

# **JABISH BROOK MIDDLE SCHOOL**



## **STUDENT / PARENT HANDBOOK 2024-2025 Belchertown Public Schools**

*Respect~Responsibility~Relationships~Rigor~Reflection~Resilience*

*The Belchertown School District does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, gender identity, race, religion, color, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.*

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## **SECTION I- GENERAL INFORMATION**

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### **BELCHERTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

Ms. Heidi Gutekenst, Chair  
Ms. Natalie Santana  
Dr. Amy Wilson-LaMothe

Ms. Ruby Bansal, Vice Chair  
Ms. Lamikco Magee

### **CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATION**

Superintendent of Schools  
Assistant Superintendent  
Director of Special Education  
School Business Manager  
School Nurse Leader  
Director of Buildings & Grounds  
Director of Food Services  
Director of Technology  
Data Administrator

Mr. Brian Cameron  
Dr. Shawn Fortin  
Ms. Rebecca Lynch  
TMS Services  
Mrs. Debra Keefe  
Mr. Eric Lebeau  
Ms. Barrett Grazioso  
Mr. Scott Karen  
Mr. Ben Admussen

WEB SITE: [www.belchertownps.org](http://www.belchertownps.org)

First Student Transportation Management	323-8316
Food Services	323-0442
Belchertown Police Department	323-6685
Belchertown Fire Department	323-7571
School Physician	325-5118

227 North Liberty Street  
59 State Street  
70 State Street  
101 North Main Street  
Dr. Kimberly Dewey

### **CENTRAL OFFICE HOURS**

General Assistance:	7:30 am-4:30 pm
School Business Assistance:	7:30 am-4:00 pm
Special Education Assistance:	7:00 am-4:00 pm

### **SCHOOL-SITE OFFICE HOURS**

BHS (High School)	7:00 am-3:30 pm
JBMS (Middle School)	7:00 am-3:00 pm
CHCS (Intermediate School)	7:30 am-4:00 pm
SRE (Elementary School)	7:30 am-4:00 pm
CSS (Early Childhood Center)	7:30 am-4:00 pm

# BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS TELEPHONE DIRECTORY

2024-2025 School Year

## Central Office 14 Maple St.

Main Number/Superintendent 323-0423  
Central Office FAX 323-0448  
Business Office 323-0424  
Business Office FAX 323-0481  
Business Manager 323-0423  
Administrative Assistant 323-0423  
Dir. of Building & Grounds 323-0423  
Building & Grounds FAX 323-0448  
Student Support Services Dept. 323-0425  
SSSD FAX 323-0427  
Dir. of Teaching & Learning 323-0423  
Central Office Anonymous Report Line 323-0460

### **Central Office Hours**

General Assistance: 8:00 am-4:00 pm  
School Business Assistance: 7:30 am-4:00 pm  
Special Education Assistance: 7:00 am-3:00 pm

## Cold Spring School 57 South Main St.

Main Number 323-0428  
Office FAX 323-0493

(follow prompts on automated system)

Web site: <https://www.belchertownps.org/cold-spring-school/>

## Swift River Elementary School 57 State St.

Main Number 323-0471  
Principal 323-0473  
Asst. Principal 323-0476  
Guidance 323-0475  
School Nurse Leader 323-0471  
School Nurse 323-0474  
Office FAX 323-0492  
Absentee Call-In Line 323-0455

Web site: <https://www.belchertownps.org/swift-river-elementary-school/>

## Chestnut Hill Community School 59 State St.

Main Number 323-0437  
FAX 323-0459

Automated system:

0-Operator  
3-Student ABSENTEE LINE  
4-Nurse  
5-Guidance  
6-Music/Band

Website: <https://www.belchertownps.org/chestnut-hill-community-school/>

Food Service Director – Ms. Barrett Grazioso (Ext. 390)

For a List of School of Events – SEE WEBSITE

Web site: <http://www.belchertownps.org>

## Jabish Brook Middle School 62 N. Washington St.

Main Number 323-0433  
323-0434  
Office FAX 323-0450

Automated system:

0-Operator  
1-Student Absentee Line  
2-Guidance-Mr. Davis  
3-Guidance-Ms. Parker  
4-Nurse's Office  
5-Music/Band  
6-Kitchen  
Teacher Voicemail-Dial Room #

Web site: <https://www.belchertownps.org/jabish-brook-middle-school/>

## Belchertown High School 142 Springfield Rd.

Main Numbers 323-9419  
323-9420  
Office Press 0  
Dial by Last Name Press \*  
Absentee Call-In Line Press 1  
Nurse Press 3  
Guidance Press 4  
Library Press 6  
Cafeteria Press 7  
Dir. of Athletics Press 8  
Current Events Press 9

Main Office Fax 323-9406  
Guidance 323-9351  
Guidance Fax 323-9353  
School Nurse 323-9508  
Library Fax 323-9356

Web site: <https://www.belchertownps.org/belchertown-high-school/>

### **School-Site Office Hours**

CSS (Early Childhood Center) 7:30 am-4:00 pm  
SRE (Elementary School) 7:30 am-4:00 pm  
CHCS (Intermediate School) 7:30 am-4:00 pm  
JBMS (Middle School) 7:00 am-3:00 pm  
BHS (High School) 7:00 am-3:30 pm

## Office of Information Technology 7 Berkshire Ave.

Main Number 323-9419/5150  
Help Desk [Oithelpdesk@belchertownps.org](mailto:Oithelpdesk@belchertownps.org)  
IT Office Hours 7:00 am-4:00 pm

### **First Student Transportation**

Main Numbers: 323-8316/323-8317  
FAX: 323-8318

**JABISH BROOK MIDDLE SCHOOL STAFF DIRECTORY**

Telephone Main Line 413-323-0423		Fax Line 413-323-0450	
ADMINISTRATION	GRADE	EXTENSION	POSITION
Mr. Thomas Ruscio		124	Principal
Ms. Sarah Strout		123	Assistant Principal
Mr. Alex Davis		225	Guidance Counselor
Ms. Jennifer Parker		228	Guidance Counselor
Ms. Diane McKelvey		126	School Nurse
Ms. Abigail Lang		125	Administrative Assistant
Ramona Griffin		0	SY Administrative Asst.
TEACHER	GRADE/ TEAM	ROOM (EXTENSION #)	SUBJECT
Ms. Danielle Meilleur	7	104	GEOGRAPHY
Mrs. Rebecca Renzette	7	109	SCIENCE
Mrs. Nicole LaRoche	7	205	ENGLISH
Ms. Selina Ammann	7	108	SCIENCE
Ms. Stephanie Davies	7	207	MATH
Mrs. Deborah Hanscom	7	204	MATH
Mr. Erich Flood	7	105	GEOGRAPHY
Ms. Suzanne North	7/8	208	MATH/ENGLISH
Mrs. Wendy Laramee	7	203	MATH/ENGLISH
Mrs. Sheila Flood	7/8	211	MATH
Mrs. Julie O'Brien	7/8	101	LLP
Mrs. Darlene Santucci	7	102	LIFESKILLS
Mrs. Christina Thomas	7	218	ENGLISH
TBD	7/8	114	SAILS
Ms. Elizabeth Kania	8	213	ENGLISH
Mr. Miles Montgomery-Butler	8	215	SCIENCE
Ms. Janice Zimmer	8	210	MATH
Mrs. Katie Thompson	8	202	CIVICS
Mrs. Jennifer Poli	8	214	ENGLISH
Mr. Regis Paris	7/8	103	FOREIGN LANGUAGE
Ms. Carmen Náter	8	216	FOREIGN LANGUAGE

**JABISH BROOK MIDDLE SCHOOL STAFF DIRECTORY CONTINUED**

<b>TEACHER</b>	<b>GRADE</b>	<b>ROOM (EXTENSION)</b>	<b>SUBJECT</b>
Mr. Matthew Garrity	7/8	113	MUSIC & CHORUS
Mrs. Corrina Smith	7/8	117-Band Annex	BAND DIRECTOR
Mr. Timothy Sigda	7/8	112-Gymnasium	PE/HEALTH
Mr. Daniel Baecher	7/8	116	TECHNOLOGY
Mr. Michael Craven	7/8	115	COMPUTERS
Ms. Carol St. Amand	7/8	224 - Library	LIBRARY RESEARCH
<b>PARAPROFESSIONALS</b>	<b>GRADE</b>	<b>ROOM (EXTENSION)</b>	<b>SUBJECT</b>
Mrs. Beth Bellerive	7/8		
Ms. Karen Beaudry	7/8		
Mrs. Gloria Pellerin	7/8		
TBD	7/8		
Ms. Mary Ann Derouin	7/8		
Mr. Timothy Leone-Forgette	7/8		
Ms. Amanda Litz	7/8		
Ms. Arlene Herlihy Nancy Czabaj Traci Lachance	7/8	Office/Cafeteria	LUNCH ROOM
<b>CAFETERIA STAFF</b>			<b>POSITION</b>
Ms. Barrett Grazioso		MySchoolBucks Coordinator	FOOD SERVICES DIRECTOR
Ms. Kari Bachand	7/8	118-Kitchen	HEAD COOK
Ms. Nicole Bourguignon	7/8	118-Kitchen	GENERAL WORKER
Ms. Salwa Ghattas	7/8	118-Kitchen	GENERAL WORKER
Ms. Rebekah Rogers	7/8	118-Kitchen	GENERAL WORKER
<b>CUSTODIAL STAFF</b>			<b>POSITION</b>
Mr. Gerald Viens	7/8	229	CUSTODIAL SUPERVISOR
Mr. Keith Lafleur	7/8		CUSTODIAN
Mr. Edward Collette	7/8		CUSTODIAN
Mr. Ryan Charpentier	7/8		CUSTODIAN

## **BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT**

### **VISION STATEMENT**

Belchertown students, both individually and collaboratively, will be innovative thinkers, problem solvers and unique, creative contributors to their community and the world.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

In the pursuit of excellence and the development of lifelong learners, it is the mission of the Belchertown Public Schools to challenge and engage all students in a respectful, positive learning environment that fosters personal, social and academic growth in order to achieve success in a global society.

## **JABISH BROOK MIDDLE SCHOOL - MISSION STATEMENT AND GOALS**

The Jabish Brook Middle School faculty and staff are committed to nurturing the growth of our students by providing a safe, supportive learning environment which not only inspires creativity but motivates and challenges students to reach their academic potential. Our faculty and staff are also dedicated to fostering the social and emotional growth of our students, by emphasizing such values as acceptance, tolerance, cooperation, responsibility, respect and a positive work ethic. At Jabish Brook Middle School we aspire to instill in students the desire to become lifelong, active learners.

To guide our actions as we strive to fulfill our responsibility, the following goals have been established:

#### **Goal A: Maintain a positive and safe educational environment**

It is the continuing goal of the professional staff at Jabish Brook Middle School to create a middle school environment that is academically excellent, developmentally responsive, and socially equitable. We strive to maintain a safe, clean, supportive educational environment that responds to the needs of every child. Integration of the 2010 Anti-Bullying Legislation will now become a formal aspect of this daily practice at the middle school level.

#### **Goal B: MCAS Assessment and Review**

Standards-based assessment requirements from both federal and state regulations mandate the use and review of the MCAS assessment system. The ongoing practice of this review continues to drive course and curriculum expectations, and is utilized by the faculty and administration to highlight effective practices, as well as identify and address areas of weakness.

#### **Goal C: Expansion of Computer Technologies used in the classroom**

The expansion and development of technological services to be utilized for the storage, dissemination and submission of information regarding the daily operations of Jabish Brook Middle School continue to be of growing demand by the school district, our community and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

#### **Goal D: Expansion and Review of Middle School Curriculum and Course Offerings**

Jabish Brook is a school committed to meeting the needs of our students on all levels. We have an excellent faculty, administration, and support staff that rise to the challenge. Areas identified for improvement and growth include introductory World Languages Language in Grade 7, as well as Remedial and Advanced course offerings in all core academic subjects.

When planning vacations for June 2025, parents/guardians should keep in mind that if there are snow days during the school year, **school will be in session after June 13<sup>th</sup>** which will alter the dates for final examinations. Students will not be allowed to take their exams early to accommodate vacation schedules.

BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2024 - 2025

2024

August 20 ..... BHS New Student Orientation  
 August 23 ..... JBMS Visiting Day  
 August 23 ..... New Employee Orientation  
 August 26 ..... Full Day PD: No School  
 August 27 ..... Convocation: No School  
 August 28 ..... 1st Day of School  
 August 28 ..... Pre-K-Kindergarten Screening  
 August 29 ..... Pre-K-Kindergarten Screening  
 August 30 ..... Pre-K-Kindergarten Screening  
 September 2 ..... Labor Day: No School  
 September 3 ..... Kindergarten & Pre-K Visiting Day  
 September 4 ..... Kindergarten Staggered First Day  
 September 4 ..... Pre-K First Day  
 September 5 ..... Kindergarten Staggered First Day  
 September 6 ..... All Kindergarten Students Report  
 October 9 ..... Early Release  
 October 14 ..... Columbus Day: No School  
 November 1 ..... Grs. 7-12 First Term Grades Close  
 November 5 ..... Full Day PD: No School  
 November 11 ..... Veteran's Day: No School  
 November 15 ..... Grs. 7-12 First Term Report Cards  
 November 22 ..... Grs. 1-6 First Term Grades Close  
 November 27-29 ..... Thanksgiving Recess: No School  
 December 6 ..... Grs. 1-6 First Term Report Cards  
 December 6 ..... Kindergarten Grades Close  
 December 13 ..... K. Progress Reports go Home



Open House Schedule

CSS - September 25, 2024  
 SRE - August 27, 2024  
 CHCS - September 5, 2024  
 JBMS - September 12, 2024  
 BHS - September 4, 2024

School Conferences

PreK - January 20 - 23  
 K - November 18 - 22  
 SRE - December 9 - 13  
 CHCS - October 22 - 24

2025

December 23-January 1 ..... Winter Recess: No School  
 January 8 ..... Early Release  
 January 17 ..... Grs. 7-12 Second Term Grades Close  
 January 20 ..... MLK Jr: No School  
 January 31 ..... Grs. 7-12 Second Term Report Cards  
 January 31 ..... Preschool Progress Reports Go Home  
 February 17-21 ..... February Recess: No School  
 March 7 ..... Grs. 1-6 Second Term Grades Close  
 March 12 ..... Early Release  
 March 14 ..... Grs. 1-6 Second Term Report Cards  
 March 21 ..... Kindergarten Grades Close  
 March 28 ..... K. Progress Reports go Home  
 April 4 ..... Grs. 7-12 Third Term Grades Close  
 April 18 ..... Good Friday: No School  
 April 21-25 ..... Spring Recess: No School  
 April 25 ..... Grs. 7-12 Third Term Report Cards  
 May 14 ..... Early Release  
 May 26 ..... Memorial Day: No School  
 June 5 ..... BHS-Class of 2025 Graduation  
 June 13 ..... Final Term Report Cards  
 June 13 ..... Last Day of School  
 June 19 ..... Juneteenth: No School  
 June 23 ..... 5 Snow Days

AUGUST						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

SEPTEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

OCTOBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

NOVEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

DECEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

JANUARY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

FEBRUARY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

MARCH						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

APRIL						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

MAY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

JUNE						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Early Release PD: Release Times

Gr. 7-12 dismissed at 12 PM  
 Gr. K-6 dismissed at 1 PM  
 No afternoon Pre-K  
 Lunch will be served

Approved by School Committee: 12/19/2023

## **JBMS SCHEDULE ROTATION - SAMPLE**

**The daily rotation will be Monday through Friday, and the first two periods of the day will be locked in order to retain programming and part-time staff in the building. The exact rotation will change each term based upon the change of specials courses. We will review schedules on a regular basis with students each term.**

	<i><u>Day A</u></i>	<i><u>Day B</u></i>	<i><u>Day C</u></i>	<i><u>Day D</u></i>	<i><u>Day E</u></i>
<i>7:35-7:42</i>	<i>Homeroom</i>				
<i>7:45-8:32</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>8:35-9:22</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>9:25-10:12</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>10:15-11:02</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>11:05-12:32</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>12:35-1:20</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>1:23-2:10</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>

### **SCHEDULE ROTATION**

The school day is divided into seven academic periods. These periods are identified with numbers 1-7. The periods are then incorporated into a full rotation over seven consecutive school days. This daily rotation is identified with letters A-G. (Example: Day A begins with Period 1, Day B begins with Period 2, Day C begins with Period 3, etc.).

On days when school is canceled, the daily rotation will continue to advance. The order of class periods will be the same on the day school returns to session as it would have been had school not been canceled. For example, if school is canceled because of a snowstorm on a Tuesday/Day C and resumes the next day on Wednesday; that Wednesday becomes Day D.

### **SCHOOL HOURS**

Students are to be in homeroom from 7:35 a.m. to 7:42 a.m. Classes are in session from 7:45 a.m. to 2:10 p.m., with the Main Office being open from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Students must obtain all required items from their lockers at the end of the school day, and prior to leaving for home. Students who remain on school grounds after school hours must have a valid educational or extracurricular purpose – the absence of which will be grounds for removal from school property.

## **ADMISSION FOR CAREER & VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL EDUCATION**

April 1st is the date by which the Chapter 74 Vocational Technical Education Program Nonresident Tuition Student Application must be received by the Superintendent of the district of residence.

### **Middle School Pathway Exploration Policy**

Effective Date: November 1, 2025

Approved By: Belchertown School Committee October 14, 2025

### **Overview**

Massachusetts state regulations (603 CMR 4.00) require sending districts to maintain a districtwide Middle School Pathway Exploration Policy that documents how middle school students in the town are made aware of, and gain exposure to, career technical education (CTE) schools and programs available to them in their regional vocational technical high school.

As a member town of the Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School District, each member town will provide all middle school students within its jurisdiction with meaningful opportunities to learn about and explore the CTE programs offered at Pathfinder Tech.

The Superintendent of each member town must submit this Policy to DESE by November 1, 2025, and as amended. Each year, the Superintendent must also submit an annual attestation that the Policy has been implemented in their town. This Policy will be posted on the town's website and made available in writing to students and parents upon request.

### **Statement of Goals**

Each member town is committed to ensuring that every middle school student is aware of and has equitable access to the CTE pathways offered at Pathfinder Tech. Through close consultation and coordination with Pathfinder Tech, each member town seeks to:

- Provide timely and accurate information about CTE programs, timelines, and admissions.
- Ensure all students have direct opportunities to learn about programs through tours, presentations, and career exploration events.
- Connect CTE exploration to students' secondary and postsecondary academic and career planning.

### **High School Pathway Options Available to Students**

Students in each member town may attend:

Pathfinder Tech – The regional vocational technical high school serving member towns. Pathfinder Tech serves students from the following nine member towns:

- Belchertown

- Monson
- New Braintree
- Palmer
- Ware
- Granby
- Hardwick
- Warren
- Oakham
- Non-resident students may also be permitted to attend Pathfinder Tech if space is available.

### **Middle School Career Exploration**

CTE exploration will be incorporated into Belchertown’s implementation of the Middle School Career Exploration program, such as MyCAP, once a model has been researched, selected, and adopted, beginning at the middle school level.

Collaboration with Pathfinder Tech: Middle School administrators and counselors will consult with Pathfinder Tech staff to plan the timing and logistics for tours, presentations, and student/family information sessions.

Pathfinder Tech On-Site Presentations: Pathfinder Tech staff will be permitted to visit the middle school in Belchertown and meet with all grade 8 students during the school day to provide information about CTE programs, admissions, and career pathways. Pathfinder Tech will propose several dates in October, November, or December for each middle school, and Belchertown will select from these available options to schedule presentations.

Information Sharing (by October 15): Belchertown Public Schools will provide Pathfinder Tech with a complete list of all seventh and eighth grade students, including full name, physical address, personal email address, and phone number. This list represents a minimum; member towns may provide additional contact information as available. In addition, students and families will receive information about Pathfinder Tech’s CTE programs:

- On-site at middle schools through Pathfinder Tech-led presentations and assemblies.
- Through mailings and emails coordinated with Pathfinder Tech.
- Via town and school public-facing websites, with Pathfinder Tech-provided content.

### **Middle School CTE Tours**

Student Tours: All middle school students in Belchertown Public Schools will be given the opportunity to tour Pathfinder Tech during regular school hours. The dates for these tours will be proposed, scheduled, and coordinated by Pathfinder Tech.

Transportation: Transportation for tours will be provided and paid for by Pathfinder Tech.

Scheduling & Coordination: Pathfinder Tech will propose multiple options for tour dates each year, and the member town will select from these available options to schedule student tours.

Attendance: Student participation in Pathfinder Tech tours will not be counted as an unexcused absence when confirmed by Pathfinder Tech.

### **Providing Records to Pathfinder Tech**

In compliance with state regulations, Belchertown Public Schools will provide to Pathfinder Tech the following:  
Student Contact Information (as noted above).

Admission Information: Confirmation of student attendance, limited discipline information (felony-level suspensions/expulsions under M.G.L. c.71 §§ 37H/37H½), student interest activities (letters of recommendation, if requested), and grade promotion to ninth grade.

All data sharing will follow state regulations and be limited to information specifically permitted under 603 CMR 4.00.

### **Maintenance of Records**

Belchertown will maintain documentation of:

Student participation in Pathfinder Tech tours and presentations.

Annual release of student contact information to Pathfinder Tech.middle school

All communications with families regarding CTE access and awareness.

Belchertown will consult with Pathfinder Tech at least annually to ensure consistent record-keeping practices and alignment with admissions processes.

**Appendix:** MyCAP Scope and Sequence by Grade Level - Once researched and adopted.

Adopted by the Belchertown Public School Committee on October 14, 2025

## **SECTION II- JBMS POLICY/PROCEDURES**

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY AND INTEGRITY**

Students are expected to do their own work. Plagiarism (copying) of material from any source, for any and all academic works including: papers, presentations or reports, submitting someone else's work as one's own, using google translate, copy and pasting electronic material, copying "crib sheets," the unauthorized removal of test/exam documents/materials from a classroom, photographing test/exam documents, are all considered forms of academic dishonesty. Any form of academic dishonesty, as determined by the teacher, will result in an automatic zero for the examination, paper, or project for grades 4-12. No makeup will be permitted. Teachers will contact parent(s)/ guardian(s) to inform them of the incident. A second offense will result in zero credit and additional disciplinary action.

**Purpose**

Belchertown Public Schools maintain a computer network and computer systems to provide students, faculty and staff with access to a host of resources both internally within the district and on the Internet. These resources include, but are not limited to, desktop, laptop, and tablet computers, personal digital assistants, network and Internet access, e-mail, telephones, voicemail and facsimile machines (collectively to be called "Electronic Resources"). The Belchertown Public Schools network is established to support the educational mission and administrative operations of the individual schools.

**Responsibilities**

As a student or employee at Belchertown Public Schools you may have access to Electronic Resources, including the network and Internet. The network is viewed as an extension of the public schools community and all expectations regarding standards of behavior as outlined in the Student, Employee or Faculty Handbook apply to your actions while utilizing or accessing the network or other Electronic Resources. You are expected to use the Electronic Resources in a mature, ethical, and responsible manner. Personal use is allowed but Belchertown Public Schools reserves the right to limit your access. If you believe a website is blocked in error, please contact the Belchertown Public Schools Office of Information Technology to initiate a review. Access to the Belchertown Public Schools network is a privilege and not a right.

**Unacceptable Uses and Behavior**

Activities that are considered violations of this electronic resources acceptable use policy and school rules include:

**Illegal Activities**

- involvement in any activity prohibited by law.
- intentional use of invasive software such as "viruses," "worms," "Trojan Horses" and other malicious software.
- interfering with the normal and proper operation of this network, the Internet or any other network. This includes: "hacking," "cracking," probing, attempting to gain access to network servers and equipment, utilizing excessive amounts of bandwidth, and setting up servers on the network of any type without express permission.
- adversely affecting the ability of others to use equipment or services.

**Plagiarism and Copyright Infringement**

- transferring, utilizing or storing materials in violation of copyright laws or license agreements. This includes software, music files, images and text.
- plagiarizing work found on the Internet - all sources of work must be cited and credited.
- tampering with computers, printers, network devices and other equipment belonging to Belchertown Public Schools or other people.
- using the network for financial and/or personal gain or for political lobbying except as expressly allowed during a school activity.
- attempting to log on to the network as the system administrator or gain access beyond your authorized access level.
- attempting to bypass security systems and software.
- sharing passwords or using someone else's password or attempting to discover another person's password.
- trespassing in another's folders, e-mail, work, or files or using another person's account.
- changing computer files that do not belong to you.

## Conduct

- conducting yourself in ways that are harmful to others.
- creating, transferring or otherwise using any text, image, movie, or sound recording that contains pornography, profanity, vulgarity, obscenity, or language that offends or tends to degrade others.
- sending or forwarding "chain" type letters, hate mail, anonymous or threatening messages.
- viewing, storing or transferring obscene, sexually explicit or pornographic material.
- posting or sending e-mail or voicemail messages that are personal attacks, including any prejudicial, discriminatory, racist or sexist content, could cause damage or disruption, contain false or defamatory information about a person or organization, or harassing another person. If you are told by a person to stop sending them messages, you must stop.
- posting personal contact information about yourself or other people. This includes your address, telephone number, school address, etc.
- Staff or Faculty professional communications with students and parents will only occur through district issued accounts.

## Disciplinary actions

Violation of this Acceptable Use Policy is considered a violation of district policy. Some behaviors are considered violations of a major school rule. Violations will result in one or more of the following disciplinary actions (Belchertown Public Schools will decide in its sole discretion which disciplinary action is warranted under the circumstances):

- verbal warning
- written warning
- restriction of access privileges
- removal from a class activity
- removal from a course
- confiscation of computer equipment
- student detention, restrictions or work hours
- suspension or expulsion
- payment for damages due to your actions
- referral to legal authorities

## Privacy

Users of the network or other Electronic Resources have no reasonable expectation of privacy concerning any materials transferred over or stored within the Belchertown Public Schools network or on other Electronic Resources (e.g., voicemail and e-mail). Information such as e-mails transmitted over the network may be a public record. The network is subject to monitoring.

## Limited Liability

Belchertown Public Schools makes no guarantee that the functions or the services provided by or through the network will be error-free or without defect. Belchertown Public Schools will not be responsible for any damage you may suffer, including but not limited to, loss of data or interruptions of service. Belchertown Public Schools are not responsible for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained through or stored on the system. Belchertown Public Schools will not be responsible for financial obligations arising through your use of the system. **You are responsible for your activities.**

## **AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM**

Activities after school are offered at various times during the school year. These range from running club to playing chess and are funded cooperatively by the Belchertown Public Schools, user fees and outside donations/grants. Students are reminded that the rules for student conduct apply during these activities as well as while waiting for buses or parents/guardians. Scholarships are available if the need arises. Late busses run only during this program.

## **ARRIVAL PROCEDURES**

Students are to enter the building immediately upon arrival in the morning. Those 7th and 8th graders who arrive prior to 7:30 a.m. must wait in the Music Assembly or Gymnasium, at which time they may go to their lockers and homeroom. There is to be no loitering in the parking lots, walkways to the school, on athletic fields, or in nearby woods.

Buses and vehicles are not to be left idling at schools. Whenever a bus or vehicle arrives, the driver is to secure the bus or vehicle and shut the engine down as soon as possible. No bus or vehicle will be left at idle in excess of five minutes of anticipated idling time.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Regular classroom attendance is necessary for student success. Students are expected to be present daily and on time for all classes. When sickness or legitimate family obligations necessitate an absence, a phone call of explanation from the parent or guardian to the school attendance line is required (323-0433, Option 1). The following information is necessary when leaving a phone message: student's name, grade, homeroom, reason for absence, caller's name and relationship to the student. In order to assure the success of this procedure, emergency notification cards must be accurate and kept up-to-date at all times. Follow up phone calls may occur to verify absences.

Parent(s) or Guardian(s) will be notified when a student has five (5) or more unexcused absences in a marking term. In such a case, the school principal or a designee, will make a reasonable effort to meet with the parent or guardian of a student who has 5 or more unexcused absences to develop action steps for student attendance. The action steps shall be developed jointly and agreed upon by the school principal or a designee, the student and the student's parent or guardian and with input from other relevant school personnel and officials from relevant public safety, health and human service, housing and nonprofit agencies. Unexcused absences may result in parental contact, further investigation, and appropriate action as determined by building administration. More than eight (8) unexcused absences will be subject to administrative review and possible action, such as filing a child requiring assistance petition or a 51A.

## **FAMILY VACATIONS**

Parents/guardians and students are reminded that Massachusetts Law requires compulsory attendance for students. We strongly discourage family vacations when school is in session. In addition to compromising the attendance law, family vacations interrupt the educational process of each course in ways that make-up work cannot reverse. Teachers are not required to give out homework assignments prior to a family vacation.

## **MISSED ASSIGNMENTS**

It is the responsibility of the student to make up all missed assignments, tests or quizzes. Unless arrangements are made, the student may have as many days as missed in order to make up the work. For example, if a student is absent for two days, the student will have two days to make up the required work following their return to school. A minimum 24 hour notice is required to prepare materials should the parent/guardian wish to make a request for student assignments prior to an absence.

## **TARDINESS AND EARLY DISMISSAL**

Tardiness and Early Dismissals from school impact student learning. Therefore, we ask that students be on time for school and remain at school the entire day. If a student will be late, please call the absentee number to report them as tardy 323-0433, Option 1. Students who arrive after 7:35AM will be considered tardy and must report to the office upon arrival. Tardiness due to school delay via school buses will be automatically excused by the front office. Repeated tardiness may result in disciplinary action

Students who need to be dismissed early, for a variety of legitimate reasons, must present a note signed by a parent or legal guardian indicating the time and reason for the dismissal plus a phone number where the parent or legal guardian may be reached. Please indicate if the student will return to school and approximate time of return. The note must be given to the Main Office prior to the first period in the morning. Only in emergencies will phone calls to dismiss students be accepted, and such dismissals must be followed by a note from the parent/legal guardian. For safety reasons, parents/guardians with a picture ID are expected to pick up their student in the front office at the designated time in order to dismiss the student.

## **RE-ENTRY MEETING**

Students returning to school after a hospitalization, prolonged illness or crisis intervention referral are required to notify the school nurse, school counselor or an administrator as soon as possible. At least one school day prior to the student's return to school, a re-entry meeting will be held with the student, parent/guardian, school counselor, nurse, and any other appropriate staff to determine what accommodations may need to be implemented in order to ensure a successful return to school. At this re-entry meeting we will request a Hospital Discharge Summary or a letter from the student's treating physician indicating that the student is mentally and physically well to safely return to school.

The student's well-being is paramount to the Belchertown School staff and we encourage you to contact us with any questions or concerns regarding this process. All information shared with the re-entry team is confidential and will be shared with appropriate staff only with student/parent permission.

## **BICYCLES**

Springfield Road and North Washington Street are very busy streets before and after the school day. There are also no sidewalks for a major portion of the roadway. With the safety of the students in mind the following rules have been formulated.

- A. Students are strongly urged to lock and chain their bicycles. The school will not be responsible for any theft and/or vandalism that might occur.
- B. Students riding bicycles shall leave school grounds immediately upon dismissal.
- C. Bicycle safety should be observed at all times when traveling to and from school, including the use of helmets and safety equipment.

## **BUILDING SECURITY AND SAFETY PLAN**

In order to support facility safety and security within the Belchertown School District for all school personnel, students and visitors, the following district-wide and school-site procedures shall be followed during regular school hours:

After all school personnel and students arrive in the morning and are in their classrooms or work areas ready to begin the regular school day, all exterior doors shall be closed and locked for the duration of the regular school day. Prior to the time when doors are closed and locked, school administrators shall assign available school personnel to areas of the facilities requiring special supervision.

After the doors are locked, individuals wishing entry into the school building must enter through the front doors only and immediately proceed to the main office.

Individuals must report directly to the school office upon entering the buildings. Individuals may not leave the school offices for other areas of the building without permission, and must sign-in and wear badges (e.g. volunteer badges, visitor badges). Prior to leaving the building, individuals must report back to the main office, return the badges, and sign out.

All students arriving late, leaving early, or being taken out and brought back during the school day (e.g. for medical or dental appointments) must report to the main office in the company of parent, guardian or designated person, in order to be signed out/in by the office secretary or other designated individuals. Parents or other individuals entering the building in order to dismiss or return a student must report to the main office. No one may go directly to a classroom without authorization from the main office and issuance of identification badges.

At dismissal time (i.e. at the end of the regular school day), students or other individuals must leave or enter the building through the front doors. Available school personnel shall be assigned to supervise specified areas at dismissal time (e.g. the bus loading area and the student parking lot).

Belchertown Public Schools may request that law enforcement conduct random canine sweeps of the premises for the purpose of detecting the presence of illegal substances, when necessary to protect the health and safety of students, employees or property and to detect the presence of illegal substances or contraband, including but not limited to alcohol and/or drugs. The use of trained canine sniffing dogs is subject to the following:

1. The administration shall authorize the search and the Executive Director or his/her designee shall be present while the search is taking place.
2. Parents and students shall be notified of this policy through its inclusion in the student and/or parent handbook.
3. All school property such as lockers, classrooms, parking areas and storage areas may be searched.
4. Individual(s) shall not be subjected to a search by dogs.
5. Once notification has been given to parents and students, through the inclusion of the policies in the student and/or parent handbook, the school district will have met its obligation to advertise the searches. Additional notices need not be given and actual times or dates of planned searches need not be released in advance.
6. Only the dog's official handler will determine what constitutes an alert by the dog. If the dog alerts on a particular item or place, that item or place will be searched by the School Administration. If anything is found the student shall be called to the area or office by the administration. If a dog alerts on a locked or unlocked vehicle, the student who brought the vehicle onto district property shall be asked to unlock it for inspection.
7. Law enforcement agencies will be given full authorization to investigate and prosecute any person(s) found to be responsible for illegal substance(s) on school property.

In order to ensure the safety and security of all school personnel and students, and as deemed necessary by school administrators, hand-held metal detectors may be utilized to check for weapons. Any weapons so identified shall be dealt with directly by school administrators prior to involving local and State Police. Individuals who refuse to submit to such a screening will be refused entry into the building.

Individuals are encouraged to report information which could help keep our schools safe and prevent potential violence. Information should be reported directly to a school administrator.

**BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY FOR THE BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
***Belchertown Public Schools Priority Statement***

**The Belchertown Public School community is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning and working environment, where all students, employees, and visitors, are free from bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, and intimidation. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, a culture of respect and tolerance; and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behaviors that can impede the learning process.**

## **DEFINITIONS**

### **Bullying**

The law defines bullying as the repeated use of a written, verbal, or electronic communication, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional (aggressors) of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim (target) that has the effect of:

- causing physical or emotional harm to the student (target) or damage to his or her property;
- placing the student (target) in reasonable fear of harm to him or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- creating a hostile environment - which is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education - at school for the target;
- infringing on the rights of the student (target) at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupting the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Examples of bullying include but are not limited to repeated acts of:

- Intimidation, either physical or psychological (in person or via an electronic device)
- Threats of any kind, stated or implied (in person or via an electronic device)
- Assaults, whether verbal, physical, psychological, or emotional
- Attacks on student property
- Demeaning names or phrases directed at an individual student
- Touching another individual in a demeaning manner
- Exclusion.

Bullying and cyber-bullying may occur in and out of school, during and after school hours, at home and in locations outside of the home. When bullying and cyber-bullying are alleged, the full cooperation and assistance of parents, families, and staff are expected.

For the purpose of this policy, whenever the term bullying is used it is to denote either bullying, or cyber-bullying.

Bullying is prohibited:

- On school grounds;

- On property immediately adjacent to school grounds;
- At school-sponsored or school-related activities;
- At functions or programs whether on or off school grounds;
- At school bus stops;
- On school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the school district; or,
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the Belchertown Public Schools.

Bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the Belchertown Public Schools if the act or acts in question:

- create a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringe on the rights of the target at school; and/or
- materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

### Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying, which is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic means, which includes, but shall not be limited to; cell phones/smart phones, personal electronic devices and computers using email, social networking sites (such as Facebook, My Space, Twitter, FormSpring, etc.), any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or part by wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including but not limited to; electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. This includes, but shall not be limited to, the distribution of communications such as text messages or emails and posting of material on web sites that can be accessed by more than just the student who may be the target of such bullying.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

The following definitions describe other behaviors that may be associated with bullying and are governed by state and federal laws, as well as Belchertown Public Schools policies:

### **Prevention and Intervention Plan**

The Superintendent and/or his/her designee shall oversee the development of a prevention and intervention plan, in consultation with all district stakeholders, which may include teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians, consistent with the requirements of this policy, as well as state and federal laws. The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be reviewed and updated at least biennially.

The Principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the bullying prevention and implementation plan within his or her school.

## **Reporting**

Individuals, who believe that they are a target of bullying, observe an act of bullying, or who have reasonable grounds to believe that these behaviors are taking place, are obligated to report incidents to a member of the school staff. The target shall, however, not be subject to discipline for failing to report bullying.

The district shall have a means for anonymous reporting by individuals of incidents of bullying. No formal disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report. A member of the school staff may be named the "aggressor" or "perpetrator" in a bullying report.

Any student or school staff member who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Parents or guardians, or members of the community, are encouraged to report an incident of bullying to the school principal or designee as soon as possible.

Belchertown Public Schools Faculty and Staff, which includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extra-curricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals take bullying very seriously and will investigate and take prompt action with individuals who engage in these activities. Belchertown Public Schools Faculty and Staff shall immediately report any instance of bullying the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the school principal or designee.

Through the Belchertown Public Schools' Memorandum of Understanding with the Belchertown Police Department, the Belchertown Public Schools may share any and all information with regard to student safety, and/or possible illegal activity with the Belchertown Public Schools Resource Officer and/or other members of the Belchertown Police Department.

## **Investigation Procedures**

The Principal or designee, upon receipt of a viable report, shall promptly contact the parents or guardians of a student who has been the alleged target or alleged perpetrator of bullying. The actions being taken to prevent further acts of bullying shall be discussed.

The Principal or designee shall promptly investigate the report of bullying, using a Bullying Intervention and Prevention Incident Reporting Form, which may include interviewing the alleged target, alleged perpetrator, staff members, students and/or witnesses.

Staff shall assess an alleged target's needs for protection and create and implement a safety plan that shall restore a sense of safety for that student.

Confidentiality shall be used to protect a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or is witness to or has reliable information about an act of bullying. Confidentiality shall be maintained to the extent consistent with the school's obligations under law.

If the Principal or a designee determines that bullying has occurred, he/she shall take appropriate disciplinary action and if it is believed that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator, the Principal shall consult with the school's resource officer and the Superintendent to determine if criminal charges are warranted. If it is determined that criminal charges are warranted, the local law enforcement agency shall be notified.

The investigation shall be completed within fourteen school days from the date of the report. The parents or guardians shall be contacted upon completion of the investigation and informed of the results, including whether the allegations were found to be factual, whether a violation of this policy was found, and whether disciplinary action has or shall be taken. The Principal or designee shall contact the parents or guardians regarding the status of the investigation throughout the investigation process.

Disciplinary actions for students or staff members who have committed an act of bullying or retaliation shall be in accordance with district disciplinary policies for students and due process/appropriate discipline for staff.

Each school shall document any incident of bullying that is reported per this policy and a file shall be maintained by the Principal or designee. All reports shall be provided to the Superintendent for his/her files.

As required by M.G.L. c. 71B section 3, when a Special Education Team determines that a student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying harassment or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and to respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

The Principal or his/her designee will take any step he/she determines is necessary and/or advisable to protect, to the extent practicable, the complainant, witnesses, and other individuals from further incidents or from retaliation pending the outcome of the investigation.

The Principal or his/her designee will maintain a separate confidential file containing the original completed Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form, investigatory interview notes, and reports, findings made, the results of the investigation, including any decision for action, and other relevant investigatory materials.

### **Retaliation**

Belchertown Public Schools' Faculty and Staff will also investigate retaliation which is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student (target) who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying. Retaliation is prohibited.

### **Target Assistance**

The Belchertown Public Schools shall provide counseling or referral to appropriate services, including guidance, academic intervention, and protection to students, both targets and perpetrators, affected by bullying, as necessary. In the case of a school staff member, the Belchertown Public Schools will refer the individual to the town's Employee Assistance Program.

### **Training and Assessment**

Annual training shall be provided for school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students in preventing, identifying, responding to, and reporting incidents of bullying.

Age-appropriate, evidence-based instruction on bullying prevention shall be incorporated into the curriculum for all K-12 students.

### **Publication and Notice**

Annual written notice of the relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to students and their parents or guardians, in age-appropriate terms.

Annual written notice of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to all school staff. The faculty and staff at each school shall be trained annually on the bullying prevention and intervention plan applicable to the school.

Relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff shall be included in the school employee handbook.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan shall be posted on the Belchertown Public Schools website [www.belchertownps.org](http://www.belchertownps.org).

### **Relationship to Other Laws**

Nothing in our policy prevents the Belchertown Public Schools from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies. In addition, nothing in this policy is designed or intended to limit the authority of the Belchertown Public Schools to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71 sections 37H or 37H ½, other applicable laws, or local or school district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether our policy covers the behavior.

### **BULLYING AMENDMENTS TO SCHOOL BULLYING LAW**

On April 24, 2014, Governor Patrick signed into law "An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools," Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014, which legislation expands the protections of the 2010 anti-bullying law. The law goes into effect 90 days after April 24, that is, July 25, 2014. The new law revises certain provisions of the current anti-bullying law, G.L.c. 71:380, and adds several new subsections to that statute.

There are four main components for the new law: (1) it requires school's anti-bullying plans to recognize that certain enumerated categories of students may be more susceptible to bullying, including LGBTQ students; (2) it requires school districts to annually report bullying incident data to DESE; (3) it requires DESE to develop and school districts to administer surveys at least once every four years on the climate of the school district and prevalence of bullying; and (4) it grants DESE the power to investigate certain alleged incidents of bullying. The law also permits school districts to "adopt an anti-bullying seal to represent the district's or school's commitment to bullying prevention and intervention."



***District Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy and Plan***

**Adopted by the Belchertown School Committee: December 14, 2010**

**Approved by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: March 17, 2011**

Revisions approved by the Belchertown School Committee:

- February 11, 2014
- January 10, 2017
- May 16, 2023
- August 13, 2024



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Appendix C Reporting, Responding, and Investigating Flow Chart

Appendix D Student Safety Plan Form

Appendix E Bullying Allegation Reporting Form

## **Introduction**

The establishment of the Belchertown Anti-Bullying Task Force was approved by the Belchertown School Committee at their August 17, 2010 meeting in response to An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools (2010). This task force of 30 members represented a broad cross-section of our community; including district administrators, teachers, and support staff, as well as parents and community members. Their charge was to take the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and apply it to our district.

The group worked diligently over the course of three months and the resulting policy and plan elements were approved by Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) on March 17, 2011. Consistent with the spirit of the law and to include updates to the statute, the Healthy and Safer Schools Committee has revised the original plan to the one contained herein.

The Department issued an update to reflect Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014, amended G.L. c. 71, §370, the anti-bullying statute, and was signed into law on April 24, 2014. G.L. c. 71, §370, as amended, requires school districts, charter schools, approved private day or residential schools, and collaborative schools to “recognize” in their bullying prevention and intervention plans that certain enumerated categories of students may be more vulnerable to being targets of bullying based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics. Such districts and schools must also include in the plan the specific steps they will take to support these vulnerable students and provide all students the skills, knowledge and strategies they need to prevent or respond to bullying or harassment. Under the new law, school districts, charter schools, approved private day or residential schools, and collaborative schools must notify parents and guardians of targets of bullying of the availability of the Department's problem resolution system and assist these parents and guardians in understanding the problem resolution process. Chapter 86 also addresses the data reporting and collection obligations of school districts, charter schools, approved private day or residential schools, and collaborative schools, requiring them to collect and report the following data to the Department: 1) the number of reported allegations of bullying or retaliation; 2) the number and nature of substantiated incidents of bullying and retaliation; 3) the number of students disciplined for engaging in bullying or retaliation, and 4) other information required by the Department. (The Department is required to analyze the data and to issue a report annually to the legislature which contains statewide aggregated data on the nature and frequency of bullying in schools.) Additionally, Chapter 86 requires school districts, charter schools, approved private day or residential schools, and collaborative schools, to administer a Department-developed student survey at least once every four years to assess “school climate and the prevalence, nature and severity of bullying in schools.” (The Department will use survey results to, among other things, assess the effectiveness of bullying prevention curricula and instruction and identify long-term trends and areas of improvement, and will make its findings available to school officials.) The law also authorizes school districts, charter schools, approved private day or residential schools, and collaborative schools to adopt an anti-bullying seal to represent its commitment to bullying prevention and intervention.

## **I. District Policy**

*including definitions, relationships to other laws, and prohibition against bullying and retaliation*

The Bullying Prevention Policy, presented in Appendix A, incorporates our district priority statement, as adopted by the Anti-Bullying Task Force in 2010. It also includes references to laws and regulations as required, defines terms related to bullying and harassment, and has specific language intended to address prohibitions against bullying and retaliation.

## **II. Leadership**

Leadership at all levels will play a critical role in the ongoing revision and implementation of this Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (“the Plan”) in the context of other whole school and community efforts to promote positive school climate. Leaders have a primary role in teaching students to be civil to one another and promoting understanding of and respect for diversity and difference.

Leadership should be defined by the district or school, depending on existing roles and responsibilities and locally identified priorities for this initiative. Leadership is responsible for setting priorities and for staying up-to-date with current research on ways to prevent and effectively respond to bullying. It is also the responsibility of leaders to involve representatives from the greater school and local community in developing and implementing the Plan.

**Public involvement in developing the Plan:** As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the Plan must be developed in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents, and guardians. Consultation must include, at a minimum, notice and a public comment period before the Plan is adopted by the school committee or equivalent authority. Schools and districts may choose to involve representatives from each of these constituencies in other aspects of Plan development, including needs assessments, working groups, task forces, and public meetings. The Plan should identify the ways that each of the various constituencies will be involved.

**Assessing needs and resources:** The Plan is the school's or district's blueprint for enhancing capacity to prevent and respond to issues of bullying within the context of other healthy school climate initiatives. As part of the planning process, school leaders, with input from families and staff, assess the adequacy of current programs; review current policies and procedures; review available data on bullying and behavioral incidents; and assess available resources including curricula, training programs, and behavioral health services. This “mapping” process assists schools and districts in identifying resource gaps and the most significant areas of need. Based on these findings, schools and districts will revise or develop policies and procedures; establish partnerships with community agencies, including law enforcement; and set priorities.

At least once every four years beginning with 2015/16 school year, the district will administer a Department of Elementary and Secondary-developed student survey to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in our schools. Additionally, the school or district will annually report bullying incident data to the Department. This information will help to identify patterns of behaviors and areas of concern, and will inform decision-making for prevention strategies including, but not limited to, adult supervision, professional development, age-appropriate curricula, and in-school support services. The Plan

describes the methods the school will use to conduct needs assessments, including timelines and leadership roles.

**Planning and oversight:** The Plan identifies the school or district leaders responsible for the following tasks under the Plan: 1) receiving reports on bullying; 2) collecting and analyzing building- and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes; 3) creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports, and for accessing information related to targets and aggressors; 4) planning for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law; 5) planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors; 6) choosing and implementing the curricula that the school or district will use; 7) developing new or revising current policies and protocols under the Plan, including an Internet safety policy, and designating key staff to be in charge of implementation of them; 8) amending student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct to, among other things, make clear that bullying of students by school staff or other students will not be tolerated; 9) leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials; and 10) reviewing and updating the Plan each year, or more frequently.

**Developing priority statements:** Priority statements can be used to communicate within the Plan the school's or district's vision in creating and implementing its bullying prevention and intervention strategies. The following are priority statements for this Plan:

- The school or district expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.
- The school or district is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyberbullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process.
- We recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to become targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. The school or district will identify specific steps it will take to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.
- A school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school or collaborative school may establish separate discrimination or harassment policies that include these or other categories of students. Nothing in this section shall alter the obligations of a school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school or collaborative school to remediate any discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state or federal law
- We will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. We will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target's sense of safety. We will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent or guardian involvement.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (“Plan”) is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying, and the school or district is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. In consultation with these constituencies, we have established this Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. The principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan except when a reported bullying incident involves the principal or the assistant principal as the alleged aggressor. In such cases, the Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for investigating the report, and other steps necessary to implement the Plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged target. If the Superintendent is the alleged aggressor, the School Committee, or its designee shall be responsible for investigating the report, and other steps necessary to implement the Plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged victim.

*Table 1.1. Leadership Plan Details.*

Goals/Objectives	Strategies	Persons Responsible	Due	Progress
A. Public involvement in maintaining the plan	1. Healthy and Safer Schools Committee reviews current plan and recommends changes to School Committee.	1. Healthy and Safer Schools Committee (administrators, teachers, parent representative, School Committee representative, and student representative)	1. Biennially	1. Next review date: 2025
B. Assessing needs and resources	<p>1. Administer periodic needs assessments to students in grades K-12 to identify resource gaps and the most significant areas of need.</p> <p>2. The district will administer the Views of Climate and Learning (VOCAL) student survey to help assess school climate and the prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in our schools.</p>	<p>1. Administrators &amp; faculty</p> <p>2. IT Department, Data Administrator, School Admin.</p>	<p>1. Biennially</p> <p>2. Annually in grades 4, 5, 8, and 10</p>	<p>1. Next review date: 2025</p> <p>2. Ongoing</p>

*Table 1.2. Leadership Plan Details Continued.*

Goals/Objectives	Strategies	Persons Responsible	Due	Progress
B. Assessing needs and resources (continued)	<p>3. The district will administer the Prevention Needs Assessment (PNAS) student survey to help assess school climate and the prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in our schools.</p> <p>4. The district will report bullying incident data to the Department.</p> <p>5. Assess resources available to continue implementation of the plan</p>	<p>3. IT Department, Data Administrator, School Admin.</p> <p>4. Data Administrator, School Administrators</p> <p>5. Healthy and Safer Schools Committee and School Administrators</p>	<p>3. Bi-Annually in grades 7, 9, and 11</p> <p>4. Annually, starting in June/July 2017</p> <p>5. Annually as part of the budget process</p>	<p>3. Ongoing</p> <p>4. Ongoing</p> <p>5. Ongoing</p>
C. Planning and oversight	<p>1. See plan: oversee elements/implementation</p>	<p>1. See plan: oversight of all by Healthy and Safer Schools Committee</p>	<p>1. Ongoing</p>	<p>1. Ongoing</p>

### **III. Training and Professional Development**

The Plan reflects the requirements under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O to provide ongoing professional development for all staff; including but not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, and paraprofessionals.

**Annual staff training on the Plan:** The Plan states the content and frequency of staff training and ongoing professional development as determined by the district's or individual school's needs, and lists other topics to be included in these staff programs. Additional areas of training will be based on needs and concerns identified by school and district staff. All school staff on the Plan will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the principal or designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades throughout the school or district. Staff members hired after the start of the school year are required to participate in school-based training during the school year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years.

**Ongoing professional development:** The specifics of Belchertown's process to craft a professional development plan may be found in Table 2, below. It addresses the annual staff training on the plan as well as ongoing professional development designed to address the following six areas of the DESE model plan: (1) age-appropriate strategies to prevent bullying; (2) developmentally age-appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents; (3) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among a perpetrator, victim, and witnesses to the bullying; (4) research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment; (5) information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and (6) Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying. Included in the plan are strategies to address the specific needs of students on Individualized Educational Plans.

Additional areas identified by the school or district for professional development include:

- promoting and modeling the use of respectful language;
- fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference;
- building relationships and communicating with families;
- constructively managing classroom behaviors;
- using positive behavioral intervention strategies;
- applying constructive disciplinary practices;
- teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management, and empathy for others;
- engaging students in school or classroom planning and decision-making;
- maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students; and
- engaging staff and those responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan to distinguish between acceptable managerial behaviors designed to correct misconduct, instill accountability in the school setting, etc. and bullying behaviors

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

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

Table 2.1. Training and Professional Development Plan Details.

Goals/Objectives	Strategies	Persons Responsible	Due	Progress
<p>D. Annual Staff Training on the Plan</p>	<p>1. Annual online training in the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan with all staff members including educators, administrators, service providers, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extra-curricular activities, paraprofessionals, and substitutes. New hires will complete training within 10 school days of hire.</p>	<p>1. School Admin and Bus Contractors</p>	<p>1. Annually</p>	<p>1. Ongoing</p>
	<p>2. Annual review of online training module to ensure compliance with any changes to statute or regulations.</p>	<p>2. School Admin</p>	<p>2. Annually, prior to the start of the school year.</p>	<p>2. Ongoing</p>
	<p>3. Volunteers, student teachers, and others who come into contact with students on a regular basis must review the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan</p>	<p>3. School Admin</p>	<p>3. Annually, within 10 school days of first interaction.</p>	<p>3. Ongoing</p>

Table 2.2. Training and Professional Development Plan Details Continued.

Goals/Objectives	Strategies	Persons Responsible	Due	Progress
E. Ongoing Professional Development	<p>1. Professional Development, based on the role of each staff member, in the following areas as it relates to the Anti-Bullying curriculum, focusing on use of common language and common approaches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Age-appropriate strategies to prevent bullying.</li> <li>● Age-appropriate strategies for immediate, effective intervention to stop bullying incidents.</li> <li>● Information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among a perpetrator, a victim, and witnesses to the bullying.</li> <li>● Research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment.</li> <li>● Information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and</li> <li>● Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying</li> </ul>	<p>1. Instructional Leadership Team, District Administrators</p>	<p>1. Annually, as needed to implement the Anti-Bullying curriculum.</p>	<p>1. Ongoing</p>

Table 2.3. Training and Professional Development Plan Details Continued.

Goals/Objectives	Strategies	Persons Responsible	Due	Progress
E. Ongoing Professional Development (Continued)	2. Overview of curriculum for substitute teachers, volunteers, student teachers, and others who come into contact with students on a regular basis so that all members of the community have a common understanding of the goals of the curriculum, key concepts, and common language.	2. Building Admin	2. Within 10 school days of first interaction.	2. Ongoing
F. Written Notice to Staff	1. Provide staff and those who come into regular contact with students with annual notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties, in the school or district employee handbook and the code of conduct.	1. District Admin	1. Annually	1. Ongoing

#### **IV. Access to Resources and Services**

A key aspect of promoting positive school climates is ensuring that the underlying emotional needs of targets, aggressors, families, and others are addressed.

**Identifying resources:** The Plan describes the strategies for providing supports and services necessary to meet these needs. In order to enhance the district's or individual school's capacity to prevent, intervene early, and respond effectively to bullying, available services should reflect an understanding of the dynamics of bullying and provide approaches to address the needs of targets and aggressors. The Plan includes a strategy for providing counseling or referral to appropriate services for aggressors, targets, and family members of those students.

**Counseling and other services:** The Plan identifies the availability of culturally and linguistically appropriate resources within the school and district. If resources need to be developed, the Plan identifies linkages with community-based organizations, including Community Service Agencies (CSAs) for Medicaid eligible students. In addition, the Plan identifies staff and service providers who assist schools in developing safety plans for students who have been targets of bullying or retaliation, providing social skills programs to prevent bullying, and offering education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors. Schools may consider current tools including, but not limited to, behavioral intervention plans, social skills groups, and individually focused curricula.

**Students with disabilities:** As required by M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

**Referral to outside services:** Schools and districts have a referral protocol for referring students and families to outside services. Clear protocols will help students and families access appropriate and timely services. Referrals must comply with relevant laws and policies. Current local referral protocols are evaluated to assess their relevance to the Plan, and revised as needed.

The details of how we will provide supports and services to meet the needs of both targets of and aggressors responsible for bullying are found in Table 3, below. We have forged relationships with area providers, particularly with Valley Human Services in Ware, Massachusetts, and the Behavioral Health Network, in Springfield, Massachusetts, which will be beneficial in assisting us with meeting the goals and strategies of the plan. The Plan addresses the needs of students with disabilities as well as their non-disabled peers. A protocol for district Special Education Team leaders to use in creating an appropriate Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) can be found in Appendix B.

Table 3.1. Access to Resources and Plan Details.

Goals/Objectives	Strategies	Persons Responsible	Due	Progress
G. Identifying Resource	1. Review the process of identifying the district’s capacity to provide counseling and other services for targets, aggressors, and their families.	1. Community Partners Network	1. Ongoing	1. Ongoing
	2. Maintain a flow chart/directory of current resources within the district and community, including staff and programs that focus on early intervention and positive school climate.	2. Community Partners Network and appropriate Student Support Services Staff	2. Ongoing	2. Ongoing
	3. Determine gaps/needs in staff and programs that remain to be filled and develop plan to fill gaps.	3. Community Partners Network	3. Ongoing	3. Ongoing
H. Counseling and Other Services	1. Identify culturally and linguistically appropriate resources within the district and community.	1. Community Partners Network and appropriate Student Support Services Staff	1. Ongoing	1. Ongoing
	2. Identify linkages with community based organizations and/or agencies.	2. Community Partners Network	2. Ongoing	2. Ongoing
	3. Identify providers to assist in developing safety plans for students who have been targets, programs/intervention plans for students who exhibit bullying behaviors, and bullying prevention programs.	3. Community Partners Network and appropriate Student Support Services Staff	3. Ongoing	3. Ongoing

Table 3.2. Access to Resources and Plan Details Continued.

Goals/Objectives	Strategies	Persons Responsible	Due	Progress
I. Students with Disabilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evaluate protocols to ensure the discussion of social skills development, targeting due to disability, and/or participation in bullying by a student with a disability at each Special Education Team meeting.</li> <li>2. Create a goal and corresponding objectives for each student identified above.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Director of Student Support Services/Team Leaders</li> <li>2. Special Education Team</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing</li> <li>2. Ongoing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing</li> <li>2. Ongoing</li> </ol>
J. Referral to Outside Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. D.1. Implement a referral protocol for referring students and families to outside services.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Director of Student Support Services/ Building Administrators/ Community Partners Network</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing</li> </ol>

## V. Academic and Non-Academic Activities

The law requires us to provide age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention in each grade that is incorporated into the district's curricula. Curricula must be evidence-based. Effective instruction will include classroom approaches, whole school initiatives, and focused strategies for bullying prevention and social skills development.

**Specific bullying prevention approaches:** Bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:

- using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
- empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students or school staff engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
- helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
- emphasizing cybersafety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
- enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications; and
- engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

Initiatives will also teach students about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. The Plan includes specific information about how and when the school or district will review the Plan with students.

**General teaching approaches that support bullying prevention efforts:** The following approaches are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment. These underscore the importance of our bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:

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

The Belchertown Public Schools have a district curriculum review process, which the plan outlined in Table 4 (below) takes into consideration. A District Leadership Team comprised of administrators, department

chairs, and grade level leaders, meet monthly to address issues of curriculum, instruction, and professional development. New curricula are reviewed by them, using a set of established criteria (including efficacy based upon research) and recommended to the School Committee's Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee. The subcommittee also reviews the curricula presented and then forwards it on to the full School Committee for approval. The Plan addresses these steps in its process of reviewing and recommending age-appropriate curricula for final approval.

Table 4.1. Academic and Non-Academic Activities Plan Details.

Goals/Objectives	Strategies	Persons Responsible	Due	Progress
K. Specific Bullying Prevention Approaches	1. Evaluate current program to determine its effectiveness and continued use or replacement, using data from surveys and state discipline reports.	1. Administrators, Faculty and Staff	1. Ongoing	1. Ongoing
L. General Teaching that Support Bully Prevention Efforts	1. Implement the following approaches which must co-exist in the success of bullying intervention and prevention initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;</li> <li>● creating safe school climate and environments for all students;</li> <li>● using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement;</li> <li>● using positive behavioral supports;</li> <li>● encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students;</li> <li>● modeling, teaching, and recognizing pro-social, health, and respectful behaviors;</li> </ul>	1. Administrators, Faculty and Staff	1. Ongoing	1. Ongoing

Table 4.2. Academic and Non-Academic Activities Plan Details Continued.

Goals/Objectives	Strategies	Persons Responsible	Due	Progress
L. General Teaching that Support Bully Prevention Efforts (Continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;</li> <li>● using the Internet safely; and</li> <li>● supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities.</li> </ul>			

## **VI. Policies and Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Bullying and Retaliation**

To support efforts to respond promptly and effectively to bullying and retaliation, the Belchertown Public Schools have put in place procedures for receiving and responding to reports of bullying or retaliation. These procedures will ensure that members of the school community – students, parents, and staff – know what will happen when incidents of bullying occur. The Plan details procedures for staff reporting of incidents, processes for communicating to students and families how reports can be made (including anonymous reports), and procedures to be followed by the principal or designee once a report is made.

Consistent with the DESE Model Plan (2010, pp. 7-10), the Belchertown Public Schools have adopted the following procedures for reporting and responding to bullying and/or retaliation (a flow chart showing the procedures is included in Appendix C):

### **A. Reporting bullying or retaliation.**

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing. A school or district staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee or to the superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor or to the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor, any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously. The school or district will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, a Bullying Allegation Reporting Form, a voicemail box, a dedicated mailing address, and an email address.

Use of a Bullying Allegation Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report. The school or district will: 1) include a copy of the Alleged Bullying Report Form in the beginning of the year packets for students and parents or guardians; 2) make it available in the school's main office, the counseling office, the school nurse's office, and other locations determined by the principal or designee; and 3) post it on the district/school's website. The Bullying Allegation Reporting Form will be made available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents or guardians.

At the beginning of each school year, the school or district will provide the school community, including administrators, staff, students, and parents or guardians, with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the principal or designee, will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the school or district website, and in information about the Plan that is made available to parents or guardians.

**Reporting by Staff Members:** A staff member will report immediately to the principal or designee, or to the superintendent or designee when the principal or the assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, or to the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to

the principal or designee does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school or district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

**Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others:** The school or district expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or designee of that student’s school or superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor. A member of the school staff may be named the “aggressor” or “perpetrator” in a bullying report. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private, and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the principal or designee or superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor.

**B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation:**

- a. **Safety:** Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. The principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation. Responses to promote safety and protection may include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target; and altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target. The principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary. If the aggressor is a staff member, the Belchertown Teachers’ Association will be involved in this process.
- b. **Obligations to Notify Others:**
  - i. Notice to parents or guardians: Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.
  - ii. Notice to another School or District: If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

- iii. Notice to Law Enforcement: At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and the Belchertown Public Schools' established agreements with the Belchertown Police Department. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the principal or designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

In making this determination, the principal will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school or district policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer, if any, and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.

**C. Investigation:**

The principal or designee will investigate promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s), the ages of the students involved, and the school staff member, if identified as the aggressor. During the investigation the principal or designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The principal or designee will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Interviews may be conducted by the principal or designee, other staff members as determined by the principal or designee, and in consultation with the school counselor, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the principal or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The principal or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation.

**D. Determination:**

The principal or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The principal or designee will: (1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and (2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary.

Depending upon the circumstances, the principal or designee may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, the target's or aggressor's parents or guardians, and Superintendent of Schools to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development.

The principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor (in the case of a staff member identified as the aggressor, the Superintendent or designee will fulfill this role) about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. All notices to parents must comply with

applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student and employee records, the principal or designee cannot report specific information

to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

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

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

The Plan includes specific steps that each school shall take to support vulnerable students and provide all students with the skills knowledge and strategies needed to prevent or respond to bullying or harassment. These steps include:

1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skill-building: Upon the principal or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, any or all of the following skill-building approaches may be used to work with the target and/or the aggressor:
  - offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the district's anti-bullying curricula, adopted in accordance with Section V of this plan;
  - providing relevant educational activities for individual students, groups of students, or staff members in consultation with guidance counselors and other appropriate school personnel, through the Employee Assistance Program in the case of staff;
  - implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals;
  - meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home;
  - adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills;
  - in the case of a school staff member, recommend accessing the town's Employee Assistance Program;
  - making a referral for evaluation; and
  - using identified community resources in accordance with Section IV of this plan to provide support and counseling.
  
2. Taking Disciplinary Action: If the principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the Belchertown Public Schools Bullying Prevention Policy and with the school/district's code of conduct.

Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), which should be acted upon in cooperation with state laws regarding student discipline.

If the principal or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action, consistent with district policy and school/district code of conduct.

If the discipline includes a school staff member, the principal/designee and Superintendent will follow due process and take any appropriate action consistent with progressive discipline.

3. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others: The principal or designee will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others as well, including, but not limited to increasing adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur. The principal or designee will complete the student safety plan form (Appendix D) and ensure implementation of the plan.

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the principal or designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the principal or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

## **F. Responding to a Report of Bullying by School Staff**

The Plan identifies policies and procedures that address how school or district administrators will respond to and resolve a report of bullying of a student by school staff. The policies and procedures address safety planning, notification to parent or guardians and others, investigation, and response – areas that are addressed when a student is alleged to have bullied another student (see Section V. B – E above). They emphasize the importance of the investigation, the need for the aggressor, target, and witnesses to be truthful, and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

See Tables 5.1 & 5.2 (below) of the Plan for details with regard to the development and implementation of reporting measures consistent with the plan for reporting, as outlined above. Appendix E contains a bullying allegation reporting form that will be used in this process.

Table 5.1. Reporting and Responding to Bullying Plan Details.

Goals/Objectives	Strategies	Persons Responsible	Due	Progress
M. Reporting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure access to reporting, responding, &amp; investigating flow chart to district web site.</li> <li>2. Ensure access to reporting email link on district and school websites.</li> <li>3. Revision of form for district wide use in reporting</li> <li>4. Monitor telephone line for reporting.</li> <li>5. Ensure access to Belchertown Police Department online anonymous reporting system.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. District Administrative staff</li> <li>2. OIT staff</li> <li>3. Leadership Team, School Resource Officer</li> <li>4. District Office Staff</li> <li>5. District Admin, School Resource Officer</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing</li> <li>2. Ongoing</li> <li>3. February, 2014 and as needed thereafter</li> <li>4. Ongoing</li> <li>5. Ongoing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing</li> <li>2. Ongoing</li> <li>3. Ongoing</li> <li>4. Ongoing</li> <li>5. Ongoing</li> </ol>
N. Responding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. B.1. Ensure implementation of district-wide protocols for ensuring student safety and protection during and following investigation period.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. District Admin and School Resource Officer</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing</li> </ol>

Table 5.2. Reporting and Responding to Bullying Plan Details (Continued).

Goals/Objectives	Strategies	Persons Responsible	Due	Progress
<p>N. Responding (Continued)</p>	<p>2. Ensure implementation of district-wide protocols for notification of parents, other districts/schools, law enforcement, and the Belchertown Teachers' Association in the case of a school staff member.</p>	<p>2. District Admin, School Resource Officer, and Belchertown Police Department in concert with the School Committee's Healthy and Safer Schools Committee</p>	<p>2. Ongoing</p>	<p>2. Ongoing</p>
	<p>3. Ensure implementation of district-wide protocols for implementing education/ counseling support consistent with district curricula for both targets and aggressors, including appropriate supports for school staff members.</p>	<p>3. District Admin, School Resource Officer in concert with the School Committee's Healthy and Safer Schools Committee</p>	<p>3. Ongoing</p>	<p>3. Ongoing</p>

## **VII. Collaboration with Families**

The Plan includes strategies to engage and collaborate with students' families in order to increase the capacity of the school or district to prevent and respond to bullying. Resources for families and communication with them are essential aspects of effective collaboration, including: (1) how parents and guardians can reinforce the curricula at home and support the school or district plan; (2) the dynamics of bullying; and (3) online safety and cyberbullying.

Parents and guardians will also be notified in writing each year about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, in the language(s) most prevalent among the parents or guardians. School- or district- specific approaches to collaboration should take into account age, climate, socio-economic factors, linguistic, and cultural make-up of students and their parents/guardians.

Table 6 (below) outlines the goals and objectives, strategies, persons responsible, and timelines for accomplishing these aspects of the plan. Among the parent resource and information networks that the task force will access in the execution of this plan include, but are not limited to:

- The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)
- The Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC)
- The Northeast Foundation for Children (Responsive Classroom)
- The Committee for Children (Second Step, Steps to Respect)
- Stop Bullying Now!

Links to these resources can be found on the Belchertown Public Schools web site:  
<https://www.belchertownps.org/bullying-prevention-policy-plan/>

Table 6.1. Collaboration with Families Plan Details.

