the child may be considered for non-promotion.

Tardiness to School

For every five tardies to school, a student will be issued one office detention. Seniors will lose Senior Privileges once they accumulate more than 5 tardies per quarter for the rest of the quarter. Tardy detentions are scheduled on Tuesdays and Thursdays and will be determined by administration. Students who are continuously late, even after these consequences are issued, will be required to attend a meeting with their parents to discuss a plan of action to change the behavior and will receive an additional consequence as deemed appropriate by the Associate Principal.

*Please Note: Any student absent from school, or not in attendance for half the school day, may not attend, participate in, or be on school grounds for any school-sponsored activity that day without administrative approval. Any student suspended from school may not attend or participate in any school-sponsored activity on the day of suspension until the morning of the next school day.

Wheeler's Attendance Interventions	
<i>If your child...</i>	<i>Action...</i>
5 absences for a semester class OR 10 absences for a year class	Attendance Letter mailed and emailed home
8 absences for a semester class or 15 absences for a year class	Attendance Meeting with the attendance committee
11 absences for a semester class or 21 for a year class	Student loses credit for the class and has the opportunity to appeal the credit
1 unexcused absence	Automated phone call from the school
2 unexcused absences within a week	Personalized phone call from the school
5 unexcused absences within two weeks	Home visit by school personnel and/or Wellness Check by State Police
Excessive unexcused absences and lack of parent/guardian response to school personnel	DCF Referral (educational neglect)

ATTENDANCE AND EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students participating in extracurricular activities such as clubs or sports must be in school for at least half of the school day to participate on the day of a scheduled event or athletic contest. If there is a scheduled early dismissal, students should be in attendance for half of that abbreviated day. If activities fall on a weekend, the student must attend school at least half of the Friday before. Exceptions are made on a case by case basis and medical appointments, college visits and DMV appointments with documentation are considered excused and do not count towards this school rule.

BREAK(HS ONLY)

The Extended Break is a 35-minute period built into the school day to provide high school students with opportunities for academic support, enrichment, and meaningful connections with staff while maintaining a structured learning environment. During this period, teachers are available in their assigned classrooms to support students through academic assistance, intervention, or enrichment activities.

Students identified by the Student Concerns Team as needing additional academic support (including those on the D/F list) may be assigned to attend specific teacher sessions during Extended Break. Attendance at these assigned sessions will be taken if a student is assigned to a specific teacher.

Wednesdays will be mandatory advisory days and students will be required to report to their advisory teachers.

On Extended Break days, students who are not assigned to a required intervention may use the time productively by:

- Meeting with teachers for academic support or make-up work
- Completing assignments independently
- Participating in approved clubs or student organizations
- Accessing other school resources as appropriate, like the Media Center
- Gather in the Commons to eat/socialize

Students are expected to use Extended Break responsibly and follow all school expectations while moving throughout the building. It will be taken from students by administration if they abuse this privilege in any way.

BRING YOUR OWN DEVICE (BYOD) POLICY

The North Stonington Board of Education is committed to aiding students and staff in creating a 21st Century learning environment. Therefore, students and staff will be permitted to access the District's wireless network with their personal devices during the school day. With teacher and parent/guardian approval, students may use their own devices to access the internet and collaborate with other students. All specific information on the BYOD Policy is available on our website.

Although the district has a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy, students are expected to use their district-issued Chromebook for all school-related work to ensure consistent access to instructional resources, software, and technical support.

CANCELLATION OF SCHOOL / DELAYED OPENINGS / EARLY DISMISSALS

If weather conditions require that schools will be canceled, a Power Announcement call will be made to each household. Please be sure to update your contact information in PowerSchool. Announcements will also be made on local radio and television stations no later than 6:00 A.M.

Two (2) Hour Delayed Openings: Weather conditions may dictate the need to delay the starting time of school. When this occurs, a Power Announcement call will be made to each household. Delayed opening announcements will also be found on local radio and television stations no later than 6:30 A.M. Bus pick-up times will be adjusted accordingly.

Early Dismissals: In an emergency situation, early dismissals are the most difficult because many parents have to make alternate arrangements for childcare. If this were to occur, a Power Announcement will be made, the times of the early dismissals will be posted on our website, and the dismissal will be announced on the local radio and television stations.

Please note: If school is canceled or dismissed early, all extra-curricular activities are also canceled for that afternoon and evening.

CELL PHONES

In an effort to create a safe, productive environment, we added an addendum to our existing BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) acceptable user policy at Wheeler. We certainly respect that students live in a digital era, and we will continue to utilize this advancement in technology in our classrooms, but with some specific differences for Middle and High School students.

ALL high school students are permitted to carry their cell phones and access them at lunch and during study hall time each day. Middle school students are not permitted to have their phones out at any point unless a teacher grants permission for a specific use. **However, during class time, all students will be asked to place their phones in the**

classroom phone holders provided in each classroom at Wheeler.

Teachers can grant permission for phone use on an individualized basis, but again, **the expectation is that phones are placed in the holders during the majority of class.** We are working very hard to support our students' well-being, and from surveying all of our stakeholders, have heard loud and clear that our students need a formalized break from their screens. Please do not have students accessing Google Classroom from phones, but instead, through their school provided Chromebooks or laptops.

Cell Phone Policy: UPDATED

- During all classes, students will be asked to place their phones in the classroom phone holders at the front of every classroom in Wheeler.
- High school students are permitted to carry their cell phones and access them at break, lunch, and during study hall each day.
- Middle school students are not permitted to have their phones out at any point unless a teacher grants permission for a specific use.
 1. Cell phones must be placed in the cell phone holders when they enter class.
 2. Cell phones can only be used in study hall if a student is NOT ON the D and F list.
 3. Students should not be talking on cell phones at any time unless they come down to the main office to make an emergency call. School phones are available in our main office for students to call home at any time, and we encourage this practice if needed.
 4. Cell phones should not be used to record or photograph students or teachers without their permission. If this occurs, students will be disciplined appropriately and will automatically lose their privilege of carrying a cell temporarily, as deemed appropriate by school administration.
 5. Cell phones will remain in the cell phone holders when students leave the room. A student caught recording with a cell phone will receive appropriate disciplinary action, including a possible in-school suspension.
 6. Cell phones must be placed in the cell phone holders during all assessments and standardized tests.

Cell Phone Progressive Discipline Approach:

If a student does not place their phone in the holder upon entering the classroom:

First offense:

- Administration notified (by teachers completing a Level I blue behavior referral form)
- Consequence from the classroom teacher
- Parent contacted by teacher

Second offense:

- Administration notified (by teachers completing a Level II blue behavior referral form)
- Consequence from administration
- Student will have to turn their phone into the office each day for a week
- Parent contacted by teacher

Subsequent offenses:

- Administration notified (by teachers completing a Level II blue behavior referral form)
- Consequence from administration
- Students will have to turn their phone into the office each school day for an entire quarter (approximately 10 weeks)
- Parent contacted by administration

Additional offense: Student will lose the privilege of carrying their phone during the school day. Phones must be turned in to the main office for the remainder of the school year and possibly result in ISS.

CHROMEBOOK PROGRAM: Regulations to Policy 6141

Every student is issued a district Chromebook to support learning both in and out of the classroom. These are monitored by Securly Classroom by our staff to make sure students are using them appropriately.

Chromebook Distribution

- Grade 5: Students receive their first Chromebook.
- Grades 5–8: Students keep and use the same Chromebook throughout elementary school and continue using it when they move to Wheeler Middle School. (In grade 5 they do not go home)
- Grade 9: Students receive a new Chromebook to use throughout all four years of high school.
- After Graduation: High school students may keep their Grade 9 Chromebook after they graduate.

- Chromebook handbook lists insurance options for parents/guardians (\$30 per year if you opt in) If not, you will be responsible for the entire cost to replace the device.

Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to:

- Charge their Chromebook every night so it is ready for school each day.
- Bring their Chromebook to school fully charged each day.
- Take good care of their device and carry it safely.

Charging Cables

- Each student is provided one charging cable with their Chromebook.
- Students are responsible for keeping track of their charger.
- We recommend leaving the charger at home to reduce the chance of it being lost or misplaced.
- The district will not provide loaner chargers. While teachers may have one or two classroom chargers available for occasional use, it is the student's responsibility to arrive with a charged device.

Damaged Chromebooks

Students are expected to handle their Chromebook with care.

- If a Chromebook is damaged, the student will be issued a one-day loaner Chromebook that must be returned to the library at the end of each school day.
- If a loaner chromebook is not returned, a students' Google Account may be temporarily suspended until it is returned.
- Students and families may be financially responsible for the cost of intentional damage. District insurance provides limited coverage and may not cover all repair or replacement costs.

DRESS CODE

We would like to begin by letting you know that one of the most driving principles behind our dress code at Wheeler is that we want students to understand there is a time and place for everything. We want students to think about concepts like dressing for success and have modified our dress code to reflect this idea. This is not driven by our personal beliefs, but instead, by what we are trying to teach our students about respect, responsibility and resiliency. We continue to work hard to update our dress code and to make sure that we are not targeting body image and creating a self-esteem issue for our students. We are asking staff to have private conversations with students who they feel are violating dress code. If a staff member is not comfortable doing so, they can request administration to have that conversation. We are not calling out students in front of their peers regardless of how insignificant a violation. Instead, we are taking the time to speak privately to give our students an opportunity to rectify the violation with minimal disturbance to their day. See the updated guidelines below:

Any clothing, in the opinion of the faculty and administration that disrupts the educational process can be a violation. The final decision as to what is appropriate rests with the administration.

- Footwear must be worn in school at all times. Appropriate footwear for PE is sneakers only.
- Clothing or other personal items worn that advertises, promotes, or expresses: discrimination against any classified group, bigotry, hate, violence, illegal activities, nicotine products, or alcohol are not permitted. Also, clothing and/or personal items that contain obscene language, explicit sexual references or sexual innuendos are not permitted.
- Sunglasses, unless medically required, may not be worn in school.
- Clothing must provide appropriate coverage.
- Tops/bottoms should provide appropriate coverage. Tops should run across the body from armpit to armpit with no open side openings. Bottoms should cover all private areas.
- Torsos should not be exposed. If they are exposed, students may be asked to put on a jacket or sweatshirt.
- See-through or mesh garments must not be worn without appropriate coverage underneath.
- Hats/Hoods are teacher discretion in the classroom but MAY NOT BE WORN during testing.

Any student that violates the dress code will have the opportunity, without consequence, to change his or her attire to conform to the appropriate standard.

Parents will be contacted if a student refuses or is unable to change their attire and that student will receive a consequence as deemed appropriate by administration of staff. Repeat offenses will require parents/guardians to come in for a meeting with administration.

Physical Education Dress Code: Students are required to change into appropriate clothing for PE class and wear sneakers for class. Your PE teacher will establish guidelines pertaining to clothing. A medical excuse is required if a student is unable to participate in class due to an illness or injury. This medical excuse must be submitted to the nurse who will inform your teacher.

EARLY DISMISSALS

If a student must be dismissed before the close of school, a written request from the parent or guardian stating the reason for dismissal must be presented to the main office attendance secretary and the student will be given an early dismissal pass. At dismissal time, the student informs his/her teacher and reports to the office and signs out prior to leaving. The administration reserves the right to confirm any early dismissal with the parent/guardian or physician if necessary. Doctor, dentist, and business appointments should be made after school hours whenever possible. Students are responsible for obtaining information regarding the work and assignments from classes that will be missed. Except for certain circumstances, students are to obtain that information before school that morning or prior to the day of early dismissal.

EXTRA HELP

Students who are experiencing difficulty academically are urged to seek extra help. Teachers make every effort to be available after school, in order to assist students who wish to have or who need this help. We request that parents communicate with the team via e-mail concerning the need for extra help. Students and parents are encouraged to monitor student progress through the PowerSchool program to receive up to date information concerning academics and attendance. There will also be times during our Tuesday and Thursday Advisory blocks for students to make scheduled appointments with teachers for extra support.

FAMILY TRAVEL / VACATION

A student's absence from class for purposes of family travel or vacation is a loss of valuable class time. If circumstances demand that students accompany their parents during the school year, disciplinary action will not be taken, but the number of days missed will be counted in the total number of days absent in determining course credit. Students are encouraged to talk with their teachers prior to missing school to obtain any assignments. Class work may be made up in a timely manner as determined by the classroom teacher.

FIELD TRIPS / CLASS TRIPS

A student's privilege of going on a field trip or an overnight class trip will be determined by a number of factors, such as attitude, academic performance, and disciplinary record. Students may be denied the opportunity to participate under the following circumstances:

- A student who has compiled a disciplinary record or who, for other reasons, has been deemed not able to participate for safety reasons by administration, may not be allowed to go on field trips or overnight trips.
- Students in academic (failing a class) or attendance danger (over the allotted days out) cannot attend a trip if they will miss that class on the day of the scheduled field trip. If they are not permitted to attend the trip, the organizing field trip coordinator will create an alternative assignment for them to complete during their class on the day of the trip for them to complete in the main office.

The ultimate decision to deny a student this privilege will rest completely with the school administrators, after consultation with the teacher advisors/trip coordinator who are responsible for the trip. **Students are responsible for any missed work if they are on a field trip.**

Class Field Trips Guidelines

1. All students are expected to participate in field trips planned by their classroom teachers and be responsible for the curriculum presented.
2. All school rules of behavior apply on field trips. Students should remember that they represent their school, their families, and their community.
3. Financial arrangements for students who would otherwise not be able to attend may be made on a case -by- case basis through the administration.

Overnight Field Trips Guidelines (BOE Approval necessary)

1. Students will abide by all regulations throughout the trip or they may be sent home at the expense of the parents or guardians.
2. Night curfews will be set by the advisor and obeyed by all students.
3. Property destruction and theft will not be tolerated at any time. Breakage will be charged to those individuals responsible.
4. The purchase or use of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs will result in the student being sent home at the

expense of the parents or guardians. Further disciplinary action may be taken as per the discipline policy of the Board of Education.

5. Students will move about in groups or a buddy system and will never be left alone at any time.
6. No person will be permitted to leave the hotel/motel once the group has returned for the night.
7. Student dress for day or evening activities will be by direction of the chaperones.
8. Behavior of all students will be positive and mature and reflect cooperation and courtesy toward each other and toward all chaperones.
9. The chaperones will make final decisions on any matter affecting the welfare of the students and the success of the trip. All laws of the United States apply.

HALL PRIVILEGES

Students may be granted permission to leave the classroom using Securly Hall Pass. Students must use the kiosks located in all classrooms to sign out and back in. All students are expected to use hallway privileges responsibly and respectfully. When issued a hall pass, students must report directly to their approved destination and return promptly to class. Students are expected to remain within the time limits established by their teacher and the Securly Hall Pass system.

Examples of abuse of hallway privileges include:

- Roaming the hallways during lunch or advisory without authorization
- Returning late to class after lunch
- Going to a location other than the approved destination on the hall pass
- Remaining out of the classroom longer than permitted without approval
- Using another student's hall pass or otherwise misusing the Securly Hall Pass system

Students who abuse hallway privileges will be subject to disciplinary action. A progressive discipline approach will be followed in accordance with school policy.

Hallway Privileges Progressive Discipline Approach:

First offense:

- Administration notified (by teachers completing a Level I blue behavior referral form)
- Consequence from the classroom teacher
- Parent contacted by teacher

Second offense:

- Administration notified (by teachers completing a Level II blue behavior referral form)
- Consequence from administration
- Parent contacted by teacher

Subsequent offenses:

- Administration notified (by teachers completing a Level II blue behavior referral form)
- Consequence from administration
- Students may be put on hallway restrictions
- Parent contacted by administration

*Students who are out of the classroom for more than 25 minutes without authorization will be considered to be skipping class and will receive a Level 2 behavioral referral and will be issued an after-school office detention.

HOMEWORK

At Wheeler, homework is assigned at the professional discretion of each teacher to support learning, reinforce classroom instruction, and promote student growth. Homework expectations, including the frequency, purpose, grading practices, and deadlines, will be clearly communicated to students and families through each teacher's course expectations at the beginning of the school year.

While individual assignments may vary by course and teacher, homework practices are aligned within each academic department and are developmentally appropriate for each school level (middle school and high school). This alignment ensures a consistent and equitable experience for students while allowing teachers the flexibility to design meaningful learning opportunities that best meet the needs of their courses.

LATE BUS PROCEDURES

The North Stonington Board of Education provides a 4:00 p.m. late bus for students on scheduled Tuesdays and Thursdays to use in order to provide students participating in after school activities the ability to get home. The late bus stops at the front entrance of Wheeler High School/Middle School. Students can only use the late bus if they are

staying after for an approved extra-curricular activity (such as a sport or club). Students are to sign in on the bus and are required to follow the above procedures. The late bus is a privilege for the Wheeler Community.