Goals/Objectives	Strategies	Persons Responsible	Due	Progress
<p>O. Parent education and resources.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure access to parent resources and related information on district website and make hard copies of flyers and helpful information available at all school buildings.</li> <li>2. Offer evidence-based education programs for parents/ guardians focusing on the parental components of the anti-bullying and/or social competency curricula used by the school district.</li> <li>3. Include evidence-based strategies to engage and collaborate with students' families in order to increase the capacity of the district to prevent and respond to bullying.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. District Administrators</li> <li>2. Healthy and Safer Schools Committee in concert with School Councils, PTOs, and Special Education PAC</li> <li>3. Healthy and Safer Schools Committee in concert with School Councils, PTOs, and Special Education PAC</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing</li> <li>2. Ongoing</li> <li>3. Ongoing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing</li> <li>2. Ongoing</li> <li>3. Ongoing</li> </ol>
<p>P. Notification requirements  <i>*All notices will be made available in the languages most prevalent among families in hard copy and electronic formats.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure access to the Bullying Prevention Intervention Plan and related information on its website and make hard copies available upon request.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. District Administrators</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Annually</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing</li> </ol>

Table 6.2. Collaboration with Families Plan Details (Continued).

Goals/Objectives	Strategies	Persons Responsible	Due	Progress
<p>P. Notification requirements (Continued)</p> <p><i>*All notices will be made available in the languages most prevalent among families in hard copy and electronic formats.</i></p>	<p>2. Inform parents/guardians of all enrolled students about the anti-bullying curricula being used each year (electronically and in hard copy), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about the dynamics of bullying</li> <li>• Information about cyberbullying and online safety</li> </ul>	<p>2. District Administrators</p>	<p>2. Ongoing</p>	<p>2. Ongoing</p>

## **VIII. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION**

The following statement is incorporated directly from M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O(b), and describes the law's requirements for the prohibition of bullying.

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

- (i) on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, and
- (ii) at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited.

As stated in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, nothing in this Plan requires the district or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

## **IX. Problem Resolution System:**

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

Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seeking assistance outside of the district may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Resolution System (PRS). That information can be found at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa>, emails can be sent to [compliance@doe.mass.edu](mailto:compliance@doe.mass.edu) or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information is also available at the Superintendent's office.

## **X. Relationship to Other Laws**

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H½, M.G.L. c. 71, §§41 and 42, M.G.L.c 76 § 5, or other applicable laws, or local school or district policies, or collective bargaining agreements, in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

## **Appendix A Belchertown Public Schools Bullying Prevention Policy**

*Belchertown Public Schools Priority Statement*

**The Belchertown Public School community is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning and working environment, where all students, employees, and visitors, are free from bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, and intimidation. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, a culture of respect and tolerance; and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behaviors that can impede the learning process.**

## **DEFINITIONS**

### *Bullying*

The law defines bullying as the repeated use of a written, verbal, or electronic communication, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional (aggressors) of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim (target) that has the effect of:

- causing physical or emotional harm to the student (target) or damage to his or her property;
- placing the student (target) in reasonable fear of harm to him or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- creating a hostile environment - which is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education - at school for the target;
- infringing on the rights of the student (target) at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupting the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Examples of bullying include but are not limited to repeated acts of:

- Intimidation, either physical or psychological (in person or via an electronic device)
- Threats of any kind, stated or implied (in person or via an electronic device)
- Assaults, whether verbal, physical, psychological, or emotional
- Attacks on student property
- Demeaning names or phrases directed at an individual student
- Touching another individual in a demeaning manner
- Exclusion.

Bullying and cyber-bullying may occur in and out of school, during and after school hours, at home and in locations outside of the home. When bullying and cyber-bullying are alleged, the full cooperation and assistance of parents, families, and staff are expected.

For the purpose of this policy, whenever the term bullying is used it is to denote either bullying, or cyber-bullying.

Bullying is prohibited:

- On school grounds;
- On property immediately adjacent to school grounds;
- At school-sponsored or school-related activities;

- At functions or programs whether on or off school grounds;
- At school bus stops;
- On school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the school district; or,
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the Belchertown Public Schools.

Bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the Belchertown Public Schools if the act or acts in question:

- create a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringe on the rights of the target at school; and/or
- materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

### Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying, which is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic means, which includes, but shall not be limited to; cell phones/smart phones, personal electronic devices and computers using email, social networking sites (such as Facebook, My Space, Twitter, FormSpring, etc.), any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or part by wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo-electronic or photo- optical system, including but not limited to; electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. This includes, but shall not be limited to, the distribution of communications such as text messages or emails and posting of material on web sites that can be accessed by more than just the student who may be the target of such bullying.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

## **Prevention and Intervention Plan**

The Superintendent and/or his/her designee shall oversee the development of a prevention and intervention plan, in consultation with all district stakeholders, which may include teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians, consistent with the requirements of this policy, as well as state and federal laws. The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be reviewed and updated at least biennially.

The Principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the bullying prevention and implementation plan within his or her school.

## **Reporting**

Individuals, who believe that they are a target of bullying, observe an act of bullying, or who have reasonable grounds to believe that these behaviors are taking place, are obligated to report incidents to a member of the school staff. The target shall, however, not be subject to discipline for failing to report bullying.

The district shall have a means for anonymous reporting by individuals of incidents of bullying. No formal

disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report. A member of the school staff may be named the “aggressor” or “perpetrator” in a bullying report.

Any student or school staff member who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Parents or guardians, or members of the community, are encouraged to report an incident of bullying to the school principal or designee as soon as possible.

Belchertown Public Schools Faculty and Staff, which includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extra-curricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals take bullying very seriously and will investigate and take prompt action with individuals who engage in these activities. Belchertown Public Schools Faculty and Staff shall immediately report any instance of bullying the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the school principal or designee.

Through the Belchertown Public Schools’ Memorandum of Understanding with the Belchertown Police Department, the Belchertown Public Schools may share any and all information with regard to student safety, and/or possible illegal activity with the Belchertown Public Schools Resource Officer and/or other members of the Belchertown Police Department.

### **Investigation Procedures**

The Principal or designee, upon receipt of a viable report, shall promptly contact the parents or guardians of a student who has been the alleged target or alleged perpetrator of bullying. The actions being taken to prevent further acts of bullying shall be discussed.

The Principal or designee shall promptly investigate the report of bullying, using a Bullying Intervention and Prevention Incident Reporting Form, which may include interviewing the alleged target, alleged perpetrator, staff members, students and/or witnesses.

Staff shall assess an alleged target's needs for protection and create and implement a safety plan that shall restore a sense of safety for that student.

Confidentiality shall be used to protect a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or is witness to or has reliable information about an act of bullying.

Confidentiality shall be maintained to the extent consistent with the school's obligations under law.

If the Principal or a designee determines that bullying has occurred, he/she shall take appropriate disciplinary action and if it is believed that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator, the Principal shall consult with the school's resource officer and the Superintendent to determine if criminal charges are warranted. If it is determined that criminal charges are warranted, the local law enforcement agency shall be notified.

The investigation shall be completed within fourteen school days from the date of the report. The parents or guardians shall be contacted upon completion of the investigation and informed of the results, including whether the allegations were found to be factual, whether a violation of this policy was found, and whether disciplinary action has or shall be taken. The Principal or designee shall contact the parents or guardians regarding the status of the investigation throughout the investigation process.

Disciplinary actions for students or staff members who have committed an act of bullying or retaliation shall be

in accordance with district disciplinary policies for students and due process/appropriate discipline for staff.

Each school shall document any incident of bullying that is reported per this policy and a file shall be maintained by the Principal or designee. All reports shall be provided to the Superintendent for his/her files.

As required by M.G.L. c. 71B section 3, when a Special Education Team determines that a student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying harassment or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and to respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

The Principal or his/her designee will take any step he/she determines is necessary and/or advisable to protect, to the extent practicable, the complainant, witnesses, and other individuals from further incidents or from retaliation pending the outcome of the investigation.

The Principal or his/her designee will maintain a separate confidential file containing the original completed Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form, investigatory interview notes, and reports, findings made, the results of the investigation, including any decision for action, and other relevant investigatory materials.

### **Retaliation**

Belchertown Public Schools' Faculty and Staff will also investigate retaliation which is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student (target) who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying. Retaliation is prohibited.

### **Target Assistance**

The Belchertown Public Schools shall provide counseling or referral to appropriate services, including guidance, academic intervention, and protection to students, both targets and perpetrators, affected by bullying, as necessary. In the case of a school staff member, the Belchertown Public Schools will refer the individual to the town's Employee Assistance Program.

### **Training and Assessment**

Annual training shall be provided for school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students in preventing, identifying, responding to, and reporting incidents of bullying.

Age-appropriate, evidence-based instruction on bullying prevention shall be incorporated into the curriculum for all K-12 students.

### **Publication and Notice**

Annual written notice of the relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to students and their parents or guardians, in age-appropriate terms.

Annual written notice of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to all school staff. The faculty and staff at each school shall be trained annually on the bullying prevention and intervention plan applicable to the school.

Relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff shall be included in the school employee handbook.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan shall be posted on the Belchertown Public Schools website [www.belchertownps.org](http://www.belchertownps.org).

### **Relationship to Other Laws**

Nothing in our policy prevents the Belchertown Public Schools from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies. In addition, nothing in this policy is designed or intended to limit the authority of the Belchertown Public Schools to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71 sections 37H or 37H ½, other applicable laws, or local or school district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether our policy covers the behavior.

### **BULLYING AMENDMENTS TO SCHOOL BULLYING LAW**

On April 24, 2014, Governor Patrick signed into law "An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools," Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014, which legislation expands the protections of the 2010 anti-bullying law. The law goes into effect 90 days after April 24, that is, July 25, 2014. The new law revises certain provisions of the current anti-bullying law, G.L.c. 71:380, and adds several new subsections to that statute.

There are four main components for the new law: (1) it requires school's anti-bullying plans to recognize that certain enumerated categories of students may be more susceptible to bullying, including LGBTQ students; (2) it requires school districts to annually report bullying incident data to DESE; (3) it requires DESE to develop and school districts to administer surveys at least once every four years on the climate of the school district and prevalence of bullying; and (4) it grants DESE the power to investigate certain alleged incidents of bullying. The law also permits school districts to "adopt an anti-bullying seal to represent the district's or school's commitment to bullying prevention and intervention."

School Committee Approved: August 23, 2016

LEGAL REFS.: Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO Commission

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 603 CMR 26.00  
M.G.L. 71:37O; 265:43, 43A; 268:13B; 269:14A

REGULATORY Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary REFERENCES: Education's Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

DISTRICT POLICY AC, Nondiscrimination

CROSS REFS.: ACAB, Sexual Harassment  
JBA, Student-to-Student Harassment JICFA, Prohibition of Hazing  
JK, Student Discipline

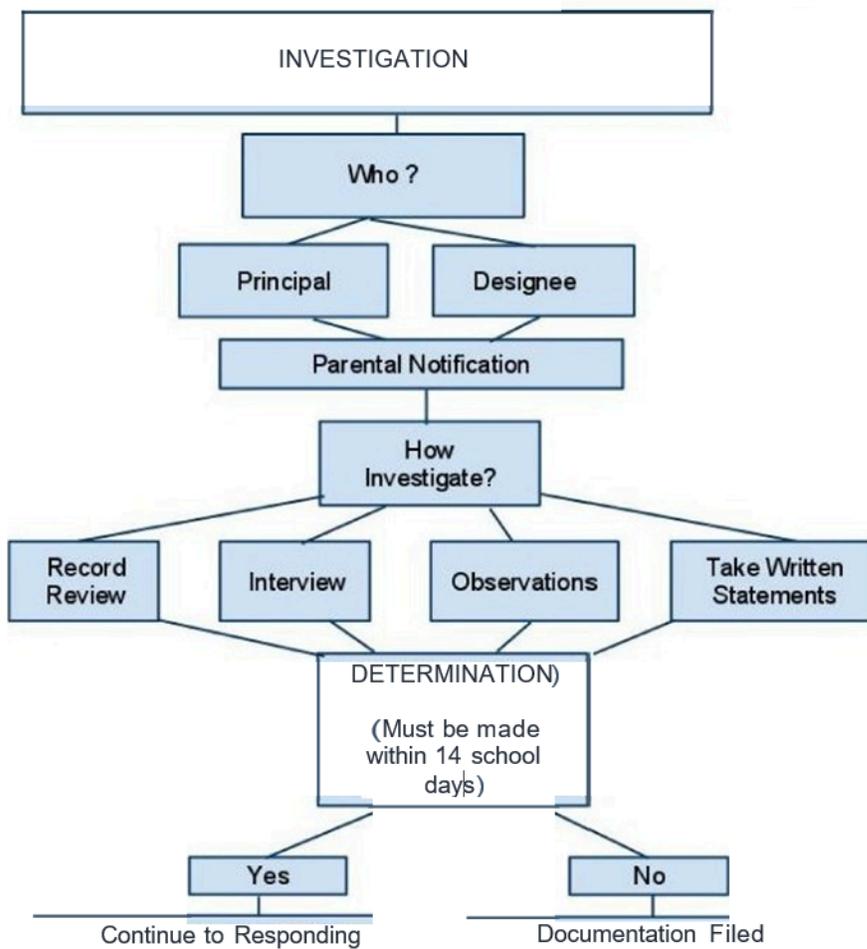
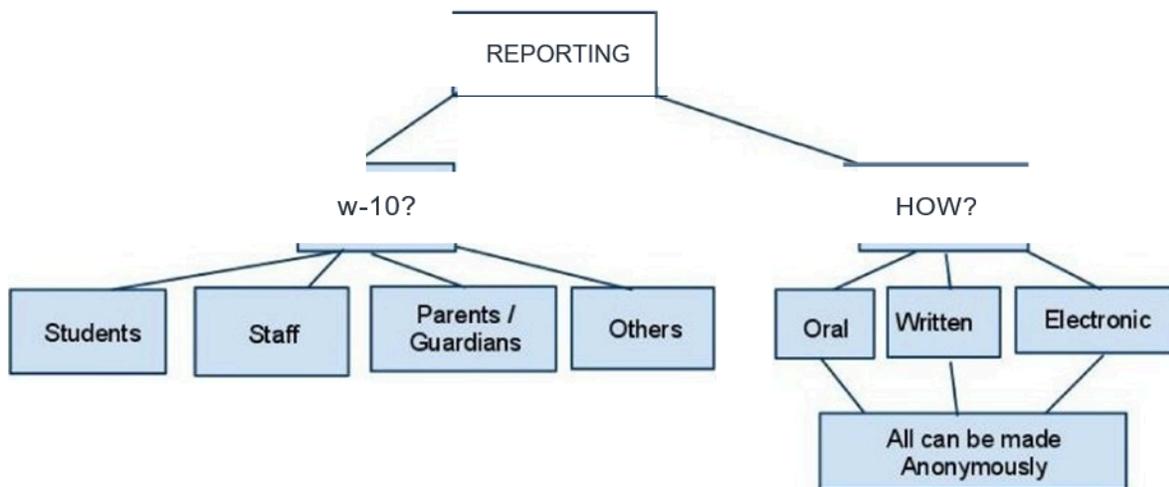
Approved by the Belchertown School Committee: August 13, 2024

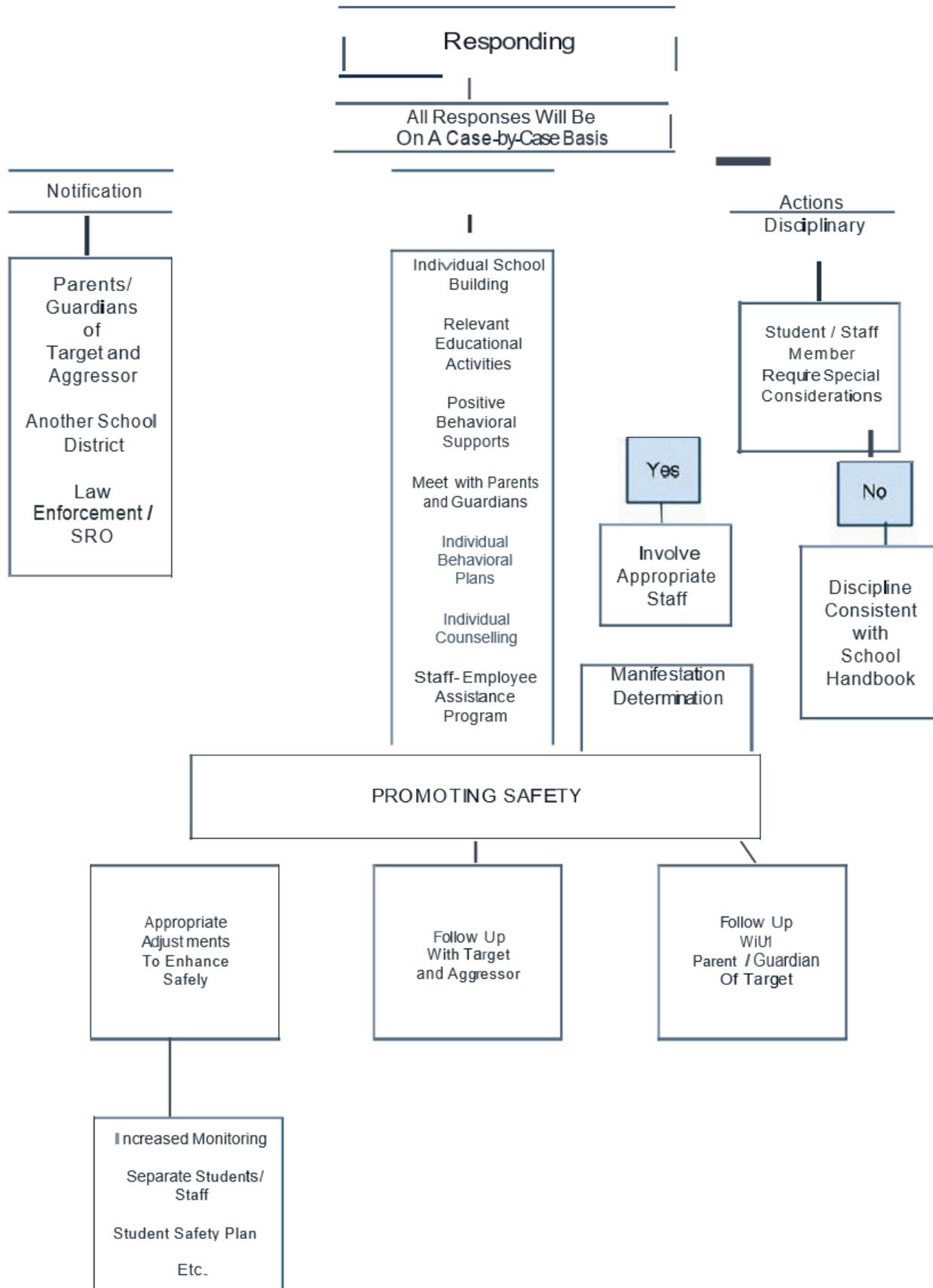
## **Appendix B Bullying Protocol for IEP Meetings**

**The following procedures will be followed at every Team meeting for students who have been found eligible for an Individual Education Plan.**

- 1. While completing “PLEP B” (page 3 of the Individual Educational Plan), the Team Leader will address social and/or emotional issues and the Team will complete a form with their decisions at that meeting. All members present sign off on the form.**
- 2. If it is determined that social and/or emotional issues impact the child’s access to the general curriculum, the Team Leader will direct the Team in a discussion regarding the specific impact as well as specific interventions to address this need.**
3. The Team will create a goal and corresponding objectives, if deemed necessary by them, to address this issue and will identify the type of staff who will provide the interventions.
- 4. For students identified with a disability on the autism spectrum, or for any student whose disability affects social skills development, the IEP Team must consider and specifically address the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing by creating appropriate goals, objectives, and/or interventions.**
5. This discussion will be documented on Team meeting notes, **on the N1 form**, on PLEP B, and on the “Additional Information” page if necessary.

**Appendix C Reporting, Responding, and Investigating Flow Chart**





## **Appendix D Student Safety Plan Form**

**BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**Student Safety Plan**

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose of Plan: \_\_\_\_\_ Duration: \_\_\_\_\_

Plan Component	Person(s) Responsible for Implementing	Frequency of student check-in (daily, weekly, etc.)	Dates of check-in/By whom

## **Appendix E Bullying Allegation Reporting Form**

**BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
BULLYING ALLEGATION REPORTING FORM**

1. **Name of Reporter/Person Filing the Report:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Note: Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.)

2. **Check whether you are the:**      **Target of the behavior**       **Reporter (not the target)**

3. **Check whether you are a:**     **Student**       **Staff member (specify role)** \_\_\_\_\_  
    **Parent**       **Administrator**       **Other (specify)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Your contact information/telephone number:** \_\_\_\_\_

4. **If student, state your school:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

5. **If staff member, state your school or work site** \_\_\_\_\_

---

6. **Information about the Incident:**

**Name of Target (of behavior):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Aggressor** (Person who engaged in the behavior) \_\_\_\_\_

**Date(s) of Incident(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time When Incident(s) Occurred** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location of Incident(s)** (Be as specific as possible): \_\_\_\_\_

---

7. **Witnesses** (List people who saw the incident or have information about it):

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_       Student    † Staff    † Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_       Student    † Staff    † Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_       Student    † Staff    † Other \_\_\_\_\_

---

8. **Describe the details of the incident (including names of people involved, what occurred, and what each person did and said, including specific words used). Please use additional space on back if necessary.**

---

FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY

9. **Signature of Person Filing this Report:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

(Note: Reports may be filed anonymously.)

10: Form Given to: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_

**II. INVESTIGATION**

Position(s): \_\_\_\_\_

1. Investigator(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Interviews:

Interviewed aggressor Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewed target Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewed witnesses Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Any prior documented incidents by the aggressor?  Yes  No

If yes, have incidents involved target or target group previously?  Yes  No

Any previous incidents with findings of  HARASSMENT  BULLYING  RETALIATION

Summary of Investigation:

(Please use additional paper and attach to this document as needed)

**III. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE INVESTIGATION**

1. Finding of bullying or retaliation:

YES

NO

Bullying

Incident documented as \_\_\_\_\_

Retaliation

Discipline referral only \_\_\_\_\_

2. Contacts:

Target's parent/guardian Date: \_\_\_\_\_  Aggressor's parent/guardian Date: \_\_\_\_\_

District Equity Coordinator (DEC) Date: \_\_\_\_\_  Law Enforcement Date: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Action Taken:

- Loss of Privileges       Detention       STEP referral       Suspension
- Community Service       Education       Other \_\_\_\_\_

4. Describe Safety Planning: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Follow-up with Target: scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_ Initial and date when completed:

\_\_\_\_\_

Follow-up with Aggressor: scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_ Initial and date when completed:

\_\_\_\_\_

Report forwarded to Principal: Date \_\_\_\_\_ Report forwarded to Superintendent: Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (If principal was not the investigator)

Signature and Title:

Date: \_\_

## **LUNCH PROGRAM (MEALS)**

Free meals for all students have been continue for the school year 2024 - 2025. Although meals are free for children, parents are still encouraged to submit an application for free or reduced price meals if you think your household may qualify based on income. Proving eligibility for free or reduced price meals at school can qualify families for reduced cost utilities, p-EBT, fuel assistance, and other benefits. 2024-2025 Free and reduced price meal applications will be available on the district website **after July 1**.

**Note:** No charging (of à la carte items) is allowed.

## **MEAL PROGRAM**

The school menu is available on the website at [www.belchertownps.org](http://www.belchertownps.org). Students in 4th grade and above will use a provided pin number to identify themselves at the point of sale and make purchases in the cafeteria. This is their PowerSchool ID, or library number, and is utilized to access report cards and log in for testing as well. This number should be kept confidential and is not to be shared with other students. A student's first Breakfast and Lunch are free of charge. A second lunch may be purchased.

Students will have the opportunity to eat a free breakfast or a home-prepared snack during morning snack time. Parents/guardians may provide a water bottle or a milk or juice box. No glass bottles are allowed.

Registering for a FREE mySchoolBucks Account:

- You will first need your student's pin number assigned to them and sent home via mail/email in August.
- Go to the district website at [www.belchertownps.org](http://www.belchertownps.org), then click on the quick link for lunch menus, click on the link to mySchoolBucks OR go directly to [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com).
- Click REGISTER FOR A FREE ACCOUNT and enter the required information.
- Click FINISH to complete the initial registration process.

Adding Students to Your Account:

- Once you are logged into your new account, click MY HOUSEHOLD from the left-side navigation bar.
- Click LOOK UP YOUR STUDENTS.
- Select your child's school from the drop-down box.
- Enter your child's first name.
- Enter your child's last name.
- Enter your child's student ID number.
- Click FIND STUDENT.
- Click ADD STUDENT.
- Click FINISH or click ADD ANOTHER STUDENT to repeat the process for additional children.

Making a Deposit:

- From the My Household page, click MAKE A PAYMENT.
- Enter the deposit amount for each student/staff account, then click ADD TO BASKET.
- Review the amount(s) you have entered and click CHECK OUT NOW. If you need to adjust an amount click CONTINUE SHOPPING.
- Enter your payment information and click CONTINUE.
- If paying with a credit or debit card, enter the three or four-digit Verification Code that appears on your card, then click CONTINUE.
- Review your order and make sure all deposits are correct, then click PLACE ORDER.
- Click PRINT ORDER to generate a receipt of your transaction in a new window. We recommend that you keep a copy for records.
- Click FINISH to complete the transaction.

## CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY AND TEXTBOOKS

Students are responsible for all school property loaned to them, including library books, textbooks, laboratory equipment, athletic uniforms, band uniforms, musical instruments, and the like.

- Any student who deliberately marks, damages, loses, or destroys textbooks or library books is liable for the cost of repairs or replacement.
- Any student who fails to return school property that has been issued to them for academics, laboratory equipment, athletics, or the music program is liable for the cost of repairs or replacement.
- Any student who willfully damages or destroys any school property is liable for the cost of repairs or replacement, including labor and materials.

## CODE OF CONDUCT & SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

To provide a positive learning environment in keeping with our school mission statement and goals, all students are expected to behave in a way that promotes a safe and secure school climate for everyone involved in the educational process. There are specific behaviors which will not be tolerated and which will lead to disciplinary action. **These behaviors include, but are not limited to:**

- Bullying, teasing, name calling, cultural or ethnic slurs
- Fighting, pushing, shoving
- Tardiness to class, skipping classes or detention, truancy
- Vulgar or profane language, aggravated insolence, insubordination
- Theft or destruction of property
- Disruption of classes, disruptive behavior
- Social Media Misuse and Electronic Device Violations
- Inappropriate displays of affection
- Possession of a weapon or dangerous item
- Possession of drugs or other controlled substances
- Possession of smoking material
- Possession of pornographic material
- Violations of the technology policy including social media

The school is empowered, within the constraints of the law, to administer disciplinary procedures, or punishment/consequences to assure compliance with its rules, policies and regulations. These procedures range from simple warnings to suspension, expulsion and even court action. In some instances, disciplinary procedures are prescribed by School Committee Policy.

Student discipline is one area, which has a direct effect on the ability of the school to fulfill its purpose.

Discipline is an area, which requires the attention and efforts of everyone - parents/guardians, students, teachers, administration and members of the School Committee. We urge all members of the community to make an effort to understand and comply with the rules of the school concerning student conduct and to cooperate with the school in carrying out disciplinary action taken by the school.

Jabish Brook Middle School uses a progressive discipline system based upon the offense and subsequent repeated offenses. This outline is a guideline for step-by-step procedures, but is not all inclusive. The seriousness of the offense, the student's previous behaviors, and what is required to correct the offending behavior influences the course of action to be taken. School discipline is the concern of all school staff involved in the supervision and safety of students. Certain disciplinary sanctions may only be imposed by the principal and/or assistant principal.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE DISCRETION**

Administrative flexibility is required in any disciplinary action to account for individual cases, unusual problems not anticipated nor written in school regulation, and maintenance of effective control of behavior in a public school. The administration reserves the right to adjust actions based upon the severities of the offense or mitigating circumstances. Action taken under the prerogative must also meet the reasonableness and protection of the rights of students.

The administration is required to maintain a discipline record on all students, which includes the date(s), description of offense(s) and action(s) taken. Continuum of Consequences (from least severe to most severe): Communication with students may be oral and or written. Notification to parent/guardian may be oral and or written, including student given opportunity to inform at home prior to administrative communication.

- A. Warnings
- B. Classroom Time Out
- C. Lunch Detention
- D. Teacher Detention
- E. In House Detention
- F. Office Detention
- G. Loss of Privileges (at the discretion of administration): During this time the student will not be allowed to participate in or attend extra-curricular activities, field trips, school assemblies or other school sponsored events held after school hours or during vacations, may also include loss of school computer access. Students receiving attendance letters for excessive absences may be sanctioned with loss of privileges.
- H. In-school suspension: Oral and written notice to the student and parent/guardian
- I. Out of school suspension: Described in detail under School Committee Policy on Suspensions and Expulsions
- J. Expulsions: Expulsion is described in detail under School Committee Policy on Suspensions and Expulsions

The standards outlined above are intended to provide for consistency and fairness. However, the principal or their designee has the authority to deviate from the above standards when appropriate. In all cases of behavior requiring administrative disciplinary actions, mitigating and unusual circumstances will be considered and appropriate action taken.

- 1. Academic Dishonesty
- 2. Arson: The intentional setting of a fire
- 3. Assault/Battery/Fighting: The un-permitted application of force.
- 4. Bus Misconduct
- 5. Bullying & Harassment
- 6. Communicating a Bomb Threat
- 7. Communicating a Physical Threat to Fellow Students, Faculty or Staff: Threats considered genuine to any member of the school community or guests.
- 8. Dangerous Acts: Throwing objects or Food, Pushing or Shoving
- 9. Disturbing a Class or Educational Activity: Characterized by loud outbursts, unnecessary or inappropriate actions, disruptions in the hallways, etc.
- 10. Electronic Device Use: The inappropriate use or perceived use of electronic devices in classrooms.
- 11. Failure to Follow Reasonable Administrative Requests
- 12. Failure to Report to Office Detention
- 13. Failure to Report to Teacher Detention
- 14. False Accusation or Claim
- 15. False Fire Alarm
- 16. Food Fight

17. Forgery/Lying or Misrepresentation of Parent/Guardian's or School Personnel's Name
18. Indecent Exposure: The term refers to exhibition of those body parts which instinctive modesty, human decency or self respect require shall be kept covered in the presence of others.
19. Initiation/Hazing
20. Insubordination: Characterized by repeated acts of insolence directed towards faculty members or school personnel.
21. Leaving School Grounds Without Authorization
22. Lewd Conduct or Behavior: Characterized by sexual acts, or acts of a sexual nature, carried out in the school environment or at a school function.
23. Possession of a Controlled Substance, (including prescription and illicit drugs).
24. Possession or Consumption of Alcohol
25. Possession of Tobacco Products
26. Possession of E-Cigarette Products and Devices
27. Possession of Drug Paraphernalia
28. Possession of Weapons
29. Public Display of Affection: Kissing, "making out," inappropriate touching or acts of intimacy in the school building or on school grounds.
30. Skipping School or Class or Detention
31. Smoking/Vaping
32. Snowball/Rock/Stick Throwing
33. Tampering with Safety Equipment or Emergency Exits
34. Tardiness to School or Class
35. Theft of Personal and/or School Property
36. Under the Influence of Alcohol
37. Vandalism, Defacing or Damaging Personal and/or School Property, Including Computers and Their Record Files and Systems
38. Vulgar or Inappropriate Language or Gestures Directed at Staff
39. Vulgar or Inappropriate Language or Gestures Not Directed at Staff

Belchertown Public schools use a restorative justice approach to discipline. It is a reflective system that focuses on the rehabilitation through reconciliation with victims and the community at large. It is best accomplished through cooperative processes that allow all willing stakeholders to meet, although other approaches are available when that is impossible.

## **SCHOOL DISCIPLINE & DISCIPLINARY MEASURES**

Prior to issuing any disciplinary consequences pursuant to G.L. c. 71, § 37H <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> and not subject to G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H and 37H <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>, as discussed below, the Principal or designee will consider alternative remedies to such consequences. This policy applies only to short-term or long-term suspensions or in-school suspensions, or expulsions that are not issued under G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H and 37H <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>. This policy does not apply to disciplinary consequences issued under G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H and 37H <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>, which include: assault of educational staff, possession of controlled substances or a dangerous weapon on school grounds, and felony charges or conviction.

The Principal or designee will consider methods to re-engage the student in the learning process when deciding disciplinary consequences for the student. Specifically, the Principal or designee will consider and use alternative remedies including but not limited to mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and collaborative problem solving. The use and results of such alternative remedies will be documented in writing.

The Principal or designee will consider, use to the extent possible, and document in writing such alternative remedies before the Principal or designee may suspend or expel a student. The Principal will also implement school or district models to re-engage students in the learning process, including positive behavioral intervention and support models and trauma sensitive learning models. The Principal or designee will not implement such models in direct response to a specific incident.

The Principal or designee will document specific reasons where alternative remedies are unsuitable or counter-productive. The Principal or designee will document specific reasons in situations where the student's continued presence in school would pose a specific, documentable concern about the infliction of serious bodily injury or other serious harm on another while in school, the Principal or designee will document specific reasons.

### **PROCEDURES FOR SHORT-TERM SUSPENSION**

**(exclusion of a student from school premises and regular classroom activities for a specified period of not more than ten school days.)**

The principal, or his/her designee, may suspend students on a short-term basis. Unless a student poses a danger to persons or property, substantially and materially disrupts the order of school, possesses a firearm, controlled substance, or assaults a school staff member, the student will receive the following prior to a short-term suspension:

1. Oral and written notice of the charges in English and the primary language of the home if other than English. This notice shall include:
  - i. The disciplinary offense;
  - ii. The basis for the charge;
  - iii. The potential consequences, including the potential length of the suspension;
  - iv. The opportunity to have a hearing with the principal and the parent concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident;
  - v. The date, time, and location of the hearing;
  - vi. The right of the parent and student to interpreter services at the hearing; and
  - vii. If the student may be placed on a long-term suspension following the hearing with the principal:
    1. The rights set forth under the "Procedures for Long-Term Suspension"; and
    2. The right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent.
2. At the hearing, if the student and/or parent elects to attend, the student shall have the opportunity to present his/her version of the relevant facts and any mitigating circumstances. The principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. To conduct the hearing without the parent, the principal must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent. The principal is presumed to have made reasonable efforts if the principal sent written notice and has documented at least two (2) attempts to contact the parent in the manner specified by the parent for emergency notification.
3. Based on the available information, the principal shall make a determination as to whether the student committed the disciplinary offences and what remedy shall be imposed. The principal shall notice the student and parent in writing of his/her decision, the reasons for it, and, if applicable, the type and duration of the suspension and the opportunity to make up assignments and other academic work.
4. If the student is in a public preschool program or in grades K through 3, the principal shall send a copy of the written determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons for imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the suspension takes effect.

### **PROCEDURES FOR EMERGENCY REMOVAL**

If the student's continued presence poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school and, in the principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption, the principal shall temporarily remove the student from the school. This temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) days following the day of the emergency removal and the superintendent shall be immediately notified of the removal. Additionally, the principal shall make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and student's parent of the emergency removal, the reason for the emergency removal, and the other information required in a short-term suspension notification. The short-term suspension notice shall be provided in writing to the student and parent. The opportunity for a hearing with the principal shall occur within two (2) school days, unless otherwise extended by the school and parent. A decision regarding the student's continued suspension or other removal shall be rendered the same day as the hearing and written notice shall be provided the following school day. This written notice shall include all the information required based on the type of discipline imposed (short-term suspension, in-school suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion).

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

The principal may also remove a student from privileges, such as extracurricular activities and attendance at school-sponsored events, based on a student's misconduct. This type of removal is not subject to the procedures for suspension and expulsion outlined in this policy.

### **PROCEDURES FOR AN IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION**

A student may be removed from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises, for up to ten (10) consecutive school days or up to ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions during the school year as an alternative to a short-term suspension. If a student receives in-school suspensions for more than ten (10) consecutive or cumulative school days, the due process procedures described below for a long-term suspension shall apply. Students who are placed in in-school suspension shall have the opportunity to earn credits, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the in-school suspension.

#### **Notice of In-School Suspension:**

The principal or his/her designee shall inform the student of the disciplinary offense charged and the basis for the charge, and provide the student with an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident. If the principal or his/her designee determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the principal or his/her designee shall inform the student of the length of the student's in-school suspension.

On the same day as the in-school suspension decision, the principal or his/her designee shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent/guardian orally of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding that the student committed the infraction, and the length of the in-school suspension. On the day of the suspension, the principal or his/her designee shall send written notice (by hand delivery, certified mail, first class mail or email) to the student and parent/guardian including the reason and the length of the in-school suspension, and inviting the parent/guardian to a meeting if the meeting has not already occurred. The notice shall be in English and the

primary language of the home if another language is identified in the home language survey, or by other means, as appropriate.

Parent/guardian Meeting:

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

No Right to Appeal:

The decision of the Principal or his/her designee is the final decision for in-school suspensions not exceeding ten (10) days, consecutively or cumulatively during a school year.

**PROCEDURES FOR LONG-TERM SUSPENSION**

**(exclusion of a student from school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten school days.)**

The principal, or his/her designee, may issue long-term suspensions at the building level. The principal may also issue expulsions for the offenses set forth in M.G.L. c. 71, §37H and §37H½. Expulsions for other offenses are handled by the School Committee pursuant to M.G.L. c. 76, §16 and §17.

1. In the event of a long term suspension or expulsion, the student will be provided oral and written notice of the charges in English and the primary language of the home if other than English. This notice shall include:
  - i. The disciplinary offense;
  - ii. The basis for the charge;
  - iii. The potential consequences, including the potential length of the suspension;
  - iv. The opportunity to have a hearing with the principal and the parent concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident;
  - v. The date, time, and location of the hearing; and
  - vi. The right of the parent and student to interpreter services at the hearing.
5. The principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. To conduct the hearing without the parent, the principal must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent. The principal is presumed to have made reasonable efforts if the principal sent written notice and has documented at least two (2) attempts to contact the parent in the manner specified by the parent for emergency notification.
2. In advance of the hearing, the student shall have the right to review the student's record and the documents upon which the principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student.
3. The student shall also have the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person at the choice and expense of the student/parent.
4. At the hearing, if the student and/or parent elects to attend, the student shall have the opportunity to present his/her version of the relevant facts and any mitigating circumstances. The student shall also have the right to produce witnesses and the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school. The student may request that the hearing be audio recorded by the principal and may request a copy of the recording. All parties must be made aware that the hearing is recorded in advance of the hearing.

5. The parent, if present, shall have the opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and other information, including mitigating circumstances that the principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.
6. The principal shall make a determination as to whether the student committed the disciplinary offences and what consequences shall be imposed. The principal shall notice the student and parent in writing of his/her decision, including the following information:

Superintendent's Appeal Hearing:

- i. A student who is placed on long-term suspension following a hearing with the principal shall have the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent.
- ii. The student or parent/guardian shall file a notice of appeal with the superintendent within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long-term suspension; provided that within the five (5) calendar days, the student or parent/guardian may request and receive from the superintendent an extension of time for filing the written notice for up to seven (7) additional calendar days. If the appeal is not timely filed, the superintendent may deny the appeal, or may allow the appeal in his or her discretion, for good cause.
- iii. The superintendent shall hold the hearing within three (3) school days of the student's request, unless the student or parent/guardian requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days, in which case the superintendent shall grant the extension.
- iv. The superintendent shall make a good faith effort to include the parent/guardian in the hearing. The superintendent shall be presumed to have made a good faith effort if he or she has made efforts to find a day and time for the hearing that would allow the parent/guardian and superintendent to participate. The superintendent shall send written notice to the parent/guardian of the date, time, and location of the hearing.
- v. The superintendent shall conduct a hearing to determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense of which the student is accused, and if so, what the consequence shall be. The superintendent shall arrange for an audio recording of the hearing, a copy of which shall be provided to the student or parent/guardian upon request. The superintendent shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made of the hearing and a copy will be provided to the student and parent/guardian upon request.
- vi. The student shall have all the rights afforded the student at the principal's hearing for long-term suspension.
- vii. The superintendent shall issue a written decision within five (5) calendar days of the hearing which meets the requirements of 603 CMR 53.08(3) (c) 1 through 5. If the superintendent determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense; the superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than the principal, but shall not impose a suspension greater than that imposed by the principal's decision.
- viii. The decision of the superintendent shall be the final decision of the school district, with regard to the suspension.
- ix. If the student is in grades K-3, the principal shall send a copy of the written determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons for the suspension before the suspension takes effect.

**EXPULSION**

Expulsion is the removal of a student from the school premises, regular classroom activities, and school activities for more than ninety (90) days, indefinitely, or permanently. Conduct that may lead to expulsion includes but is not limited to possession of a dangerous weapon, assault on school personnel or upon other students, possession of a controlled substance, and certain criminal convictions and charges. See also, the

Policies and Laws Relating to Student Conduct section of the handbook. Procedures associated with expulsion are set forth under the Procedures for Expulsion section of the handbook.

### **ADDITIONAL PROCEDURAL PROTECTIONS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS**

In general, special education students may be excluded from their programs for up to ten school days per school year just as any other student. However, when the district seeks to exclude a special education student from his/her program for more than ten school days in the school year, the student's special education Team must first determine whether the student's behavior was caused by, or was directly and substantially related to his/her disability or whether the conduct in question was the direct result of the district's failure to implement the student's IEP (a "manifestation determination"). If the Team determines that the behavior was a manifestation of his/her disability or was caused by a failure to implement the IEP, it must conduct a functional behavioral assessment and develop a behavior plan (or review and modify an existing plan, if necessary), and return the student to his/her current program, unless the student's parents and the district agree to a change in placement.

If the Team determines the behavior was not caused by, or directly and substantially related to the student's disability or failure to implement the IEP, the school may discipline the student according to the school's code of student conduct, except that during the period of suspension or expulsion, the district must continue to provide the student with a free appropriate public education (FAPE) and, if appropriate, conduct a functional behavior assessment and provide intervention services and modifications to prevent the conduct from recurring. If the conduct involves weapons, drugs, or serious bodily injury, a special education student may be removed to an interim alternative educational placement for up to 45 school days regardless of the behavior's relationship to his/her disability.

No later than the date of the start of any disciplinary action, the district will notify the parent of the decision and provide written notice of procedural safeguards.

Additional information regarding the procedural protections for students with disabilities can be obtained from the Director of Student Services at (413) 323-0423, x112.

#### **Students Not Yet Identified as Having a Disability**

A student who has not been determined to be eligible for an IEP or 504 Plan and who has engaged in behavior that violated the policies and rules of conduct, may assert any of the protections provided for in this part if the District/school had knowledge that the student was a student with a disability before the behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred.

The District/school must be deemed to have knowledge that a student is a student with a disability if before the behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred:

- The parent/guardian of the student expressed concern in writing to supervisory or administrative personnel of the school, or a teacher of the student, that the student is in need of special education and related services;
- The parent/guardian of the student requested an evaluation of the; or
- The teacher of the student, or other school personnel, expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the child directly to the Director of Special Education, the Section 504 Coordinator, or other supervisory or administrative personnel.

The District/school would not be deemed to have knowledge if:

- The parent/guardian has not allowed an evaluation of the student or has refused services; or
- The student has been evaluated and determined to not be a student with a disability.

If the District/school did not have knowledge that a student is a student with a disability (in accordance with above) prior to taking disciplinary measures against the student, the student may be disciplined in accordance with the same process afforded to all students. If a request is made for an evaluation of a student during the time period in which the student is subjected to disciplinary measures, the District must conduct the evaluation in an expedited manner. If the student is determined to be a student with a disability, then he/she receives all the protections set forth above following the finding of eligibility.

**POSSESSION OF WEAPONS OR CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES**  
**ASSAULT OF EDUCATIONAL PERSONNEL**

Massachusetts General Law Ch. 71, §37H authorizes the principal to expel students as follows:

1. Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in Chapter Ninety-Four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
2. Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
3. Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (1) or (2) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal.  
After said hearing, a principal may, at his discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (1) or (2).
4. Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of his appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.
5. Any school district that suspends or expels a student under this section shall continue to provide educational services to the student during the period of suspension or expulsion, under section 21 of chapter 76. If the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student in an education service plan, under section 21 of chapter 76.
6. Districts shall report to the department of elementary and secondary education the specific reasons for all suspensions and expulsions, regardless of duration or type, in a manner and form established by the commissioner. The department of elementary and secondary education shall use its existing data collection tools to obtain this information from districts and shall modify those tools, as necessary, to obtain the information. On an annual basis, the department of elementary and secondary education shall make district level de-identified data and analysis, including the total number of days each student is excluded during the school year, available to the public online in a machine readable format. This report shall include district level data disaggregated by student status and categories established by the commissioner.
7. Under the regulations promulgated by the department, for each school that suspends or expels a significant number of students for more than 10 cumulative days in a school year, the commissioner shall investigate

and, as appropriate, shall recommend models that incorporate intermediary steps prior to the use of suspension or expulsion. The results of the analysis shall be publicly reported at the school district level.

A copy of this law may be obtained in the main office.

**SUSPENSION/EXPULSION BASED UPON A FELONY CHARGE/CONVICTION M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H½**

issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony or upon the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the principal of a school may suspend a student for a period of time determined appropriate by the principal if the principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and the reasons for such suspension prior to such suspension taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such suspension; provided, however, that such suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

The student shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent in writing of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the suspension. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the student's request for an appeal. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the suspension.

The principal may expel a student who has been convicted, adjudicated, or admitted guilt with respect to a felony or felony delinquency, if the principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and reasons for such expulsion prior to such expulsion taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such expulsion; provided, however, that the expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

The student shall have the right to appeal the expulsion to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent, in writing, of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the expulsion.

A copy of this law may be obtained in the main office.

**EDUCATION SERVICES AND ACADEMIC PROGRESS UNDER SECTIONS 37H, 37H1/2 AND 37H3/4:**

In accordance with the Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Sections 37H, 37H ½, and 37H ¾, in conjunction with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 76, Section 21, the principal is responsible for notifying the student and their parent of the opportunities for students to earn credits, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of their in-school suspension, short-term suspension (10 days or less), long-term suspension (10 days or more), or expulsion.

Any student who is expelled or long-term suspended from school may select one of the following education service options for the duration of their exclusion:

**Access to tutoring services:**

Students choosing this option are expected to attend tutoring sessions at a designated public site identified by the school district. The tutoring will be provided by qualified Belchertown Public Schools' personnel or contracted providers as assigned by the Belchertown Public Schools. Notice shall be provided in English and in the primary language spoken in the student's home if other than English as determined by the home language survey, or other means of communication where appropriate. The academic work will be consistent with the academic standards and curriculum frameworks established for all students under G.L. c. 69 §§1D and 1F. Students' tutoring schedule is by appointment and prepared weekly. \*\*

\*\*Based upon the availability of qualified tutors, tutoring services may only be available before or after school hours.

**Collaborative for Educational Services**

The Belchertown Public Schools collaborates with the Collaborative for Educational Services (CES) to ensure that students are offered an opportunity that is appropriate for them, depending on the severity of the student behavior and the individual needs of the student.

Other options may be added to this plan in the future.

The Belchertown Public Schools will facilitate and verify enrollment of the student in the service, upon selection of an educational service by the student and the parent/guardian.

**LEGAL AUTHORITY:** M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H  
M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ½  
M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ¾  
M.G.L. c. 76, § 21  
603 CMR 53.00

**COURT ORDERS**

It is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to inform the School Administration immediately of any special court orders (i.e. restraining, custody, etc.) that must be adhered to due to a court injunction that is in place or occurs during the school year. The safety of your child is very important to us and we want to ensure that the school is following legal guidelines concerning any custody issues.

**DANCES**

All school dances will be open to students registered at Jabish Brook Middle School only. They will occur after school hours and all school rules will be applied. School dances will be held between the hours of 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. No student will be admitted after 7:30 p.m. At the discretion of the Administration, any student on disciplinary probation or not in attendance at school that day will not be admitted to social events. Students with chronic attendance letters may not be permitted to attend.

## **DISMISSAL PROCEDURES**

Parents picking up their children prior to the 2:10 p.m. dismissal time are required to go to the office to meet their children. Please send your requests for early dismissal in writing with the date and your signature. We strongly encourage parents to schedule children's necessary appointments outside of school time. We also ask that you do not allow extra curricular activities to disrupt your child's school day.

Parents who are picking up their children at the end of the school day are asked to park in the upper parking lot off of Old Springfield Road. Parents may not wait in the hallways outside of the classroom doors for their children to be dismissed. This distracts the students during a time when the classroom teacher needs their attention. If someone other than a parent/guardian is picking up a student, we may require a photo I.D. before the child will be released.

A student not present for at least 50% of the school day (3 hours) will not be eligible to participate in any extracurricular activities on that day unless the absence has been excused, and prior notification and approval is provided by the Principal.

Buses and vehicles are not to be left idling at schools. Whenever a bus or vehicle arrives, the driver is to secure the bus or vehicle and shut the engine down as soon as possible. No bus or vehicle will be left at idle in excess of five minutes of anticipated idling time.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

All electronic devices fall under the school committee acceptable use policy. Jabish Brook Middle School recognizes that cell phones may be viewed as a necessity by parents for safety and that they are necessary for communication with the family regarding after school and school events. Therefore, cell phones may be brought to school as long as the following conditions are met:

- Cell phones, tablets, and any other personal connected device with internet/communication capability are not to be used during the school day. All such devices must be off and stowed in the locker during the school day.
- Devices that are not stowed in lockers during the school day will be confiscated.
  - 1st Offense - Device in office for the day and student given verbal warning
  - 2nd Offense - Device in office for the day and parents contacted regarding violation
  - 3rd Offense - Parents contacted and the device is required to be dropped off in the office everyday for 5 school days.

The only exception is if a teacher approves the use of a cell phone for a limited time period for a specific classroom instructional/academic purpose.

**CELL PHONES BEING STOWED IN LOCKERS IS REQUIRED.**

## **EMERGENCY EVACUATION**

Emergency evacuation routes are posted within each classroom and procedures will be reviewed periodically with students. Emergency evacuation drills will also be held periodically. The function of these drills is to create a rapid, safe and organized method of evacuation routes and procedures. Any visitor or student that is not with their class at the time the alarm sounds should leave the building by the closest exit. Students should report to the nearest adult for further instructions.

ALL DRILLS MUST BE CONSIDERED AN ACTUAL EMERGENCY. No one should return to the building until the all clear signal has been given.

### **FIREARMS AND DANGEROUS WEAPONS**

Any individual, not being a law enforcement officer, and notwithstanding any license obtained by them under the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 140, carrying on their person a firearm, loaded or unloaded or other dangerous weapon in any building, on the grounds of any Belchertown School, or at any school related event without the written authorization of the board or officer in charge of such school, shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars or by imprisonment for not more than one year, or both. Firearm shall mean any pistol, revolver, rifle or smoothbore arm from which a shot, bullet or pellet can be discharged by whatever means.

Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in M.G.L. Chapter 94C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the Principal. See individual school-site's sanctions for such violations.

Any student, who assaults a Principal, Assistant Principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the Principal.

### **COUNSELING PROGRAM**

There are two full time counselors to service students at Jabish Brook Middle School. Mr. Davis and Ms. Parker are professionals trained to assist all students in maximizing their intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development, which further enables students to become responsible, respectful, and productive learners. Support and consultation is available to students, staff, parents/guardians, and the school community.

Counseling services will include: educational guidance; testing programs; occupational, career, and higher education assistance and information; study aids; consultation services; and personal developmental guidance as needed. These services will be available to all students. While some of the problems of the individual may relate to behavior and consequently entail guidance on behavior, student discipline will not be a regular function of personnel.

### **HALL PASSES**

Students are required to use the electronic SmartPass system located on a kiosk within their classroom whenever traveling in the hallways during scheduled class times. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action by the teacher and referral to administration.

### **HEALTH SERVICES**

The role of the school nurse is to strengthen and facilitate the educational process by improving and protecting the health status of children. A school nurse is assigned to each school during school hours. In the event of an accident or illness emergency care and first aid will be provided until a parent or parent-assigned adult is contacted and arrangements are made.

**Under Massachusetts State Law, students entering Belchertown Public Schools must have up-to-date immunizations, evidence of a recent physical examination (within 12 months), and proof of a lead test and birth certificate.** Children whose immunizations are not up-to-date will be

excluded. If you have any concerns regarding the information above Please contact your child's school nurse. For more information regarding requirements see links provided below:

- [Learn about lead screening and reporting requirements | Mass.gov](#)
- [Physical Exam Requirements](#)
- **[Massachusetts School Immunization Requirements 2024–2025](#)**

**Please Note:** All students are required to present, to the school nurse, documentation of a physical examination prior to first school entry and at intervals. Students in Grades 1, 4, 7, and 10 are required to have an updated physical exam (within 12 months) on file with the school nurse. If participating in competitive sports physical exams are required annually (within 13 months).

According to the Federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act schools are required to immediately enroll homeless students in school, even if they do not have the documents required for enrollment, such as school records, medical records, or proof of residency. There are similar protections under Title I of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) for foster care students. For additional information regarding the education of homeless students, please contact the Homeless Liaison Coordinator, Rebecca Lynch (413-323-0423 ext. 117). The Belchertown Public Schools prohibits discrimination or harassment based on homelessness. For information regarding foster care students, please contact the Department of Children and Families (DCF) liaison of Belchertown Public Schools, Rebecca Lynch, (413-323-0423 ext. 117). Any complaints of discrimination or harassment based on homelessness should be reported to the homeless liaison coordinator and it will be investigated using the same process and steps as the Belchertown Public Schools' non-discrimination procedures.

### **Medication administration in school:**

Students in Pre-K through Grade 12 will be administered over-the-counter (OTC) medications with written parental permission. The permission and OTC medications available are listed on the back of the emergency form filled out each school year. Analgesics (Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen) will only be given after all **palliative** measures have been implemented. If a student requests an OTC analgesic more than three times in a month, a parent/guardian may be notified and requested to seek further medical consultation. Emergency forms MUST be filled out before any medication is given. **STUDENTS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO CARRY THEIR OWN MEDICATION TO AND FROM SCHOOL** with the exception of EpiPens, Inhalers, and Insulin; providing the physician, parent/ guardian and school nurse feel the student is capable of self-administration. However, the student must demonstrate to the school nurse competency of self-administration and knowledge of their medical condition. The school nurse has the final decision as to the student's appropriateness of self-administration and will be responsible for determining whether the medication to be self-administered falls within the parameters of the medication policy

If your child needs medication administration during school hours, the following criteria must be met:

- A signed permission form by the parent must be on file
- A signed medication order by the licensed prescriber must be on file
- Medication must be delivered by the child's parent/guardian or responsible adult to the child's school nurse; in a pharmacy or manufacturer-labeled container.
- For after school hours, a parent/guardian is responsible for providing medication unless other arrangements have been made with your child's school nurse.

***(PLEASE DO NOT SEND MEDICATION TO SCHOOL WITH YOUR CHILD: A parent / guardian or responsible adult must bring the prescription medication, that is to be administered, to their child's school nurse).***

- The Department of Public Health has granted permission for BPS Nurse to delegate the administration of prescription medications to unlicensed school personnel to students on field trips, when a school nurse is unable to attend. However delegation of the prescription medication to be administered must meet certain requirements which includes parental or guardian permission, proper training and documentation. Parents/Guardians are responsible for providing medications on field trips, after school hours, and on weekends unless other arrangements have been made with your child's school nurse. Please reach out to your child's school nurse with any questions or concerns regarding this medication administration in school.

### **Illness and Injury**

The focus of school nursing practice is the enhancement of a student's capacity for learning, growing and developing (emotionally and physically). Students with signs and symptoms of any contagious illness will be sent home. With school inclusion, more medically fragile and chronically ill children are mainstreamed into the classroom. All students are entitled to a healthy and disease-free school environment. Thank you for your cooperation.

- An Emergency Information Form will be sent home in a health packet at the beginning of each school year. This information on the emergency form is our link to locating a parent/guardian in case of an injury or illness. Please complete the form on both sides, noting areas concerning legal custody issues, allergies and medications. Also, please update this information with any changes throughout the school year.
- If your child does not have health insurance please contact your child's school nurse regarding Massachusetts Health Insurance (Mass Health).
- The school nurse is available for any student who becomes ill, has a health related problem or is injured during the school day. With the exception of emergency situations, students who request to see the school nurse should first get permission from their classroom teacher (this is only for safety reasons for your child).
- Students being treated for Acute contagious illness require antibiotics such as Strep Throat or Conjunctivitis (pink eye), must remain out of school for 24 hours AFTER MEDICATION HAS BEGUN. This will prevent further spread of the illness.
- Students who are identified as having pediculosis (live lice crawling, or nits within ¼ inch or less of the scalp) will be dismissed to home for treatment. The school nurse will recheck the student when they return to school following treatment.
- Please keep your child's school nurse informed of any health changes throughout the school year in order for the school to provide appropriate accommodations and support as needed.

- In case of an accident or incident, no matter how minor, the student should report the accident or incident to a staff member immediately. In the event of a severe accident, acute illness (physical or mental ) emergency care will be given and the parent/guardian will be notified.
- All children in the Elementary Grades Pre-k - 6th have outdoor recess unless environmental factors exist such as weather (e.g. snow, rain, extreme temperatures hot or cold etc.) It is important for children to go out to play, socialize, exercise, and get fresh air. If your child needs to stay in for medical reasons, please provide a note from your child’s primary care provider.
- If the school nurse determines that a student is unable to remain in school due to an injury, or illness (physical or mental) the parent/guardian will be contacted to make arrangements for dismissal.

**Please note:** Any student hospitalized should have a re-entry meeting with the parent/guardian, student, and appropriate staff (e.g school nurse, school counselor and other staff involved with the student) for the student's safe and successful return to school. Thank you for your cooperation with this confidential matter.

**Annual Mandated School Health Screenings:**

Schools are required by Massachusetts General Law to provide vision screening, hearing screening, heights & weights, body mass index (BMI), postural screening, and Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) health screenings to all students. *Parents/guardians will be notified if a referral is necessary.*

**School Health Screening | Mass.gov**

Vision	Students entering Kindergarten are required by Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 71 and Section 57, to have had a vision screening by a physician. Annually in grades pre-k, 1 through 5, once in Grades 6 through 8, and once in grades 9 through 12
Hearing	Kindergarten through Grade 3 and once in Grades 6th through 8th and once in Grades 9th through 12th
Height, Weight & BMI	Heights and weights are measured and body mass index (BMI) is calculated on children in Grades 1, 4, 7 and 10. The purpose of BMI screening in all Massachusetts schools is to gather valuable data that can help MDPH monitor trends in childhood obesity and identify possible systems-wide solutions. BMI results are submitted to Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) only.

Postural Screening:	The State of Massachusetts mandates that all students in Grades 5 through 9 are screened for scoliosis.
SBIRT	<p>Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment is done once in Grades 6 through 8 and once in Grades 9 through 12. The screening uses the “CRAFFT” tool as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics’ Committee on Substance Abuse. SBIRT screening sessions will be brief and conducted confidentially in a private, one-on-one session.</p> <p><u><a href="#">Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT)   Mass.gov</a></u></p>

School Mandated Health Screenings in Belchertown Public Schools:

- Vision Screening: Pre-k, Kindergarten, Grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, & 10.
- Hearing Screening: Kindergarten, Grades 1, 2, 3, 7 & 10.
- Height,Weight and BMI: Grades 1, 4, 7, & 10.
- Postural Screening: Grades 5, 6, 7, 8, & 9.
- SBIRT Screening: Grades 7 & 9.

We recognize that some parent(s)/guardian(s) may prefer to have the screening performed by their child’s health care provider. For your child to be exempt from these mandated screenings in school, please provide the following documentation to your child’s school nurse. Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the mandated screenings please contact your child’s school nurse.

Hearing & Vision	A Copy of the screening results from the student’s primary care provider for the current school year.
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Postural Screening	A Copy of the screening results from the student's primary care provider for the current school year or documentation that the student is under care for scoliosis for the current school year.
Height/Weight/BMI Screening	The Parent/Guardian must provide a written request to the school nurse if they do not want their child to participate in this screening.
SBIRT Screening	The Parent/Guardian must provide a written request to the school nurse if they do not want their child to participate in this program.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the mandated health screenings please contact your child's school nurse.

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION EXCUSED ABSENCES**

All students are expected to participate in Physical Education classes. If there is a medical reason that your child cannot participate in Physical Education classes, please send a note to your child's teacher. A note written and signed by the parent/guardian, stating the reason, will allow an excused absence once per term.

If there is a medical reason that your child cannot participate in Physical Education class on an ongoing basis, please provide a note from your child's physician for review by the school nurse. The school nurse may excuse students from Physical Education classes for medical reasons without a doctor's note once per term.

### **HAZING**

#### **CH. 269, S.17. CRIME OF HAZING; DEFINITION; PENALTY**

Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing as defined herein shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

The term "hazing" as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or

recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to be contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

#### CH. 269, S.18. DUTY TO REPORT HAZING

Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars.

#### CH. 269, S.19. HAZING STATUTES TO BE PROVIDED; STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE AND DISCIPLINE POLICY REQUIRED

Each secondary school and each public and private school or college shall issue to every group or organization under its authority or operating on or in conjunction with its campus or school, and to every member, plebe, pledge or applicant for membership in such group or organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen. An officer of each such group or organization, and each individual receiving a copy of said sections seventeen and eighteen shall sign an acknowledgment stating that such group, organization or individual has received a copy of said sections seventeen and eighteen.

- Each secondary school and each public or private school or college shall file, at least annually, a report with the regents of higher education and in the case of secondary schools, the Board of Education, certifying that such institution has complied with the provisions of this section and also certifying that said school has adopted a disciplinary policy with regards to the organizers and participants of hazing. The Board of Regents and, in the case of secondary schools, the Board of Education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution which fails to make such a report.

#### **HOMEWORK**

Generally, homework will be assigned to seventh and eighth grade students every night. Its purpose is to reinforce and/or extend concepts covered in class, develop study skills, and encourage student responsibility.

Extra help, remediation, or make-up work can be done after school. Please remind your child to make arrangements with their teacher to find after school time without conflicts. A dated note giving your student permission to stay after school indicating that transportation arrangements have been made is required before a student can stay late. The student must have the agenda signed by the teacher indicating the time spent with the teacher.

Grade 7 students will be expected to complete 60 – 90 minutes of homework per day.

Grade 8 students will be expected to complete 60 – 120 minutes of homework per day.

Hopefully knowing these average ranges of homework will be helpful to you as you help your child plan their daily schedule to successfully complete homework assignments. You are always encouraged to keep in contact with your child’s teacher regarding difficulties that they are having regarding completing homework assignments.

### **HONOR ROLL**

The honor roll is recognition of superior achievement and as such should be difficult to attain and a goal for which students should strive. Recognizing this, an honor roll for grades 7 and 8 has been established with the following criteria: **HIGH HONORS** - all A's **HONORS** - all A's and B's

### **LIBRARY/MEDIA SERVICES**

Our mission is to help students and staff become effective users of ideas and information. The library is available for helping students find a good book, research advice, including topic ideas, to find the best resources to use for assignments, instruction on using resources, as well as reference materials, Internet access, and subscription databases. The library is open Monday-Friday from 7:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., by arrangements with classroom teachers. Research classes are held in the library, which may limit access during certain class periods. **Loan Period: Books: 2 weeks (renewals permitted) and Magazines: 1 week**

### **LOCKERS**

Each homeroom teacher will assign a locker to your child at the beginning of the year. Lockers should be kept clean and tidy so that books, coats and backpacks will fit. Locks will be made available to all students at the start of the school year.

All materials should be kept in the locker when not in use. The locker is for the storage and safekeeping of books and outer garments only. Large sums of money and valuables should not be kept in lockers. They may be left in the office until the end of the school day. The school cannot be responsible for the contents of unlocked lockers. Each student will also be assigned a locker for use during Physical Education classes. Students are provided a lock to use during class.

Lockers and padlocks are the property of the school and NOT a student’s private property. They may be opened and searched by school authorities at any time. This statement is “prior notice” of locker searches. Any unauthorized items found in a locker may be removed. Locks must be returned to the school at the end of the school year.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

It is strongly recommended that all clothing be marked with name tags, as, during the course of the school year, especially in the winter months, children have a tendency to misplace or lose articles of value such as clothing, boots, eyeglasses, etc. As the school year progresses, the number of articles lost increases and it becomes almost impossible to store and control. Currently the articles are stored in a storage bin outside the cafeteria where the children have access to the materials to search out the items. Valuable items such as jewelry, eyeglasses, etc. are stored in the main office for student identification. If the articles are not claimed within a reasonable time span, it will be up to the principal to discard the materials.

### **MCAS TESTING**

<b><u>2025 ACCESS for ELLS Test Grades K–12</u></b>	
<b><u>ACCESS for ELLs test sessions</u></b>	<b><u>January 6–February 14</u></b>
<b><u>2025 MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt) Grades 3–12</u></b>	

<b><u>Deadline for UPS pickup of portfolios</u></b>	<b><u>March 28</u></b>
<b><u>Spring 2025 MCAS Tests for Elementary and Middle Schools</u></b> <b><u>Grades 3–8 ELA and Mathematics and Grades 5 and 8 STE</u></b>	
<b><u>ELA test sessions</u></b>	<b><u>March 24–April 18</u></b>
<b><u>Mathematics test sessions</u></b>	<b><u>April 28–May 23</u></b>
<b><u>STE test sessions</u></b>	<b><u>April 28–May 23</u></b>
<p style="text-align: right;"><b><u>Civics</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>State-level performance task</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>End-of-course test</u></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>First year of operational testing</p>	<b><u>April 28–June 6</u></b>

***NON- DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT***

The Belchertown School District does not discriminate on the basis of his or her actual or perceived race, to include traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles. color, creed, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sex/gender, pregnancy or pregnancy-related medical condition, homelessness, disability, sexual orientation, limited English proficiency, genetic information, veteran status, criminal record, gender identity or age.

**NON-DISCRIMINATION AND ANTI-HARASSMENT PROCEDURES**

It is the practice of Jabish Brook Middle School to maintain a learning environment that is free from harassment or discrimination of any kind, including sex-based harassment (under state law). Any allegations of sex-based harassment or sex discrimination will be addressed through the school/district’s Title IX policy/procedures. It is a violation of this policy for any member of the school community to harass or discriminate against another individual as outlined in this policy. Any allegation of harassment or discrimination will be investigated, and, if a violation of this policy is substantiated, disciplinary action will be taken. All reports of harassment or discrimination shall be investigated promptly, impartially and in a manner which will preserve the confidentiality of all concerned to the extent practicable under the circumstances.

Any employee, student or third party who believes that he or she has experienced harassment or discrimination on the basis of his or her actual or perceived race, to include traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles, color, creed, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sex/gender, pregnancy or pregnancy-related medical condition, homelessness, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or age or who has witnessed or learns about the harassment of or discrimination against, another person in the school environment, should inform the principal

of the relevant school site or appropriate discrimination/harassment complaint official immediately or as soon as possible. Belchertown High School further does not deny equal access to or a fair opportunity to meet, or discriminate against, any group officially affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America, or any other youth group listed in Title 36 of the United States Code as a patriotic society

Harassment and discrimination is banned not just at school, during school hours, but also before or after school hours on all school property, including the school bus, school functions, or at school events held at other locations. The policy also applies to any off-campus conduct that causes or threatens to cause a substantial and material disruption at school, or interferes with the rights of students or employees to be free from a hostile school environment taking into consideration the totality of the circumstances on and off campus.

Problems and complaints regarding discrimination and harassment should be resolved in a prompt and equitable manner. When possible, such problems and complaints should be resolved in an informal manner.

### **Definitions**

Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical, or visual, that is based upon a person's protected status, such as sex, color, race, sexual orientation, sexual identity, religion, national origin, age, disability, or other legally protected group status.

Sex-based harassment includes both sexual harassment and gender-based harassment.

Sexual harassment under state law consists of unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature may constitute sexual harassment where:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a person's employment or educational development.
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or education decisions affecting such individual.
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or educational performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or educational environment.

Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:

- unwelcome sexual advances - whether they involve physical touching or not;
- sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip about one's sex life, comment on an individual's body, comment about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;
- displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures and cartoons;
- unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, suggestive or insulting comments;
- inquiries into one's sexual experiences; and
- discussion of one's sexual activities.