LOCKERS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

All high school students can request a locker through their class advisor. **Middle School students are not issued lockers.** This locker is owned by the North Stonington Board of Education. **It is the student's responsibility to see that his or her locker is kept locked and in order at all times.** Combinations must be kept confidential. The school has an obligation to maintain a proper environment. When there is suspicion of a condition that endangers the health, welfare, or safety of any student, the school not only has the right, but the obligation, to examine locker contents.

Hallway Locker Guidelines

1. All high school students can reserve a locker if they want one. They secure this through their class advisors each fall.
2. Students are not to share their lockers with anyone.
3. The upkeep and cleanliness of the locker is the responsibility of the individual student. Damage to a locker will result in financial obligation.
4. Students should keep their lockers locked at all times as the school is not responsible for lost or stolen articles. Any damage to the lockers or lock must be reported to the Main Office.
5. Students may not change locker assignments without authorization from the Main Office.

Athletic Bags Guidelines

Members of athletic teams are permitted to use the locker room to store their personal items, including athletic equipment during the season they participate. Athletic bags **MUST** be dropped off by 7:40 am at the latest, as the locker room will be locked after that and students should be in their first period class by 7:45am. If students are running late, they should take their athletic bags with them to their first class and then bring them to the locker room during break.

Locker Searches:

The Board of Education provides lockers as depositories for students' personal belongings and school-related materials. Students shall be responsible for maintaining lockers in an orderly and sanitary condition. Therefore, the Board of Education, through the school administration, maintains ultimate control over all student lockers. The school administration may open and examine any and all lockers without individualized suspicion at any time when such examination is in the best interest of the school system.

LOST AND FOUND

Articles found should be deposited in an appropriate "Lost and Found" container. If a student does lose any items, he or she is encouraged to check first in the Main Office, and in the lost and found container located in the Commons. Unclaimed items turned in to the office, with the exception of books, will be given to a suitable charitable organization. An announcement will be made prior to the donation. Personal property loss/theft should be reported to the administration, upon which time an investigation and record of the circumstances will be made. The school is not responsible for articles taken from unlocked lockers. Periodically, the school reserves the right to empty the Lost and Found and send it to various non-profit organizations.

MEDIA CENTER

The Media Center, which adjoins the Commons on the first level of the school building, hosts all high school study halls and offers a wide variety of resources to all students, staff, and faculty, including :

- Personalized research assistance and information literacy instruction for individuals, small groups, and entire classes.
- Collaboration with teachers to design engaging lessons that support curriculum, inquiry-based learning, digital citizenship, and responsible use of artificial intelligence (AI).
- Access to resource sharing through interlibrary loan services for classroom instruction and independent learning.
- A diverse print collection of fiction, nonfiction, graphic novels, and periodicals that supports academic research, personal interests, and recreational reading.
- Extensive digital resources including eBooks, audiobooks, online databases, streaming media, and digital research platforms accessible from school and home.
- Technology resources available for video production, podcasting, 3D printing, and graphic design
- High-speed internet-connected workstations and flexible learning spaces for research, collaboration, content

- creation, and multimedia production.
- Makerspace and creative learning opportunities that encourage innovation, design thinking, coding, STEM exploration, and hands-on problem solving.
- Printing, copying, and other production services to support student and staff projects.
- Student-centered spaces designed for collaboration, independent study, reading, and academic support throughout the school day.
- Rotating displays that celebrate student learning, artwork, community partnerships, cultural events, and school-wide initiatives.
- Ongoing support for reading engagement through book clubs, reading challenges, author spotlights, literacy events, and personalized book recommendations.

MEDITATION / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE POLICY

Meditation: Consistent with the mandate of State law, it is the policy of the Board of Education of North Stonington to provide an opportunity for each student and each teacher to observe a time of silent meditation. At such time those students and teachers who wish may utilize such a period for silent meditation. Any student who chooses not to engage in such silent meditation shall nevertheless remain quietly seated in the classroom. Any teacher who chooses not to engage in such silent meditation shall nevertheless remain in the classroom to provide professional supervision.

Pledge of Allegiance: Each school within the district shall provide time each school day to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Such recitation is voluntary consistent with the mandate of Federal and State law. If, because of some personal philosophy or belief, a student/staff member has made the decision not to recite the “Pledge,” he/she may choose to remain silent. Non-participants are expected to maintain order and decorum appropriate to the school environment.

MENTAL HEALTH WELLNESS DAYS

Students are permitted to take two (2) *Mental Health Wellness Days* during the school year that will be considered “excused.” **These days CANNOT be taken consecutively and a parent MUST call in such a day to the main office on the day that the student is taking the Mental Health Wellness Day or before.** Mental Health Wellness Days are considered a school day during which a student attends to their emotional and psychological well-being in lieu of attending school. Students may not use a mental health wellness day on our scheduled District Wellness Day.

If a student takes a mental health day, they may not participate in any after school-sponsored and/or evening events on the day they took the mental health day.

MORNING ARRIVAL

All students should be in their first period class no later than 7:45 a.m. each day. Students may enter the building at 7:30 am each day and may purchase breakfast in the Commons until their first period class begins. **Students are late if they are not in their first period class at 7:45am.**

NORTH STONINGTON PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION

All parents, teachers, and administrators in the North Stonington School System are automatically members of the N.S.P.T.O. There are no formal registration requirements or dues. We are all working for the same goals:

1. To open the lines of communication between parents, teachers, students, administrators, the Board of Education, and residents
2. To work within the current system to improve the quality of education for the entire community. To achieve our goals, we need your help. By becoming active in the N.S.P.T.O., you will demonstrate your commitment to the education of our children, and you will be an informed, contributing partner in education.

PARENT PICK UP / DROP-OFF

Parent Pick up and Drop off is located in the front of Wheeler High School/Middle School. The back entrance to the building is for staff entrance and for students who ride the bus. Please do not pick up or drop off your children at the back entrance of the school as this will cause traffic congestion for our buses.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

It is essential that regular, ongoing communication be maintained between the school and the parents of our students. Conferences to discuss student progress and/or concerns can be scheduled at any time during the school year by simply contacting the teacher and scheduling an appointment. Parents or guardians desiring to confer with any faculty member, administrator, or school counselor are encouraged to telephone the main office (860-535-0377) for an

appointment. Upon arrival at school, the parent or guardian must report to the main office to obtain a visitor's pass. That pass must be worn while on school grounds and in any of the school buildings. There are two scheduled parent/teacher conferences each year at Wheeler in the fall and spring. Middle School Student-Led conferences will replace the spring conferences for all middle school students.

PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEOTAPING OF STUDENTS POLICY

Throughout the school year, there may be occasions when your child's photograph or video image may be taken for our school newsletter, website, or local newspapers. For your child's safety and protection, we ask that you complete and return the permission slip included in the packet of paperwork received during registration or on the first day of school so we may be made aware of your wishes regarding this matter. If the permission slip is not returned, we will assume implied consent.

The Board of Education authorizes the use of video cameras on district property to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of all staff, students, and visitors to district property, and to safeguard district facilities and equipment. Video cameras may be used in locations as deemed appropriate by the Superintendent. The district shall notify staff and students through the proper handbooks that video surveillance may occur on district property. Video recordings may become a part of a student's educational record. The district shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws related to record maintenance and retention.

SIGN IN/OUT OF CLASSROOMS

At all times during the school day, each student is scheduled to be in a specific room. Whenever it is necessary to leave that room, the student is responsible for signing out and in using Securly Hallway Pass kiosks when they return. Students who wish to speak with the school social worker or psychologist should make an appointment during study halls or in the morning before school.

STUDENTS RIDING THE ELEMENTARY BUS

Students with elementary bus passes will be allowed to ride the bus at the elementary school when space on the bus is available and per Admin approval. Students using the elementary bus must follow these procedures:

1. Students must obtain a stamped elementary bus pass from the Wheeler High School/Middle School Main Office. No student will be allowed on the bus without a pass.
2. When their afternoon activity is over, students must report to the elementary school no earlier than 3:10 via the pedestrian underpass. The elementary bus will leave by 3:15.
3. Wait underneath the canopy in front of the main entrance.
4. Be polite and courteous and observe all school rules. Any disciplinary problems will be dealt with according to this Student Handbook.
5. Do not enter the North Stonington Elementary School without permission.
6. When your bus arrives, promptly board the bus, ask the bus driver where you should sit, and remain on the bus.

Please Note: Students may use the elementary bus when space is available. Riding the elementary school bus is a privilege and not a right. Students may be excluded from riding an elementary bus if there is no room available after all elementary students have a seat.

STUDENT SOCIAL EVENTS

All social events involving the students are planned by student committees and supervised by the faculty sponsors of the classes, clubs, or activities. Only Wheeler students may participate in these social events, unless they are registered guests with a form on file from their school principal. Students are expected to follow the Wheeler handbook and all regulations and policies listed during all social activities. Reservation for space and time for such events must be approved by the building principal and/or the Central Office for school calendar availability.

- All students attending an activity shall be restricted to the area of the activity. Any student leaving a school-sponsored event before it concludes will not be allowed to return.
- Possession, consumption, or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages or drugs during a student activity is not permitted. (see disciplinary code for consequences)
- The administration may establish regulations for the conduct of a student activity on a case-by-case basis consistent with Board policies.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS/INTERNET: ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Student use of the Internet and any other electronic information retrieval services is a privilege. Students may use the Internet and any other electronic information retrieving systems owned by the Board of Education only when supervised by a teacher or a paraprofessional. Further guidelines for the use of these electronic services can be found

on the website in the policy manual.

TELEPHONE USE

Students are allowed to use the Main Office phone for emergencies only. Calls home due to illness will be made by our nurse. **Please discourage your child from calling you directly from a cell phone to be dismissed if they do not feel well.** Students who are not feeling well **MUST** be seen by our school nurse for such a dismissal. If it is necessary to leave a message for a child, contact the school office and the teacher will be notified. In the event of an emergency, students will be called to the office. **Students can not be called out of school via text messages.**

TITLE IX (North Stonington Public School Title IX Non-Discrimination Statement)

Per North Stonington Schools Policy, discrimination among students attending our schools with respect to race, color, religious creed, age, marital status, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, physical disability, gender, or identity is prohibited. Complaints regarding sexual harassment, bullying, racial harassment, and transgender issues should be directed to the District Title IX Coordinator:

Title IX District Coordinator: Allison Reyes

Wheeler High School/Middle School
297 Norwich-Westerly Road
North Stonington, CT 06378
(860)-535-0377 x2304
reyesa@nostoschools.org

All complaints should be filed with the district coordinator using the Sexual Harassment Report Form. A full investigation will take place upon referral.

North Stonington Public Schools Policies

- Nondiscrimination(includes grievance procedures for employees) [4118.11](#)
- Harassment [4118.113](#)
- School Climate Policy 5131.911

State of CT Title IX Contact Information
Dr. Adrian R. Wood
State of Connecticut Title IX Coordinator
CT State Department of Education
Turnaround Office
450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 602
Hartford, CT 06103-1841
Telephone: (860) 713-6795
E-mail: adrian.wood@ct.gov

VISITORS

On occasion, prospective students or foreign exchange students may be allowed to visit for a part of the school day after prior approval of the administration. **No past graduates should visit the school or the specific classroom during the school day without advanced permission from the school administration.** It should be strongly stressed that the facilities of the school are for the use of registered students of Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School only. Visitors involved in school business must obtain a visitor's badge in the Main Office before proceeding to their destination. These visitors will also have to submit a license so they can be checked through our RAPTOR program. These visitors will also be wearing a visible badge that identifies them. If you see an unfamiliar face without a badge, please approach them and direct them back to the main office. If you see suspicious persons, please contact the office immediately. The school will report to the Police Department the name(s) of anyone located in the school without such a pass if necessary.

WORKING PAPERS

All individuals under 18 years of age must have working papers issued by the school for employment. Each applicant must appear in person with evidence of age and a written signed statement from the employer on his/her letterhead stating the conditions of employment. Please see the Central Office Administrative Assistant if you need working papers for your child.

HIGH SCHOOL GENERAL SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY POLICY

Selection to the National Honor Society is a privilege, not a right. Students **with a GPA of 3.7 (A-) are invited** to apply for membership during their junior year as well as during the fall of their senior year. Membership is granted only to those students selected by the NHS Faculty Council, by meeting the requirements of service, leadership and character. Besides submitting a completed application and essay, students must submit one faculty referral proving authentic leadership at Wheeler High School.

All students should understand that accountability for their actions plays an important role in the selection process for National Honor Society. Any student with a serious, documented violation of the WHS Code of Conduct (including but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, vandalism, drug and alcohol violations, and harassment) will be denied membership in the National Honor Society. In turn, violations of the WHS Code of Conduct will be grounds for dismissal from the National Honor Society.

SENIOR RELEASE

This privilege, which grants seniors a certain amount of independence, requires parental permission.

Seniors who qualify will be allowed to eat lunch outside at the picnic tables, and leave school when their study halls fall at the beginning or end of each school day. This privilege has the following guidelines:

- **All seniors will start the school year with senior privileges once the signed permission slip is submitted to their class advisor.**
- **If a student has two study halls at the end of the day or two study halls in the beginning of the day, both study halls will qualify for Senior Release. Also, if seniors have a study hall at the beginning of the day and the end of the day, they may come in late and leave early on those days as well.**
- **All senior grades will be checked at the middle and end of each quarter. At these check points, if the student should have any D's or F's, they will lose this privilege for the remainder of the quarter. Students can also earn them back at this time as well. After that, they **MUST** wait for the end of the quarter to earn them back.**
- **If a student hits their limit on tardies during a marking period, they automatically lose their senior privilege for the entire quarter.**
- **Students who have any major disciplinary infractions (Level 2) may also lose their privileges for the following marking period.**
- **Senior release is also up to the discretion of administration and can be taken away at any time by admin.**

Students must sign in directly with the attendance secretary no later than 5 minutes before the start of their first period class. They must also sign out before leaving the building at the end of the day if they are leaving early. **Seniors may not leave early on scheduled advisory days or special school days such as Wellness Day, Senior Capstone Day, and any scheduled testing days.**

STUDENTS DRIVING TO CAMPUS POLICY

Parking on school grounds is a privilege extended to students by the school administration. Spaces are assigned to students on an individualized basis. Students who park on the property of Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School do so at their own risk. The North Stonington Board of Education assumes no responsibility for damage to or theft from any vehicle parked or driven on WHS property. **Students must register their cars by returning the appropriate form to the Main Office and obtain a parking pass BEFORE driving to school. Forms may be obtained from the Main Office.**

Automobiles will not be used for any purpose during the school day. Once the student enters the school, he/she cannot return to their vehicle until the time of dismissal. No motor vehicle of any kind is to be driven or parked on the lawns, walkways, or athletic fields at any time. Automobiles illegally parked (fire lanes, handicapped spaces, faculty spaces, lawn, etc.) will be towed at the owner's expense. Students must park in their assigned areas and space numbers: In most cases, seniors out front and juniors in the back lot. Anyone parking in the DEEP lot, does so at their own risk of being towed as this is NOT Wheeler property. Underclassmen seeking permits will be given out as long as they are available.

Failure to obey all traffic regulations will mean loss of the privilege of parking on the school grounds and possible further disciplinary action. Some (not all) of the traffic regulations are:

1. **Speed limit—5 mph on school property**

2. No “peeling out” or driving in a reckless manner
3. No passing buses at ANY time (This is a \$500 fine if the bus department turns in the licensed driver)
4. Pedestrians have the right of way

Violation of any of the regulations listed above, or any others deemed unsafe by school administrators, will mean loss of the privilege of parking as follows:

1st offense: one week

2nd offense: two weeks

3rd offense: remainder of the school year

STUDENT SOCIAL EVENTS – HIGH SCHOOL

All social events involving the students are planned by student committees and supervised by the faculty sponsors of the classes, clubs, or activities. **Students should be reminded that these opportunities are privileges and that administration deems the right to deny access to such events based on significant disciplinary infractions.** Students are expected to follow all the school rules and policies during all social activities. Reservation for space and time for such events must be approved **by the Administration** for school calendar availability.