Gender-based harassment includes acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility that are based on sex, although they are not necessarily sexual in nature, including harassment based on gender identity and expression. Gender-based harassment includes, but is not limited to, harassment based on the person's nonconformity with gender stereotypes, regardless of the actual or perceived sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation of the harasser or target of the harassment.

Hostile environment is unwelcome conduct that is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive to interfere with or limit one or more students' abilities to participate in or benefit from the education program or creates a threatening, intimidating or abusive environment or sufficiently severe or pervasive so as to alter the conditions of the victim's employment and create an abusive working environment.

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, threatening, coercion or discrimination, directed against a student/staff/third party who reports a sex-based harassment, provides information during, assists in or participates in an investigation of sex-based harassment, or witnesses or has reliable information about sex-based harassment.

### **Reporting Responsibilities**

Everyone in the school community is responsible for immediately reporting incidents of harassment, discrimination and/or retaliation, by anyone, in any form, that are directed at or witnessed by them at school or at a school sponsored event or of which they otherwise learn. Failure to cooperate with an investigation of such an incident will result in disciplinary action. Deceptive reporting may also be subject to a disciplinary response.

An individual may report to either the principal of the relevant school site or appropriate discrimination/harassment complaint official at his or her discretion. Students may additionally report incidents that they believe involve harassment or discrimination to their guidance counselor, any teacher, administrator or any member of the support staff, and the staff member will refer the complaint to the principal or the discrimination/harassment complaint official. If a School Guidance or Adjustment Counselor, School Nurse, or any member of the teaching staff, is contacted concerning a complaint or possible complaint, he/she should refer the matter to the principal immediately. Staff who observe conduct which violates this policy are to report the conduct to the principal immediately.

Employees who need help or wish to talk about harassment should contact the school principal, the appropriate discrimination/harassment complaint official, the perpetrator's immediate supervisor or any other school administrator immediately.

If one of the discrimination/harassment complaint officials is the person alleged to be engaged in discrimination/harassment, the complaint may be filed with one of alternate officials or any other school employee the student or employee chooses.

The discrimination/harassment complaint officials for the District are the following individuals:

#### Title II/ Section 504 (disability)

Dr. Shawn Fortin  
Assistant Superintendent  
14 Maple Street  
(4130 323-0423 ex 100)

#### Title VI (race, color, national origin)

Dr. Shawn Fortin  
Assistant Superintendent  
14 Maple Street  
(4130 323-0423 ex 100)

#### Title VII (employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin)

Dr. Shawn Fortin

Assistant Superintendent  
14 Maple Street  
(4130 323-0423 ex 100)

Sexual harassment (state law)

Dr. Shawn Fortin  
Assistant Superintendent  
14 Maple Street  
(4130 323-0423 ex 100)

Age Discrimination/Boy Scouts

Dr. Shawn Fortin  
Assistant Superintendent  
14 Maple Street  
(4130 323-0423 ex 100)

The school principals will serve as the building level coordinators for these categories.

## **Procedures for Investigating**

The procedures set forth in this policy may be invoked even if other appeals and adjudication procedures have been provided by state law or federal law. Retaliation in any form for the filing of a complaint or reporting of harassment or discrimination is prohibited and will result in serious disciplinary action.

When a complaint of harassment or discrimination is received by the school/district, that allegation will be promptly investigated in a fair and expeditious manner. The investigation will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances and to the extent consistent with the law and collective bargaining agreements. The grievance officer or discrimination/harassment complaint official will inform witnesses and others involved in the resolution process of the importance of maintaining confidentiality.

The investigation will include a private interview with the person filing the complaint and with witnesses. The investigation will also include an interview with the person alleged to have committed the harassment or discrimination. Each party will have the opportunity to provide evidence and witnesses.

In certain cases, the harassment of a student may constitute child abuse under state law. The school/district will comply with all legal requirements governing the reporting of suspected cases of child abuse and will report suspected criminal activity to the appropriate authorities.

The specific procedures to be followed in conducting the investigations are set forth more fully below.

1. Any staff member who receives a complaint verbally or in writing concerning harassment or discrimination or observes conduct which he/she believes may constitute harassment or discrimination is required to document the complaint and refer it to the school principal or discrimination/harassment complaint official immediately. Although the school/district encourages a written complaint, use of a formal reporting requirement is not required. Oral reports will be considered complaints as well. The

principal or discrimination/harassment complaint official shall ensure that the report is documented in writing within two (2) school days of receiving the complaint. The principal must send copies to the relevant discrimination/harassment complaint official within two (2) school days.

2. Anyone may use the informal process in order to resolve the complaint, unless the school/district believes that it is inappropriate.
3. If the alleged victim or the alleged perpetrator chooses not to utilize the informal procedure, or feels that the informal procedure is inadequate or has been unsuccessful, he or she may proceed to the formal procedure. The informal process is completely voluntary and individuals can opt-out at any time.
4. The informal process will be a voluntary conversation between the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator, which is facilitated by a school employee or by a designated discrimination/harassment complaint official. If the alleged victim or alleged perpetrator is a student under the age of eighteen (18), the facilitator **will** notify the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) if, after initial consultation with the student, it is determined to be in the best interest of the student. If the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator feel that a resolution has been achieved, then the conversation remains confidential and no further action needs to be taken. The voluntary conversation must occur within five (5) workdays after receiving the complaint of discrimination or harassment. The results of an informal resolution shall be maintained by the facilitator, in writing.
5. If the alleged victim does not want to deal directly with the alleged perpetrator, or if the matter is not resolved informally, the complainant should immediately notify the school principal or the discrimination/harassment complaint official for formal resolution.
6. For a formal complaint, the alleged victim (or complainant, if not the alleged victim) will be asked to complete the incident form which begins the formal investigation process conducted by the school principal or the discrimination/harassment complaint official. If the alleged victim is not able to complete the form, the principal or discrimination/harassment complaint official will complete it and ask the alleged victim to sign it. If requested, a Guidance / Adjustment Counselor, a School Nurse, or a School Psychologist may assist a student in completing the incident form.
7. During the investigation, the school principal or discrimination/harassment complaint official will:
  - Keep the investigation group as small as possible to protect the rights of all parties and to prevent the investigation from becoming overly publicized and to protect the alleged victim (in addition to the complainant, if not the alleged victim) from retaliation.
  - Complete the investigation as soon as possible from the date that it is reported, but no later than thirty (30) work days from the date of the complaint or report, unless impracticable. The investigation will include interviewing the complainant, the alleged victim (if different than the complainant), the alleged perpetrator and such other person(s) named by the complainant, alleged victim (if different than the complainant), or the alleged perpetrator who may have witnessed or have information pertaining to the incident. An opportunity will be provided for all parties to be heard and present witnesses.
  - Throughout the investigation the District will maintain on-going contact with the alleged victim and the alleged aggressor. In determining whether the alleged conduct constitutes a violation of this policy, the school principal or discrimination/harassment complaint official shall consider the age and level of understanding of the student(s) involved, surrounding circumstances, any relevant documents, the nature of the behavior, past incidents or past or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationships between the

parties involved, and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred. Whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of the District's policy prohibiting discrimination or harassment based on the actual or perceived protected class status of a student, employee or third party, requires a determination based on all of the facts and surrounding circumstances. Given that victims often experience continuing effects of harassment in the educational setting, during the investigative process the school/district will consider off-campus conduct to determine whether there is a hostile environment on campus.

8. After completing the investigation, the school principal or discrimination/harassment complaint official will conclude whether a violation of the policy has occurred or not; complete the written investigation report form and send copies of the report to the discrimination/harassment complaint official, if the school principal is conducting the investigation, the alleged victim (or their parents if they are under 18) and the alleged perpetrator (or their parents if they are under 18). The report shall include:
  - a statement of the allegations investigated;
  - a summary of the steps taken to investigate the allegations;
  - the findings of fact based on a preponderance of the evidence gathered;
  - the District's conclusion of whether discrimination or harassment did or did not occur;
  - the disposition of the complaint;
  - the rationale for the disposition of the complaint; and
  - if the District concluded discrimination or harassment occurred, a description of the District's response.

The school principal or the discrimination/harassment complaint official shall determine whether the allegations have been substantiated as factual and whether they appear to be violations of this policy, using a preponderance of the evidence standard. A "preponderance of the evidence" means that it is more likely than not that the alleged conduct occurred.

If the complaint is supported, the report should recommend what action, if any, is required and will identify what steps the school/district is going to take to prevent recurrence of any discrimination or harassment and to correct its discriminatory effects on the complainant and others, if appropriate.

9. Formal disciplinary actions shall be imposed in the event that the preponderance of the evidence indicates that the alleged conduct occurred. Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with due process rights under State law and any applicable collective bargaining agreement. The seriousness of the offense, including the nature and degree of harm caused, shall be considered when deciding the appropriate disciplinary action.
  - If the person alleged to have violated this policy is a staff member, possible discipline includes, but is not limited to, letters of reprimand, reassignment, and other disciplinary actions, including suspension or job termination.
  - If the person alleged to have violated this policy is a student, possible discipline includes reprimand, classes or instruction on appropriate behavior, counseling, class transfer, detention, suspension or expulsion, consistent with the Student Code of Conduct.
  - Any discipline of students will focus on changing behavior and ensuring that students learn about the impact of their behaviors and attitudes. Possible remedial action includes:

- Interventions for the alleged victim, such as counseling, academic support, health services, assigning an escort to allow the student to move safely between classes, and instruction on how to report other incidents of harassment or discrimination.
  - Training or other interventions for the larger school community to ensure that students, staff and parents understand the types of behavior that constitute harassment or discrimination, and how to report it.
  - Interventions for the individual who engaged in the conduct, such as parent notification, counseling, guidance, education about the impact of the conduct, positive behavior support, referral to a student success team, transfer to alternative programs, denial of participation in extracurricular or co-curricular activities or other privileges, and discipline.
- If it is established that the conduct involves a violation of law, report the matter immediately to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

### **Interim Measures**

The school/district shall take immediate steps to protect the alleged victim, alleged perpetrator, witnesses, and the larger school community pending the completion of an investigation or the informal process and address any ongoing harassment or discrimination. The school/district will take interim measures to prevent retaliation against the alleged victim and alleged aggressor.

Examples of interim measures include, but are not limited to:

- Providing counseling services via the school adjustment counselor and/or school psychologist for both the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator;
- Providing academic support services;
- Ensuring no contact between the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator in District programs and activities (e.g., through stay away orders); the District will take care to minimize the burden of such steps on the alleged victim;
- Providing an alternate schedule to ensure that the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator do not attend the same classes;
- Informing the alleged victim of how to report any recurring conduct or retaliation;
- Providing the alleged victim or alleged aggressor with alternative movement between classes and activities; and
- Making community based referral to medical and counseling services.

If the circumstances suggest a threat to others, the school principal or the discrimination/harassment complaint official will ensure that the school/district informs relevant members of the school community. This may include, for example, notifying parents and employees, if a student is sexually assaulted on the way home from school, or notifying employees of areas where harassment or discrimination frequently occurs.

### **Referral to Law Enforcement and Other Agencies**

Some alleged conduct may constitute both a violation of school/district policies or procedures and criminal activity. The school principal or the discrimination/harassment complaint official will refer matters to law enforcement and other agencies as appropriate under the law or school/district policy and/or procedure, and inform the complainant of the right to file a criminal complaint.

The school principal or the discrimination/harassment complaint official will follow this procedure regardless of whether the alleged conduct is also being investigated by another agency, unless the fact finding process would impede a law enforcement investigation. In such cases, the school principal or the discrimination/harassment complaint official will determine whether interim measures to protect the well-being of the complainant and the school community and prevent retaliation are needed while the law enforcement agency's fact-gathering is in progress. Once notified that law enforcement has completed its gathering of evidence (not the ultimate outcome of the investigation or the filing of any charges), the school principal or the discrimination/harassment complaint official will promptly resume and complete the investigation.

Additionally, several behaviors listed as sexual harassment may also constitute physical or sexual abuse. Sexual abuse is defined as any act or acts by any persons involving sexual molestation or exploitation of a child, including, but not limited to incest, prostitution, rape, sodomy, or any lewd or lascivious conduct involving a child. Thus, under certain circumstances, alleged harassment may also constitute physical and/or sexual abuse under Massachusetts law. Such harassment or abuse is subject to the duties of mandatory reporting and must be reported to the Department of Children and Families within twenty-four (24) hours of the time the educator becomes aware of the suspected abuse. All school personnel are identified as being mandatory reporters.

### **Conflict of Interest**

If there is a conflict of interest with respect to any party affected by this policy, appropriate accommodations will be made, such as, but not limited to, appointing or contracting with a neutral third-party investigator to conduct the investigation, or recusing from the process the person for whom a conflict or potential conflict of interest exists.

### **Retaliation**

Retaliation in any form for the filing of a complaint, the reporting of discrimination, including harassment, or participating in an investigation is prohibited. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment. If retaliation is established, it can be considered grounds for disciplinary action. Any allegations of reprisal will be subject to the same kind of investigation and disciplinary action as described above. The school principal or the discrimination/harassment complaint official will inform all involved individuals that retaliation is prohibited, and that anyone who feels they have experienced harassment, coercion, intimidation, or discrimination for filing a complaint or participating in the resolution process should inform the school principal or the discrimination/harassment complaint official.

### **Right to Alternative Complaint Procedures**

In addition to the remedies set forth above, if you believe you have been subjected to harassment or discrimination, you may file a formal complaint with the government agency or agencies set forth below. Using

the school/district complaint process does not prohibit you from filing a complaint with these agencies. Each of the agencies has a short time period for filing a claim.

A. Students

If you believe you have been subjected to harassment or discrimination, you may file a formal complaint with:

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
Program Quality Assurance Services  
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906  
Phone: (781) 338-3700  
FAX: (781) 338-3710  
Email: [compliance@doe.mass.edu](mailto:compliance@doe.mass.edu)

The time period for filing a claim is one year from the action.

United States Department of Education  
Office for Civil Rights("OCR")  
5 Post Office Square  
Boston, MA 02109  
tel. (617) 289-0111

The time period for filing a claim with the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights is 180 days.

B. Employees

If you believe you have been subjected to harassment or discrimination, you may file a formal complaint with either or both of the government agencies set forth below:

1. United States Equal Employment  
Opportunity Commission ("EEOC")  
JFK Federal Building, Room 475  
Boston, MA 02203  
tel. (800) 669-4000

The time period for filing a claim with the EEOC is 180 days.

2. Massachusetts Commission  
Against Discrimination ("MCAD")

Boston Office  
One Ashburton Place, Rm. 601  
Boston, MA 02108  
(617) 994-6000

Springfield Office  
436 Dwight Street, Rm. 220  
Springfield, MA 01103  
(413) 739-2145

The time period for filing a claim with the MCAD is 300 days.

## **PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)**

The Belchertown PTO believes that working together makes a difference in our schools. The PTO strives to help the home, school, and community work together to provide the best possible learning environments for our children. We believe that this partnership will improve and enrich our children's education. We hope that you will join the PTO and support this important partnership to help Belchertown's children be their best.

Our goals continue to offer family programs, support teachers and school improvement goals, and effectively involve parents. To become involved with the PTO, call Jabish Brook Middle School for the name and number of the president. Also, look for our membership forms sent home with your child(ren) in September.

## **PLACEMENT OF STUDENTS**

Each year the Guidance Department compiles information to assist in the placement of students. This information can include grades, test scores, special services and other input to provide appropriate and balanced placement of students. In order to afford each child the opportunity to reach their academic potential, students are scheduled randomly on an annual basis. Changes may be made in order to balance class size, student distribution, etc., but specific requests for teachers made by parents will not be honored. Specific courses, such as exploratory classes, specific language classes, and advanced courses, such as Honors Math, will be scheduled individually based upon availability, course selections, and eligibility requirements.

## **PROGRESS REPORTS/REPORT CARDS**

Report cards will be issued quarterly throughout the year. Progress reports will be issued at the midpoint of each quarter or later if needed.

The Marking System is as follows:

98 - 100	A+	87 - 89	B+	77 - 79	C+	66 - 69	D+	0 - 59	F
94 - 97	A	83 - 86	B	73 - 76	C	63 - 65	D		
90 - 93	A-	80 - 82	B-	70 - 72	C-	60 - 62	D-		

## **PROMOTION/RETENTION**

Effort has been made to provide a framework for promotion at Jabish Brook Middle School that allows for individual differences and to provide a meaningful achievement standard for students. It is based upon the use of a ten point scale for averaging grades and is used to calculate a Grade Point Average. The Grade Point average is determined by totaling the points for all courses and dividing by the total number of class meetings per week. The ten point scale provides standardization as well as allows for the vacillation of student achievement which is so common with transitional students. With this system all failures carry the same weight so that a given set of grades results in an average with less deviation than the traditional grading system allows. It also provides an opportunity and incentive for improvement. Any student falling into one or more of the following categories will be subject to possible retention:

- Two or more F's in major subject areas
- Four or more F's in general
- Greater than 24 absences for the year
- Cumulative Grade Point Average below 2 - retention likely
- Cumulative Grade Point Average between 2 and 3 - danger zone

All candidates for retention will have their records reviewed by the administration, which will consider faculty

input, parent and student input, overall academic average, effort grades, maturity and self-discipline, achievement test results, attendance and the social effects of placement.

Possible results of the review might include:

- A. Promotion
- B. Retention
- C. Deferred Promotion - recommendation of summer school

The following conditions are placed on summer school leading to a deferred promotion:

- 1. No more than two (2) subject areas are allowed
- 2. Must pass a standardized achievement test upon completion. In cases where summer school attendance creates a hardship, tutoring may be considered as an alternative provided that:
  - a. Tutors must be certified teachers and be approved in advance by the guidance department.
  - b. Tutors must submit to the Principal, a letter stating the particulars of the tutoring and that a minimum of 30 hours of work, per subject, has been accomplished by the student.

It is the right of the Principal to determine that a student is to be retained in a particular grade and not promoted to the next grade at the end of the school year.

### **SCHOOL OWNED INSTRUMENT USER AGREEMENT**

The Belchertown Band Program can provide a school owned instrument for your student's use when available. This is usually issued at CHCS in 5th grade and follows the student throughout JBMS and BHS. When necessary and feasible, the director will find a higher quality instrument for the student, especially when they have moved to the higher grade levels. Our school instrument inventory is limited and a school owned instrument is not guaranteed. Parents/guardians are responsible for repairs when the student damages a school owned instrument through gross negligence. The district will cover repairs due to normal wear and tear.

School owned band shirts will be distributed to each band student before three of our school year performances; the Belchertown Fair Parade in September, the Belchertown Memorial Day Parade in May, and our Great East Adjudication/Six Flags Trip in May or June. The shirts are to be washed and returned to the director soon after our performance and will be reissued for each following performance.

### ***SEX-BASED HARASSMENT/DISCRIMINATION***

Belchertown Public Schools do not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination and sex-based harassment in any education program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX. The Belchertown Public Schools are committed to maintaining an education and work environment for all school community members that is free from all forms of harassment, including sex-based harassment and sex-based discrimination.

**Sex-based discrimination** is discrimination based on sex, sex stereotypes, sex characteristics, pregnancy or related conditions, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

**Sex-based harassment** is harassment on the basis of sex, sex stereotypes, sex characteristics, pregnancy or related conditions, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

Sex-based harassment includes:

- *Quid pro quo harassment.* An employee, agent, or other person authorized by the School to provide an aid, benefit, or service under the School's education program or activity explicitly or impliedly conditioning the provision of such an aid, benefit, or service on a person's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
- *Hostile environment harassment.* Unwelcome sex-based conduct that, based on the totality of the circumstances, is subjectively and objectively offensive and is so severe or pervasive that it limits or denies a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the recipient's education program or activity (i.e., creates a hostile environment).
- *Specific offenses.* An offense classified as a forcible or nonforcible sex offense under the uniform crime reporting system of the Federal Bureau of Investigation such as sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, etc.

While it is not possible to list all those additional circumstances that may constitute sex-based harassment, the following are some examples of conduct, which if unwelcome, may constitute sex-based harassment, depending on the totality of the circumstances, including the severity of the conduct or its pervasiveness:

- Unwelcome sexual advances-whether they involve physical touching or not;
- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life; comment on an individual's body, comment about an individual's sexual activity and/or sexual orientation and/or gender identity, deficiencies, or prowess;
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons;
- Unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, suggestive or insulting comments;
- Inquiries into one's sexual experiences; and,
- Discussion of one's sexual activities.

The definition of sex-based harassment is broad and in addition to the above examples, other conduct, whether it is intended or not, that is unwelcome and has the effect of creating an environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating, to male, female, or gender non-conforming students or employees may also constitute sexual harassment.

Because the District takes allegations of harassment, including sex-based harassment, seriously, the District will respond promptly to complaints of harassment including sex-based harassment, and following an investigation where it is determined that such inappropriate conduct has occurred, we will act promptly to eliminate the conduct and impose corrective action as necessary, including disciplinary action where appropriate.

Belchertown is committed to ensuring that sex-based discrimination and sex-based harassment does not continue or recur within our education program or activities. To report information about conduct that may constitute sex discrimination or sex-based harassment or to make a complaint regarding such under Title IX, please contact the Title IX Coordinator.

The Title IX Coordinator for the [school] is:

Name: Dr. Shawn Fortin

Title: Superintendent  
Address: 14 Maple Street  
Phone: 413-323-0423 ex 110  
Email: sfortin@belchertownps.org

Inquiries about Title IX may be referred to [ABC School's] Title IX Coordinator, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, or both.

Belchertown's nondiscrimination policy and grievance procedures can be located within the school's handbook.

Retaliation against a complainant, witness, or any other participant in an investigation because they have filed a harassment or sex-based harassment complaint or assisted or participated in a harassment or sexual harassment investigation or proceeding, is strictly prohibited. Anyone found to have retaliated against another in violation of [School's] policy will be subject to disciplinary action.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL**

The Special Education Parent Advisory Council is a volunteer organization of parents, guardians, teachers and other members of the community concerned with the delivery of appropriate special education services in the Belchertown Public Schools. The SEPAC meets monthly and all meetings are open to the public. Public notices of meetings are posted within the schools and on the website. Special education parent advisory councils are a requirement of the current Massachusetts Special Education Regulations.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION REFERRALS**

The parent/guardian of a Belchertown resident who is between the ages of 2.5 years and 22 years old may contact the school guidance office or the Office of Special Education for concerns and/or evaluations related to a known or suspected disability. Areas of concern may be in: academic skills, behavior, social skills, fine motor skills, gross motor skills, speech and/or language skills, and/or emotional health.

### **STUDENT COUNCIL**

Representatives from each class will be elected to a student council. The student council will be involved with planning social functions, fund raising, and acting as a communications link between the administration and the student population.

### **SUMMER SCHOOL**

A student with a failing grade of no less than 50% will be given permission to attend a summer school session in a program approved in advance by guidance and the administration. Upon the successful completion of the course, the student will be granted a grade no higher than 60%. Successful completion of summer school may be a requirement for student promotion to the next grade. Please refer to the Promotion/Retention Policy for further details.

### **TRANSPORTATION FEES**

School bus transportation fees for students in grades 7-12 are as follows:

Full Year Pass .....\$165  
Full Year Discount Pass.....\$150

Half Year Pass.....	\$83 Valid on or after
Half Year Pass.....	\$83 Valid on or after
Infrequent Rider Ticket.....	\$1.50 Valid for One-Way Ride
Pack of 10.....	\$15.00 Valid For One-Way Ride

These fees may be waived due to demonstrated financial need to the Belchertown Public Schools, or at the discretion of the Principal.

**VALUABLES & LARGE SUMS OF MONEY**

For obvious reasons, students should not come to school with valuable jewelry, coins, collectibles or large sums of money in their possession. The loss or theft of personal items that were not in a locker secured with a school issued lock is not the responsibility of the school and will not be investigated.

Section III  
Selected School Committee Policies

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## SEX-BASED HARASSMENT/DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Belchertown School Committee and Belchertown Public Schools do not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination and sex-based harassment in any education program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX. The Belchertown Public Schools are committed to maintaining an education and work environment for all school community members that is free from all forms of harassment, including sex-based harassment and sex-based discrimination. The members of the school community include the School Committee, employees, administration, faculty, staff, students, volunteers in the schools, and parties contracted to perform work for the Belchertown Public Schools.

Sex-based discrimination is discrimination based on sex, sex stereotypes, sex characteristics, pregnancy or related conditions, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

Sex-based harassment is harassment on the basis of sex, sex stereotypes, sex characteristics, pregnancy or related conditions, sexual orientation, and gender identity including:

- *Quid pro quo harassment.* An employee, agent, or other person authorized by the School to provide an aid, benefit, or service under the School's education program or activity explicitly or impliedly conditioning the provision of such an aid, benefit, or service on a person's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
- *Hostile environment harassment.* Unwelcome sex-based conduct that, based on the totality of the circumstances, is subjectively and objectively offensive and is so severe or pervasive that it limits or denies a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the recipient's education program or activity (*i.e.*, creates a hostile environment).
- *Specific offenses.* An offense classified as a forcible or nonforcible sex offense under the uniform crime reporting system of the Federal Bureau of Investigation such as sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, etc.

Massachusetts General Laws Ch. 119, Section 51 A, requires that public schools report cases of suspected child abuse, immediately orally and file a report within 48 hours detailing the suspected abuse to the Department of Children and Families. In addition to Section 51A referrals, serious and/or criminal matters shall be referred to local law enforcement.

While it is not possible to list all those additional circumstances that may constitute sex-based harassment, the following are some examples of conduct, which if unwelcome, may constitute sex-based harassment, depending on the totality of the circumstances, including the severity of the conduct or its pervasiveness:

- Unwelcome sexual advances-whether they involve physical touching or not;
- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life; comment on an individual's body, comment about an individual's sexual activity and/or sexual orientation and/or gender identity, deficiencies, or prowess;
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons;
- Unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, suggestive or insulting comments;
- Inquiries into one's sexual experiences; and,
- Discussion of one's sexual activities.

The legal definition of sex-based harassment is broad and in addition to the above examples, other conduct, whether it is intended or not, that is unwelcome and has the effect of creating an environment that is hostile,

offensive, intimidating, to male, female, or gender non-conforming students or employees may also constitute sexual harassment.

Because the District takes allegations of harassment, including sex-based harassment, seriously, the District will respond promptly to complaints of harassment including sex-based harassment, and following an investigation where it is determined that such inappropriate conduct has occurred, we will act promptly to eliminate the conduct and impose corrective action as is necessary, including disciplinary action where appropriate.

Please note that while this policy sets forth our goals of promoting an environment that is free of harassment including sex-based harassment, the policy is not designed or intended to limit our authority to discipline or take remedial action for conduct which we deem unacceptable, regardless of whether that conduct satisfies the definition of harassment or sex-based harassment.

Retaliation against a complainant, witness, or any other participant in an investigation because they have filed a harassment or sex-based harassment complaint or assisted or participated in a harassment or sexual harassment investigation or proceeding, is strictly prohibited. A student or employee who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including student suspension and expulsion or employee termination.

The complainant does not have to be the person at whom the unwelcome sexual conduct is directed. The complainant, regardless of gender, may be a witness to and personally offended by such conduct.

### **TITLE IX COORDINATOR**

The District's Title IX Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the recipient's compliance with its obligations under this policy and Title IX. The Title IX Coordinator has discretion in issuing a sex-based harassment complaint should they believe based on all of the information, an investigation into possible sex-based harassment should occur. Regardless of whether a complaint is initiated, the Coordinator must take appropriate prompt and effective steps, in addition to steps necessary to effectuate the remedies provided to an individual complainant, if any, to ensure that sex discrimination does not continue or recur within the recipient's education program or activity.

### **NOTICE OF SEX-BASED HARASSMENT**

The Title IX regulations require a school district to respond when the district has notice of sexual harassment. Schools must seriously respond to and address all reports of sex-based harassment that meet the definition of harassment and the conditions of notice and jurisdiction as noted, whether or not the complainant files a formal complaint. Holding a school liable under Title IX can occur only when the school knows of sexual harassment allegations and responds in a way that is deliberately indifferent (clearly unreasonable in light of known circumstances). Schools are required to investigate every formal complaint and respond meaningfully to every known report of sex-based harassment.

The regulations highlight the importance of supportive measures designed to preserve or restore access to the school's education program or activity, with or without a formal complaint. Where there has been a finding of responsibility, the regulations require remedies designed to restore or preserve access to the school's education program or activity.

## **REPORTING**

All employees are required to notify the Title IX Coordinator when an employee has information about conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination under Title IX. All employees will be trained to that effect.

Any person may file a report of sex discrimination, including sex-based harassment (whether or not the person reporting is the person alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sex discrimination or sex-based harassment), at any time either in person, by mail, by telephone, or by electronic mail, using the contact information listed for the Title IX Coordinator, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person's verbal or written report. However, if a person files a false complaint in bad faith, knowingly and intentionally, they will be subject to discipline.

The contact information for the Title IX Coordinator will always be prominently displayed on the school's website.

## **INVESTIGATIONS**

The School will investigate and adjudicate formal complaints of sexual harassment using a grievance process that incorporates due process principles, treats all parties fairly, and reaches reliable responsibility determinations. The school's grievance process will at a minimum:

- Require equitable treatment of complainants and respondents;
- Provide for supportive measures whether or not a formal complaint is issued;
- Give both parties written notice of the allegations, an equal opportunity to select an advisor of the party's choice at the party's own expense (who may be, but does not need to be, an attorney), and an equal opportunity to submit and review evidence throughout the investigation;
- Require Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decisionmakers, and facilitators of an informal resolution process must not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent.
- Require adequate notice to the parties of the allegations, dismissal, delays, meetings, proceedings, and determinations;
- Give the parties an equal opportunity to present and access relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence, as well as provide a reasonable opportunity for each party to respond to that evidence;
- The school's decision makers must objectively evaluate each party's relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence;
- Have a process enabling the decision maker to assess a party's or witness's credibility when credibility is in dispute and relevant;
- Not impose disciplinary sanctions under Title IX on any person unless at the conclusion of grievance procedures it has been determined that sex discrimination for which the person was responsible has occurred;

- Obtain the parties' voluntary, written consent before using any kind of "informal resolution" process, such as mediation or restorative justice, and not use an informal process where an employee allegedly sexually harassed a student;
- Apply a presumption that the respondent is not responsible during the grievance process (often called a "presumption of innocence"), so that the school bears the burden of proof and the standard of evidence is applied correctly;
- Use the preponderance of the evidence standard for all complaints of harassment, regardless of whether the complaint is against students or district employees;
- Protect all complainants from inappropriately being asked about prior sexual history ("rape shield");
- Send both parties a written determination regarding responsibility explaining how and why the decision-maker reached conclusions;
- Effectively implement remedies for a complainant if a respondent is found responsible for sexual harassment;
- Offer both parties an equal opportunity to appeal;
- Protect any individual, including complainants, respondents, and witnesses, from retaliation for reporting sexual harassment or participating (or refusing to participate) in any Title IX grievance process;
- Make all materials used to train Title IX personnel publicly available on the school's website or, if the school does not maintain a website, make these materials available upon request for inspection by members of the public; and
- Document and keep records of all sexual harassment reports and investigations for at least seven years.

### **RETALIATION IS PROHIBITED**

Retaliation is strictly prohibited. Retaliation is any intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination against any person for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege, or because the person has reported information, made a complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation, including in an informal resolution process. Nothing in this definition or this part precludes a School from requiring an employee or other person authorized to provide aid, benefit, or service under the School's education program or activity to participate as a witness in, or otherwise assist with, an investigation.

Any person who experiences retaliation for exercising their rights under Title IX can file a retaliation complaint with the Title IX Coordinator.

### **SUPPORTIVE MEASURES**

The Title IX Coordinator will inform relevant persons of their rights to supportive measures even if no formal complaint is filed. Supportive measures for those involved in the sexual harassment complaint process may include: counseling, extending deadlines, modifications of work and/or class schedules, school escort services, increased school security and/or monitoring, mutual restrictions on contact between the individuals involved through a safety plan.

Supportive measures will be kept confidential whether they are provided to the alleged victim or accused person to the extent the confidentiality will not interfere with the supportive measure offered.

This policy, or a summary thereof that contains the essential policy elements shall be distributed by the **Belchertown School District** to its students, employees, parents and guardians.

The Complainant may also file a complaint with:

- The Mass. Commission Against Discrimination, 1 Ashburton Place, Room 601  
Boston, MA 02108.  
Phone: 617-994-6000.
- Office for Civil Rights (U.S. Department of Education)  
5 Post Office Square, 8th Floor  
Boston, MA 02109.  
Phone: 617-289-0111.
- The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission,  
John F. Kennedy Bldg.  
475 Government Center  
Boston, MA 02203.

Please note that the following entities have specified time limits for filing a claim.

### **RECORD KEEPING**

Schools must create and maintain records documenting every Title IX sexual harassment complaint. Records relating to complaints of sexual harassment must be kept in accordance with the records retention schedule. Such records include: records of a school's investigation (including complaints (formal and informal), notices, the determination, investigative report, disciplinary measures or remedies, etc.); records of any appeals and materials associated with the appeal; records of any supportive measures taken in response to a complaint of sexual harassment (even if the complainant does not file a formal complaint); records of any informal resolution process; all materials used to train Title IX Coordinators, Investigators, decision makers, and those facilitating an informal resolution. The training materials must be kept on the School's website.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 151B:3A

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

BESE 603 CMR 26:00

34 CFR 106.44 (a), (a)-(b)

34 CFR 106.45 (a)-(b) (1)

School Committee Approved: August 13, 2024

## **ADDA - C.O.R.I. - S.O.R.I. REQUIREMENTS**

It shall be the policy of the Belchertown Public School to obtain all available Criminal Offender Record Information (C.O.R.I) and Sex Offender Registry Information (S.O.R.I) from the Criminal History Systems Board of prospective employee(s) or volunteer(s) of the school department including any individual who regularly provides school related transportation to children, who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children, prior to hiring the employee(s) or to accepting any person as a volunteer. State law requires that school districts obtain C.O.R.I. data for employees of taxicab companies that have contracted with the schools to provide transportation to pupils. In addition, Belchertown Public School will also require S.O.R.I. data.

The Superintendent-Director, Principal, or their certified designees shall periodically, but not less than every three years, obtain all available Criminal Offender Record Information from the Criminal History Systems Board and Sex Offender Records Information from the Sex Offender Registry Board (SORB) on all employees. This includes individuals who regularly provide school related transportation to children, including taxicab company employees and volunteers who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children during their term of employment or volunteer service.

The Superintendent or his/her certified designees may also have access to Criminal Offender Record Information and Sex Offender Records Information for any subcontractor or laborer who performs work on school grounds, and who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children, and shall notify them of this requirement and comply with the appropriate provisions of this policy.

Pursuant to a Department of Education C.O.R.I. Law Advisory dated February 17, 2003, "Direct and unmonitored contact with children means contact with a child when no other C.O.R.I. or S.O.R.I. cleared employee of the school or district is present. A person having only the potential for incidental unsupervised contact with children in commonly used areas of the school grounds, such as hallways, shall not be considered to have the potential for direct and unmonitored contact with children. These excluded areas do not include bathrooms and other isolated areas (not commonly utilized and separated by sight or sound from other staff) that are accessible to students."

In accordance with state law, all current and prospective employees, volunteers, and persons regularly providing school related transportation to children of the school district shall sign a request form authorizing receipt by the district of all available C.O.R.I. and S.O.R.I. data from the Criminal History Systems Board. In the event that a current employee has questions concerning the signing of the request form, he/she may meet with the Principal or Superintendent-Director. However, failure to sign the C.O.R.I. or S.O.R.I request form may result in a referral to local counsel for appropriate action. Completed request forms must be kept in secure files. The School Committee, Superintendent-Director, Principal or their designees certified to obtain information under this policy, shall prohibit the dissemination of school information for any purpose other than to further the protection of school children.

C.O.R.I. / S.O.R.I. is not subject to the public records law and must be kept in a secure location, separate from personnel files and may be retained for not more than three years. C.O.R.I. / S.O.R.I. may be shared with the individual to whom it pertains, upon his or her request, and in the event of an inaccurate report the individual should contact the Criminal History Systems Board or the Sex Offender Registry Board.

Access to C.O.R.I. / S.O.R.I. material must be restricted to those individuals certified to receive such information. In the case of prospective employees or volunteers, C.O.R.I. / S.O.R.I. material should be obtained only where the Superintendent-Director has determined that the applicant is qualified and may forthwith be recommended for employment or volunteer duties.

The hiring authority, subject to applicable law, reserves the exclusive right concerning any employment decision made pursuant to Chapter 385 of the Acts of 2002. The employer may consider the following factors when reviewing C.O.R.I.: the type and nature of the offense, the date of the offense, and whether the individual has been subsequently arrested, as well as any other factors the employer deems relevant. Unless otherwise provided by law, a criminal record will not automatically disqualify an applicant. Rather, determinations of suitability based on C.O.R.I. checks will be made consistent with this policy and any applicable law or regulations.

If a criminal record is received from the Criminal History Systems Board (CHSB), the Superintendent will closely compare the record provided by CHSB with the information on the C.O.R.I. request form and any other identifying information provided by the applicant, to ensure the record relates to the applicant.

If the district is inclined to make an adverse decision based on the results of the C.O.R.I. check, the applicant will be notified immediately. The applicant shall be provided with a copy of the criminal record and the district's C.O.R.I. policy, advised of the part(s) of the record that make the individual unsuitable for the position or license, and given an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the C.O.R.I. record.

The Superintendent shall ensure that on the application for employment and/or volunteer form there shall be a statement that as a condition of employment or volunteer service the school district is required by law to obtain Criminal Offender Record Information or Sex Offender Registry Information for any employee, individual who regularly provides school related transportation, or volunteer who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children. Current employees, persons regularly providing school related transportation, and volunteers shall also be informed in writing by the Superintendent-Director prior to the periodic obtaining of their Criminal Offender Record Information or Sex Offender Registry Information.

The Superintendent shall amend employment applications to include questions concerning criminal records (see attachment) which the Massachusetts Commission against Discrimination has determined may be legally asked of prospective employees. Any employment application which seeks information concerning prior arrests or convictions of the applicant shall include the following statement: "An applicant for employment with a sealed record on file with the commissioner of probation may answer 'no record' with respect to an inquiry herein relative to prior arrests, criminal court appearances, or convictions. An applicant for employment with a sealed record on file with the commissioner of probation may answer 'no record' to an inquiry herein relative to prior arrests or criminal court appearances. In addition, any applicant for employment may answer 'no record' with respect to any inquiry relative to prior arrests, court appearances, and adjudications in all cases of delinquency or as a child in need of service which did not result in a complaint transferred to the superior court for criminal prosecution."

Records sealed pursuant to law shall not operate to disqualify a person in any examination, appointment, or application for public service on behalf of the Commonwealth or any political subdivision thereof.

The Superintendent shall revise contracts with special education schools and other providers to require a signed statement that the provider has met all the legal requirements of the state where it is located relative to criminal background checks for employees and others having direct and unmonitored contact with children.

**As soon as possible after the district obtains the certification from the Criminal History Systems Board to receive C.O.R.I. data and certification from the Sex Offender Registry Board, the Superintendent-Director shall obtain such data for any person then providing volunteer service, as a condition of continued service.**

LEGAL REF: M.G.L. 71:38R, 151B, 276, §.100A, St. 2002, c.385

MCAD Regulations and D.O.E. Advisory on C.O.R.I. Law (Feb 17, 2003)

Adopted: October 18, 2023

## ADDA-E-1 - INFORMATION CONCERNING THE PROCESS IN CORRECTING A CRIMINAL RECORD

If you have undergone a background check by an agency that has received a criminal record from the CHSB, you may ask the agency to provide you with a copy of the criminal record. You may also request a copy of your adult criminal record from the Criminal History Systems Board, 200 Arlington Street, Suite 2200, Chelsea, MA 02150 by calling (617) 660-4640 or go to [www.mass.gov/chsb/cori/cori\\_forms.html#pers](http://www.mass.gov/chsb/cori/cori_forms.html#pers).

The CHSB charges \$25.00 fee to provide an individual with a copy of his/her criminal record. You may complete an affidavit of indigency and request that the CHSB waive the fee.

Upon receipt, review the record. If you need assistance in interpreting the entries or dispositions, please review the disposition code and "how to read a BOP" on the CHSB's website [www.mass.gov/chsb/cori/cori\\_bop.html](http://www.mass.gov/chsb/cori/cori_bop.html). The CHSB does not offer "walkin" service but you may call our Legal Division at (617) 660-4760 for assistance or the CORI Unit of the Office of the Commissioner of Probation at (617) 727-5300.

If you believe that a case is opened on your record that should be marked closed, you may contact the Office of the Commissioner of Probation CORI Unit at (617) 727-5300 for assistance, or you may go to the Probation Department at the court where the charges were brought and request that the case(s) be updated.

If you believe that a disposition is incorrect, contact the Chief Probation Officer at the court where the charges were brought or the CORI Unit at the Office of the Commissioner of Probation and report that the court incorrectly entered a disposition on your criminal record.

If you believe that someone has stolen or improperly used your identity and were arraigned on criminal charges under your name, you may contact the Office of the Commissioner of Probation CORI Unit or the Chief Probation Officer in the court where the charges were brought. For a listing of courthouses and telephone numbers, please see [www.mass.gov/chsb/cori/cori\\_codes\\_court.html](http://www.mass.gov/chsb/cori/cori_codes_court.html)

In some situations of identity theft, you may need to contact the CHSB to arrange to have a fingerprint analysis conducted.

If there is a warrant currently outstanding against you, you need to appear at the court and ask that the warrant be recalled. You cannot do this over the telephone.

If you believe that an employer, volunteer agency, housing agency or municipality has been provided with a criminal record that does not pertain to you, the agency should contact the CORI Unit for assistance at (617) 660-4640.

## ADDA-E-2 - C.O.R.I. REQUIREMENTS

### Employers may ask the following series of questions:

1. Have you been convicted of a felony? Yes or no?
2. Have you been convicted of a misdemeanor within the past five years (other than a first conviction for any of the following misdemeanors: drunkenness, simple assault, speeding, minor traffic violations, affray or disturbance of the peace)? Yes or no?
3. Have you completed a period of incarceration within the past five years for any misdemeanor (other than a first conviction for any of the following misdemeanors: drunkenness, simple assault, speeding, minor traffic violations, affray or disturbance of the peace)? Yes or no?
4. If the answer to question number 3 above is “yes” please state whether you were convicted more than five years ago for any offense (other than a first conviction for any of the following misdemeanors: drunkenness, simple assault, speeding, minor traffic violations, affray or disturbance of the peace)? Yes or no?

Some employers are authorized to request, receive, view and/or hold criminal offender record information pursuant to state or federal law.

Any inquiry into the criminal record of an applicant must also contain language pursuant to M.G.L. c. 276, § 100A.

### It is unlawful for an employer to make any inquiry of an applicant or employee regarding:

1. An arrest, detention or disposition regarding any violation of law in which no conviction resulted.
2. First convictions for the misdemeanors of drunkenness, simple assault, speeding, minor traffic violations, affrays or disturbance of the peace. For the purposes of 804 CMR 3.02 minor traffic violations include any moving traffic violation other than reckless driving, driving to endanger and motor vehicle homicide.
3. Any conviction of a misdemeanor where the date of the conviction or the completion of any period of incarceration resulting therefrom, which ever date is later, occurred five or more years prior to the date of such inquiry, unless such person has been convicted of any offense within five years immediately preceding the date of the inquiry.

No person shall be held under any provision of any law to be guilty of perjury or of otherwise giving false statement by reason of his failure to recite or acknowledge such information as he has a right to withhold by 804 CMR 3.02.

## ADDA-R - C.O.R.I. REQUIREMENTS

Applicants challenging the accuracy of the policy shall be provided a copy of the Criminal History Systems Board's (CHSB) Information Concerning the Process in Correcting a Criminal Record. If the CORI record provided does not exactly match the identification information provided by the applicant, the Superintendent will make a determination based on a comparison of the CORI record and documents provided by the applicant. The Superintendent may contact the CHSB and request a detailed search consistent with CHSB policy.

If the Superintendent reasonably believes the record belongs to the applicant and is accurate, based on the information as provided in district policy, then the determination of suitability for the position or license will be made. Unless otherwise provided by law, factors considered in determining suitability may include, but not be limited to the following:

- (a) Relevance of the crime to the position sought;
- (b) The nature of the work to be performed;
- (c) Time since the conviction;
- (d) Age of the candidate at the time of the offense;
- (e) Seriousness and specific circumstances of the offense;
- (f) The number of offenses;
- (g) Whether the applicant has pending charges;
- (h) Any relevant evidence of rehabilitation or lack thereof;
- (i) Any other relevant information, including information submitted by the candidate or requested by the hiring authority

The Superintendent will notify the applicant of the decision and the basis of the decision in a timely manner.

# ADF - WELLNESS POLICY

The Belchertown Public Schools are committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. With the passing of the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010, and Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods and Beverages in Public Schools (105 CMR 225), the goal is to ensure Belchertown Public Schools offer students food and beverage choices that will enhance learning, contribute to their healthy growth and development, and cultivate lifelong healthy eating behaviors. The intent of this policy is to outline the district's on-going commitment in support of wellness in the areas of nutrition, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote health and wellness. Using passed School Nutrition Bill 2010, and recommendations by the Massachusetts Departments of Education and the Department of Public Health, it is the policy of the Belchertown School District that:

- The school district will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing district-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students in grades Pre-K through 12 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold a la carte or competitive foods served at school will meet the nutrition standards for competitive foods and beverages in public schools, 105 CMR 225.00, found on the Massachusetts A list. The list is found at [www.johnstalkerinstitute.org](http://www.johnstalkerinstitute.org)
- The Food Service Director will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; will accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
- To the maximum extent practicable, all schools in our district will participate in available federal school meal programs.
- Schools will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, and with related community services.

## TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:

### I. Healthy and Safer Schools Committee

The School Committee will establish a Healthy and Safer Schools subcommittee to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The Healthy and Safer Schools Committee will provide oversight for the multifaceted plan that this policy addresses: curriculum, school activities, food service, and guidelines for teachers, staff, and parents. The membership of this committee shall include at least one: parent, student, School Committee member, Pre-K guidance counselor, 7 through 12 guidance counselor, school administrator from each school in the district, community member, as well as the School Resource Officer the School Nurse Leader, and the Director of Food Service. The Healthy and Safer Schools Committee will also serve as a resource to school sites for implementing those policies.

### II. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus

#### School Meals

Meals served through the National School Lunch Program will ensure that all foods including competitive foods or beverages sold or provided to students during the school day meet State and Federal food requirements:

- be appealing and attractive to children;
- be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;

- offer low-fat (1 %) and fat-free milk
- all foods shall be trans-fat free;
- make nutritional information available;
- prohibit fryolators in preparation of competitive foods;
- no food or beverage shall contain artificial sweeteners.

Schools should engage students and parents, through surveys and meetings, in selecting foods sold through the school meal programs in order to identify new, healthful, and appealing food choices. In addition, schools should share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students. All nutritional information for the school menu is found on the district web site. Promotion of healthy foods will be a priority.

### Free and Reduced-Priced Meals

The Belchertown Public Schools will continue to make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals.

### Meal Times and Scheduling Recommendations

Schools:

- will provide students with at least 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- should schedule meal periods at appropriate times, e.g., lunch should be scheduled during the mid-day portion of the schedule according to the school site;
- should not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
- will schedule lunch periods to allow daily recess periods (in elementary schools);
- will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks.

### Qualifications of School Food Services Staff

The Food Service Director will administer the school meal programs. As part of the school district's responsibility to operate a food services program, we will provide continuing professional development for the Food Service Director and staff. Staff development programs should include appropriate certification and/or training programs for the Food Service staff according to their levels of responsibility.

### Sharing of Foods and Beverages

Schools should discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

### Foods and Beverages Sold Individually

Belchertown Public Schools will adhere to 105 CMR 225.00, Nutrition Standards, for competitive Foods and Beverages in Public Schools from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day.

All foods and beverages sold individually outside the reimbursable school meal programs (including those sold through a la carte lines, vending machines, or fundraising activities) during the school day, or through educational programs for students after the school day, will meet the Massachusetts A List for competitive foods. Fresh fruit and non-fried vegetables may be offered for sale.

#### (A) Beverages

##### (1) Juice

- (a) All juice shall be made of 100% fruit or vegetable juice, with no added sugar and may or may not be diluted with water or carbonated water.
- (b) Servings of juice shall be no more than 8 ounces.

##### (2) Milk and Milk Substitutes

- (a) All milk and milk substitutes, which include alternative milk beverages such as lactose-free and soy milk, shall be fat free or low fat (1% or less).

- (b) All milk and milk substitutes shall meet the USDA definitions and standards for fluid milk and milk substitutes.
  - (c) Servings of milk and milk substitutes shall be no more than 8 ounces.
  - (d) Flavored milk and flavored milk substitutes shall be fat free and have no more than 22 grams of sugar per eight ounces.
- (3) Water
- (a) Water shall contain no added sugars, sweeteners or artificial sweeteners, but may contain natural flavorings and/or carbonation.
- (4) Other Beverages
- (a) No beverages other than juice, milk, milk substitutes and water, all as defined above, shall be sold or provided.

Vending machines not part of the school lunch program will be closed at or during lunch except those that only dispense water.

(B) Food

Calories

Food shall not exceed 350 calories for entrée items including accompaniments or 200 calories for side or snack dish items.

Fat

No food shall contain more than 35% of its total calories from fat, except as provided in 105 CMR 225.200 (B)(4).

Saturated Fat

No food shall contain no more than 10% of its total calories from saturated fat, except provided in 105 CMR 225.200 (B) (4).

Exception to Standards on Fat Content

Regardless of the limits established above in 105 CMR 225.200(B) for fat content schools may provide or sell up to one ounce of nuts, seeds, nut/seed butters, reduced fat cheese, part skim mozzarella, or products that consist of only dried fruit with nuts and/or seeds with no added nutritive sweeteners or fat. Additionally, schools may provide or sell seafood with no added fat. No other combination products are exempt from the fat standard.

Exceptions to Standards on Saturated Fat Content

Regardless of the limits established above in 105 CMR 225.200 (B) for saturated fat content, schools may provide or sell up to one ounce of nuts, seeds, seeds, nut/seed butters, reduced fat cheese, part skim mozzarella, or products that consist of only dried fruit with nuts and/or seeds with no added nutritive sweeteners or fat. No other combination products are exempt from the saturated fat standard.

Trans Fat

All foods shall be trans-fat free.

Sugar

No food shall contain more than 35% of its weight from total sugars; provided however, that a public school may provide or sell (a) Fresh, frozen and canned fruits/vegetables with no added sweeteners except for fruits packed in 100% juice; (b) Products consisting of only dried fruit with nuts and/or seeds with no added nutritive sweeteners or fat; and (c) Dried whole fruits/vegetables, dried whole fruit/vegetable pieces, dried dehydrated fruits/vegetables with no added nutritive sweeteners, and dried

fruits with nutritive sweeteners that are required for processing and/or palatability purposes, i.e., cranberries, tart cherries and blueberries.

### Sodium

No food shall contain more than 200 mg of sodium per item, with the exception of a la carte entrees, which shall not contain more than 480 mg of sodium per item.

### Grains

All breads and other grain based products shall be comprised of whole grains.

### Food and Beverages

#### (1) Artificial Sweeteners

No food or beverages shall contain an artificial sweetener.

#### (2) Caffeine

No food or beverages shall contain more than trace amounts of caffeine.

#### (3) Accompaniments

All accompaniments must be included in the nutrient profile as part of the item served.

A choice of fresh fruits and/or non-fried vegetables will be offered for sale at any location on the school site where foods are sold

### Portion Sizes

- Limit portion sizes of foods and beverages sold individually in accordance with the A List.

### Fundraising Activities Recommendations

To support children's health and school nutrition-education efforts, school fundraising activities can involve food that meets nutrition and portion size standards for foods and beverages sold individually. Schools will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity. The school district will make available a list of ideas for acceptable fundraising activities. The policy will be amended as necessary per state standards.

### Snacks from Home

We recommend that snacks brought in from home make a positive contribution to the students' diets and health. Suggestions for healthy snacks are available from your school nurse.

The district's web site will provide teachers, parents, students a link to the Massachusetts A List and will work to educate teachers, after-school program personnel, and parents about nutritious foods.

### Rewards

Schools will refrain from foods or beverages, as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, and will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment. Please refer to Healthy Students, Healthy Schools Guide for a list of recommended alternative rewards.

### Curriculum-Based Food Activities

The Belchertown Public Schools will adopt curriculum-based food activities approved by the principal/director or by their designee. All food will be prepared at school site by teachers/staff members. All teachers will be mindful of students with food allergies and will not allow allergy food to be brought in the classroom. A list of allowable peanut/tree nut free snacks will be available for parents and teachers. See district website under Health Services for suggested list.

### School-Sponsored Events (such as, but not limited to, athletic events, dances, or performances)

Foods and beverages offered or sold at school-sponsored events outside the school day will try to meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually (above).

### III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

#### Nutrition Education and Promotion

The Belchertown Public Schools aim to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools should provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- will encourage students to start each day with a healthy breakfast;
- will develop a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- is part of not only health education classes, but also classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;
- includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- promote fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices;
- emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise);
- teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing; and
- includes training for teachers and other staff.

#### Integrated Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting

For students to receive physical activity and for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. To that end:

- health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically-active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television;
- opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons as appropriate;
- classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate; and
- recess periods should not be used as a punishment

#### Communication with Parents

The district will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The district will send home nutrition information, post nutrition tips on its websites, and provide nutrient analyses of school menus. Schools should encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the above nutrition standards for individual foods and beverages. The district will provide parents with the link to the Massachusetts A list that meets the district's snack standards and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards, and fundraising activities.

The district will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities before, during, and after the school day; and support parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school. Such supports will include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through a website, newsletter, or other take-home materials, special events, or physical education homework.

#### Food Marketing in Schools

School-based marketing will be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. As such, schools will limit food and beverage marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually (see above). School-based marketing of brands

promoting predominantly low-nutrition foods and beverages is prohibited. The promotion of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products is encouraged.

Examples of marketing techniques include the following: logos and brand names on/in vending machines, books or curricula, textbook covers, school supplies, scoreboards, school structures, and sports equipment; educational incentive programs that provide food as a reward; programs that provide schools with supplies when families buy low-nutrition food products; free samples or coupons; and food sales through fundraising activities. Marketing activities that promote healthful behaviors (and are therefore allowable) include: vending machine covers promoting water; pricing structures that promote healthy options in a la carte lines or vending machines; and sales of fruit for fundraisers.

#### IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

##### Physical Education (P.E.) Pre-K through 12

All students in grades Pre-K through 12, including students with disabilities, special healthcare needs, and in alternative education settings, will receive physical education or its equivalent. All physical education classes will be taught by a licensed physical education teacher. Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity (e.g., interscholastic or intramural sports) will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement. Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

##### Daily Recess

All elementary school students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools will encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity through the provision of space and equipment.

Unless no other options are available, loss of recess as a consequence will be discouraged.

Schools will discourage extended periods of two or more hours of inactivity. When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of time, schools will give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active, if allowable.

##### Safe Routes to School

The school district will assess and, if necessary and to the extent possible, make needed improvements to make it safer and easier for students to walk and bike to school. When appropriate, the district will work together with local public works, public safety, and/or police departments in those efforts. The school district will explore the availability of federal "safe routes to school" funds, administered by the state department of transportation, to finance such improvements.

#### V. Monitoring and Policy Review

##### Monitoring

The Superintendent or designee will ensure compliance with established district-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. In each school, the principal or designee will ensure compliance with those policies in his/her school and will report on the school's compliance to the school district's Superintendent or designee.

School food service staff, at the school or district level, will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the superintendent (or if done at the school level to the school principal). In addition, the school district will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes.

If the district has not received a SMI review from the state agency within the past five years, the district will request from the state agency that a SMI review be scheduled as soon as possible. The superintendent or designee will develop a summary report every three years on district-wide compliance with the district's

established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies, based on input from schools within the district. That report will be provided to the School Committee and will make it available to the community via the district web site.

### Policy Review

Assessments will be repeated every three years to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, the school district will review our nutrition and physical activity policies; provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity; and nutrition and physical education policies and program elements. The district, and individual schools within the district, will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation. The district and/or individual schools will make updates available on an annual basis and will inform the public about content of wellness policy updated or revised.

Written documentation demonstrating compliance with community involvement, annual progress report, documentation of annual public notification of the wellness policy and triennial assessment will be available to the public, as well as any documentation of assessment for each school.

State agencies will conduct administrative reviews at least every 3 years (Local wellness policy, documentation demonstrating policy made available to public, documentation of efforts to review and update the wellness policy- indicating who is involved and methods district uses to make stakeholders aware of ability to participate), the most recent assessment on the implementation of the wellness policy and documentation demonstrating the most recent assessment on implementation of wellness policy made available to public.

LEGAL REFS.:           Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010  
                              Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods and Beverages in Public Schools, 105 CMR 225

CROSS REFS.:         EFC, Free and Reduced-Cost Food Services  
                              IHAMA, Teaching About Alcohol, Tobacco and Drugs  
                              KI, Public Solicitations/Advertising in District Facilities

Personnel & Policy Approved:	February 1, 2016
School Committee Approved:	February 9, 2016
School Committee Approved:	May 23, 2017
School Committee Approved:	August 13, 2024

## B DFA - SCHOOL COUNCILS

The School Committee believes that the school will be the key unit for educational improvement and change and that successful school improvement is best accomplished through a school-based decision-making process. By involving those directly affected by any action or decision of the school council in the process of determining that action or decision, it helps to strengthen the commitment to those decisions by those most affected by its implementation.

Under this policy, the Principal shall have primary responsibility for the management of the school. Decisions which are made at the school level must be aligned with the budget, policies, curriculum, and long-range and short-range goals adopted by the School Committee. In addition, decisions must comply with any state and federal laws and regulations and with any negotiated agreements of the school District.

As enacted by the state legislature in the Education Reform Act of 1993, a school council shall be established in each school to advise the Principal in specific areas of school operation. The Principal, except as specifically defined in the law, shall have the responsibility for defining the composition of and forming the group pursuant to a representative process approved by the Superintendent and School Committee.

The following requirements define the role of the school council:

The School Council shall meet regularly with the Principal of the school and shall assist in:

1. Adoption of educational goals for the school that are consistent with state and local policies and standards.
2. Identification of the educational needs of the students attending the school.
3. Review of the school building budget.
4. Formulation of a school improvement plan that may be implemented only after review and approval by the Superintendent.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:38Q, 71:59C

Personnel & Policy Subcommittee Revised: January 11, 2016

Personnel & Policy Subcommittee Approved: February 1, 2016

School Committee Approved: February 9, 2016

## EBCD - EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

The Superintendent may close the schools or dismiss them early in the event of hazardous weather or other emergencies that threaten the health or safety of students and personnel. While it may be prudent, under certain circumstances, to excuse all students from attending school, to delay the opening hour or to dismiss students early, the Superintendent has the responsibility to see that as much of the administrative, supervisory and operational activity is continued as may be possible. Therefore, if conditions affect only a single school, only that school may be closed.

In making the decision to close schools, the Superintendent will consider many factors, including the following principal ones relating to the fundamental concern for the safety and health of the children:

1. Weather conditions, both existing and predicted.
2. Driving, traffic, and parking conditions affecting public and private transportation facilities.
3. Actual occurrence or imminent possibility of any emergency condition that would make the operation of schools difficult or dangerous.
4. Inability of teaching personnel to report for duty, which might result in inadequate supervision of students.

The Superintendent will weigh these factors and take action to close the schools only after consultation with public works and public safety authorities and with school officials from neighboring towns. Students, parents and staff will be informed early in each school year of the procedures that will be used to notify them in case of emergency closings. When schools are closed for emergency reasons, staff members will comply with School Committee policy in reporting for work.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:4; 71:4A

CROSS REF.: EBC, Emergency Plans

## EFC - FREE AND REDUCED PRICE FOOD SERVICES

The school system will take part in the National School Lunch Program and other food programs that may become available to ensure that all children in the schools receive proper nourishment.

In accordance with guidelines for participation in these programs, and in accordance with the wishes of the Committee, no child who a teacher believes is improperly nourished will be denied a lunch or other food simply because proper application has not been received from his/her parent or guardian.

As required by state and federal regulations, the School Committee will approve a policy statement pertaining to eligibility for free milk, free meals, and reduced price meals.

LEGAL REFS.: National School Lunch Act, as amended (42 USC 1751-1760) Child Nutrition Act of 1966

P.L. 89-642, 80 Stat. 885, as amended

M.G.L. 15:1G; 15:1L; 69:1C; 71:72

Approved: February 13, 2018

# EFD - MEAL CHARGE POLICY

## **Meal Charges and Balances**

Students will receive the first meal free of charge. Second meals, a la carte items and milk with home lunch are not free of charge. Belchertown Public Schools does not allow student charging.

## **Payments**

Parents/Guardians are responsible for all meal payments to the food service program. Notices of low or deficit balances will be sent directly to parent/guardians via email or regular postal mail at regular intervals during the school year. At no time shall any staff member give payment notices to students unless that student is known to be an emancipated minor who is fully responsible for themselves or over the age of 18. If parent/guardians have issues with student purchases they should contact food services for assistance.

Parents/Guardians may pay for meals in advance. Further details are available on the school district webpage and in student handbooks. Funds should be maintained in accounts to minimize the possibility that a child may be without meal money on any given day. Any remaining funds for a particular student, whether positive or negative, will be carried over to the next school year.

All school cafeterias possess computerized point of sale/cash register systems that maintain records of all monies deposited and spent for each student and those records are available to parents by setting up an online account (see student handbooks for more details) or by speaking with the school's food service manager. The point of sale system is designed to prevent direct identification of a student's meal status. Parents will receive automated low-balance emails or mailed notices weekly, if applicable. If notices do not result in payment, parents will receive a phone call from food services. If the phone call does not result in payment the food service manager shall turn the account over to the business office.

## **Refunds**

Refunds for withdrawn and/or graduating students require a written request (email, postal, or in person) for a refund of any money remaining in their account to be submitted. Graduating students also have the option to transfer funds to a sibling's account or to donate to a student in need with a written request.

## **Policy Communications**

This policy shall be communicated to all staff and families at the beginning of each school year and to families transferring to the district during the year.

LEGAL REFS: MGL [71:72](#); USDA School Meal Program Guidelines May 2017

CROSS REFS: [JQ](#), Student Fees, Fines & Charges

SOURCE: MASC February 2018

Approved Belchertown School Committee: April 24, 2018

Approved Belchertown School Committee: August 13, 2024

## IHBA - PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In keeping with the intention of the state of Massachusetts to offer educational opportunities to all students that will enable them to lead fulfilling and productive lives, the District shall provide appropriate educational opportunities to all resident students in accordance with the requirements of state and federal statutes.

LEGAL REF.:           Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504

# IHBAA - OBSERVATIONS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

1. Parents' request to observe their child(ren), current program, or a potential placement must be made at least five days in advance with the Special Education Director or designee and/or Principal.
2. The Special Education Director or designee shall contact the parent(s) for initial scheduling conversation within five (5) days of receipt of the parents' request.
3. When a parent requests an observation of a special needs student or program, the Special Education Director or designee will seek approval from the Director of Special Education and the building principal before it is processed. Such approval may only be withheld for those reasons outlined within law and DESE regulation.
4. The Special Education Director or designee and/or Principal will work with the classroom teacher and the observer to set up the specifics of the observation (including, but not limited to, scheduling and placement of the observer in the class room).
5. The number, frequency, and duration of observation periods will be determined on an individual student basis in accordance with law and regulation. The start and end time of observation periods and a schedule of observation periods will be stated in advance. In order to minimize classroom or student disruption, the length of individual observation periods may be limited.
6. If the observer is not the parent, the parent must sign a release for the individual to observe.
7. The number of observers at any one time may be limited.
8. The observer will be informed that he/she is not to interfere with the educational environment of the classroom. If his/her presence presents a problem, he/she will be asked to leave. This notice is particularly important, since the presence of parents can influence both the performance of their child(ren) and those of others.
9. The observer will be asked to submit his/her report of the observation in advance of any follow-up TEAM meeting.
10. The observer will be informed that he/she is there to evaluate the appropriateness of a specific educational program to meet the needs of an individual child.
11. The observer will be instructed regarding the disclosure of confidential or personally identifiable information relating to other children. Staff must be mindful of removing materials which may be part of students' records from plain view. In the event that removal is not possible the observer may be asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement.
12. A school administrator, or designee, also will observe at the same time and take notes as to what is observed, paying particular attention to note anything that is non-typical concerning the period. This observation summary will be placed in the student's file and provided to the parent(s) prior to any follow-up TEAM meeting.

LEGAL REF.: MGL 71B:3  
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2009-2 dated January 8, 2009

CROSS REF.: KI, Visitors to Schools

NOTE: The following quotes from the DESE Advisory are important points of understanding to the implementation of this policy.

“School districts and parents have reported that, typically, observations are between one and four hours. While useful as a general rule, the Department recommends that district policies and practices specify that the duration and extent of observations will be determined on an individual basis. Districts should avoid rigid adherence to defined time limits regardless of the student's needs and settings to be observed. The complexities of the child's needs, as well as the program or programs to be observed, should determine what the observation will entail and what amount of time is needed to complete it. Discussion between school staff and the parent or designee is a good starting point for resolving the issue.”

“The observation law states that districts may not condition or restrict program observations except when necessary to protect:

- the safety of children in the program during the observation;
- the integrity of the program during the observation;
- and children in the program from disclosure by an observer of confidential or personally identifiable information he or she may obtain while observing the program.”

Approved by School Committee: August 13, 2024

# IJNDB - ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

## **Purpose**

Belchertown Public Schools maintain a computer network and computer systems to provide students, faculty and staff with access to a host of resources both internally within the district and on the Internet. These resources include, but are not limited to, desktop, laptop, and tablet computers, personal digital assistants, network and Internet access, e-mail, telephones, voicemail and facsimile machines (collectively to be called "Electronic Resources"). The Belchertown Public Schools network is established to support the educational mission and administrative operations of the individual schools.

## **Responsibilities**

As a student or employee at Belchertown Public Schools you may have access to Electronic Resources, including the network and Internet. The network is viewed as an extension of the public schools community and all expectations regarding standards of behavior as outlined in the Student, Employee or Faculty Handbook apply to your actions while utilizing or accessing the network or other Electronic Resources. You are expected to use the Electronic Resources in a mature, ethical, and responsible manner. Personal use is allowed but Belchertown Public Schools reserves the right to limit your access. If you believe a website is blocked in error, please contact the Belchertown Public Schools Office of Information Technology to initiate a review. Access to the Belchertown Public Schools network is a privilege and not a right.

## **Unacceptable Uses and Behavior**

Activities that are considered violations of this electronic resources acceptable use policy and school rules include:

### **Illegal Activities**

- involvement in any activity prohibited by law.
- intentional use of invasive software such as "viruses," "worms," "Trojan Horses" and other malicious software.
- interfering with the normal and proper operation of this network, the Internet or any other network. This includes: "hacking," "cracking," probing, attempting to gain access to network servers and equipment, utilizing excessive amounts of bandwidth, and setting up servers on the network of any type without express permission.
- adversely affecting the ability of others to use equipment or services.

### **Plagiarism and Copyright Infringement**

- transferring, utilizing or storing materials in violation of copyright laws or license agreements. This includes software, music files, images and text.
- plagiarizing work found on the Internet - all sources of work must be cited and credited.
- tampering with computers, printers, network devices and other equipment belonging to Belchertown Public Schools or other people.
- using the network for financial and/or personal gain or for political lobbying except as expressly allowed during a school activity.
- attempting to log on to the network as the system administrator or gain access beyond your authorized access level.
- attempting to bypass security systems and software.
- sharing passwords or using someone else's password or attempting to discover another person's password.
- trespassing in another's folders, e-mail, work, or files or using another person's account.
- changing computer files that do not belong to you.

## **Conduct**

- conducting yourself in ways that are harmful to others.
- creating, transferring or otherwise using any text, image, movie, or sound recording that contains pornography, profanity, vulgarity, obscenity, or language that offends or tends to degrade others.
- sending or forwarding "chain" type letters, hate mail, anonymous or threatening messages.
- viewing, storing or transferring obscene, sexually explicit or pornographic material.
- posting or sending e-mail or voicemail messages that are personal attacks, including any prejudicial, discriminatory, racist or sexist content, could cause damage or disruption, contain false or defamatory information about a person or organization, or harassing another person. If you are told by a person to stop sending them messages, you must stop.
- posting personal contact information about yourself or other people. This includes your address, telephone number, school address, etc.
- Staff or Faculty professional communications with students and parents will only occur through district issued accounts.