Dance Guidelines:

1. Wheeler High School students will be allowed one out-of-town guest. Students wishing to bring a guest to a Wheeler High School dance must return a Student Information Form to the Main Office on the Wednesday before the scheduled dance.
 - a) The guest is the sole responsibility of the student, and disciplinary action can result to a Wheeler High student for the behavior of the guest.
 - b) Student Information Forms **MUST** be signed by a parent and a school administrator if the guest attends another school
 - c) If a guest is out of high school, the Student Information Form **MUST** be signed by a parent and the driver’s license number and date of birth of the guest must be written on the form.
 - d) All guests outside of high school will be run through our school RAPTOR program to identify any background issues that the school needs to be aware of.
 - e) Administration reserves the right to deny a guest ticket to anyone that has any background disciplinary action that is concerning to the safety of the Wheeler student body.
 - f) Guests over the age of 21 will not be permitted to a school dance.
2. No middle school students are allowed
3. Any student determined to have consumed alcohol or other drugs at the time he or she is admitted to the dance will be detained, reported to the police, and have his or her parents/guardians notified. Disciplinary action will be taken per Board of Education Policy.
4. Students who break school rules, or whose conduct is unacceptable, will be removed from the dance and their parents/guardians will be notified. Disciplinary action will be taken.
5. Student members of the organization sponsoring the dance are to assist in the setting up and cleaning up.
6. Once a person leaves the dance, he or she shall not be readmitted. No one will be permitted to loiter on the school grounds during or after a dance.
7. **Students must attend school for a minimum of half of the school day/ (2 blocks) on the day of the social event or, in the case of a Saturday event, the student must attend school for a minimum of half of the school day (2 blocks) the school day prior to the social event.**
8. If an outsider creates a disturbance, or violates Board Policy or school rules, he or she will be removed and not allowed to participate in any future events. The student inviting a guest who creates a disturbance may be restricted from inviting guests to future activities.
9. Students must have a ride to and from the event. Parents should be at the school to pick up their child when the event is over.
10. Students must arrive at the dance within one half hour of the starting time unless prearranged in writing with an administrator. Anyone arriving more than one half hour after the start of the dance will not be admitted.

STUDY HALL

Study Hall teachers will use the D and F list to better support students who are struggling and will require any student on the D and F list to stay off their phone during this time. Seniors in study hall who fall on the D and F list at the start of a quarter and at the midway check, will lose their senior privileges for the remainder of the study hall. Students should not be roaming the hallways during their study halls and should be using the time to complete schoolwork.

MIDDLE SCHOOL GENERAL SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The middle school experience is a unique one that serves the emerging adolescent. The Wheeler Middle School program are designed with this type of model in mind. During a student's time in this community, he/she will experience changes as they grow from childhood through adolescence. These changes are physical, mental, social, and emotional. This program was designed to help the students move through this transitional period and help them to grow and mature during these important developmental years of their lives. Please also understand that oftentimes, at the middle level, friendships grow and change. Our school counseling office, our teams and our administration support the needs of all our middle school students as needed.

While here in our community, teachers attempt to initiate an atmosphere of self-responsibility and assist the students in developing a better understanding of who they are. While enrolled in Wheeler Middle School, students will explore new academic areas, develop new academic skills, mature in their decision-making ability, strengthen their ability to organize their time, and learn responsibility. Many focuses by their teams will be on collaboration and cooperation. Teams will have students participate in multiple team-building activities as well as interdisciplinary learning units to practice this collaboration and cooperation.

DANCE/ACTIVITY NIGHT RULES

Dances and social events are scheduled periodically throughout the year. These events are for Wheeler Middle School students only, and some events may only be for particular grades. Students are expected to follow the rules of the school handbook during all social activities.

Tickets for these events are sold during the school day and will not be sold at the door of the event, unless otherwise announced. Students must have the school issued permission slip completed before purchasing a ticket. The last day to purchase tickets and turn in a permission slip is the Friday before the dance. The following rules apply for these events:

1. Students who have been suspended from school will lose the privilege of attending the event.
2. Students must be in school two (2) blocks the day of the event.
3. Students must conduct themselves in a proper manner or they will be asked to leave. As a result, the privilege of attending other school events may be curtailed.
4. Students must remain in designated areas.
5. Once a student leaves the building, he/she may not return.
6. Students must have a ride to and from the event. Parents should be at the school to pick up their child when the event is over. If a student is picked up more than fifteen (15) minutes after the conclusion of the event, he/she will not be allowed to attend the next event.
7. The dress code requirements that must be followed during the school day must be followed during the social events unless special circumstances are established, like a costume dance.

HIGH SCHOOL PLANNING

School counselors will work closely with 8th grade students wishing to pursue outside vocational, technical, and agricultural programs in the fall of grade 8. They will also review in-house options including pathway, manufacturing and internship programs at Wheeler during this time and again, in grade 9.

MIDDLE SCHOOL TEAM APPROACH

The Teacher Team Approach at Wheeler Middle School is an arrangement in which four teachers, one from each of the core subjects, taking advantage of their respective competencies, schedule, plan, instruct, and evaluate the performance of Wheeler Middle School students. Each team works collaboratively and in a collegial manner to plan and share instructional strategies that foster opportunities for student success. We view this as a cooperative effort among students, families, and teachers, and look forward to working together throughout this year.

The teachers on each team meet daily to discuss the specific needs of the middle school adolescents. This is accomplished by:

1. Planning ways to assist individual students and monitoring student progress
2. Creating common expectations for learning of each student
3. Discussing student issues concerning discipline and recognition
4. Planning team activities, which include field trips, interdisciplinary projects, student-led conferences and assemblies
5. Meeting with parents

ACADEMICS AT WHEELER

As part of our work in measuring student growth in our academic expectations, Wheeler staff will administer an assessment to all 8th (second semester)-12th grade students that covers all domains in their chosen academic expectation each semester. During our two assessment week schedules, each semester, students will take an assessment in each of their classes. Staff will upload student work so students and parents are informed on growth or areas of deficit. Students who miss an exam due to illness may take it during any scheduled afternoon during assessment week. Students who will miss any of the assessment days MUST contact the teacher to reschedule a time THAT WEEK in the afternoons to retake the missed assessment. 7th graders will not take these assessments and 8th grade students will take their first one in the Spring of their 8th grade year in the following academic areas: English, Math, Science, Social Studies and World Language (if applicable)

Academic Integrity

The faculty and administration of Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School demand high standards of academic performance and academic honesty. Anything less would jeopardize quality education and allow our students to deny themselves the needed skills and knowledge. For this reason, students who cheat on their assigned work, reports, research papers, quizzes, tests, or examinations risk prompt and punitive action by both their teacher and the school. Examples of violations may include, but are not limited to:

- Plagiarizing work and handing in as your own
- Giving or receiving aid on any assigned work
- Unauthorized talking during tests
- Copying tests, homework or any assignments
- Unapproved discussion of examinations/assignments contents
- Using any unapproved technological assistance to complete work unauthorized by staff (AI, translators, Photomath...etc.)
- Sharing personal Google documents with other students who turn them in as their own

USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Generative AI models sample large data sets to predict and create new content. This may include, but is not limited to, text, mathematical answers, graphs, images, and videos. Students may use AI tools to find initial avenues of inquiry, identify potential sources of information, and evaluate their original work. Wheeler High School/Middle School recognizes the possibilities and problems of using AI tools in education. In keeping with the mission of teaching students to navigate a complex and changing world, the following guidance outlines acceptable AI use in our Wheeler classrooms.

RESPONSIBLE USE OF AI

- Students may use approved AI tools in appropriate contexts with teacher knowledge. AI tools must enhance, not replace, the learning process. Students must analyze and evaluate content without the use of AI tools.
- Students are encouraged to use AI tools to help identify and avoid plagiarism, assist in generating citations, and proof their original work with grammar and tone.
- AI is a powerful tool that helps generate and connect ideas, but information accuracy is not guaranteed. Students must take steps to verify AI-provided information through reliable sources.

PROHIBITED USE OF AI

Academic:

- Plagiarism. Using AI tools to plagiarize or submit work that is NOT the student's original work is prohibited. See the Academic Integrity Statement for more information on offense consequences.

Non academic:

- Misinformation. Creating and distributing content using AI tools to spread misinformation or harm others is prohibited and may lead to consequences in line with other school policies.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE APPROACH

Documentation of all sources is important to avoid plagiarism, which is the stealing of another's ideas, words, writing, or academic work, and implying that it is original. Both quoting and paraphrasing information from an outside source, including using any technology, without crediting that source is a form of plagiarism. Students who are found

cheating or plagiarizing will be subject to the following actions:

First offense:

- Administration notified (by teachers completing a Level I blue behavior referral form)
- Academic penalty up to and including zero (teacher discretion)
- Parent contacted by teacher

Subsequent offenses:

- Administration notified (by teachers completing a Level II blue behavior referral form)
- Academic penalty up to and including zero (teacher discretion)
- Parent meeting
- Disciplinary action by the administration, which may include office detention or suspension

ELIGIBILITY FOR ACTIVITIES POLICY (CIAC-Public Act No. 26-139)

Participation in sports and extracurricular activities is a privilege, not a right; therefore, students are expected to be positive school and community citizens. Serious violations of school rules and community laws could result in suspension of these privileges. Student activities provide an opportunity for each student to further develop individual interests and abilities, to develop personal relationships, initiative, cooperation, dependability, and organizational ability. Success is not measured by the number of activities in which a student participates, but by the amount and quality of work done in each. All students involved in club, music, or athletic activities must conform to current eligibility requirements. The requirements are as follows:

The student must have earned at least five credits in the year immediately preceding the one in which he/she is competing and must carry at least five credits in the year he/she is competing.

- Eligibility for the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th quarters is based upon the previous quarter's grades.
- Students must pass a minimum of five credits the quarter prior.
- Misbehaviors may be cause for restricted participation in extracurricular activities. (please refer to the *Wheeler Athletic Handbook*)

EXEMPTION FROM INSTRUCTION POLICY

The North Stonington Board of Education allows exemption from instruction for religious or medical reasons and or instruction on the following curriculum: AIDS/HIV, dissection of animals, and family life/sex education upon receipt of a written request from a parent/guardian for such exemption to the principal.

GRADE LEVEL PROMOTION

At the end of Grade 8: Students who successfully pass all four core subjects – English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies – will be unconditionally promoted to the next higher grade. Decisions concerning unique cases will be made by the administration after consultation with the school counseling department and the grade level teams.

At the end of Grade 9: A student must have earned six credits (6.5), including a credit in English I, for promotion to Grade 10.

At the end of Grade 10: A student must have earned thirteen (13) credits, including a credit in English II, for promotion to Grade 11.

For promotion to Grade 12: A student must have earned eighteen (19.5) credits, including a credit in English III.

Please also note that if a student is not eligible to be promoted due to a shortage of credits, they will have to attend the class meetings of the class where they are enrolled. However, if they are potential seniors, they will be permitted to attend the senior class meetings if they are working to rejoin their senior cohort per approval by administration.

HONOR ROLL

To be eligible for the Honor Roll, the following requirements must be met:

High Honors: Students achieving grades between A- and A+ or with only one grade in the B to B+ range (excluding physical education) will receive high honors.

Honors: Students achieving grades between B- and A + or with only one grade in the C to C+ range (excluding physical education) will receive honors.

Please Note: Physical Education grades must be in the A, B, or C range for a student to be included on the honor roll.

WHEELER MARKING PERIOD DATES 2026-2027

Semester 1

Quarter One (45)	August 27 October 30	Q1 Starts (First/Shortened Day) Q1 Ends
Quarter Two (47)	November 2 January 22	Q2 Starts (4 days of assessments) Q2 Ends

***Students will return to their Quarter 2 groups on January 21st and 22nd to wrap up for the semester and to review mid- year assessments.**

Exams/Course Assessments: January 14-15, January 19-20 (1/2 days with 2 sessions meeting each day) Academic Expectations Assessments

Semester 2

Quarter Three (46)	January 25 April 2	Q3 Starts Q3 Ends
Quarter Four (44)	April 5 June 11	Q4 Starts (4 days of assessments) Q4 Ends (Last/Shortened Day)

Exams/Course Assessments: June 7th-11th (1/2 days with 2 sessions meeting each day) Academic Expectations Assessments (MS will follow a different schedule)

***Seniors will not be in classes from June 7th -11th, outside of graduation rehearsals, senior events, and senior week activities.**

Academic Expectations Assessments: This schedule allows students to rotate through their eight periods to complete these assessments in your classrooms. This time can also be used to teach, have students self-assess, and for student/teacher meetings to review assessments. The afternoons will be spent finishing scoring, loading work to portfolios or planning. Please also be aware that students who miss assessments should reschedule them with you during the afternoons during the assessment windows. (7th graders do not take Academic Assessments. 8th graders only take the end-of-year assessments.)

REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS POLICY

PowerSchool: Wheeler High School/ Middle School uses an on-line web portal grading system which allows parents/guardians and students the ability to log on at any time to see student progress. **Please keep in mind that teachers have a two week window to enter grades after students submit work and a one week window to submit grades on any late work submitted. Teachers will make expectations clear on their late work policies on their course expectations.** If you have questions concerning access, lost password, etc... Please contact the School Counseling Office. If a parent/guardian does not have access to a computer, or would like a paper copy of a student grade report, contact the School Counseling Office. Please allow teachers up to two weeks' time to record grades in the PowerSchool portal.

Report Cards: Report cards are issued approximately one week after the marking period ends. Paper copies of report cards can be made upon request, but printed report cards are only printed at the end of each semester. The final report cards are mailed home at the end of the school year. At any time, parents can access student grades by using the PowerSchool Parent Portal. Parents will also receive semester progress updates on how high school students are performing in regard to our four (4) Academic Expectations: Analysis, Communication, Collaboration and Literacy.

SUMMER SCHOOL/CREDIT RECOVERY

Wheeler High School offers online summer school for high school students who do not receive credit and wish to pursue credit recovery options or course redo's. If a student enrolls at LEARN or any other online summer school option for credit recovery or enrichment, the following rules apply:

1. The student and parent assume costs of those programs.
2. Credit recovery will be granted only if, during the regular school year, the student has previously taken, completed, and failed the course with an F grade.
3. A course may not be dropped and then taken for credit in summer school.

- Credit will be granted based upon the credit value of the course failed. For example, a student failing a one-credit course will be granted one credit upon successful completion of that course in summer school. Under no circumstance will a student receive more credit for a summer school course than would have been earned if the course had been passed during the school year.
- Students are responsible for having their summer school grades sent to Wheeler High School if completed outside of Wheeler.
- Summer school grades will be recorded on the permanent record. Summer school credit recovery grades will be averaged in the G.P.A. as a 60 (D-).

ACADEMICS AT WHEELER HIGH SCHOOL

ADD DROP OR SCHEDULE CHANGES

Students may add or drop a course, however there is a time frame that needs to be adhered to. If the add/drop is taking place within the first **two days** of the new semester, students may do so with a counselor's approval.

If an add/drop takes place after the first two days of the semester, students must make an appointment with their school counselor to request an Add/Drop Form and to discuss the reasons for the schedule change. Then, students must adhere to the following:

- Student must arrange a conference with the classroom teacher to discuss the reason for the drop.
- If applicable, student must arrange a conference with the classroom teacher they are hoping to add to their schedule.
- Students have seven school days to make a schedule change without receiving a W (Withdrawal) on their transcript.
- A class drop will not be allowed if it causes the student to go below the minimum required credits.
- Parent approval on the Add/Drop form is also required.

If an add/drop takes place after the allotted seven-day window, students must do the following:

- Student must make an appointment with their school counselor to request an Add/Drop Form, and to discuss reasons for the schedule change.
- Student must arrange a conference with the classroom teacher to discuss the reason for the drop.
- If applicable, student must arrange a conference with the classroom teacher they are hoping to add to their schedule.
- Students will receive a W (Withdrawal) on their transcript for any class dropped after the three-week window has expired unless deemed otherwise by administration.
- A class drop will not be allowed if it causes the student to go below the minimum required credits.
- If a student is failing a course at the time of the drop, that student will automatically lose eligibility for honor roll for that marking period.
- Parent approval on the Add/Drop form is also required.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT COURSES/ECE COURSES:

Advanced Placement (AP), offered through College Board, and Early College Experience (ECE) offered through UCONN, are college level courses taught in a secondary school environment. AP/ECE courses are taught by highly qualified high school teachers whose curriculum is guided by the College Board *AP Course/UCONN Course Descriptions*. Students who take AP courses have the opportunity to receive college credit, depending on how they score on the AP exam (a 3, 4, or 5) and as determined by individual colleges and universities. Students who take an AP course are **required** to take an AP exam, usually given in May. Students who take an ECE course are also required to take an exam to receive college credit and must score a 73% or higher.

****PLEASE NOTE: Students and families are responsible to pay the full cost of their AP exam(s). These fees will be applied at the start of each school year after the add/drop period has concluded. All AP test fees must be paid in full by October 1st.***

AGE OF MAJORITY

Any student in Connecticut who is eighteen (18) years old has reached the age of majority and, as a student, has certain responsibilities:

School regulations concerning all attendance matters (ie. early dismissal, field trips, late arrival, etc.) shall continue to be handled as they were previously. Eighteen-year-olds not living with parent(s) or guardian(s) will be dealt with directly in attendance matters.

- The school system recognizes its moral responsibility to the parent regardless of the age of the students in its charge. All contacts and records shall continue to be maintained with the home.
- The school recognizes the right of the eighteen-year-old to examine all personal records.

3. Any student at or above the age of majority, who is independent of parents, taking up residence in the town and enrolling in the school system, shall submit a proper certificate of residency.