**Disciplinary actions**

Violation of this Acceptable Use Policy is considered a violation of district policy. Some behaviors are considered violations of a major school rule. Violations will result in one or more of the following disciplinary actions (Belchertown Public Schools will decide in its sole discretion which disciplinary action is warranted under the circumstances):

- verbal warning
- written warning
- restriction of access privileges
- removal from a class activity
- removal from a course
- confiscation of computer equipment
- student detention, restrictions or work hours
- suspension or expulsion
- payment for damages due to your actions
- referral to legal authorities

**Privacy**

Users of the network or other Electronic Resources have no reasonable expectation of privacy concerning any materials transferred over or stored within the Belchertown Public Schools network or on other Electronic Resources (e.g., voicemail and e-mail). Information such as e-mails transmitted over the network may be a public record. The network is subject to monitoring.

**Limited Liability**

Belchertown Public Schools makes no guarantee that the functions or the services provided by or through the network will be error-free or without defect. Belchertown Public Schools will not be responsible for any damage you may suffer, including but not limited to, loss of data or interruptions of service. Belchertown Public Schools are not responsible for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained through or stored on the system. Belchertown Public Schools will not be responsible for financial obligations arising through your use of the system. **You are responsible for your activities.**

**By signing below, I acknowledge that I have completely read, understood and agree to abide by the Belchertown Public Schools Acceptable Use Policy.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Printed Name of Student or Staff Member*      *Signature*      *Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Printed Name of Parent (if Required)*      *Signature*      *Date*

School Committee Approved:

March 28, 2017

# IJNDB-R ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY - TECHNOLOGY ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

1. Commercial use of the system/network is prohibited.
2. The District will provide training to users in the proper use of the system/network.
3. The District will provide each user with copies of the Acceptable Use Policy and Procedures.
4. Copyrighted software or data shall not be placed on the District system/network without permission from the holder of the copyright and the system administrator.
5. Access will be granted to employees with a signed access agreement and permission of their supervisor.
6. Access will be granted to students with a signed access agreement and permission of the building administrator or designee(s).
7. Account names will be recorded on access agreements and kept on file at the building level.
8. Initial passwords provided by the network administrator should be set to expire on login.
9. Passwords shall be changed every 15 days and all passwords shall be expired at the end of each school year.
10. Passwords are confidential. All passwords shall be protected by the user and not shared or displayed.
11. Students completing required course work will have first priority for after-hours use of equipment.
12. Principals or their designee will be responsible for disseminating and enforcing policies and procedures in the building(s) under their control.
13. Principals or their designee will ensure that all users complete and sign an agreement to abide by policies and procedures regarding use of the system/network. All such agreements are to be maintained at the building level.
14. Principals or their designee will ensure that training is provided to users on appropriate use of electronic resources.
15. Principals or their designee shall be authorized to monitor or examine all system activities, including electronic mail transmissions, as deemed appropriate to ensure proper use of electronic resources.
16. Principals or their designee shall be responsible for establishing appropriate retention and backup schedules.
17. Principals or their designee shall be responsible for establishing disk usage limitations, if needed.
18. Individual users shall, at all times, be responsible for the proper use of accounts issued in their name.
19. The system/network may not be used for illegal purposes, in support of illegal activities, or for any activity prohibited by District policy.
20. System users shall not use another user's account.
21. System users should purge electronic information according to District retention guidelines.
22. System users may redistribute copyrighted material only with the written permission of the copyright holder or designee. Such permission must be specified in the document or in accordance with applicable copyright laws, District policy, and administrative procedures.
23. System administrators may upload/download public domain programs to the system/ network. System administrators are responsible for determining if a program is in the public domain.
24. Any malicious attempt to harm or destroy equipment, materials, data, or programs is prohibited.
25. Deliberate attempts to degrade or disrupt system performance may be viewed as violations of District policy and/or as criminal activity under applicable state and federal laws. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses.
26. Vandalism will result in the cancellation of system privileges and will require restitution for costs associated with hardware, software, and system restoration.
27. Forgery or attempted forgery is prohibited.
28. Attempts to read, delete, copy, or modify the electronic mail of other users or to interfere with the ability of other users to send/receive electronic mail is prohibited.
29. Use appropriate language; swearing, vulgarity, ethnic or racial slurs, and other inflammatory language is prohibited.
30. Pretending to be someone else when sending/receiving message is prohibited.
31. Transmitting or viewing obscene material is prohibited.
32. Revealing personal information (addresses, phone numbers, etc.) is prohibited.

33. The District will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to misuse of the District's system/network.

A user who violates District policy or administrative procedures will be subject to suspension or termination of system/network privileges and will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action and/or prosecution.

# IJNDD-R ELECTRONIC CONTACT AND SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY REGULATIONS

## 1. Technology Acceptable Use Policy still in force

These administrative regulations are adopted in addition to, and not as a substitute for, the School District's Acceptable Use Policy, which governs use of the school district's technological resources.

## 2. General Concerns

The Belchertown Public Schools recognize the proliferation and, in some instances, usefulness, of online conversation between teachers and students and/or their parents or guardians. However, due to the nature of social networking sites, there exists a risk, without care and planning, that the lines between one's professional life and personal life will be blurred. Our staff should always be mindful of how they present themselves to the world, online and otherwise. Should an educator "friend" a student on Facebook, subscribe to a student's "twitter" account, regularly engage in email "chat" with a student, exchange text messages with students or engage in other electronic communication, the school district is concerned, and the educator should be concerned, that such activities may undermine the educator's authority to maintain discipline, encourage inappropriate behaviors and compromise the educator's ability to remain truly objective with his or her students.

In addition, any online communication using one's own personal resources, as opposed to school district resources, compromises the staff member's, as well as the school district's ability to retain public records in accordance with the requirements of the Commonwealth's public records laws. The law requires public employees who send, receive or maintain records in their capacity as public employees, to retain, disclose and dispose of such records in compliance with strict provisions of the public records law. This law applies whether or not the record is in the form of a paper document or an electronic communication. When staff members communicate through school-based resources, such as staff email or school sponsored web pages, such records are retained and archived through the school's information technology department. If, however, a teacher or staff member communicates outside of these resources, such information is not retained. The burden falls on the teacher or staff member to comply with public records laws when using personal email or social network accounts to communicate with students and/or parents and guardians.

## 3. Expectations of Staff

With these concerns in mind, the Belchertown Public Schools has instituted an Electronic Contact and Social Networking Policy (IJNDD) and announces its expectations for staff members' use of social networks such as Facebook, Linked-in, Twitter, personal email accounts, text message features of cell phones, use of blogs, and other electronic or technologically based communication systems.

1. Before endeavoring to establish any social networking account, faculty and staff should familiarize themselves with the features of any account they choose to use. For example, some social media sites require account holders to take specific steps to "privatize" the information they place online. You must educate yourself to these features of any social networking site you select. You will be responsible should any information you intended to be "private" becomes "public" due to your own ignorance of the features of the social network you have decided to use or your failure to properly use such features.
2. You must also know that any information you share privately with a recipient could be re-distributed by such recipient, without your knowledge or consent. The same principles you apply to in person communication should be applied to online conversation: use discretion, and do not place your trust in individuals who have not proven themselves trustworthy. In essence, nothing you post online is ever truly "private."

3. The school district expects you to keep the line between your professional life and your personal life clearly drawn at all times. There is no reason why this cannot be done, even in light of the proliferation of social networking sites. All that is required is some forethought before using social networking for both your professional and personal life, to be sure that these lines never become blurred. Therefore, all requests to use an educational social media site must have prior approval, as do any other web sites (see regulations IJNDC-R, Web Site Guidelines and Procedures for Approval).
4. At all times, and in the use of any form of communications, staff members will always adhere to student privacy rights and the rights of employees to have their personnel and medical information kept confidential. Information that is protected by law from disclosure to third parties will not be communicated online in a way that unreasonably exposes such information to retrieval by those third parties. For example, through an educational social networking account, a staff member may not post confidential student information through any part of that account that would be accessible to other members associated with that account. If a staff member wishes to communicate privately with a student through such an account, the staff member should access those features that allow him/her to communicate with that student alone.
5. Staff members are encouraged to communicate with students and parents on educational matters only, and only through school-based resources, such as school-provided email or web portal accounts. Use of one's personal email account or social networking account to discuss school business with students and parents is discouraged. It should be noted that, just because a staff member uses his/her personal email as opposed to a school email account, this does not shield such email from the provisions of the public records law or from discovery in litigation. It only prevents the archiving of such messages through the school district's automatic email archiving system. We again remind staff members that information sent or received by them, even through personal email or social network accounts that are related to their capacity as a school employee, are still subject to public records retention, exemption and disclosure requirements.
6. If a staff member conveys school related messages to students and parents on his/her private account, he/she should save such email or any communication conveyed through a social networking site, or print and save a paper copy of such email or other online communication, and file it, and regard its privacy, as he/she would any other document concerning that student. The staff member should forward copies of any such emails or online communications to his or her school based email account so that it can be properly retained and archived in compliance with the requirements of the public records law. Any document created or received by a public employee in his or her capacity as such is subject to retention, and perhaps disclosure under the public records law.
7. No matter what medium of communication a staff member selects, he/she should adhere to appropriate adult/student boundaries. You are a role model, not a student's friend, you are his/her responsible adult, and you should always conduct yourself in accordance with this understanding.
8. This policy is not intended to infringe upon a staff member's right to speak publicly on matters of public concern, or to communicate with fellow members of their union on workplace issues, so long as such communication adheres to appropriate time, place and manner restrictions and does not interfere with the performance of your job duties. However, when you speak via social networking sites or tools on matters concerning your work, you are speaking as an employee and not as a citizen, and restrictions may be placed upon your freedom to express yourself. Those restrictions are intended to preserve student confidentiality, maintain your status as an educator who should command and receive the respect of students, be able to maintain order and discipline in your classroom, and remain objective with respect to your students.
9. Staff members are discouraged from using home telephones, personal cell phones, personal email accounts and personal Facebook accounts to communicate with students. Your communications with students, even if you do not use school resources for such communications, are within the jurisdiction of the school district to monitor as they arise out of your position as an educator or staff member within the district. Any conduct, whether online or not, that reflects poorly upon the school district or consists

of inappropriate behavior on the part of a staff member, may expose an employee to discipline up to and including discharge. Even if you are not using a school telephone, computer, classroom or the like to engage in contact with a student that such contact is not outside of the school district's authority to take appropriate disciplinary action. If your behavior is inappropriate, undermines your authority to instruct or maintain control and discipline with students, compromises your objectivity, or harms students, the school district reserves the right to impose discipline for such behavior. A staff member may also face individual liability for inappropriate online communications with students and/or parents and guardians, as well as exposing the district to vicarious liability in certain instances.

At the same time, the district recognizes that, in limited cases, use of cell phone text messages or cell phone calls or emails outside of regular school hours may be reasonably necessary. For example, in connection with school sponsored events for which staff members serve as duly appointed advisors, they may need to convey messages in a timely manner to students and may not have access to school based email accounts, school provided telephones or school based web pages. In such limited circumstances, the district anticipates that staff members will make reasonable use of their cell phones or smart phones to convey time sensitive information on scheduling issues and the like.

10. Staff members may not access their personal email accounts or private Facebook accounts using school district computer resources.
11. If you are communicating as an employee of the district in your online communications, you must be aware that readers will assume you "speak for the school district." Therefore, all of your online communications, when you are actually acting on behalf of the district, or creating the appearance that you are doing so, must be professional at all times and reflect positively on the school district.
12. In the use of your Facebook account or other social networking site, you may not, without express permission from the superintendent of schools, use the school's logo, likeness or any school photographs or other property that belongs to the school in accordance with all other policies and procedures relative to the use of technology as outlined in the School Committee policy manual.
13. References to "Facebook" are not included to limit application of their policy to use of that program. All online, electronic or computerized means of communication are subject to this policy. Given the rapid pace of technological change it is not possible to identify all proprietary or commonly named or identified means of such communications.

SOURCE: M.A.S.S.

## IJOC - SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

It is the policy of the School Committee to encourage volunteer efforts in the schools. Parents/guardians, business representatives, senior citizens, and other community volunteers are recognized as important sources of support and expertise to enhance the instructional program and vital communication links with the community. The volunteer program will be coordinated in cooperation with building administrators.

CROSS REF.: ADDA, C.O.R.I. Requirements

## IKE - PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS

The School Committee is dedicated to the best total and continuous development of each student enrolled. The professional staff is expected to place students at the grade level best suited to them academically, socially, and emotionally.

In evaluating student achievement, each teacher will make use of all available information, including results of teacher-made tests and other measures of skill and content mastery, standardized test results, student attendance, and teacher observation of student performance. The Principal will direct and aid teachers in their evaluations and review grade assignments in order to ensure uniformity of evaluation standards.

Students will normally progress annually from grade to grade. Exceptions may be made when, in the judgment of the professional staff, such exceptions are in the best educational interest of the students involved. Exceptions will only be made after prior notification and explanation to each student's parents/guardians, but the final decision will rest with the building Principal.

## IMDA - RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

Any student who is unable because of religious beliefs, to attend classes or to participate in any examination, study, or work requirement on a particular day shall be excused. Absence from school will require that the parent(s)/guardian(s) use the same procedure outlined in the Attendance Policy and call the Absentee Call-in line for the school site. Absence from school for religious observance will be an excused absence.

Non-completion of school work or an examination for excused absences must be made up within five days.

Educators shall make reasonable accommodations for any student present in school and observing a religious holiday. Such accommodations shall include, but are not limited to, allowing the student to postpone the taking of a test or quiz, or the submission of any assignment until the second school day following the end of the religious holiday. A note from the parents) /guardian(s) is required in advance or on the holiday.

# IMG - ANIMALS IN SCHOOL

No animal shall be brought to school without prior permission of the building Principal.

The Belchertown Public Schools are committed to providing a high quality educational program to all students in a safe and healthy environment. School Principals, in consultation with the Health Services Providers in each building, shall utilize the Department of Public Health publication "Guidelines for Animals in Schools or on School Grounds" and review student health records to determine which animals may be allowed in the school building. The decision of the Principal shall be final.

## **Educational Program**

Use of animals to achieve specific curriculum objectives may be allowed by the building Principal provided student health and safety is not jeopardized and the individual requesting that the animal be brought to school is responsible for adhering to the "Guidelines for Animals in Schools or on School Grounds" and any other conditions established by the Principal to protect the health and well-being of students.

## **Student Health**

The health and well-being of students is the District's highest priority. Animals may cause an allergic reaction or otherwise impair the health of students. No animals may be brought to school or kept in the school, classroom, office or common area that may negatively impact the health of any student who must utilize that area. Animals that cause an allergic reaction or impair the health of students shall be removed from the school immediately so that no student shall have his/her health impaired and each student shall have full access to available educational opportunities.

## **Animals Prohibited from School**

Rabies is a growing problem and any fur-bearing animal is susceptible to this very serious fatal disease. Infected animals can transmit this disease to students and staff. Based on the Massachusetts Departments of Health and Education recommendations the following animals are prohibited from schools within the Belchertown School District.

**Wild Animals and Domestic Stray Animals** - Because of the high incidence of rabies in bats, raccoons, skunks, foxes and other wild carnivores, these animals should not be permitted in school buildings under any circumstances (including dead animals).

**Fur-Bearing Animals** (pet dogs,\* cats, wolf-hybrids, ferrets, etc.) - These animals may pose a risk for transmitting rabies, as well as parasites, fleas, other diseases and injuries.

**Bats** - Bats pose a high risk for transmitting rabies. Bat houses should not be installed on school grounds and bats should not be brought into the school building.

**Poisonous Animals** - Spiders, venomous insects and poisonous snakes, reptiles and lizards are prohibited for safety reasons.

**\*Exception: Guide, Hearing and Other Service Animals or Law Enforcement Dogs** - These animals may be allowed in school or on school grounds with proof of current rabies vaccination.

Exceptions may be made with the prior approval of the Superintendent of Schools.

## **Service Animals**

The Belchertown School Committee does not permit discrimination against individuals with disabilities, including those who require the assistance of a service animal. The District will comply with Massachusetts law concerning the rights of persons with guide or assistance dogs and with federal law and will permit such animals on school premises and on school transportation.

For purposes of this policy, a “service animal includes any animal that has been individually trained to do the work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability.” The regulations further state that “a public entity shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures to permit the use of a miniature horse by an individual with a disability if the horse has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of the individual with the disability.”

Service animals perform some of the functions and tasks that individuals with disabilities cannot perform themselves. Service animals are not pets. There are several kinds of service animals that assist individuals with disabilities. Examples include, but are not limited to, animals that:

- assist individuals who are blind or have severe sight impairments as “seeing eye dogs” or “guide dogs;”
- alert individuals with hearing impairments to sounds;
- pull wheelchairs or carry and pick-up items for individuals with mobility impairments; and
- assist mobility-impaired individuals with balance.

The District shall not assume or take custody or control of, or responsibility for, any service animal or the care or feeding thereof. The owner or person having custody and control of the animal shall be liable for any damage to persons, premises, property, or facilities caused by the service animal, including, but not limited to, clean up, stain removal, etc.

If, in the opinion of the School Principal or authorized designee, any service animal is not in the control of its handler, or if it is not housebroken, the service animal may be excluded from the school or program. The service animal can also be excluded if it presents a direct and immediate threat to others in the school. The parent or guardian of the student having custody and control of the animal will be required to remove the service animal from District premises immediately.

If any student or staff member assigned to the classroom in which a service animal is permitted suffers an allergic reaction to the animal, the person having custody and control of the animal will be required to remove the animal to a different location designated by the Building Principal or designee and an alternative plan will be developed with appropriate District staff. Such plan could include the reassignment of the person having custody and control of the animal to a different classroom. This will also apply if an individual on school transportation suffers an allergic reaction. In this case, an alternate plan will be developed in coordination with appropriate school, District, and transportation staff including the involvement of the parents/ guardian of the student.

When a student will be accompanied by a service animal at school or in other District facilities on a regular basis, such staff member or such student’s parent or guardian, as well as the animal’s owner and any other person who will have custody and control of the animal will be required to sign a document stating that they have read and understood the foregoing.

The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee shall be responsible for developing procedures to accommodate a student’s use of an assistance animal in District facilities and on school transportation vehicles.

**Approved: April 24, 2018**



## JBB - EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

In recognition of the diversified characteristics and needs of our students and with the keen desire to be responsive to them, the School Committee will make every effort to protect the dignity of the students as individuals. It also will offer careful consideration and sympathetic understanding of their personal feelings, particularly with reference to their race to include "traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, homeless student status or physical and intellectual differences.

To accomplish this, the Committee and its staff will make every effort to comply with the letter and the spirit of the Massachusetts equal educational opportunities law (known as Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971), which prohibits discrimination in public school admissions and programs. The law reads as follows:

No child shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and course of study of such public school on account of race traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or homeless student status.

This will mean that every student will be given equal opportunity in school admission, admissions to courses, course content, guidance, and extracurricular and athletic activities.

All implementing provisions issued by the Board of Education in compliance with this law will be followed.

LEGAL REFS.: Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964  
Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972  
Executive Order 11246, as amended by E.O. 11375  
Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972  
M.G.L. 76:5; 76:16 (Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971)  
Board of Education Chapter 622 Regulations Pertaining to Access to Equal Educational Opportunity, adopted 6/24/75, amended 10/24/78  
Board of Education, Chapter 766 Regulations 10/74 - amended through 3/28/78  
603 CMR 26:00  
CROSS REF.: AC, Nondiscrimination

Approved by School Committee: August 13, 2024

## JF-E-2 - SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

### Admission to Course of Study

- (1) Each and every course of study offered by a public school shall be open and available to students regardless of race, to include "traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles color, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation or national origin. Nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit the use of prerequisite requirements that have been demonstrated to be essential to success in a given program. However, if participation in a course or program is dependent upon completion of a prerequisite which was previously limited to students of one sex, or if close scrutiny reveals that access mechanisms or other administrative arrangements have limited the opportunities of any class of students to participate in such prerequisites, then all members of the previously excluded group shall be given the opportunity to acquire the prerequisites or be allowed to enter the program without such prerequisites. If it cannot be shown that a prerequisite is essential for success in a given program, the prerequisite shall be abolished.
- (2) The determination of what courses or units of study are to be required of any student shall also be made without regard to the race, to include "traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles color, sex, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or religion of that student.
- (3) The scheduling of students into courses or units of study shall not be done on the basis of sex, color, race, to include "traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles, religion, disability, sexual orientation or national origin.
- (4) Each student, regardless of race to include "traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles, color, sex, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation or limited English-speaking ability, shall have equal rights of access to courses of study and other opportunities available through the school system of the city or town in which he/she resides, along with appropriate bilingual instruction and programs or other curriculum offerings of a supportive nature such as appropriate remedial programs.
- (5) Nothing in 603 CMR 26.03 shall be construed to prevent particular segments of a program of instruction from being offered separately to each sex when necessary in order to respect personal privacy.

Approved by School Committee: August 13, 2024

## JH - STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

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

Therefore, students may be excused temporarily from school attendance for the following reasons:

1. Illness or quarantine (with medical documentation)
2. Bereavement or serious illness in family
3. Weather so inclement as to endanger the health of the child
4. Observance of major religious holidays
5. Court Appearance
6. Sanctioned School Activities: i.e. scheduled athletic events

A child may also be excused for other exceptional reasons with approval of the school administrator.

A student's understanding of the importance of day-to-day schoolwork is an important factor in the shaping of their character. Parents can help their children by refusing to allow them to miss school needlessly.

Whether a student's absence is excused or unexcused, the student is responsible for completing all work assigned while absent. The requirements for making up assigned work while absent rests with the individual schools. Students are responsible for knowing the expectations for making up assigned work.

With a doctor's medical note, a student experiences a medical absence and is home-bound. Administration will work with the family to provide support for the student.

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

More than eight unexcused absences will be subject to administrative review and possible action.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [76:1](#); [76:16](#); [76:20](#) M.G.L. [119:39](#)

**Revision Approved by School Committee: July 28, 2015**

**Revision Approved by School Committee: March 28, 2017**

**Revision Approved by School Committee: October 10, 2017**

## JI - STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The School Committee has the responsibility to afford students the rights that are theirs by virtue of guarantees offered under the federal and state constitutions and statutes. In connection with rights, there are responsibilities that must be assumed by students.

Among these rights and responsibilities are the following:

1. Civil rights — including the rights to equal educational opportunity and freedom from discrimination; the responsibility not to discriminate against others.
2. The right to attend free public schools; the responsibility to attend school regularly and to observe school rules essential for permitting others to learn at school.

3. The right to due process of law with respect to suspension, expulsion, and decisions the student believes injure his rights.
4. The right to free inquiry and expression; responsibility to observe reasonable rules regarding these rights.
5. The right to privacy, which includes privacy with respect to the student's school records.

It is the School Committee's belief that as part of the educational process students should be made aware of their legal rights, and of the legal authority of the School Committee to make and delegate authority to its staff to make rules regarding the orderly operation of the schools.

Students have the right to know the standards of behavior that are expected of them, and the consequences of misbehavior.

The rights and responsibilities of students, including standards of conduct, will be made available to students and their parents through handbooks distributed annually.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37H; 71:82 through 71:86

## JICA - STUDENT DRESS CODE

The responsibility for the dress and appearance of the students will rest with individual students and parents.

They have the right to determine how the student will dress providing that attire is not destructive to school property, complies with requirements for health and safety, and does not cause disorder or disruption. The administration is authorized to take action in instances where individual dress does not meet the stated requirements.

This does not mean that student, faculty, or parent groups may not recommend appropriate dress for school or special occasions. It means that students will not be prevented from attending school or a school function, or otherwise be discriminated against, so long as their dress and appearance meet the requirements set forth above.

## JICC - STUDENT CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES

The School Committee and its staff share with students and parents the responsibility for student safety during transportation to and from school. The authority for enforcing School

Committee requirements of student conduct on buses will rest with the Principal.

To ensure the safety of all students who ride in buses, it may occasionally be necessary to revoke the privilege of transportation from a student who abuses this privilege. Parents of children whose behavior and misconduct on school buses endangers the health, safety, and welfare of other riders will be notified that their children face the loss of transportation privileges in accordance with regulations approved by the School Committee.

# JICC-R - STUDENT CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES

## Procedures for Drivers and Parents

1. In case of any misconduct on a bus, the incident will be reported on the proper form to the school Principal. He/she will report the incident in writing to the parent concerned, with a copy to the Superintendent.
2. In case of a repetition by the same student, the Principal will suspend the student's transportation privileges with written notice to the parent to report at once with the child to the Superintendent's office.
3. After a second offense and a conference with the Superintendent, if a third such incident occurs, bus privileges will be denied the student and the responsibility for transportation will then rest with the parent.

## Loading and Unloading at Bus Stop

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

## Required Conduct aboard the Bus

1. Riders must remain in seats or in place when the bus is in motion.
2. Whistling and shouting are not permitted.
3. Profanity and obscene language are forbidden.
4. Smoking is prohibited.
5. The following disturbances are prohibited:
  - Pushing or wrestling
  - Annoying other passengers or disturbing their possessions
  - Talking to the driver
  - Throwing objects within the bus or out of windows
  - Climbing over seats
  - Opening or closing windows without permission
  - Leaning out of windows
  - Littering the bus
6. Parents will be held responsible for any defacing or damaging of the bus.

## Distribution of Literature

Parents and students will be informed of these regulations at the beginning of each school year, and parents will be asked to return signed forms indicating that the regulations have been received and read.

## JICF - GANG ACTIVITY / SECRET SOCIETIES

The goal of the School Committee is to keep District schools and students free from the threats or harmful influence of any gang. For purposes of this policy, gang is defined as any group, secret society, organization or association that advocates drug use, violence, ethnic intimidation, or disruptive or illegal behavior. The Principal or his/her designee shall maintain supervision of school premises to deter intimidation of students and confrontations between members of different gangs.

The Superintendent shall establish open lines of communication with local law enforcement agencies so as to share information and provide mutual support in this effort within appropriate legal guidelines.

The Superintendent may provide in-service training to help staff members identify gangs and gang symbols, recognize early manifestations of disruptive activities, and respond appropriately. Staff members shall be informed about conflict management techniques and alerted to intervention measures and community resources that may help students.

### Symbols

The School Committee finds that gang symbols are inherently disruptive to the educational process, and therefore prohibits the presence of any insignia, apparel, jewelry, accessory, notebook or other school supply, or manner of grooming which by virtue of its color, arrangement, trademark, or any other attribute denotes membership in gangs. The School Committee further prohibits any demonstration of gang membership through the use of hand gestures, graffiti, or printed materials. This policy shall be applied by the Principal or his/her designee as the need for it arises individual school sites. A student may be suspended or expelled for failure to comply with the provisions of this policy.

### Prevention Education

The School Committee realizes that students may become involved in gangs without understanding the consequences of such membership. Early intervention is a key component of efforts to break the cycle of such memberships. Therefore, gang violence prevention information shall be made available in the elementary, middle, and high schools as appropriate.

### **SECRET SOCIETIES**

Fraternities, sororities and/or secret societies shall not receive District or building recognition in any manner.

A student may be suspended or expelled for failure to comply with the provisions of this policy.

## JICFA-E - HAZING

### CH. 269, S.17. CRIME OF HAZING; DEFINITION; PENALTY

Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing as defined herein shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

The term "hazing" as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to be contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

### CH. 269, S.18. DUTY TO REPORT HAZING

Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars.

### CH. 269, S.19. HAZING STATUTES TO BE PROVIDED; STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE AND DISCIPLINE POLICY REQUIRED

Each secondary school and each public and private school or college shall issue to every group or organization under its authority or operating on or in conjunction with its campus or school, and to every member, plebe, pledge or applicant for membership in such group or organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen. An officer of each such group or organization, and each individual receiving a copy of said sections seventeen and eighteen shall sign an acknowledgment stating that such group, organization or individual has received a copy of said sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each secondary school and each public or private school or college shall file, at least annually, a report with the regents of higher education and in the case of secondary schools, the Board of Education, certifying that such institution has complied with the provisions of this section and also certifying that said school has adopted a disciplinary policy with regards to the organizers and participants of hazing. The Board of Regents and, in the case of secondary schools, the Board of Education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution which fails to make such a report.

# JICFB - BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY FOR THE BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Belchertown Public Schools Priority Statement

The Belchertown Public School community is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning and working environment, where all students, employees, and visitors, are free from bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, and intimidation. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, a culture of respect and tolerance; and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behaviors that can impede the learning process.

### DEFINITIONS

#### Bullying

The law defines bullying as the repeated use of a written, verbal, or electronic communication, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional (aggressors) of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim (target) that has the effect of:

- causing physical or emotional harm to the student (target) or damage to his or her property;
- placing the student (target) in reasonable fear of harm to him or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- creating a hostile environment - which is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education - at school for the target;
- infringing on the rights of the student (target) at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupting the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Examples of bullying include but are not limited to repeated acts of:

- Intimidation, either physical or psychological (in person or via an electronic device)
- Threats of any kind, stated or implied (in person or via an electronic device)
- Assaults, whether verbal, physical, psychological, or emotional
- Attacks on student property
- Demeaning names or phrases directed at an individual student
- Touching another individual in a demeaning manner
- Exclusion.

Bullying and cyber-bullying may occur in and out of school, during and after school hours, at home and in locations outside of the home. When bullying and cyber-bullying are alleged, the full cooperation and assistance of parents, families, and staff are expected.

For the purpose of this policy, whenever the term bullying is used it is to denote either bullying, or cyber-bullying.

Bullying is prohibited:

- On school grounds;
- On property immediately adjacent to school grounds;
- At school-sponsored or school-related activities;
- At functions or programs whether on or off school grounds;
- At school bus stops;
- On school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the school district; or,

- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the Belchertown Public Schools.

Bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the Belchertown Public Schools if the act or acts in question:

- create a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringe on the rights of the target at school; and/or
- materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

### Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying, which is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic means, which includes, but shall not be limited to; cell phones/smart phones, personal electronic devices and computers using email, social networking sites (such as Facebook, My Space, Twitter, FormSpring, etc.), any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or part by wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including but not limited to; electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. This includes, but shall not be limited to, the distribution of communications such as text messages or emails and posting of material on web sites that can be accessed by more than just the student who may be the target of such bullying.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

The following definitions describe other behaviors that may be associated with bullying and are governed by state and federal laws, as well as Belchertown Public Schools policies:

### **Prevention and Intervention Plan**

The Superintendent and/or his/her designee shall oversee the development of a prevention and intervention plan, in consultation with all district stakeholders, which may include teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians, consistent with the requirements of this policy, as well as state and federal laws. The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be reviewed and updated at least biennially.

The Principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the bullying prevention and implementation plan within his or her school.

### **Reporting**

Individuals, who believe that they are a target of bullying, observe an act of bullying, or who have reasonable grounds to believe that these behaviors are taking place, are obligated to report incidents to a member of the school staff. The target shall, however, not be subject to discipline for failing to report bullying.

The district shall have a means for anonymous reporting by individuals of incidents of bullying. No formal disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report. A member of the school staff may be named the "aggressor" or "perpetrator" in a bullying report.

Any student or school staff member who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Parents or guardians, or members of the community, are encouraged to report an incident of bullying to the school principal or designee as soon as possible.

Belchertown Public Schools Faculty and Staff, which includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extra-curricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals take bullying very seriously and will investigate and take prompt action with individuals who engage in these activities. Belchertown Public Schools Faculty and Staff shall immediately report any instance of bullying the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the school principal or designee.

Through the Belchertown Public Schools' Memorandum of Understanding with the Belchertown

Police Department, the Belchertown Public Schools may share any and all information with regard to student safety, and/or possible illegal activity with the Belchertown Public Schools Resource Officer and/or other members of the Belchertown Police Department.

### **Investigation Procedures**

The Principal or designee, upon receipt of a viable report, shall promptly contact the parents or guardians of a student who has been the alleged target or alleged perpetrator of bullying. The actions being taken to prevent further acts of bullying shall be discussed.

The Principal or designee shall promptly investigate the report of bullying, using a Bullying Intervention and Prevention Incident Reporting Form, which may include interviewing the alleged target, alleged perpetrator, staff members, students and/or witnesses.

Staff shall assess an alleged target's needs for protection and create and implement a safety plan that shall restore a sense of safety for that student.

Confidentiality shall be used to protect a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or is witness to or has reliable information about an act of bullying. Confidentiality shall be maintained to the extent consistent with the school's obligations under law.

If the Principal or a designee determines that bullying has occurred, he/she shall take appropriate disciplinary action and if it is believed that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator, the Principal shall consult with the school's resource officer and the Superintendent to determine if criminal charges are warranted. If it is determined that criminal charges are warranted, the local law enforcement agency shall be notified.

The investigation shall be completed within fourteen school days from the date of the report. The parents or guardians shall be contacted upon completion of the investigation and informed of the results, including whether the allegations were found to be factual, whether a violation of this policy was found, and whether disciplinary action has or shall be taken. The Principal or designee shall contact the parents or guardians regarding the status of the investigation throughout the investigation process.

Disciplinary actions for students or staff members who have committed an act of bullying or retaliation shall be in accordance with district disciplinary policies for students and due process/appropriate discipline for staff.

Each school shall document any incident of bullying that is reported per this policy and a file shall be maintained by the Principal or designee. All reports shall be provided to the Superintendent for his/her files.

As required by M.G.L. c. 71B section 3, when a Special Education Team determines that a student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying harassment or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and to respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

The Principal or his/her designee will take any step he/she determines is necessary and/or advisable to protect, to the extent practicable, the complainant, witnesses, and other individuals from further incidents or from retaliation pending the outcome of the investigation.

The Principal or his/her designee will maintain a separate confidential file containing the original completed Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form, investigatory interview notes, and reports, findings made, the results of the investigation, including any decision for action, and other relevant investigatory materials.

### **Retaliation**

Belchertown Public Schools' Faculty and Staff will also investigate retaliation which is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student (target) who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying. Retaliation is prohibited.

### **Target Assistance**

The Belchertown Public Schools shall provide counseling or referral to appropriate services, including guidance, academic intervention, and protection to students, both targets and perpetrators, affected by bullying, as necessary. In the case of a school staff member, the Belchertown Public Schools will refer the individual to the town's Employee Assistance Program.