CLASS RANK* / GPA POLICY

Class rank will be determined by multiplying the grade point value weight of the grade earned in a course by the credit value (F grades receive no weight). The result is then divided by the total number of units attempted. Class rank is not shared with students and is only used by school to determine scholarships and to identify Wheeler Scholars at graduation time. Parents/students who need it for college or scholarship application purposes should request this from their school counselor.

***Students transferring to Wheeler after the close of Semester 1 of their Junior year will not be included in class rank.**

Grade and Quality Point Table

Grade	Level 0 (Non-Honors)	Level 1 (Honors)	Level 2 (AP)
A+	4.30	4.63	4.96
A	4.00	4.33	4.66
A-	3.70	4.03	4.36
B+	3.30	3.63	3.96
B	3.00	3.33	3.66
B-	2.70	3.03	3.36
C+	2.30	2.63	2.96
C	2.00	2.33	2.66
C-	1.70	2.03	2.36
D+	1.30	1.63	1.96
D	1.00	1.33	1.66
D-	0.70	1.03	1.36
F	0.00	0.00	0.00
I	0.00	0.00	0.00
P	0.00	0.00	0.00
W	0.00	0.00	0.00

COURSE LEVELS

Students need not be in the same level for all courses

Advanced Placement Courses: These courses are college courses and are extremely rigorous. Students may receive college credit for them if they score a 3, 4, or 5 on the Advanced Placement Examination given in May each year. Grade prerequisites and teacher recommendations are required. (Level 2 on Quality Point Table)

Honors Courses: These rigorous courses are intended for students who are in the top 20% of their class. Grade prerequisites and teacher recommendations are required. (Level 1 on the Quality Point Table)

Academic Courses: These courses are for very serious students who are planning to attend college. These are students who are committed to a challenging program that will prepare them academically for the rigors of college. (Level 0 on the Quality Point Table)

Academic Courses with support: These courses are for those students who are not yet ready for the challenges of the Academic courses independently, but who are looking for a solid educational support. These courses will prepare the student for further education or work

FULL TIME STUDENT CREDIT POLICY

All students attending Wheeler High School must carry a minimum of six and a half (6.5) credits each year, with seniors required to carry six (6) credits during their senior year-NOT INCLUDING Capstone credit. A total of six and a half (6.5) credits, including English, must be earned for promotion to the next grade level. Administration deems the right to determine changes to this policy should there be extenuating circumstances which may warrant reconsideration.

GRADES AND COURSE CREDIT

Grades earned in any course shall reflect the student's daily attendance, as well as the fulfillment of other academic requirements as may be established by the teacher.

Incompletes: All incomplete grades must be converted to a letter grade within two weeks of the close of the marking period. Extenuating circumstances will be dealt with by the Administration and School Counseling Office on a case-by-case basis.

GRADING SYSTEM

The Wheeler Community uses a traditional grading system:

A+ (97 – 100)	C (73 – 76)
A (93 – 96)	C- (70 – 72)
A- (90 – 92)	D+ (67 – 69)
B+ (87 – 89)	D (63 – 66)
B (83 – 86)	D- (60 – 62)
B- (80 – 82)	F (0 – 59)
C+ (77 – 79)	

To receive credit in any subject, a student must achieve a passing grade (D-).

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS POLICY

Wheeler High School Graduation Requirements*

<u>Graduation Requirements</u>	Class of 2022 and beyond Total 26 Credits	
	# Credits	Total Credits by Cluster
Cluster 1: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics		9
Math	3	
Science	3	
STEM Elective	3	
Cluster 2: Humanities		9 (9.5)
English	4	
Social Studies	2 (11th and 12th graders) 2.5 (9th and 10th graders)	
Fine Arts		
Humanities Electives	3(10th, 11th and 12th graders) 2.5 (9th graders)	
Cluster 3: Career and Life Skills		8
Physical Education	1.5	
Health	1	
Personal Finance	0.5	
World Language	1	
Electives	3	
Senior Capstone Project	1	

**Seniors who still have less than or equal to 1.0 Carnegie unit/credit to still earn at the end of their senior year, CAN walk at Wheeler's Graduation Ceremony, but will not receive their diploma until completion of their course requirements. Students who have more than 1.0 credits to earn WILL NOT be permitted to walk at graduation and will be required to finish either over the summer, or come back in the fall to earn their credit. Administration will be in constant contact with students and families in either of these scenarios. Students not earning enough credit to graduate in either scenario WILL NOT be permitted to attend Senior Week activities and will be asked to come in each day to continue their coursework.*

INDEPENDENT STUDY PROGRAM POLICY

The primary objective of the Independent Study program is to provide academic students an opportunity to design, with assistance of family members, an individual course or project that is above and beyond the required academic experience. Independent Study is for serious, mature, and well-motivated students who possess the intellectual ability and self-discipline to pursue a program of interest and focused study. Independent Studies must be approved ahead of time by the Principal once the project has been clearly established with the supervising teacher. It will be the primary responsibility of the supervising teacher to help the student in his/her pursuit of the Independent Study goals. The following criteria will be applied in determining whether a student should be allowed to participate in this program:

The following criteria will be applied in determining whether a student should be allowed to participate in this program:

1. A completed form must be submitted to your school counselor before the end of the add/drop period for any proposed independent study to take place in the fall semester, and by the end of the add/drop period for any proposed independent study to take place in the spring semester.
2. Students must submit one letter of recommendation from a former teacher that speaks to their commitment and dedication as a student, as well as their ability to be independent and self-reliant.
3. **All independent studies must be approved by the building principal before they are begun.**
4. Students must have met or shown evidence that they will meet all Wheeler course requirements to be successful in their Independent Study. This includes course prerequisites that are typically met.
5. Independent study credits cannot be used to meet credit or distribution requirements for graduation, EXCEPT on those rare occasions when the schedule of our small school will make it impossible to schedule required courses. In these rare instances on-line courses may be accepted to meet credit and distribution requirements. This will occur only after all other possibilities have been exhausted.
6. The student must have exhausted all departmental courses that relate to the independent study.

The following requirements will apply to all students who are accepted to participate in the Independent Study program:

- The student must spend a minimum of **63** hours per semester for .5 credit and **126** hours per semester for 1 credit. The expectation is that credited Independent Study requirements will include work both in and outside of school.
- The student must maintain a weekly log of activities and times associated with the Independent Study. The supervising teacher will sign off on the log on a weekly basis and make a copy of the log, to be handed in to the school counseling office at the end of the semester. (Log sheet provided by Guidance Office) Each week, the assisting teacher will enter a grade based on the overall effort of the student during that week.
- The student must also maintain a journal with a minimum of bi-weekly, one-page reflections on his/her experiences, his/her insights and growth, and his/her learning challenges and frustrations. After this journal is graded by the teacher, it will be turned into administration as part of the student's record.
- The student must present a performance outcome to an audience beyond the immediate supervising teacher at the conclusion on the Independent Study. The audience must consist of faculty, administration, student's parents/guardians, students and will be scheduled and organized by the cooperating teacher.
- The student may withdraw from the Independent Study without penalty provided he/she withdraws prior to the school withdrawal deadline each semester.
- Independent Study courses that are an extension of the academic "core" curriculum will be considered and reviewed on a case-by-case basis for their inclusion in our GPA rank system.

PARENT OVERRIDES

If a parent and student choose to appeal the recommendation of a teacher for level placement in a particular course, they must follow the outlined procedure:

- Turn in an override form with all necessary signatures by the date that all schedule requests are due. (date is on the override form)
- Override forms received after the assigned date will be considered on an individual basis after the master schedule is developed, depending on class sections and size AND the timely return of parent override forms.
- If a student/parent overrides a class against a faculty recommendation, parents and students understand that a future level change may not be possible as outlined on the course override form.
- Override students will be reviewed at the end of the first month of class and students who are struggling may be recommended by a classroom teacher to drop back down to a lower level if there is an available seat in the class.

PATHWAY OPPORTUNITIES

At the end of Freshmen year, students can choose to join one of our offered pathways: Engineering/ Business and Education. A full presentation of our Pathways Program will take place during the Fall of Freshmen year and will highlight the program. Pathway students will specialize in elective offerings around their chosen pathway and will complete a minimum of a 63 hours internship during their senior year. Pathway students will carry a rigorous course load during their sophomore and junior years so they can free up their schedules to complete these internships. Pathway students will present their senior capstone project on their pathway experience the Spring of their senior year.

SENIOR CAPSTONE PROJECT

The Wheeler Senior Capstone Project challenges students to demonstrate and display mastery of the skills acquired while attending Wheeler High School. One of the goals of the Senior Capstone Project is to allow students to take control of and have a powerful voice in their own education and development, both as learners and as individuals. Student choice and personal interest are valued and recognized during each phase of the Senior Project. It is an opportunity for students to demonstrate what they know and are able to do by showcasing these achievements in a real-world situation.

This graduation requirement provides students with the opportunity to apply and broaden their knowledge and skills in an area of personal interest. Throughout their senior year, under the guidance of their senior English teacher, community mentors and the Senior Capstone Project Committee, seniors will complete an educational experience determined to be worthy in scope and content. Students will receive a grade based on their completed digital portfolio, presentation, paper and professional skills checklist. The Senior Project Committee, evaluation team, community mentor and English teacher will determine the final grade. See your school counselor with questions or see the Senior Capstone Project Handbook on the Wheeler website: www.northstonington.k12.ct.us.

WORK STUDY

Per Admin approval, students may apply to participate in work study opportunities their junior or senior year for credit. Such opportunities must align to graduation requirements and must be a minimum of 63 hours for .5 credit to be granted, or 126 hours for 1.0 credit to be granted.

ACADEMICS AT WHEELER MIDDLE SCHOOL

ACCELERATED MATH PROGRAM

All middle school students who qualify for an accelerated math program will be placed in a separate accelerated class for mathematics. 8th grade students on the accelerated track will take High School Honors Geometry. Successful completion of this course will earn 8th grade students high school mathematics credit.

There will be no parent overrides when it comes to placement in these classes. This identification process begins at the elementary school and students there will be put through specific criteria each year that will determine whether or not they qualify to be part of the accelerated math program. The criteria for these courses will be based on the following areas:

IXL data (district in-house computer adaptive math test)

SBA Results from year prior

A test and quiz average in math for the prior school year up to the time recommendations are made

Teacher recommendation

EARNING HIGH SCHOOL CREDIT AT WHEELER MIDDLE SCHOOL

The graduation requirements for Wheeler High School place a heavy emphasis on postsecondary readiness. The mission of Wheeler is *to provide students with the education that will best help them to live a life of accomplishment and satisfaction in a complex and changing world*. Our commitment to this mission is reflected in the graduation requirements and the coursework our students must complete in the broad range of academic disciplines.

These requirements have created opportunities for Middle School students to take more challenging courses. Wheeler Middle School students can earn high school math and world language credit for high school courses available in the middle school. By meeting the eligibility requirements delineated below, students will be able to take higher level and challenging courses during their high school career.

Eligibility Requirements

Middle School students are eligible to earn Wheeler High School graduation credit taught at the middle school level by meeting the following requirements:

- Pass the course, and
- Complete all four quarters for the year-long course.

Students meeting all of the above requirements will receive credit and the information will be on their high school transcript. Any courses taken for high school math or world language credit **will** count toward a student's GPA.

EXTENDED ADVISORY HOMEROOM

Extended Advisory Homeroom is a time where middle school students are with their core teachers. This time is used for team-building initiatives, clubs, meetings, SLC prep, interdisciplinary work and for team celebrations. It is an important time to support our middle school model, and provides collaborative experiences across teams to help prepare students for high school.

FLEX

All students have an FLEX block built into their daily schedule at Wheeler Middle School. During this time, core academic teachers as well as reading and math interventionists will use this time to service students in the areas of reading and math should they have any notable deficiencies. This fluid intervention system is based on data that is analyzed at intervals throughout the quarter. Such data includes: teacher recommendation, IXL data, teacher recommendation, overall performance and grades.

During this block students also participate in interdisciplinary project based learning. "What I Need Now" (WINN) time is also provided. This time is designed to aid students as they transition to High School by giving them time to work on skills and executive functioning in an independent manner.

Students requiring additional services (Tier 3) in the areas of reading and math will be referred specifically to our reading and math interventionists and could possibly be pulled in addition to Tier 2 time from other classes. If your child is receiving Tier 3 services, you will be contacted by one of our interventionists directly.

Recognizing that parents have the primary right, responsibility, and obligation for the education of their children, the Wheeler Community strives to complement, reinforce, and extend these family efforts. Wheeler is committed to enhancing mutual respect, student responsibility, and cooperation between school and home. Through an individualized problem-solving process which incorporates appropriate alternative behavioral procedures, students and their families will try to set up a productive plan to prevent unwanted behaviors from occurring again. In many cases of a more serious nature, parent/student/administration conferences will be standard procedure.

PRIDE CRITERIA

The middle school continues to promote academic and social/civic responsibility at Wheeler. Each semester, ALL students will take part in a semester celebration of their hard work in these areas. Students who may struggle during the semester will be pulled for restorative work/interventions throughout the semester to help them find success moving forward, but all students will now be able to participate in these semester celebrations. The program focuses on:

- Grades
- Tardies and attendance
- Discipline

PRIDE qualifiers will be successful, responsible, honest and safe and working towards achieving Wheeler's Social/Academic Expectations: RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY and RESILIENCE.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES AT WHEELER

The primary responsibility of Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School is to provide students a rewarding education. Wheeler has established behavior expectations that must be followed in order to maintain an environment that is conducive to learning. To attain this, a sequence of corrective consequences has been developed to address a broad range of student behaviors. At all levels of infractions, we are committed to implement a variety of instructional activities and actions, which are geared toward positive student behavioral development. However, more serious or repetitive negative behaviors by students will result in a system of progressive discipline in which consequences

become increasingly more severe.

Wheeler practices a restorative approach to discipline. Administration investigates and looks at all circumstances surrounding disciplinary events, as well as student records and statements from staff and students that are relative. Wheeler administration practices a progressive approach to discipline to reinforce to students that mistakes happen and that students have opportunities to make amends. Although we do not have a “cookie-cutter” approach to discipline, there are disciplinary infractions that we MUST by law, address specifically. Those include possession or distribution of drugs or weapons on campus. Those infractions are automatic ten (10) day suspensions pending a hearing with the Superintendent of Schools and an impartial hearing officer.

The North Stonington Board of Education is committed to creating a safe, orderly, and supportive learning environment for all students, staff, and visitors. This policy aims to balance the necessity of maintaining safety and order within our schools while adhering to progressive discipline and restorative practices, which seeks to address and correct inappropriate behavior while promoting accountability, personal growth, and the repair of harm.

Students are expected to comply with school rules and Board policies and may be disciplined for conduct on school grounds or at any school-sponsored activity that endangers persons or property, is seriously disruptive of the educational process, or that violates a publicized policy of the Board. Students may be disciplined for conduct off school grounds if such conduct is seriously disruptive to the educational process and violates Board policy.

Policy Objectives

1. **Ensure Safety and Order:** Maintain a secure and disciplined school environment conducive to learning and free from violence, threats, and disruptive behaviors.
2. **Promote Equity and Fairness:** Apply disciplinary measures in an equitable, consistent, and unbiased manner, ensuring that all students are treated with dignity and respect.
3. **Support Progressive Discipline:** Implement a progressive discipline model that focuses on intervention and prevention strategies to address and correct student behavior before it escalates.
4. **Implement Restorative Practices:** Incorporate restorative practices that emphasize accountability, reparation of harm, and the restoration of relationships within the school community.
5. **Encourage Personal Responsibility:** Foster a sense of personal responsibility and self-discipline in students, helping them to understand the consequences of their actions and to make better choices in the future.
6. **Engage Families and Communities:** Involve parents, guardians, and community members in the disciplinary process to support students in their behavioral and academic growth.

Policy Guidelines

1. **Clear Expectations and Communication:**
 - Establish and communicate clear behavioral expectations and the consequences of violating them.
 - Ensure that all students, staff, and parents/guardians are aware of the discipline policy and procedures.
2. **Progressive Discipline Framework:**
 - Utilize a tiered approach to discipline that escalates in response to the severity and frequency of the behavior.
 - Implement early intervention strategies such as counseling, mentoring, and behavior modification plans to address minor infractions.
3. **Restorative Practices:**
 - Employ restorative practices such as mediation, peer counseling, and restorative circles to address conflicts and repair harm.
 - Encourage students to take responsibility for their actions and to actively participate in the resolution

process.

4. Consistent and Fair Application:

- Ensure that disciplinary measures are applied consistently and fairly across all student populations.
- Monitor and address any disparities in the application of disciplinary actions to prevent discrimination or bias.

5. Supportive Interventions:

- Provide support services such as counseling, social work, and mental health resources to help students address underlying issues contributing to behavioral problems.
- Develop individualized behavior plans for students with recurring or severe behavioral issues.

6. Engagement and Collaboration:

- Engage families in the disciplinary process through regular communication and involvement in restorative practices.
- Collaborate with community organizations and resources to support students and families in addressing behavioral and social-emotional needs.

7. Training and Professional Development:

- Provide ongoing training for staff on progressive discipline, restorative practices, and culturally responsive approaches to student behavior.
- Encourage staff to develop skills in conflict resolution, de-escalation techniques, and positive behavior support.

Review and Accountability

The North Stonington Board of Education will regularly review the effectiveness of its discipline policy, incorporating feedback from students, staff, parents, and the community. Data on disciplinary actions and their outcomes will be collected and analyzed to ensure continuous improvement and the achievement of policy objectives.

By adopting this balanced approach to discipline, the North Stonington Public School District aims to create a school environment where all students can learn, grow, and succeed while feeling safe and supported.

A. Definitions

1. **"Exclusion"** shall be defined as any denial of public school privileges to a student for disciplinary purposes.
2. **"Removal"** shall be defined as an exclusion from a classroom for all or a part of single class period, provided such exclusion shall not extend beyond ninety (90) minutes.
3. **"In-School Suspension"** means an exclusion from regular classroom activity for no more than five consecutive days, but not exclusion from school, provided such exclusion shall not extend beyond the end of the school year in which such in-school suspension was imposed. Such suspensions shall be served in any school building under the jurisdiction of the Board of Education.
4. **"Suspension"** means an exclusion from school privileges or from transportation services, provided such exclusion shall not extend beyond the end of the school year in which suspension was imposed. An out-of-school suspension for students in grades 3-12 shall not exceed ten days. An out-of-school suspension imposed for children in preschool to second grade shall not exceed five days.

All suspensions shall be in-school unless the administration determines for any student in grades three through twelve that (1) the student being suspended poses such a danger to persons or property or such a disruption of the educational process that the student (grades three to twelve) shall be excluded from school during the period of the suspension, or (2) that an out-of-school suspension is appropriate based on evidence of previous disciplinary issues that have led to suspensions or expulsion of the student and efforts by the administration to

address such disciplinary issues through means other than out-of-school suspension or expulsion, including positive support strategies.

A student in grades preschool to two, inclusive, may be given an out-of-school suspension if it is determined by the administration that such suspension is appropriate based on evidence that the student's conduct on school grounds is of a violent or sexual nature that endangers persons. In addition, a person's duty as a mandated reporter to report suspected child abuse or neglect is not limited by this provision.

5. **"Expulsion"** shall be defined as an exclusion from school privileges for any student in grades three to twelve, inclusive, for more than ten (10) consecutive school days and shall be deemed to include but not be limited to, exclusion from the school to which such student was assigned at the time such disciplinary action was taken, provided that assignment to a regular classroom program in a different school in the district shall not constitute a suspension or an expulsion. Such period of exclusion may extend to the school year following the school year in which the exclusion was imposed, up to one calendar year. To be expelled, the student's conduct must be found to be both violative of a Board policy and either seriously disruptive of the educational process or endangering persons or property.

Unless an emergency exists, no student shall be expelled without a formal hearing provided whenever such student is a minor, the notice shall also be given to the parents or guardians of the student at least five business days before such hearing, not including the day of such hearing. If an emergency exists, such hearing shall be held as soon after the expulsion as possible. The notice shall include information concerning the parent's or guardian's and the student's legal rights and concerning legal services provided free of charge or at a reduced rate that are available locally and how to access such services. An attorney or other advocate may represent any student subject to expulsion proceedings. The parent or guardian of the student shall have the right to have the expulsion hearing postponed for up to one week to allow time to obtain representation, except that if an emergency exists, such hearing shall be held as soon after the expulsion as possible.

6. **"Emergency"** shall be defined as a situation under which the continued presence of the student in the school imposes such a danger to persons or property or such a disruption of the educational process that a hearing may be delayed until a time as soon after the exclusion of such student as possible.

7. **"Days"** is defined as days when school is in session.

8. **"School-sponsored activity"** is defined as any activity sponsored, recognized or authorized by the Board of Education and includes activities conducted on or off school property.

9. **"Possess"** means to have physical possession or otherwise to exercise dominion or control over tangible property.

10. **"Deadly weapon"** means any weapon, whether loaded or unloaded, from which a shot may be discharged, or a switchblade knife, gravity knife, billy, blackjack, bludgeon, or metal knuckles. A weapon such as a pellet gun and/or airsoft pistol may constitute a deadly weapon if such weapon is designed for violence and is capable of inflicting death or serious bodily harm.

11. **"Firearm"** as defined in 18 U.S.C. §921, means 1) any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; 2) the frame or receiver of any such weapon; 3) any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or 4) any destructive device. Firearm does not include any antique firearm. For purposes of this definition "destructive device" means any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas, bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than 4 ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than ¼ ounce, mine, or device similar to any of the weapons described herein. A "destructive device" does not include an antique firearm; a rifle intended to be used by the owner solely for sporting, recreational, or cultural purposes; or any device which is neither designed nor redesigned for use as a weapon.

12. **"Vehicle"** means a **"motor vehicle"** as defined in Section 14-1 of the Connecticut General Statutes, snow mobile, any aircraft, or any vessel equipped for propulsion by mechanical means or sail.

13. **"Martial arts weapon"** means a nunchakum kama, kasari-fundo, octagon sai, tonfa or chinese star.

14. **"Dangerous Drugs and Narcotics"** is defined as any controlled drug in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes §219-240.

15. **"Alternate education"** means a school or program maintained and operated by the Board of Education

that is offered to students in a nontraditional setting and addresses their social, emotional, behavioral and academic needs. Such program must conform to SBE guidelines and conform to C.G.S. 10-15 and 16 (180 days/900 hours).

16. **"Dangerous Instrument"** means any instrument, article, or substance which, under the circumstances in which it is used or attempted or threatened to be used, is capable of causing death or serious physical injury, and includes a "vehicle" or a dog that has been commanded to attack.

17. **"Seriously disruptive of the educational process"** means, as applied to off-campus conduct, any conduct that markedly interrupts or severely impedes the day-to-day operation of a school.

B. Removal from Class

1. All teachers are hereby authorized to remove a student from class when such student causes a serious disruption of the educational process within the classroom.
2. Such teacher shall send the student to a designated area and shall immediately inform the building Principal or his/her designee as to the name of the student and the reason for removal.
3. No student shall be removed from class more than six (6) times in any year nor more than twice in one week, unless such student is referred to the Building Principal or his/her designee and granted an informal hearing in accordance with the provisions of this policy, as stated in G(3).
4. A school principal or other school administrator shall notify a parent or guardian of a student whose behavior has caused a serious disruption to the instruction of other students, caused self-harm or caused physical harm to a teacher, another student or other school employee not later than twenty-four hours after such behavior occurs. Such notice shall include, but not be limited to, informing such parent or guardian that the teacher of record in the classroom in which such behavior occurred may request a behavior intervention meeting.

Any teacher of record in a classroom may request a behavior intervention meeting with the crisis intervention team for the school, for any student whose behavior has caused a serious disruption to the instruction of other students, or caused self-harm or physical harm to such teacher or another student or staff member in such teacher's classroom. The crisis intervention team shall, upon the request of such teacher and notifying such student's parent or guardian, convene a behavior intervention meeting regarding such student. The participants of such behavior intervention meeting shall identify resources and support to address such student's social, emotional and instructional needs. Not later than seven days after the behavior intervention meeting, the crisis intervention team shall submit to the parent or guardian of such student, in the dominant language of such parent or guardian, a written summary of such meeting, including, but not limited to, the resources and supports identified.

C. Exclusion from Co-Curricular and Extra-Curricular Activities

Participation in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities is a privilege and not an entitlement. Students involved in such programs are expected to follow all school rules and demonstrate good citizenship. Failure to do so may result in partial or complete exclusion from said activities and programs. Activities include, but are not limited to, athletic programs, musical or drama productions, clubs, field trips, and school trips out-of-state and abroad.

D. Actions Leading to Disciplinary Action, including Removal from Class, Suspension and/or Expulsion

Conduct which may lead to disciplinary action (including, but not limited to, removal from class, suspension and/or expulsion in accordance with this policy) includes conduct on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity (including on a school bus), and conduct off school grounds, as set forth above. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Striking or assaulting a student, members of the school staff or other persons.
2. Theft.
3. The use of obscene or profane language or gestures, the possession and/or display of obscenity or pornographic images or the unauthorized or inappropriate possession and/or display of images, pictures or photographs depicting nudity.

4. Violation of smoking, dress, transportation regulations, or other regulations and/or policies governing student conduct.
5. Refusal to obey a member of the school staff, law enforcement authorities, or school volunteers, or disruptive classroom behavior.
6. Any act of harassment based on an individual's sex, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, disability, national origin or ancestry.
7. Refusal by a student to identify himself/herself to a staff member when asked, misidentification of oneself to such person(s), lying to school officials or otherwise engaging in dishonest behavior.
8. Inappropriate displays of public affection of a sexual nature and/or sexual activity on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity.
9. A walk-out from or sit-in within a classroom or school building or school grounds.
10. Blackmailing, threatening or intimidating school staff or students (or acting in a manner that could be construed to constitute blackmail, a threat, or intimidation, regardless of whether intended as a joke).
11. Possession of any weapon, weapon facsimile, deadly weapon, martial arts weapon, electronic defense weapon, pistol, knife, blackjack, bludgeon, box cutter, metal knuckles, pellet gun, air pistol, explosive device, firearm, whether loaded or unloaded, whether functional or not, or any other dangerous object or instrument. The possession and/or use of any object or device that has been converted or modified for use as a weapon.
12. Possession of any ammunition for any weapon described above in paragraph 11.
13. Unauthorized entrance into any school facility or portion of a school facility or aiding or abetting an unauthorized entrance.
14. Possession or ignition of any fireworks, combustible or other explosive materials, or ignition of any material causing a fire. Possession of any materials designed to be used in the ignition of combustible materials, including matches and lighters.
15. Unlawful possession, sale, distribution, use, or consumption of tobacco, electronic nicotine delivery systems (e.g. e-cigarettes), vapor products, drugs, narcotics or alcoholic beverages (or any facsimile of tobacco, drugs, narcotics or alcoholic beverages, or any item represented to be tobacco, drugs or alcoholic beverages), including being under the influence of any such substances or aiding in the procurement of any such substances. For the purposes of this Paragraph 15, the term "electronic nicotine delivery system" shall mean an electronic device that may be used to simulate smoking in the delivery of nicotine or other substance to a person inhaling from the device and includes, but is not limited to, an electronic cigarette, electronic cigar, electronic cigarillo, electronic pipe or electronic hookah and any related device and any cartridge or other component of such device. For the purposes of Paragraph 15, the term "vapor product" shall mean any product that employs a heating element, power source, electronic circuit or other electronic, chemical or mechanical means, regardless of shape or size, to produce a vapor that may or may not include nicotine that is inhaled by the user of such product. For the purposes of this Paragraph 15, the term "drugs" shall include, but shall not be limited to, any medicinal preparation (prescription and non-prescription) and any controlled substance whose possession, sale, distribution, use or consumption is illegal under state and/or federal law.
16. Sale, distribution, or consumption of substances contained in household items; including, but not limited to glue, paint, accelerants/propellants for aerosol canisters, and/or items such as the aerators for whipped cream; if sold, distributed or consumed for the purpose of inducing a stimulant, depressant, hallucinogenic or mind-altering effect.
17. Unlawful possession of paraphernalia used or designed to be used in the consumption, sale or distribution of drugs, alcohol or tobacco, as described in subparagraph (15) above. For purposes of this policy, drug paraphernalia includes any equipment, products and materials of any kind which are used, intended for use or designed for use in growing, harvesting, manufacturing, producing, preparing, packaging, storing, containing or concealing, or injecting, ingesting, inhaling or otherwise introducing controlled drugs or controlled substances into the human body, including but not limited to items such as "bongs," pipes, "roach clips," vials, tobacco rolling papers, and any object or container used, intended or designed for use in storing, concealing, possessing, distributing or selling controlled drugs or controlled substances.

18. The destruction of real, personal or school property, such as, cutting, defacing or otherwise damaging property in any way.
19. Accumulation of offenses such as school and class tardiness, class or study hall cutting, or failure to attend detention.
20. Trespassing on school grounds while on out-of-school suspension or expulsion.
21. Making false bomb threats or other threats to the safety of students, staff members, and/or other persons.
22. Defiance of school rules and the valid authority of teachers, supervisors, administrators, other staff members and/or law enforcement authorities.
23. Throwing snowballs, rocks, sticks and/or similar objects, except as specifically authorized by school staff.
24. Unauthorized and/or reckless and/or improper operation of a motor vehicle on school grounds or at any school-sponsored activity.
25. Leaving school grounds, school transportation or a school-sponsored activity without authorization.
26. Use of or copying of the academic work of another individual and presenting it as the student's own work, without proper attribution; or any other form of academic dishonesty, cheating or plagiarism.
27. Possession and/or use of a cellular telephone, radio, walkman, CD player, blackberry, personal data assistant, walkie talkie, Smartphone, mobile or handheld device, or similar electronic device, on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity in violation of Board policy and/or administrative regulations regulating the use of such devices.
28. Possession and/or use of a beeper or paging device on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity without the written permission of the principal or his/her designee.
29. Unauthorized use of any school computer, computer system, computer software, Internet connection or similar school property or system, or the use of such property or system for inappropriate purposes.
30. Possession and/or use of a laser pointer, unless the student possesses the laser pointer temporarily for an educational purpose while under the direct supervision of a responsible adult.
31. Hazing.
32. Bullying.
33. Cyberbullying, defined as any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.
34. Acting in any manner that creates a health and/or safety hazard for staff members, students, or the public, regardless of whether the conduct is intended as a joke.
35. Engaging in a plan to stage or create a violent situation for the purposes of recording it by electronic means; or recording by electronic means acts of violence for purposes of later publication.
36. Engaging in a plan to stage sexual activity for the purposes of recording it by electronic means; or recording by electronic means sexual acts for purposes of later publication.
37. Using computer systems, including email, instant messaging, text messaging, blogging or the use of social networking websites, or other forms of electronic communications, to engage in any conduct prohibited by this policy.
38. Use of a privately owned electronic or technological device in violation of school rules, including the unauthorized recording (photographic or audio) of another individual without permission of the individual or a school staff member.

E. Scope of the Student Discipline Policy

a. Conduct on School Grounds or at a School-Sponsored Activity

Students may be disciplined for conduct on school grounds or at any school-sponsored activity that endangers persons or property, is seriously disruptive of the educational process, or that violates a publicized policy of the Board.

b. Conduct off School Grounds

1. Students may be disciplined for conduct off school grounds if such conduct is seriously disruptive of the educational process and violative of a publicized policy of the Board. In making a determination as to whether such conduct is seriously disruptive of the educational process, the Administration and the Board of Education may consider, but such consideration shall not be limited to, the following factors: (1) whether the incident occurred within close proximity of a school; (2) whether other students from the school were involved or whether there was any gang involvement; (3) whether the conduct involved violence, threats of violence, or the unlawful use of a weapon, as defined in section Conn. Gen. Stat. § 29-38, and whether any injuries occurred; and (4) whether the conduct involved the use of alcohol.

In making a determination as to whether such conduct is seriously disruptive of the educational process, the Administration and/or the Board of Education may also consider whether such off-campus conduct involved the illegal use of drugs.

F. Mandatory Expulsion

It shall be the policy of the Board to expel a student, grades preschool, and kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, for one full calendar year if:

1. The student, on grounds or at a school-sponsored activity, was in possession of a firearm, as defined in 18 U.S.C. 921*, as amended from time to time, or deadly weapon, dangerous instrument or martial arts weapon, as defined in C.G.S. 53A-3; or the student, off school grounds, did possess such firearm in violation of C.G.S. 29-35 or did possess and use such a firearm, instrument or weapon in the commission of a crime; or the student, on or off school grounds offered for sale or distribution a controlled substance, as defined in subdivision (9) of C.G.S. 21a-240, whose manufacture, distribution, sale, prescription, dispensing, transporting or possessing with intent to sell or dispense, offering or administering is subject to criminal penalties under C.G.S. 21-277 and 21a-278.
2. Such a student shall be expelled for one calendar year if the Board of Education or impartial hearing officer finds that the student did so possess or so possess and use, as appropriate, such a weapon or firearm, instrument or weapon or did so offer for sale or distribution such a controlled substance.
3. The Board may modify the period of a mandatory expulsion on a case-by-case basis.
4. A firearm, as defined by C.G.S. 53a-3 includes any sawed-off shotgun, machine gun, rifle, shotgun, pistol, revolver, or other weapon, whether loaded or unloaded from which a shot may be discharged, or a switchblade knife, a gravity knife, billy, black jack, bludgeon or metal knuckles.
5. A student enrolled in a preschool program provided by the Board of Education, state or local charter school or interdistrict magnet school shall not be expelled from such school except that a student shall be expelled for one calendar year from such preschool program pursuant to the mandatory expulsion requirement in compliance with the Gun-Free School Act, as described in this section.

G. Suspension Procedure (as modified in Public Act 24-45, Sections 13 and 14)

All suspensions shall be in-school suspensions, except the Board of Education may authorize the administration of schools under its direction to impose an out-of-school suspension on any student in:

1. Grades three to twelve, inclusive, if, resulting from a due process hearing:
 - a. The administration determines that the student being suspended poses such a danger to persons or property or such a disruption of the educational process that the student shall be excluded from school during the period of suspension;
 - b. The administration determines that an out-of-school suspension is appropriate for such student based

on evidence of:

- i. Previous disciplinary problems that have led to suspensions or expulsion of such student, and
 - ii. Efforts by the administration to address such disciplinary problems through means other than out-of-school suspension or expulsion, including positive behavioral support strategies; **or for grades preschool to two if during the due process hearing:**
2. The administration determines that an out-of-school suspension is appropriate for such student based on evidence that such student's conduct on school grounds is behavior that causes physical harm;
 3. Requires that such student receives services that are trauma-informed and developmentally appropriate and align with any behavioral intervention plan, individualized education program, or plan pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended from time to time, for such student upon such student's return to school immediately following the out-of-school suspension; and

****A firearm; currently defined by 18 U.S.C. 921, is any weapon that can expel a projectile by an explosive action and includes explosive devices, incendiaries, poison gases, and firearm frames, receivers, mufflers or silencers.***

4. Considers whether to convene a planning and placement team meeting for the purposes of conducting an evaluation to determine whether such student may require special education or related services.

An out-of-school suspension shall not exceed ten school days for students in grades 3-12.

An out-of-school suspension shall not exceed five school days for children in preschool through 2 grade.

An in-school suspension may be served in the student's school or any school building under the jurisdiction of the local or regional board of education, as determined by such board.

The administration shall also have the authority to suspend a student from transportation services whose conduct while awaiting or receiving transportation violates the standards set forth in paragraph D, above. The administration shall have the authority to immediately suspend from school any student when an emergency exists as that term is defined in paragraph A, above.

If an emergency situation exists, the hearing outlined in paragraph G (3) shall be held as soon as possible after the exclusion of the student.

5. In the case of suspension, the administration shall notify the student's parents and the Superintendent of Schools not later than twenty-four (24) hours of the suspension as to the name of the student who has been suspended and the reason therefore. Any student who is suspended shall be given an opportunity to complete any class work including, but not limited to, examinations which such student missed during the period of his/her suspension.

6. Except in the case of an emergency, as defined in paragraph A, above, a student shall be afforded the opportunity to meet with the administration and to respond to the stated charges prior to the effectuation of any period of suspension or in-school suspension. If, at such a meeting the student denies the stated charges, he/she may at that time present his/her version of the incident(s) upon which the proposed suspension is based. The administration shall then determine whether or not suspension or in-school suspension is warranted. In determining the length of a suspension period, the administration may receive and consider evidence of past disciplinary problems which have led to removal from a classroom, in-school suspension, or expulsion.

7. For any student who is suspended for the first time and who has never been expelled, the school administration may shorten the length of or waive the suspension period if the student successfully completes an administration-specified program and meets any other administration-required conditions. Such program shall be at no expense to the student or his/her parents/guardians.

8. No student shall be suspended more than ten times or a total of fifty (50) days in one school year, whichever results in fewer days of exclusion, unless a hearing as provided in paragraph H(5) is first granted.

9. No student shall be placed on in-school suspension more than fifteen times or a total of fifty (50) days in one school year, whichever results in fewer days of exclusion, unless a hearing as provided in paragraph H(5) is first granted.

H. Expulsion Procedures

1. The Board of Education may, upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, expel any student for one or more of the reasons stated in this policy if in the judgment of the Board of Education, such disciplinary action is in the best interest of the school system.
2. Upon receipt of a recommendation for expulsion from the Superintendent of Schools the Board shall, after giving written notice, at least five (5) business days before such hearing, to the student and his parents or guardian, if said student is less than 18 years of age, conduct a hearing prior to taking any action on the expulsion of said student, provided however, that in the event of an emergency as defined in this policy, the student may be expelled prior to the hearing but in such case even a hearing shall be held as soon after the expulsion as possible. The notice shall include information concerning the student's and his/her parent's/guardian's legal rights and concerning legal services that are provided free of charge or at a reduced rate that are available locally (CT Legal Service a source of such services) and how to access such services. An attorney or other advocate may represent any student subject to expulsion proceedings. The parent/guardian of the student has the right to have the expulsion hearing postponed for up to one week to allow time to obtain representation, except that if an emergency exists, such hearing shall be held as soon after the expulsion as possible.
3. Expulsion hearings conducted by the Board will be heard by any three or more Board members. A decision to expel a student must be supported by a majority of the Board members present, provided that no less than three (3) affirmative votes to expel are cast.

Alternatively, the Board may appoint an impartial hearing officer composed of one (1) or more persons to hear and decide the expulsion matter, provided that no member of the Board may serve on such panel.

4. A special education student's handicapping conditions shall be considered before making a decision to expel. A Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting must be held to determine whether the behavior or student actions violative of Board of Education standards set forth in policy governing suspension and expulsion are the result of the student's handicapping condition.
5. The procedure for any hearing conducted under this paragraph shall at least include the right to:
 - a. Notice prior to the date of the proposed hearing which shall include a statement of the time, place and nature of the hearing and a statement of the legal jurisdiction under which the hearing is to be held and a statement that students under sixteen years old who are expelled and students between sixteen and eighteen who have been expelled for the first time and who comply with conditions set by the Board of Education, must be offered an alternative educational opportunity;
 - b. A short and plain statement of the matters asserted, if such matters have not already been provided in a statement of reasons requested by the student;
 - c. The opportunity to be heard in the student's own defense;
 - d. The opportunity to present witnesses and evidence in the student's defense;
 - e. The opportunity to cross-examine adverse witnesses;
 - f. The opportunity to be represented by counsel at the parents'/student's own expense; and
 - g. Information concerning legal services provided free of charge or at a reduced rate that are available locally and how to access such services;
 - h. The opportunity to have the services of a translator, to be provided by the Board of Education whenever the student or his/her parent or legal guardian do not speak the English language;
 - i. The prompt notification of the decision of the Board of Education, which decision shall be in writing if adverse to the student concerned.
6. The record of the hearing held in any expulsion case shall include the following:
 - a. All evidence received and considered by the Board of Education;
 - b. Questions and offers of proof, objections and ruling on such objections;

- c. The decision of the Board of Education rendered after such hearing; and
 - d. A copy of the initial letter of notice of proposed expulsion, a copy of any statement of reasons provided upon request, a statement of the notice of hearing and the official transcript, if any or if not transcribed, any recording or stenographic record of the hearing.
7. Rules of evidence at expulsion hearings shall assure fairness, but shall not be controlled by the formal rules of evidence, and shall include the following:
- a. Any oral or documentary evidence may be received by the Board of Education but, as a matter of policy, irrelevant, immaterial or unduly repetitious evidence may be excluded. In addition, other evidence of past disciplinary problems which have led to removal from a classroom, in-school suspension, suspension, or expulsion may be received for considering the length of an expulsion and the nature of the alternative educational opportunity, if any, to be offered;
 - b. The Board of Education shall give effect to the rules of privilege by law;
 - c. In order to expedite a hearing, evidence may be received in written form, provided the interest of any party is not substantially prejudiced thereby;
 - d. Documentary evidence may be received in the form of copies or excerpts;
 - e. A party to an expulsion hearing may conduct cross-examination of witnesses where examination is required for a full and accurate disclosure of the facts;
 - f. The Board of Education may take notice of judicially cognizable facts in addition to facts within the Board's specialized knowledge provided, however, the parties shall be notified either before or during the hearing of the material noticed, including any staff memoranda or data, and an opportunity shall be afforded to any party to contest the material so noticed;
 - g. A stenographic record or tape-recording of any oral proceedings before the Board of Education at an expulsion hearing shall be made provided, however, that a transcript of such proceedings shall be furnished upon request of a party with the cost of such transcript to be paid by the requesting party. Findings of fact made by the Board after an expulsion hearing shall be based exclusively upon the evidence adduced at the hearing.
 - h. Decisions shall be in writing if adverse to the student, and shall include findings of fact and conclusions necessary for the decision. Findings of fact made by the Board after an expulsion hearing shall be based exclusively upon the evidence adduced at the hearing.
8. For any student expelled for the first time and who has never been suspended, except for a student who has been expelled based on possession of a firearm or deadly weapon, the Board of Education may shorten the length of or waive the expulsion period if the student successfully completes a Board specified program and meets any other conditions required by the Board. Such a Board specified program shall not require the student or the parent/guardian of such student to pay for participation in the program.

I. Notification

1. All students and parents within the jurisdiction of the Board of Education shall be informed, annually, of Board Policy governing student conduct by the delivery to each said student of a written copy of said Board Policy.
2. The parents or guardian of any minor student either expelled or suspended shall be given notice of such disciplinary action no later than 24 hours of the time of the institution of the period of expulsion or suspension
3. The notice of an expulsion hearing shall be given at least five (5) business days before such hearing to the student and his/her parents or guardians, if said student is less than 18 years of age shall include information concerning the parent's/guardian's and the student's legal rights and concerning legal services that are provided free of charge or at a reduced rate that are available and how to access such services. The notification shall reference the maximum number of suspension days before the expulsion days proceed. 5 consecutive days for students in pre-school to second grade, 10 consecutive days for students in grades 3-12, a statement that an attorney or other advocate may represent any student subject to expulsion proceedings. The parent/guardian of the student shall be notified of the right to have the expulsion hearing postponed for up to one week to allow

time to obtain representation, except that if an emergency exists, such hearing shall be held as soon after the expulsion as possible.

J. Stipulated Agreements

In lieu of the procedures used in this section, the Administration and the parents (or legal guardians) of a student facing expulsion may choose to enter into a Joint Stipulation of the Facts and a Joint Recommendation to the Board concerning the length and conditions of expulsion. Such Joint Stipulation and Recommendation shall include language indicating that the parents (or legal guardians) understand their right to have an expulsion hearing held pursuant to these procedures, and language indicating that the Board, in its discretion, has the right to accept or reject the Joint Stipulation of Facts and Recommendation.

If the Board rejects either the Joint Stipulation of Facts or the Recommendation, an expulsion hearing shall be held pursuant to the procedures outlined herein. If the Student is eighteen years of age or older, the student shall have the authority to enter into a Joint Stipulation and Recommendation on his or her own behalf.

If the parties agree on the facts, but not on the disciplinary recommendation, the Administration and the parents (or legal guardians) of a student facing expulsion may also choose to enter into a Joint Stipulation of the Facts and submit only the Stipulation of the Facts to the Board in lieu of holding the first part of the hearing, as described above. Such Joint Stipulation shall include language indicating that the parents understand their right to have a hearing to determine whether the student engaged in the alleged misconduct and that the Board, in its discretion, has the right to accept or reject the Joint Stipulation of Facts. If the Board rejects the Joint Stipulation of Facts, a full expulsion hearing shall be held pursuant to the procedures outlined herein.

K. Students identified as eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA")

If the Board of Education expels a student who is eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the district shall continue to provide educational services in accordance with IDEA and applicable Connecticut law.

L. Procedures Governing Suspension and Expulsion of Students Identified as Eligible for Services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA")

A. Suspension of IDEA students

Notwithstanding the foregoing, if the Administration suspends a student identified as eligible for services under the IDEA (an "IDEA student") who has violated any rule or code of conduct of the school district that applies to all students, the following procedures shall apply:

1. The administration shall make reasonable attempts to immediately notify the parents of the student of the decision to suspend on the date on which the decision to suspend was made, and a copy of the special education procedural safeguards must either be hand-delivered or sent by mail to the parents on the date that the decision to suspend was made.
2. During the period of suspension, the school district is not required to provide any educational services to the IDEA student beyond that which is provided to all students suspended by the school district.

B. Expulsion and Suspensions that Constitute Changes in Placement for IDEA Students

Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary, if the administration recommends for expulsion an IDEA student who has violated any rule or code of conduct of the school district that applies to all students, the procedures described in this section shall apply. The procedures described in this section shall also apply for students whom the administration has suspended in a manner that is considered under the IDEA, as it may be amended from time to time, to be a change in placement:

1. The parents of the student must be notified of the decision to recommend for expulsion (or to suspend if a change in placement) on the date on which the decision to suspend was made, and a copy of the special education procedural safeguards must either be hand-delivered or sent by mail to the parents on the date that the decision to recommend for expulsion (or to suspend if a change in placement) was made.
2. The school district shall immediately convene the student's Planning and Placement Team ("PPT"), but

in no case later than ten (10) school days after the decision to recommend expulsion or impose a suspension that constitutes a change in placement. The PPT shall conduct a manifestation determination to determine whether the student's conduct was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the student's disability, or was the direct result of the district's failure to implement the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

3. If the student's PPT determines that the student's conduct was a manifestation of the student's disability, the Administration shall not proceed with the recommendation for expulsion or the suspension that constitutes a change in placement. The student shall be returned to the placement from which the student was removed unless the parent and the district agree to a change of placement as part of the modification of the student's Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), or one of the special circumstances under the IDEA applies. The PPT shall conduct a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA), unless one has already been completed, and shall develop or review the student's Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), as appropriate, and revise the plan as necessary to address the behavior.

4. If the student's PPT finds that the behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability, the Administration may proceed with the recommended expulsion or suspension that constitutes a change in placement. The student remains entitled to receive special education and related services sufficient to enable participation in the general education curriculum and progress toward IEP goals.

5. During any period of expulsion, or suspension of greater than ten (10) days per school year, the Administration shall provide the student with an alternative education program in accordance with the provisions of the IDEA.

6. When determining whether to recommend an expulsion or a suspension that constitutes a change in placement, the building administrator (or his or her designee) should consider the nature of the misconduct and any relevant educational records of the student.

C. Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES) for Certain Offenses:

School personnel may transfer an IDEA student to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) school days if the student:

1. Was in possession of a dangerous weapon, as defined in 18 U.S.C. 930(g)(2), as amended from time to time, on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity, or
2. Knowingly possessed or used illegal drugs or sold or solicited the sale of a controlled substance while at school or at a school-sponsored activity; or
3. Has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function.

The following definitions shall be used for this subsection XII. C.

1. **Dangerous weapon** means a weapon, device, instrument, material, or substance, animate or inanimate, that is used for, or is readily capable of, causing death or serious bodily injury, except that such term does not include a pocket knife with a blade of less than 2.5 inches in length.
2. **Controlled substance** means a drug or other substance identified under schedules I, II, III, IV, or V in section 202(c) of the Controlled Substances Act, 21 U.S.C. 812(c).
3. **Illegal drug** means a controlled substance but does not include a substance that is legally possessed or used under the supervision of a licensed health-care professional or that is legally possessed or used under any other authority under the Controlled Substances Act or under any other provision of federal law.
4. **Serious bodily injury** means a bodily injury which involves: (A) a substantial risk of death; (B) extreme physical pain; (C) protracted and obvious disfigurement; or (D) protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty.

M. Disciplinary Procedures for Students Eligible Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

A. If the Administration recommends an expulsion or other disciplinary action that constitutes a significant change in placement for a student who is eligible for accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation

Act of 1973, the following procedures shall apply:

1. The parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be notified of the proposed disciplinary action.
2. The District shall convene the student's Section 504 Team to conduct a manifestation determination review. The Section 504 Team shall determine whether:
 - the student's conduct was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the student's disability; or
 - the conduct was the direct result of the District's failure to implement the student's Section 504 Plan.
3. If the Section 504 Team determines that the student's conduct was a manifestation of the student's disability, the proposed disciplinary action that constitutes a significant change in placement shall not proceed. The Section 504 Team shall review the student's Section 504 Plan and determine whether revisions or additional supports or accommodations are necessary.
4. If the Section 504 Team determines that the student's conduct was **not** a manifestation of the student's disability, the District may apply disciplinary procedures in the same manner and for the same duration as for students without disabilities.

B. The Board may take disciplinary action regarding the use or possession of illegal drugs or alcohol by a student currently engaging in the illegal use of drugs or alcohol to the same extent that such disciplinary action is taken for students without disabilities. In these circumstances, the procedural protections related to manifestation determinations under Section 504 do not apply when the disciplinary action is based solely on the student's current illegal use or possession of drugs or alcohol.

N. Procedures Governing Expulsions for Students Committed to a Juvenile Detention Center

A. Any student who commits an expellable offense and is subsequently committed to a juvenile detention center, the Connecticut Juvenile Training School or any other residential placement for such offense may be expelled by the Board in accordance with the provisions of this section. The period of expulsion shall run concurrently with the period of commitment to a juvenile detention center, the Connecticut Juvenile Training School or any other residential placement.

B. If a student who committed an expellable offense seeks to return to a school district after participating in a diversionary program or having been detained in a juvenile detention center, the Connecticut Juvenile Training School or any other residential placement and such student has not been expelled by the board of education for such offense under subdivision (A) of this subsection, the Board shall allow such student to return and may not expel the student for additional time for such offense.

O. Alternative Educational Opportunity

The Board of Education recognizes its obligation to offer any student under the age of sixteen (16) who is expelled, an alternative educational opportunity which shall be equivalent to alternative education, as defined, by C.G.S. 10-74j with an individualized learning plan, (1) if the Board provides such alternative education, or (2) in accordance with the standards adopted by the State Board of Education (by 8/15/17), which includes the kind of instruction to be provided and the number of hours to be provided, during the period of expulsion.

Any parent or guardian of such student who does not choose to have his or her child enrolled in an alternative educational opportunity shall not be subject to the provision of Section 10-184 of the Connecticut General Statutes. Any expelled student who is between the ages of sixteen (16) and eighteen (18) not previously expelled and who wishes to continue his or her education shall be offered such an alternative educational opportunity if he or she complies with conditions established by the Board of Education. other than the one from which the student has been excluded.

Such alternative educational opportunity may include, but shall not be limited to, the assignment of a student (who is seventeen (17) years of age or older) to any such adult education program or placement of such student in a regular classroom program of a school

Any student participating in an adult education program during a period of expulsion shall not be required to withdraw from school under C.G.S. 10-184. In determining the nature of the alternative education opportunity to be offered under this Section, the Board of Education may receive and consider evidence of past disciplinary issues which have led to removal from a classroom, suspension, or expulsion.

The Board of Education is not obligated to provide such alternative educational opportunity to any student eighteen years of age or older. The Board of Education is also required to offer such alternative educational opportunity, as defined, to any student between the ages of sixteen and eighteen who is expelled because of conduct which endangers persons, and involved the following, on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event:

1. Possession of a firearm, deadly weapon, dangerous instrument or martial arts weapon, or
2. Offering an illegal drug for sale or distribution.

If the Board expels a student for the sale or distribution of a controlled substance, the Board shall refer the student to an appropriate state or local agency for rehabilitation, intervention or job training, or any combination thereof, and inform the agency of its action. If a student is expelled for possession of a firearm, deadly weapon, dangerous instruments (those that can be used to cause death or serious injury) or martial arts weapons the Board shall report the violation to the local police department.

This provision shall not apply to students requiring special education who are described in subdivision (1) of sub-section (e) of C.G.S. 10-76a. The alternative educational opportunity for any such student shall be established by the IEP team (PPT) in accordance with the procedures described above.

P. Other Considerations

1. If a student is expelled, notice of the expulsion and the conduct for which the student was expelled shall be included on the student's cumulative educational record. Such notice, except for the notice of an expulsion of a student in grades nine through twelve, inclusive, based on possession of a firearm or deadly weapon, shall be expunged from the cumulative educational record by the Board if the Board determines that the student's conduct and behavior in the years following such expulsion warrants an expungement or if the student graduates from high school.
2. If a student's expulsion is shortened or the expulsion period waived based upon the fact that the student was expelled for the first time, had never been suspended, and successfully completed a Board specified program and/or met other conditions required by the Board, the notice of expulsion shall be expunged from the cumulative educational record if the student graduates from high school or, if the Board so chooses, at the time the student completes the Board specified program and meets any other conditions required by the Board.
3. If a student in grades preschool to eight, is expelled based on possession of a firearm or deadly weapon, the Board may expunge from the students' cumulative education record the notice of the expulsion and the conduct for which the student was expelled if the Board determines that the conduct and behavior of the student in the years following such expulsion warrants an expungement.
4. The Board may adopt the decision of a student expulsion hearing conducted by another school district provided such Board of Education held a hearing pursuant to C.G.S. 10-233d(a). Adoption of such a decision shall be limited to a determination of whether the conduct which was the basis for the expulsion would also warrant expulsion under the policies of this Board. The student shall be excluded from school pending such hearing. The excluded student shall be offered an alternative education opportunity in accordance with item K above.
5. Whenever a student against whom an expulsion hearing is pending withdraws from school and after notification of such hearing but before the hearing is completed and a decision rendered, (1) notice of the pending expulsion hearing shall be included on the student's cumulative educational record and (2) the Board shall complete the expulsion hearing and render a decision.
6. A student expelled for possession of a firearm, deadly weapon, dangerous instrument or martial arts weapon shall have the violation reported to the local police department.
7. The period of expulsion shall not extend beyond a period of one calendar year. A period of exclusion may extend into the next school year.
8. An expelled student may apply for early readmission to school. Such readmission shall be at the discretion of the Board of Education/Superintendent of Schools (choose which). Readmission decisions shall not be subject to appeal to Superior Court. The Board or Superintendent, as appropriate, may condition such readmission on specified criteria.

9. Any student who commits an expellable offense and is subsequently committed to a juvenile detention center, The Connecticut Juvenile Training School or any other residential placement for such offense may be expelled by the local Board of Education. The period of expulsion shall run concurrently with the period of commitment to a juvenile detention center, the Connecticut Juvenile Training School or any other residential placement.

A. Student moving into the school district

1. If a student enrolls in the district while an expulsion hearing is pending in another district, such student shall not be excluded from school pending completion of the expulsion hearing unless an emergency exists, as defined above. The Board shall retain the authority to suspend the student or to conduct its own expulsion hearing.

2. Where a student enrolls in the district during the period of expulsion from another public school district, the Board may adopt the decision of the student expulsion hearing conducted by such other school district. The student shall be excluded from school pending such hearing. The excluded student shall be offered an alternative educational opportunity in accordance with statutory requirements. The Board shall make its determination based upon a hearing held by the Board, which hearing shall be limited to a determination of whether the conduct which was the basis of the previous public school district's expulsion would also warrant expulsion by the Board.

B. Student moving out of the school district:

Where a student withdraws from school after having been notified that an expulsion hearing is pending, but before a decision has been rendered by the Board, the notice of the pending expulsion hearing shall be included on the student's cumulative record and the Board shall complete the expulsion hearing and render a decision. If the Board subsequently renders a decision to expel the student, a notice of the expulsion shall be included on the student's cumulative record.

R. Compliance with Documentation and Reporting Requirements

A. The Board of Education shall include on all disciplinary reports the individual student's state-assigned student identifier (SASID).

B. The Board of Education shall report all suspensions and expulsions to the State Department of Education.

C. If the Board of Education expels a student for sale or distribution of a controlled substance, the Board shall refer such student to an appropriate state or local agency for rehabilitation, intervention or job training and inform the agency of its action.

D. If the Board of Education expels a student for possession of a deadly weapon or firearm, as defined in Conn. Gen. Stat. §53a-3, the violation shall be reported to the local police.

Readmission of Student from a Residential Placement

A District student who has committed an expellable offense who seeks to return to a District school, after participating in a diversionary program or having been detained in a juvenile detention center, the Connecticut Juvenile Training School or any other residential placement, for one year or more, in lieu of expulsion from the District, shall be permitted to return to the appropriate school setting within the District. Further, the District shall not expel the student for any additional time for the offense(s).

Students and parents shall be notified of this policy annually.

CLASSROOM DETENTION

Each teacher is responsible for establishing a restorative approach for classroom management and reviewing behavioral expectations which will assure the best learning environment possible. Students will be made aware of the expectations at the beginning of the course by each teacher through the distribution of course expectations which include behavioral expectations.

Teachers may assign an after-school or lunch, teacher detentions for any misconduct occurring in the classroom. Teacher detentions take precedence over other commitments such as practice or other extra-curricular activities. Teacher detentions may be any length of time up to ninety minutes. If a student skips a teacher detention, the student

will be referred to the office and the student's parents will be notified. Students must be given advanced notice of twenty- four-hours for any after school teacher detention, unless the teacher and the parent have discussed this consequence and have agreed to this detention. Examples of offenses that may lead to a teacher detention may include, but are not limited to:

- violation of teacher's classroom rules
- misuse of hall pass
- plagiarism or cheating
- misuse of a cell phones
- inappropriate language
- insubordination

HOME/SCHOOL: LAW ENFORCEMENT RELATIONS

Law enforcement officers of the State Police routinely visit the Wheeler community to support efforts to create a healthy, safe, orderly, and cooperative school environment. With the support of parents and our resident troopers, Wheeler affords students a productive and comprehensive approach to behavior management. Student behavior that jeopardizes the safety or well-being of any member of our school community may be referred to law enforcement officials. **Administration will notify the police of any criminal behavior that the school is investigating and has become an educational disruption.**

INSPECTION AND SEARCH POLICY

Student Searches: The building principal or his or her designee is authorized to search a student's person or effects where there exist reasonable grounds for suspecting the search will produce evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or a school rule. In all cases of a proposed search of a student's person or effects, the Superintendent of Schools will be consulted where possible. The building principal or his or her designee shall be expected to use sound professional judgment in deciding whether a search should be conducted. A search of a student's person shall be conducted only by a person of the same sex as the student.

NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS; FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he/she reaches the age of eighteen (18) or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the schools. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.

Parents or eligible students have the right to request that the school correct records that they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has a right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his/her view about the contested information.

Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions:

1. School officials with legitimate educational interest
2. Other schools to which a student is transferring
3. Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes
4. Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student
5. Organizations conducting certain studies on behalf of the school
6. Accrediting organizations
7. To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena
8. State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. At the beginning of each school year, a letter is sent to the parents/guardians of the eligible students informing them of this information and providing a form to request that the names of their students not be disclosed.

Under the *Armed Forces Recruiter Access to Students and Student Recruiting Information Act*, schools are now required to provide student directory-type information - including name, address, and phone number - to military recruiters and other institutes of higher education. The parent/guardian may annually deny such access of information by completing the letter sent home at the beginning of the school year and returning it to the main office.

OFFICE DETENTION

While the Administration is in charge of office detention, supervision of detentions will be carried out by individual teachers per the duty schedule. Detention begins promptly at 2:30 p.m. and ends at 3:45 p.m. in the room of the teacher who will be supervising; it is the responsibility of the student to check in with the Main Office to find out where the detention will be held. All students are to remain seated and quiet for the entire time. There is to be no communication of any kind between any students serving detention. **THERE ARE NO CELL PHONES ALLOWED DURING DETENTION.** Students are required to bring their own work and are required to work for the entire time. Any student who does not come with work will be given an assignment by the supervising teacher. Failure to abide by the above will result in further disciplinary action by the administration. If a student is asked to leave a detention, that detention does not count as being served and the student will be referred to the office for further consequences.

The following behaviors may result in office detention:

- excessive tardiness
- classroom or hallway disruption
- skipping teacher detention
- skipping class
- bus misconduct
- plagiarism or cheating
- misuse of a cell phones
- other infractions deemed appropriate by the administration

USE/UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF/ SALE OF/POSSESSION OF TOBACCO POLICY

The Board of Education is vitally interested in providing and maintaining a safe and healthy environment in the public schools of North Stonington. Therefore, effective July 1, 1995, smoking or the use of tobacco products is prohibited anywhere in the school buildings or on the school grounds. It is also prohibited during any school- sponsored activity occurring off the property of the North Stonington Public Schools.

USE/SALE/UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF/POSSESSION OF ALCOHOL/DRUGS POLICY

The following procedure will be followed:

1. parents notified
2. school medical personnel notified
3. suspension from school - up to 10 days and possible expulsion recommendation.
4. police may be notified (in cases of possession and/or sale, the police will be notified)
5. mandatory in-school or out-of-school counseling

In addition to the prohibitions pertaining to alcohol, drugs, and tobacco contained in Board policy #5131.6 (above), no student shall inhale, ingest, apply, use, or possess an abusable glue, aerosol paint, or substance containing a volatile chemical with intent to inhale, ingest, apply, or use any of these in a manner:

1. Contrary to directions for use, cautions or warnings appearing on a label of a container of glue, paint aerosol, or substance; and
2. Designed to affect the central nervous system, create or induce a condition of intoxication, hallucination or elation, or change, distort, or disturb the person's eyesight, thinking process, balance, or coordination.

In cases of reasonable suspicion, students will be searched by school personnel.

ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES

VAPING/ALCOHOL

As vaping continues to be an epidemic among teenagers, we will continue to monitor our bathrooms and hallways to make sure that behaviors such as this one are not happening on school grounds. We currently have installed vape detectors in some of our bathrooms and will continue to add them to others. Consequences for vaping are established to approach this behavior in a progressive manner and remain within that existing school year. If students are caught vaping nicotine, the following procedures will take place:

First Offense: Two (2) days of in-school suspension with an educational component on the dangers of vaping. Students can not participate in any extracurricular events during the suspension period.

Second Offense: Four (4) days of in-school suspension Student can not participate in any extracurricular events during the four day suspension period. At this point, the administration will schedule a meeting with parents/guardians to discuss a plan for resources and support for the student. Students committing a second offense will be removed from any sport or extracurricular in season for the rest of that activity. If this offense falls between two seasons or activities they will not be permitted to participate in the next season or activity.

Third Offense: Five (5) days of in-school suspension Student can not participate in any extracurricular events during the five day suspension period. At this point, the administration will schedule a meeting with parents/guardians to discuss a plan for resources and support for the student. Students committing a third offense will not be allowed to participate in any extracurricular activities for the remainder of the school year.

IF A STUDENT IS CAUGHT VAPING THC Products or consuming alcohol or in possession of alcohol on school grounds, it will be treated as possession of alcohol or narcotics, which is an automatic ten (10) day suspension, a combination of in and out of school to be determined by the administration. If a student is involved in an extracurricular activity they will be automatically removed from that activity for the remainder of it. If a second offense with THC/alcohol occurs, students are out of all extracurricular activities for the remainder of the school year. **Any student vaping a THC product or in possession of alcohol on school grounds will also result in the notification of the state police. The police will handle all matters at this point.**

VANDALISM POLICY

Vandalism or destruction of school property, books, or supplies will be treated as a serious offense. Payment for destruction of property will be required from the student before he/she is restored to full status in all school activities. State Police will be notified of any physical destruction to school property.

SCHOOL SAFETY

ACCIDENTS / INJURIES POLICY

A student who suffers an accident/injury in the school, on school grounds, or on the way to or from school, should report the circumstances immediately to the teacher/adult in charge. The accident/injury must be reported to the school nurse and an accident/injury report will be completed. The student will be provided first aid by the school nurse or by other certified school personnel and additional medical attention will be arranged if circumstances appear to warrant it, but the school will not be financially responsible for the medical expenses beyond the first aid and liability insurance coverage carried by the Board of Education. Students who because of religious beliefs are not to receive medical attention in the event of an accident must have filed a statement previously to this effect with the nurse.

Pupil insurance is not compulsory, although it is recommended. Athletes are insured by the school for any injuries sustained during the playing season. To be assured of compensation, claimants must follow company regulations; the school offers the coverage as a service, but does not act as an insurance agency. Students who do not carry school insurance and who are injured on school property must first file a claim with his/her parents' insurance company.

BUS RULES AND REGULATIONS POLICY

The following rules are designed to promote good conduct on the school bus and to ensure that the safety and welfare of all individuals riding the bus can be maintained:

1. For morning school bus pick up, each student shall be at his or her designated pick-up at least five minutes prior to the scheduled pick up time.
2. Students waiting at their bus stops should stand in orderly fashion at a safe distance from the traveled portion of the road.
3. Students shall not move toward the bus until it has come to a complete stop and the entrance door has been opened. When a student must cross in front of the bus to get on or off a bus, he/she must wait for the driver's signal. The student should still check in both directions before crossing and must walk at least ten (10) feet in front of the bus so the driver can clearly keep him or her in sight.
4. Middle school students must sit in those seats before the emergency exit. High school students can sit from the emergency exits back.

5. While on the bus, students will remain seated at all times.
6. Throwing of objects, verbal abuse of the driver or other students, swearing, or fighting will not be tolerated.
7. Smoking or lighting of matches is not permitted.
8. Consumption of food (including chewing gum and candy) and beverages of any kind is not allowed on the bus.
9. Students may only exit at their own bus stops, unless they have written permission from parent/guardian and approval of the school.
10. Students are liable for expenses arising from damages or the defacing of school bus equipment. The decision to remove or deny transportation to a student shall be made by the administration. The following guidelines shall be observed in such cases:
 1. Bus drivers shall report, in writing, all violations to their bus supervisor.
 2. The supervisor shall report such violations, in writing, to the administration responsible for the student(s) concerned.

In the event of a serious problem or repeated violation of bus regulations, the administration may:

1. Immediately suspend the student(s) from riding the bus.
2. Notify the parent(s)/guardian(s), by telephone of the decision to suspend.
3. Confirm the decision to suspend in a letter to the parent(s)/guardian(s).
4. Conduct a hearing prior to allowing a student back on the school bus. Persons invited to the hearing should include the parent(s)/guardian(s), bus officials, bus driver, and the student(s) involved.

BICYCLE USAGE

Students may ride bicycles to school, but they must leave them outside the building in a bicycle rack. Bicycles are not allowed in the tunnel. The school is not responsible for bicycles that are stolen or damaged while stored on school grounds. Students should have their own bicycle locks and chains.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE POLICY

Disaster Instructions

In the event of a disaster or emergency in our part of the state, we will be taking some additional precautions to help ensure that our children are safe. There are a variety of contingency plans that we may employ. One may include going into a lock-down situation, where the children and their teacher will stay in the locked classroom. Our main concern would be to notify the parents in the event of any occurrence. We will use our Power Announcement system to notify parents. Our first consideration is to release the children to their families. If possible, the children would be taken home on their regular buses. **It is very important that we have updated emergency contact information and phone numbers.**

EVACUATION PROCEDURES POLICY

Evacuations are serious in nature and full cooperation is mandatory at all times by everyone in the school for their protection and safety. It is imperative that all students, faculty, and staff members follow the protocol that has been established by administration.

1. All classes will move away from the building at least twenty-five (25) yards to their assigned areas; please see the procedures posted in each classroom.
2. If exits are blocked during an evacuation drill, please move in an orderly fashion to the best alternative route.
3. Follow your classmates and remain with them during the drill. Check in with your teacher when you arrive at the assigned area, where attendance will be taken.

PEDESTRIAN UNDERPASS

During the school day and in connection with any school activity, all students and members of the staff are prohibited from crossing Route 2 except by the underground walkway constructed between the middle/high school complex and the gymnasium/athletic field, or by other safe means established by the Superintendent of Schools. Such "safe means" shall not discriminate on the basis of physical disability and may include the use of vans or other vehicles to transport students and staff across Route 2. A student who crosses Route 2 in any manner other than that established under this policy, without first obtaining the written permission of his or her principal, shall be subject to discipline, including suspension or expulsion, under the student disciplinary policy of the Board of Education.

SAFE SCHOOL CLIMATE

WHEELER HIGH SCHOOL/MIDDLE SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN RESPONSE CHART:

All-Hazards School Security and Safety Plan

WHEELER HIGH SCHOOL/MIDDLE SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN RESPONSE CHART 2026-27

Lockdown <i>Immediate threat of an intruder in the building</i> - Immediately lock classroom door; once locked no entry allowed - Turn lights off, cover classroom door window, draw exterior window shades - Move students to a location in the room away from the door and windows. Students must be out of sight from the doorway. - Students must remain quiet - If outside, do not enter building - Disregard fire alarm unless you see smoke or fire - Do not call main office If extreme life-threatening danger is perceived as imminent to yourself or students, be prepared to exit classroom thru any means or be prepared to defend yourself and/or your students - o Commons: go to the media center computer lab or nurse's office - o Office conference room: go to back of office in supply closet - o Hall conference room 122: go to room 125 - o Staff room 124: go to room 125 - o Counseling offices: go to guidance copy room <i>All teachers have lockdown key (same as staff bathroom key) and can lock all doors from the inside</i>	Evacuate <i>Fire alarm, suspicious smell, or bomb threat</i> - Take your emergency clipboard - Evacuate the building following the building procedures - Close classroom door - Guide all students out of classroom to pre-designated area - Check lavatories on the way out of the building for students who may not have heard the alarm - Keep students together in a line and away from the building - Once outside, take attendance and follow procedure with green, yellow, and red cards - Remain in safe area until notified, continue to monitor students	Shelter in Place- Lockout <i>Suspicious activity/crime in town or surrounding town</i> - No one leaves or enters the building - Lock classroom door and draw exterior window shades - Continue teaching and continue normal school operations - Students may pass to next class Shelter in Place- Lock-In <i>Safety issue or health issue</i> - Clear hallways, bring non-involved students into classroom - Lock classroom door and cover classroom door window, draw exterior window shades - Remain in current class until notified; no passing to other classes Shelter in Place- Extreme Weather <i>Extreme weather conditions</i> - Follow instructions on where to remain safe - If power outage, remain in current class/area If Shelter in Place or Lockdown during after school activities: Outdoor activities suspended; people enter building to a safe area
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Administration/office staff will communicate with all staff via PA, email, and/or REMIND throughout incident. If bomb threat, do not use cellphone or walkie-talkie.

All incidents that affect school culture and climate are taken very seriously by Wheeler Administration and all Board of Education procedures and policies will be followed. State policies and regulations continue to be updated each year. Please reference the BOE policies for updated policy information.

SCHOOL CLIMATE PLAN POLICY 5131.911

All schools must support and promote teaching and learning environments where all students thrive academically and socially, have a strong and meaningful voice, and are prepared for lifelong success.

Implementation of the set of guiding principles and systemic strategies within the School Climate Policy will promote a positive school climate, which is essential to achieving these goals.

“School climate” means the quality and character of the school life, with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community, and which is based on patterns of people's experiences of school life and that reflects the norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning, leadership practices and organizational structures within the school community.

“Positive Sustained School Climate” is the foundation for learning and positive youth development and includes:

- Norms, values, and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally, culturally, racially, intellectually, and physically safe.

- b. People who treat one another with dignity and are engaged, respected and solve problems restoratively.
- c. A school community that works collaboratively together to develop, live, and contribute to a shared school vision.
- d. Adults who model and nurture attitudes that emphasize the benefits and satisfaction gained from learning; and
- e. A school community that contributes to the operations of the school and the care of the physical environment.

BULLYING

Bullying behavior by any student in the North Stonington Public Schools is strictly prohibited, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from school.

“Bullying” means unwanted and aggressive behavior among children in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, that involves a real or perceived power imbalance.

Students, parents or guardians of students enrolled in the school, and school employees may file written complaints concerning suspected bullying behavior using the challenging behavior reporting form found on our website. Students shall be permitted to anonymously report acts of bullying to school employees. Please understand that if such suspected bullying behavior is not reported to the school administration, it cannot be brought into another investigation in the future. Administration will investigate all suspected bullying or climate matters to verify if bullying or harassment occurs.

Any report of challenging behavior will be promptly reviewed following the School Climate Policy procedures. If acts of bullying are verified, prompt disciplinary action will be taken against the perpetrator, consistent with his/her rights of due process.

STUDENT SERVICES

Special Education Services

North Stonington Public Schools provides special education and related services in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Connecticut law.

Parents who have concerns regarding their child's educational progress are encouraged to contact their child's teacher, school counselor, principal, or the Director of Special Services.

Additional information regarding referrals, evaluations, eligibility, procedural safeguards, and special education services is available through the Office of Special Services. In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), North Stonington Public Schools identifies, locates, and evaluates children suspected of having disabilities who may require special education services.

Link

[Special Services webpage](#)

SECTION 504 ACCOMMODATIONS

North Stonington Public Schools is committed to providing equal access to educational opportunities for students with disabilities in accordance with **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**.

A student who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities may be eligible to receive accommodations or services through a Section 504 Plan. Section 504 Plans are designed to provide

students with equitable access to educational programs and activities by addressing individual needs within the general education setting.

Parents/guardians who have concerns regarding their child's access to educational programs or who believe their child may require accommodations are encouraged to contact their child's **school counselor**, **building principal**, or the **Director of Special Services**. The district will review referrals, determine whether an evaluation is appropriate, and follow all applicable federal and state requirements.

Additional information regarding referrals, evaluations, eligibility, accommodations, and procedural safeguards is available through the Office of Special Services.

COUNSELING SERVICES

Counseling services are essential and integral parts of the total school program. Each student at Wheeler High School/Wheeler Middle School is assigned a school counselor. Counselors confer with students individually and in groups regarding their school programs and career planning. They provide academic, vocational, and personal counseling, refer students to the school psychologist and social worker, and administer the standardized testing program. The Counseling department has an extensive file of occupational and collegiate materials. This resource center is available to students during study halls, as well as before and after school.

The Wheeler Middle/High School Counseling Department supports students' academic achievement, college and career readiness, and social-emotional development. School counselors work collaboratively with students, families, teachers, administrators, and community agencies to help students achieve success throughout middle school and high school. The Counseling office also houses a school psychologist and a school social worker.

Throughout the school year, students may be invited to participate in small group counseling based on their individual needs or strengths. Groups provide opportunities to develop social-emotional skills, build healthy relationships, strengthen communication, problem-solving, and coping skills, increase self-confidence, and navigate life challenges. Some students may also be invited to serve as positive peer role models. Small group counseling is part of the school's comprehensive counseling program and provides a supportive environment for students' personal growth and skill development.

Parents/guardians who prefer that their child not participate in small group counseling should contact their child's school counselor.

Staff in the School Counseling Office assist students with:

- Academic planning and course selection
- Graduation requirements and educational planning
- College and career exploration
- Postsecondary planning
- Social-emotional support and problem-solving
- Short-term individual and group counseling
- Referrals to school and community resources
- Coordination of Section 504 plans
- Crisis response and student support

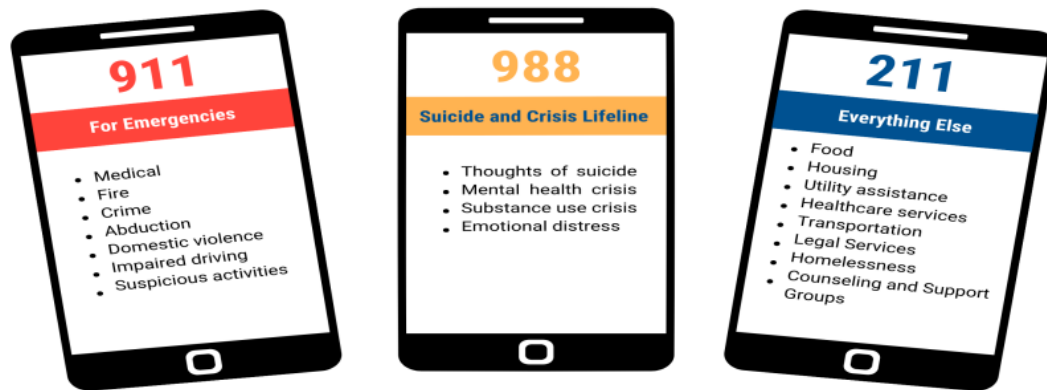
When appropriate, school counselors collaborate with the school social worker, school psychologist, school nurse, Director of Special Services, teachers, administrators, families, and outside agencies to provide comprehensive support for students.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to contact their child's school counselor whenever questions or concerns arise regarding academic progress, postsecondary planning, or student well-being.

[Wheeler Counseling Department Website](#)

[Wheeler Counseling Resource Sheet](#)

Help is 3 Numbers Away



HEALTH SERVICES

The Wheeler Middle/High School Health Office is staffed by a licensed Registered Nurse (RN) who supports the health, safety, and well-being of all students. The school nurse provides first aid, emergency care, medication administration, required health screenings, health counseling, and care coordination for students with acute and chronic health conditions.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to notify the school nurse whenever their child experiences a significant change in health status, including hospitalization, surgery, a new medical diagnosis, allergies, medication changes, or any other health condition that may affect the student's participation in school or school-sponsored activities.

Please Note: The information below provides a summary of school health services and requirements. Additional Board of Education policies, administrative regulations, required forms, health action plans, medication authorization forms, and current Connecticut health guidance are available on the Wheeler Health Office webpage:

<https://www.northstonington.k12.ct.us/wheeler-health-office>

Families are encouraged to contact the school nurse with any questions regarding their child's health or medical needs.

Resources and References:

- [North Stonington Public Schools – Wheeler Health Office](#)
- [Connecticut School Nurse Manual](#)
- Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) School Nursing Program

Health Assessments and Immunizations

Connecticut law requires students to comply with all health assessment and immunization requirements established by the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). Required health assessments and immunization records must be submitted in accordance with Connecticut law and Board of Education policy. Students who do not meet current state requirements may be excluded from school until the required documentation has been received.

Families with questions regarding health assessment or immunization requirements should contact the school nurse.

Additional Information

- [Connecticut DPH School Immunization Requirements:](#)
- [Connecticut School Health Assessment Forms:](#)

Resources and References:

- CGS §§ 10-204a, 10-204c
- Connecticut Department of Public Health

Athletics Health Requirements

Students participating in interscholastic athletics must meet all health assessment requirements established by Connecticut law, the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC), and North Stonington Board of Education policy before participating in practices or competitions.

Additional information is available through the Athletic Department and Wheeler Health Office.

Resources and References:

- [Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference \(CIAC\)](#)
- [Connecticut Public Act 26-13 \(Athletic Health Assessments\)](#)

Health Screenings

The school nurse conducts health screenings required by Connecticut law, which may include vision, hearing, postural, and other screenings at designated grade levels. Parents/guardians will be notified if follow-up with a healthcare provider is recommended.

Additional information regarding required screenings is available through the Wheeler Health Office.

Resources and References:

- [CGS §10-214](#)
- [Connecticut School Nurse Manual](#)

Illness During the School Day

Students who become ill or injured during the school day must report to the Health Office. Students may not leave school because of illness without authorization from the school nurse or school administration.

Parents/guardians will be contacted when a student is unable to remain in school due to illness or injury.

As a general guideline, students should remain home until they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medication and are no longer experiencing vomiting, diarrhea, or other symptoms that would prevent participation in school. Return-to-school recommendations may vary based on current Connecticut Department of Public Health guidance and the professional judgment of the school nurse.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to notify the school nurse if their child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease.

Additional Information

- [Connecticut Department of Public Health:](#)

Resources and References:

- Connecticut Department of Public Health
- Connecticut School Nurse Manual

Medication Administration

Whenever possible, medications should be administered at home.

Medication may be administered during the school day only in accordance with Connecticut law and North Stonington Board of Education policy. Medication must be accompanied by the required written authorization from both the student's licensed healthcare provider and parent/guardian.

Prescription medication must be provided in the original pharmacy-labeled container. Non-prescription medication must be provided in the original manufacturer's container.

Medications should be delivered to and picked up from the Health Office by a parent/guardian or another responsible adult unless otherwise permitted by law.

Students may carry and self-administer emergency medications, including prescribed inhalers, epinephrine auto-injectors, diabetes supplies, and other medications authorized by Connecticut law, when approved by the school nurse and supported by the required medical documentation.

Medication authorization forms are available through the Wheeler Health Office webpage.

Questions regarding medication administration or required authorization forms should be directed to the school nurse prior to bringing medication to school.

Resources and References:

- [CGS §§10-212a through 10-212d](#)
- [Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies §§10-212a-1 through 10-212a-10](#)
- [Connecticut School Nurse Manual](#)
- [Connecticut State Department of Education Medication Administration Guidelines](#)

Students with Chronic Health Conditions

Parents/guardians should notify the school nurse if their child has a chronic medical condition, including but not limited to asthma, diabetes, seizure disorders, severe allergies, cardiac conditions, or other significant health concerns.

Families should provide updated physician orders, emergency action plans, and any necessary medications at the beginning of each school year or whenever a student's health needs change.

When appropriate, the school nurse will collaborate with families, healthcare providers, and school staff to develop

individualized health care plans, emergency care plans, or other supports necessary to promote the student's health, safety, and access to school.

Resources and References:

- [Connecticut School Nurse Manual](#)
- [Connecticut State Department of Education Guidelines for Managing Students with Health Needs](#)

Concussions and Head Injuries

Students suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury during the school day or while participating in school-sponsored activities will be managed in accordance with Connecticut law, CIAC requirements (when applicable), and Board of Education policy.

Medical documentation may be required before a student returns to school activities or athletics.

Additional Information

- [CIAC Concussion Information](#)
- [Connecticut State Department of Education Concussion Resources](#)

Resources and References:

- [CGS §10-149b](#)
- CIAC Concussion Guidelines

Emergency Information

Parents/guardians are responsible for maintaining current emergency contact information and notifying the school promptly of any changes to:

- Home, work, or cell phone numbers
- Emergency contacts
- Healthcare providers
- Medical conditions
- Allergies
- Medications

Accurate emergency information is essential to ensure timely communication and appropriate care during the school day.

New Students

Health records for all new students will be reviewed by the school nurse upon enrollment. Families transferring from another school district or state may be asked to provide additional health documentation to ensure compliance with current Connecticut health assessment and immunization requirements.

Partnership with Families

The Wheeler Middle/High School Health Office is committed to partnering with students, families, healthcare providers, and school staff to support each student's health, safety, well-being, and academic success. Open communication between home and school is essential in providing safe, effective, and individualized care. Parents and guardians are encouraged to contact the school nurse whenever questions, concerns, or changes in their child's health arise.