### **Training and Assessment**

Annual training shall be provided for school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students in preventing, identifying, responding to, and reporting incidents of bullying.

Age-appropriate, evidence-based instruction on bullying prevention shall be incorporated into the curriculum for all K-12 students.

### **Publication and Notice**

Annual written notice of the relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to students and their parents or guardians, in age-appropriate terms.

Annual written notice of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to all school staff. The faculty and staff at each school shall be trained annually on the bullying prevention and intervention plan applicable to the school.

Relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff shall be included in the school employee handbook.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan shall be posted on the Belchertown Public Schools website [www.belchertownps.org](http://www.belchertownps.org).

### **Relationship to Other Laws**

Nothing in our policy prevents the Belchertown Public Schools from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies. In addition, nothing in this policy is designed or intended to limit the authority of the Belchertown Public Schools to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71 sections 37H or 37H ½, other applicable laws, or local or school district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether our policy covers the behavior.

### **BULLYING AMENDMENTS TO SCHOOL BULLYING LAW**

On April 24, 2014, Governor Patrick signed into law "An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools," Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014, which legislation expands the protections of the 2010 anti-bullying law. The law goes into effect

90 days after April 24, that is, July 25, 2014. The new law revises certain provisions of the current anti-bullying law, G.L.c. 71:380, and adds several new subsections to that statute.

There are four main components for the new law: (1) it requires school's anti-bullying plans to recognize that certain enumerated categories of students may be more susceptible to bullying, including LGBTQ students; (2) it requires school districts to annually report bullying incident data to DESE; (3) it requires DESE to develop and school districts to administer surveys at least once every four years on the climate of the school district and prevalence of bullying; and (4) it grants DESE the power to investigate certain alleged incidents of bullying. The law also permits school districts to "adopt an anti-bullying seal to represent the district's or school's commitment to bullying prevention and intervention."

School Committee Approved: August 23, 2016

Approved by School Committee: August 13, 2024



## **District Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy and Plan**

**Adopted by the Belchertown School Committee: December 14, 2010**

**Approved by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: March 17, 2011**

Revisions approved by the Belchertown School Committee: February 11, 2014  
January 10, 2017  
May 16, 2023  
August 13, 2024

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## **Introduction**

The establishment of the Belchertown Anti-Bullying Task Force was approved by the Belchertown School Committee at their August 17, 2010 meeting in response to An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools (2010). This task force of 30 members represented a broad cross-section of our community; including district administrators, teachers, and support staff, as well as parents and community members. Their charge was to take the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and apply it to our district.

The group worked diligently over the course of three months and the resulting policy and plan elements were approved by Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) on March 17, 2011. Consistent with the spirit of the law and to include updates to the statute, the Healthy and Safer Schools Committee has revised the original plan to the one contained herein.

The Department issued an update to reflect Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014, amended G.L. c. 71, §37O, the anti-bullying statute, and was signed into law on April 24, 2014. G.L. c. 71, §37O, as amended, requires school districts, charter schools, approved private day or residential schools, and collaborative schools to “recognize” in their bullying prevention and intervention plans that certain enumerated categories of students may be more vulnerable to being targets of bullying based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics. Such districts and schools must also include in the plan the specific steps they will take to support these vulnerable students and provide all students the skills, knowledge and strategies they need to prevent or respond to bullying or harassment. Under the new law, school districts, charter schools, approved private day or residential schools, and collaborative schools must notify parents and guardians of targets of bullying of the availability of the Department's problem resolution system and assist these parents and guardians in understanding the problem resolution process. Chapter 86 also addresses the data reporting and collection obligations of school districts, charter schools, approved private day or residential schools, and collaborative schools, requiring them to collect and report the following data to the Department: 1) the number of reported allegations of bullying or retaliation; 2) the number and nature of substantiated incidents of bullying and retaliation; 3) the number of students disciplined for engaging in bullying or retaliation, and 4) other information required by the Department. (The Department is required to analyze the data and to issue a report annually to the legislature which contains statewide aggregated data on the nature and frequency of bullying in schools.) Additionally, Chapter 86 requires school districts, charter schools, approved private day or residential schools, and collaborative schools, to administer a Department-developed student survey at least once every four years to assess “school climate and the prevalence, nature and severity of bullying in schools.” (The Department will use survey results to, among other things, assess the effectiveness of bullying prevention curricula and instruction and identify long-term trends and areas of improvement, and will make its findings available to school officials.) The law also authorizes school districts, charter schools, approved private day or residential schools, and collaborative schools to adopt an anti-bullying seal to represent its commitment to bullying prevention and intervention.

## **I. District Policy**

*including definitions, relationships to other laws, and prohibition against bullying and retaliation*

The Bullying Prevention Policy, presented in Appendix A, incorporates our district priority statement, as adopted by the Anti-Bullying Task Force in 2010. It also includes references to laws and regulations as required, defines terms related to bullying and harassment, and has specific language intended to address prohibitions against bullying and retaliation.

## **II. Leadership**

Leadership at all levels will play a critical role in the ongoing revision and implementation of this Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (“the Plan”) in the context of other whole school and community efforts to promote positive school climate. Leaders have a primary role in teaching students to be civil to one another and promoting understanding of and respect for diversity and difference.

Leadership should be defined by the district or school, depending on existing roles and responsibilities and locally identified priorities for this initiative. Leadership is responsible for setting priorities and for staying up-to-date with current research on ways to prevent and effectively respond to bullying. It is also the responsibility of leaders to involve representatives from the greater school and local community in developing and implementing the Plan.

**Public involvement in developing the Plan:** As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the Plan must be developed in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents, and guardians. Consultation must include, at a minimum, notice and a public comment period before the Plan is adopted by the school committee or equivalent authority. Schools and districts may choose to involve representatives from each of these constituencies in other aspects of Plan development, including needs assessments, working groups, task forces, and public meetings. The Plan should identify the ways that each of the various constituencies will be involved.

**Assessing needs and resources:** The Plan is the school's or district's blueprint for enhancing capacity to prevent and respond to issues of bullying within the context of other healthy school climate initiatives. As part of the planning process, school leaders, with input from families and staff, assess the adequacy of current programs; review current policies and procedures; review available data on bullying and behavioral incidents; and assess available resources including curricula, training programs, and behavioral health services. This “mapping” process assists schools and districts in identifying resource gaps and the most significant areas of need. Based on these findings, schools and districts will revise or develop policies and procedures; establish partnerships with community agencies, including law enforcement; and set priorities.

At least once every four years beginning with 2015/16 school year, the district will administer a Department of Elementary and Secondary-developed student survey to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in our schools. Additionally, the school or district will annually report bullying incident data to the Department. This information will help to identify patterns of behaviors and areas of concern, and will inform decision-making for prevention strategies including, but not limited to, adult supervision, professional development, age-appropriate curricula, and in-school support services. The Plan

describes the methods the school will use to conduct needs assessments, including timelines and leadership roles.

**Planning and oversight:** The Plan identifies the school or district leaders responsible for the following tasks under the Plan: 1) receiving reports on bullying; 2) collecting and analyzing building- and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes; 3) creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports, and for accessing information related to targets and aggressors; 4) planning for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law; 5) planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors; 6) choosing and implementing the curricula that the school or district will use; 7) developing new or revising current policies and protocols under the Plan, including an Internet safety policy, and designating key staff to be in charge of implementation of them; 8) amending student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct to, among other things, make clear that bullying of students by school staff or other students will not be tolerated; 9) leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials; and 10) reviewing and updating the Plan each year, or more frequently.

**Developing priority statements:** Priority statements can be used to communicate within the Plan the school's or district's vision in creating and implementing its bullying prevention and intervention strategies. The following are priority statements for this Plan:

- The school or district expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.
- The school or district is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyberbullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process.
- We recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to become targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. The school or district will identify specific steps it will take to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.
- A school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school or collaborative school may establish separate discrimination or harassment policies that include these or other categories of students. Nothing in this section shall alter the obligations of a school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school or collaborative school to remediate any discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state or federal law
- We will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. We will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target's sense of safety. We will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent or guardian involvement.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (“Plan”) is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying, and the school or district is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. In consultation with these constituencies, we have established this Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. The principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan except when a reported bullying incident involves the principal or the assistant principal as the alleged aggressor. In such cases, the Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for investigating the report, and other steps necessary to implement the Plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged target. If the Superintendent is the alleged aggressor, the School Committee, or its designee shall be responsible for investigating the report, and other steps necessary to implement the Plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged victim.

*Table 1.1. Leadership Plan Details.*

Goals/Objectives	Strategies	Persons Responsible	Due	Progress
A. Public involvement in maintaining the plan	1. Healthy and Safer Schools Committee reviews current plan and recommends changes to School Committee.	1. Healthy and Safer Schools Committee (administrators, teachers, parent representative, School Committee representative, and student representative)	1. Biennially	1. Next review date: 2025
B. Assessing needs and resources	<p>1. Administer periodic needs assessments to students in grades K-12 to identify resource gaps and the most significant areas of need.</p> <p>2. The district will administer the Views of Climate and Learning (VOCAL) student survey to help assess school climate and the prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in our schools.</p>	<p>1. Administrators &amp; faculty</p> <p>2. IT Department, Data Administrator, School Admin.</p>	<p>1. Biennially</p> <p>2. Annually in grades 4, 5, 8, and 10</p>	<p>1. Next review date: 2025</p> <p>2. Ongoing</p>

*Table 1.2. Leadership Plan Details Continued.*

Goals/Objectives	Strategies	Persons Responsible	Due	Progress
B. Assessing needs and resources (continued)	<p>3. The district will administer the Prevention Needs Assessment (PNAS) student survey to help assess school climate and the prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in our schools.</p> <p>4. The district will report bullying incident data to the Department.</p> <p>5. Assess resources available to continue implementation of the plan</p>	<p>3. IT Department, Data Administrator, School Admin.</p> <p>4. Data Administrator, School Administrators</p> <p>5. Healthy and Safer Schools Committee and School Administrators</p>	<p>3. Bi-Annually in grades 7, 9, and 11</p> <p>4. Annually, starting in June/July 2017</p> <p>5. Annually as part of the budget process</p>	<p>3. Ongoing</p> <p>4. Ongoing</p> <p>5. Ongoing</p>
C. Planning and oversight	<p>1. See plan: oversee elements/implementation</p>	<p>1. See plan: oversight of all by Healthy and Safer Schools Committee</p>	<p>1. Ongoing</p>	<p>1. Ongoing</p>

### **III. Training and Professional Development**

The Plan reflects the requirements under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O to provide ongoing professional development for all staff; including but not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, and paraprofessionals.

**Annual staff training on the Plan:** The Plan states the content and frequency of staff training and ongoing professional development as determined by the district's or individual school's needs, and lists other topics to be included in these staff programs. Additional areas of training will be based on needs and concerns identified by school and district staff. All school staff on the Plan will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the principal or designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades throughout the school or district. Staff members hired after the start of the school year are required to participate in school-based training during the school year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years.

**Ongoing professional development:** The specifics of Belchertown's process to craft a professional development plan may be found in Table 2, below. It addresses the annual staff training on the plan as well as ongoing professional development designed to address the following six areas of the DESE model plan: (1) age-appropriate strategies to prevent bullying; (2) developmentally age-appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents; (3) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among a perpetrator, victim, and witnesses to the bullying; (4) research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment; (5) information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and (6) Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying. Included in the plan are strategies to address the specific needs of students on Individualized Educational Plans.

Additional areas identified by the school or district for professional development include:

- promoting and modeling the use of respectful language;
- fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference;
- building relationships and communicating with families;
- constructively managing classroom behaviors;
- using positive behavioral intervention strategies;
- applying constructive disciplinary practices;
- teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management, and empathy for others;
- engaging students in school or classroom planning and decision-making;
- maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students; and
- engaging staff and those responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan to distinguish between acceptable managerial behaviors designed to correct misconduct, instill accountability in the school setting, etc. and bullying behaviors

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

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

Table 2.1. Training and Professional Development Plan Details.

Goals/Objectives	Strategies	Persons Responsible	Due	Progress
<p>D. Annual Staff Training on the Plan</p>	<p>1. Annual online training in the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan with all staff members including educators, administrators, service providers, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extra-curricular activities, paraprofessionals, and substitutes. New hires will complete training within 10 school days of hire.</p>	<p>1. School Admin and Bus Contractors</p>	<p>1. Annually</p>	<p>1. Ongoing</p>
	<p>2. Annual review of online training module to ensure compliance with any changes to statute or regulations.</p>	<p>2. School Admin</p>	<p>2. Annually, prior to the start of the school year.</p>	<p>2. Ongoing</p>
	<p>3. Volunteers, student teachers, and others who come into contact with students on a regular basis must review the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan</p>	<p>3. School Admin</p>	<p>3. Annually, within 10 school days of first interaction.</p>	<p>3. Ongoing</p>

Table 2.2. Training and Professional Development Plan Details Continued.

Goals/Objectives	Strategies	Persons Responsible	Due	Progress
<p>E. Ongoing Professional Development</p>	<p>1. Professional Development, based on the role of each staff member, in the following areas as it relates to the Anti-Bullying curriculum, focusing on use of common language and common approaches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Age-appropriate strategies to prevent bullying.</li> <li>● Age-appropriate strategies for immediate, effective intervention to stop bullying incidents.</li> <li>● Information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among a perpetrator, a victim, and witnesses to the bullying.</li> <li>● Research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment.</li> <li>● Information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and</li> <li>● Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying</li> </ul>	<p>1. Instructional Leadership Team, District Administrators</p>	<p>1. Annually, as needed to implement the Anti-Bullying curriculum.</p>	<p>1. Ongoing</p>

Table 2.3. Training and Professional Development Plan Details Continued.

Goals/Objectives	Strategies	Persons Responsible	Due	Progress
E. Ongoing Professional Development (Continued)	2. Overview of curriculum for substitute teachers, volunteers, student teachers, and others who come into contact with students on a regular basis so that all members of the community have a common understanding of the goals of the curriculum, key concepts, and common language.	2. Building Admin	2. Within 10 school days of first interaction.	2. Ongoing
F. Written Notice to Staff	1. Provide staff and those who come into regular contact with students with annual notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties, in the school or district employee handbook and the code of conduct.	1. District Admin	1. Annually	1. Ongoing

## **IV. Access to Resources and Services**

A key aspect of promoting positive school climates is ensuring that the underlying emotional needs of targets, aggressors, families, and others are addressed.

**Identifying resources:** The Plan describes the strategies for providing supports and services necessary to meet these needs. In order to enhance the district's or individual school's capacity to prevent, intervene early, and respond effectively to bullying, available services should reflect an understanding of the dynamics of bullying and provide approaches to address the needs of targets and aggressors. The Plan includes a strategy for providing counseling or referral to appropriate services for aggressors, targets, and family members of those students.

**Counseling and other services:** The Plan identifies the availability of culturally and linguistically appropriate resources within the school and district. If resources need to be developed, the Plan identifies linkages with community-based organizations, including Community Service Agencies (CSAs) for Medicaid eligible students. In addition, the Plan identifies staff and service providers who assist schools in developing safety plans for students who have been targets of bullying or retaliation, providing social skills programs to prevent bullying, and offering education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors. Schools may consider current tools including, but not limited to, behavioral intervention plans, social skills groups, and individually focused curricula.

**Students with disabilities:** As required by M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

**Referral to outside services:** Schools and districts have a referral protocol for referring students and families to outside services. Clear protocols will help students and families access appropriate and timely services. Referrals must comply with relevant laws and policies. Current local referral protocols are evaluated to assess their relevance to the Plan, and revised as needed.

The details of how we will provide supports and services to meet the needs of both targets of and aggressors responsible for bullying are found in Table 3, below. We have forged relationships with area providers, particularly with Valley Human Services in Ware, Massachusetts, and the Behavioral Health Network, in Springfield, Massachusetts, which will be beneficial in assisting us with meeting the goals and strategies of the plan. The Plan addresses the needs of students with disabilities as well as their non-disabled peers. A protocol for district Special Education Team leaders to use in creating an appropriate Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) can be found in Appendix B.

Table 3.1. Access to Resources and Plan Details.

Goals/Objectives	Strategies	Persons Responsible	Due	Progress
G. Identifying Resource	1. Review the process of identifying the district’s capacity to provide counseling and other services for targets, aggressors, and their families.	1. Community Partners Network	1. Ongoing	1. Ongoing
	2. Maintain a flow chart/directory of current resources within the district and community, including staff and programs that focus on early intervention and positive school climate.	2. Community Partners Network and appropriate Student Support Services Staff	2. Ongoing	2. Ongoing
	3. Determine gaps/needs in staff and programs that remain to be filled and develop plan to fill gaps.	3. Community Partners Network	3. Ongoing	3. Ongoing
H. Counseling and Other Services	1. Identify culturally and linguistically appropriate resources within the district and community.	1. Community Partners Network and appropriate Student Support Services Staff	1. Ongoing	1. Ongoing
	2. Identify linkages with community based organizations and/or agencies.	2. Community Partners Network	2. Ongoing	2. Ongoing
	3. Identify providers to assist in developing safety plans for students who have been targets, programs/intervention plans for students who exhibit bullying behaviors, and bullying prevention programs.	3. Community Partners Network and appropriate Student Support Services Staff	3. Ongoing	3. Ongoing

Table 3.2. Access to Resources and Plan Details Continued.

Goals/Objectives	Strategies	Persons Responsible	Due	Progress
I. Students with Disabilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evaluate protocols to ensure the discussion of social skills development, targeting due to disability, and/or participation in bullying by a student with a disability at each Special Education Team meeting.</li> <li>2. Create a goal and corresponding objectives for each student identified above.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Director of Student Support Services/Team Leaders</li> <li>2. Special Education Team</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing</li> <li>2. Ongoing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing</li> <li>2. Ongoing</li> </ol>
J. Referral to Outside Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. D.1. Implement a referral protocol for referring students and families to outside services.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Director of Student Support Services/ Building Administrators/ Community Partners Network</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing</li> </ol>

## V. Academic and Non-Academic Activities

The law requires us to provide age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention in each grade that is incorporated into the district's curricula. Curricula must be evidence-based. Effective instruction will include classroom approaches, whole school initiatives, and focused strategies for bullying prevention and social skills development.

**Specific bullying prevention approaches:** Bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:

- using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
- empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students or school staff engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
- helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
- emphasizing cybersafety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
- enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications; and
- engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

Initiatives will also teach students about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. The Plan includes specific information about how and when the school or district will review the Plan with students.

**General teaching approaches that support bullying prevention efforts:** The following approaches are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment. These underscore the importance of our bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:

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

The Belchertown Public Schools have a district curriculum review process, which the plan outlined in Table 4 (below) takes into consideration. A District Leadership Team comprised of administrators, department

chairs, and grade level leaders, meet monthly to address issues of curriculum, instruction, and professional development. New curricula are reviewed by them, using a set of established criteria (including efficacy based upon research) and recommended to the School Committee's Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee. The subcommittee also reviews the curricula presented and then forwards it on to the full School Committee for approval. The Plan addresses these steps in its process of reviewing and recommending age-appropriate curricula for final approval.

Table 4.1. Academic and Non-Academic Activities Plan Details.

Goals/Objectives	Strategies	Persons Responsible	Due	Progress
K. Specific Bullying Prevention Approaches	1. Evaluate current program to determine its effectiveness and continued use or replacement, using data from surveys and state discipline reports.	1. Administrators, Faculty and Staff	1. Ongoing	1. Ongoing
L. General Teaching that Support Bully Prevention Efforts	1. Implement the following approaches which must co-exist in the success of bullying intervention and prevention initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;</li> <li>● creating safe school climate and environments for all students;</li> <li>● using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement;</li> <li>● using positive behavioral supports;</li> <li>● encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students;</li> <li>● modeling, teaching, and recognizing pro-social, health, and respectful behaviors;</li> </ul>	1. Administrators, Faculty and Staff	1. Ongoing	1. Ongoing

Table 4.2. Academic and Non-Academic Activities Plan Details Continued.

Goals/Objectives	Strategies	Persons Responsible	Due	Progress
L. General Teaching that Support Bully Prevention Efforts (Continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;</li> <li>● using the Internet safely; and</li> <li>● supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities.</li> </ul>			

## **VI. Policies and Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Bullying and Retaliation**

To support efforts to respond promptly and effectively to bullying and retaliation, the Belchertown Public Schools have put in place procedures for receiving and responding to reports of bullying or retaliation. These procedures will ensure that members of the school community – students, parents, and staff – know what will happen when incidents of bullying occur. The Plan details procedures for staff reporting of incidents, processes for communicating to students and families how reports can be made (including anonymous reports), and procedures to be followed by the principal or designee once a report is made.

Consistent with the DESE Model Plan (2010, pp. 7-10), the Belchertown Public Schools have adopted the following procedures for reporting and responding to bullying and/or retaliation (a flow chart showing the procedures is included in Appendix C):

### **A. Reporting bullying or retaliation.**

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing. A school or district staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee or to the superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor or to the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor, any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously. The school or district will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, a Bullying Allegation Reporting Form, a voicemail box, a dedicated mailing address, and an email address.

Use of a Bullying Allegation Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report. The school or district will: 1) include a copy of the Alleged Bullying Report Form in the beginning of the year packets for students and parents or guardians; 2) make it available in the school's main office, the counseling office, the school nurse's office, and other locations determined by the principal or designee; and 3) post it on the district/school's website. The Bullying Allegation Reporting Form will be made available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents or guardians.

At the beginning of each school year, the school or district will provide the school community, including administrators, staff, students, and parents or guardians, with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the principal or designee, will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the school or district website, and in information about the Plan that is made available to parents or guardians.

**Reporting by Staff Members:** A staff member will report immediately to the principal or designee, or to the superintendent or designee when the principal or the assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, or to the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to

the principal or designee does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school or district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

**Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others:** The school or district expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or designee of that student’s school or superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor. A member of the school staff may be named the “aggressor” or “perpetrator” in a bullying report. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private, and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the principal or designee or superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor.

**B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation:**

- a. **Safety:** Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. The principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation. Responses to promote safety and protection may include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target; and altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target. The principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary. If the aggressor is a staff member, the Belchertown Teachers’ Association will be involved in this process.
- b. **Obligations to Notify Others:**
  - i. Notice to parents or guardians: Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.
  - ii. Notice to another School or District: If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

- iii. Notice to Law Enforcement: At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and the Belchertown Public Schools' established agreements with the Belchertown Police Department. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the principal or designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

In making this determination, the principal will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school or district policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer, if any, and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.

**C. Investigation:**

The principal or designee will investigate promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s), the ages of the students involved, and the school staff member, if identified as the aggressor. During the investigation the principal or designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The principal or designee will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Interviews may be conducted by the principal or designee, other staff members as determined by the principal or designee, and in consultation with the school counselor, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the principal or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The principal or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation.

**D. Determination:**

The principal or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The principal or designee will: (1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and (2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary.

Depending upon the circumstances, the principal or designee may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, the target's or aggressor's parents or guardians, and Superintendent of Schools to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development.

The principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor (in the case of a staff member identified as the aggressor, the Superintendent or designee will fulfill this role) about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. All notices to parents must comply with

applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student and employee records, the principal or designee cannot report specific information

to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

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

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

The Plan includes specific steps that each school shall take to support vulnerable students and provide all students with the skills knowledge and strategies needed to prevent or respond to bullying or harassment. These steps include:

1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skill-building: Upon the principal or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, any or all of the following skill-building approaches may be used to work with the target and/or the aggressor:
  - offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the district's anti-bullying curricula, adopted in accordance with Section V of this plan;
  - providing relevant educational activities for individual students, groups of students, or staff members in consultation with guidance counselors and other appropriate school personnel, through the Employee Assistance Program in the case of staff;
  - implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals;
  - meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home;
  - adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills;
  - in the case of a school staff member, recommend accessing the town's Employee Assistance Program;
  - making a referral for evaluation; and
  - using identified community resources in accordance with Section IV of this plan to provide support and counseling.
  
2. Taking Disciplinary Action: If the principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the Belchertown Public Schools Bullying Prevention Policy and with the school/district's code of conduct.

Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), which should be acted upon in cooperation with state laws regarding student discipline.

If the principal or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action, consistent with district policy and school/district code of conduct.

If the discipline includes a school staff member, the principal/designee and Superintendent will follow due process and take any appropriate action consistent with progressive discipline.

3. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others: The principal or designee will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others as well, including, but not limited to increasing adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur. The principal or designee will complete the student safety plan form (Appendix D) and ensure implementation of the plan.

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the principal or designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the principal or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

## **F. Responding to a Report of Bullying by School Staff**

The Plan identifies policies and procedures that address how school or district administrators will respond to and resolve a report of bullying of a student by school staff. The policies and procedures address safety planning, notification to parent or guardians and others, investigation, and response – areas that are addressed when a student is alleged to have bullied another student (see Section V. B – E above). They emphasize the importance of the investigation, the need for the aggressor, target, and witnesses to be truthful, and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

See Tables 5.1 & 5.2 (below) of the Plan for details with regard to the development and implementation of reporting measures consistent with the plan for reporting, as outlined above. Appendix E contains a bullying allegation reporting form that will be used in this process.

Table 5.1. Reporting and Responding to Bullying Plan Details.

Goals/Objectives	Strategies	Persons Responsible	Due	Progress
M. Reporting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure access to reporting, responding, &amp; investigating flow chart to district website.</li> <li>2. Ensure access to reporting email link on district and school websites.</li> <li>3. Revision of form for district wide use in reporting</li> <li>4. Monitor telephone line for reporting.</li> <li>5. Ensure access to Belchertown Police Department online anonymous reporting system.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. District Administrative staff</li> <li>2. OIT staff</li> <li>3. Leadership Team, School Resource Officer</li> <li>4. District Office Staff</li> <li>5. District Admin, School Resource Officer</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing</li> <li>2. Ongoing</li> <li>3. February, 2014 and as needed thereafter</li> <li>4. Ongoing</li> <li>5. Ongoing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing</li> <li>2. Ongoing</li> <li>3. Ongoing</li> <li>4. Ongoing</li> <li>5. Ongoing</li> </ol>
N. Responding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. B.1. Ensure implementation of district-wide protocols for ensuring student safety and protection during and following investigation period.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. District Admin and School Resource Officer</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing</li> </ol>

Table 5.2. Reporting and Responding to Bullying Plan Details (Continued).

Goals/Objectives	Strategies	Persons Responsible	Due	Progress
<p>N. Responding (Continued)</p>	<p>2. Ensure implementation of district-wide protocols for notification of parents, other districts/schools, law enforcement, and the Belchertown Teachers' Association in the case of a school staff member.</p>	<p>2. District Admin, School Resource Officer, and Belchertown Police Department in concert with the School Committee's Healthy and Safer Schools Committee</p>	<p>2. Ongoing</p>	<p>2. Ongoing</p>
	<p>3. Ensure implementation of district-wide protocols for implementing education/ counseling support consistent with district curricula for both targets and aggressors, including appropriate supports for school staff members.</p>	<p>3. District Admin, School Resource Officer in concert with the School Committee's Healthy and Safer Schools Committee</p>	<p>3. Ongoing</p>	<p>3. Ongoing</p>

## **VII. Collaboration with Families**

The Plan includes strategies to engage and collaborate with students' families in order to increase the capacity of the school or district to prevent and respond to bullying. Resources for families and communication with them are essential aspects of effective collaboration, including: (1) how parents and guardians can reinforce the curricula at home and support the school or district plan; (2) the dynamics of bullying; and (3) online safety and cyberbullying.

Parents and guardians will also be notified in writing each year about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, in the language(s) most prevalent among the parents or guardians. School- or district- specific approaches to collaboration should take into account age, climate, socio-economic factors, linguistic, and cultural make-up of students and their parents/guardians.

Table 6 (below) outlines the goals and objectives, strategies, persons responsible, and timelines for accomplishing these aspects of the plan. Among the parent resource and information networks that the task force will access in the execution of this plan include, but are not limited to:

- The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)
- The Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC)
- The Northeast Foundation for Children (Responsive Classroom)
- The Committee for Children (Second Step, Steps to Respect)
- Stop Bullying Now!

Links to these resources can be found on the Belchertown Public Schools website:  
<https://www.belchertownps.org/bullying-prevention-policy-plan/>

Table 6.1. Collaboration with Families Plan Details.

Goals/Objectives	Strategies	Persons Responsible	Due	Progress
<p>O. Parent education and resources.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure access to parent resources and related information on district website and make hard copies of flyers and helpful information available at all school buildings.</li> <li>2. Offer evidence-based education programs for parents/ guardians focusing on the parental components of the anti-bullying and/or social competency curricula used by the school district.</li> <li>3. Include evidence-based strategies to engage and collaborate with students' families in order to increase the capacity of the district to prevent and respond to bullying.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. District Administrators</li> <li>2. Healthy and Safer Schools Committee in concert with School Councils, PTOs, and Special Education PAC</li> <li>3. Healthy and Safer Schools Committee in concert with School Councils, PTOs, and Special Education PAC</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing</li> <li>2. Ongoing</li> <li>3. Ongoing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing</li> <li>2. Ongoing</li> <li>3. Ongoing</li> </ol>
<p>P. Notification requirements  <i>*All notices will be made available in the languages most prevalent among families in hard copy and electronic formats.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure access to the Bullying Prevention Intervention Plan and related information on its website and make hard copies available upon request.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. District Administrators</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Annually</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing</li> </ol>

Table 6.2. Collaboration with Families Plan Details (Continued).

Goals/Objectives	Strategies	Persons Responsible	Due	Progress
<p>P. Notification requirements (Continued)</p> <p><i>*All notices will be made available in the languages most prevalent among families in hard copy and electronic formats.</i></p>	<p>2. Inform parents/guardians of all enrolled students about the anti-bullying curricula being used each year (electronically and in hard copy), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about the dynamics of bullying</li> <li>• Information about cyberbullying and online safety</li> </ul>	<p>2. District Administrators</p>	<p>2. Ongoing</p>	<p>2. Ongoing</p>

## **VIII. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION**

The following statement is incorporated directly from M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O(b), and describes the law's requirements for the prohibition of bullying.

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

- (i) on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, and
- (ii) at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited.

As stated in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, nothing in this Plan requires the district or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

## **IX. Problem Resolution System:**

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

Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seeking assistance outside of the district may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Resolution System (PRS). That information can be found at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa>, emails can be sent to [compliance@doe.mass.edu](mailto:compliance@doe.mass.edu) or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information is also available at the Superintendent's office.

## **X. Relationship to Other Laws**

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H½, M.G.L. c. 71, §§41 and 42, M.G.L.c 76 § 5, or other applicable laws, or local school or district policies, or collective bargaining agreements, in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

**Appendix A Belchertown Public Schools Bullying Prevention Policy**

*Belchertown Public Schools Priority Statement*

**The Belchertown Public School community is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning and working environment, where all students, employees, and visitors, are free from bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, and intimidation. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, a culture of respect and tolerance; and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behaviors that can impede the learning process.**

## **DEFINITIONS**

### *Bullying*

The law defines bullying as the repeated use of a written, verbal, or electronic communication, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional (aggressors) of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim (target) that has the effect of:

- causing physical or emotional harm to the student (target) or damage to his or her property;
- placing the student (target) in reasonable fear of harm to him or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- creating a hostile environment - which is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education - at school for the target;
- infringing on the rights of the student (target) at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupting the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Examples of bullying include but are not limited to repeated acts of:

- Intimidation, either physical or psychological (in person or via an electronic device)
- Threats of any kind, stated or implied (in person or via an electronic device)
- Assaults, whether verbal, physical, psychological, or emotional
- Attacks on student property
- Demeaning names or phrases directed at an individual student
- Touching another individual in a demeaning manner
- Exclusion.

Bullying and cyber-bullying may occur in and out of school, during and after school hours, at home and in locations outside of the home. When bullying and cyber-bullying are alleged, the full cooperation and assistance of parents, families, and staff are expected.

For the purpose of this policy, whenever the term bullying is used it is to denote either bullying, or cyber-bullying.

Bullying is prohibited:

- On school grounds;
- On property immediately adjacent to school grounds;
- At school-sponsored or school-related activities;

- At functions or programs whether on or off school grounds;
- At school bus stops;
- On school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the school district; or,
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the Belchertown Public Schools.

Bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the Belchertown Public Schools if the act or acts in question:

- create a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringe on the rights of the target at school; and/or
- materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

### Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying, which is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic means, which includes, but shall not be limited to; cell phones/smart phones, personal electronic devices and computers using email, social networking sites (such as Facebook, My Space, Twitter, FormSpring, etc.), any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or part by wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo-electronic or photo- optical system, including but not limited to; electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. This includes, but shall not be limited to, the distribution of communications such as text messages or emails and posting of material on web sites that can be accessed by more than just the student who may be the target of such bullying.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

The following definitions describe other behaviors that may be associated with bullying and are governed by state and federal laws, as well as Belchertown Public Schools policies:

### **Prevention and Intervention Plan**

The Superintendent and/or his/her designee shall oversee the development of a prevention and intervention plan, in consultation with all district stakeholders, which may include teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians, consistent with the requirements of this policy, as well as state and federal laws. The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be reviewed and updated at least biennially.

The Principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the bullying prevention and implementation plan within his or her school.

### **Reporting**

Individuals, who believe that they are a target of bullying, observe an act of bullying, or who have reasonable grounds to believe that these behaviors are taking place, are obligated to report incidents to a member of the

school staff. The target shall, however, not be subject to discipline for failing to report bullying.

The district shall have a means for anonymous reporting by individuals of incidents of bullying. No formal disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report. A member of the school staff may be named the “aggressor” or “perpetrator” in a bullying report.

Any student or school staff member who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Parents or guardians, or members of the community, are encouraged to report an incident of bullying to the school principal or designee as soon as possible.

Belchertown Public Schools Faculty and Staff, which includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extra-curricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals take bullying very seriously and will investigate and take prompt action with individuals who engage in these activities. Belchertown Public Schools Faculty and Staff shall immediately report any instance of bullying the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the school principal or designee.

Through the Belchertown Public Schools’ Memorandum of Understanding with the Belchertown Police Department, the Belchertown Public Schools may share any and all information with regard to student safety, and/or possible illegal activity with the Belchertown Public Schools Resource Officer and/or other members of the Belchertown Police Department.

### **Investigation Procedures**

The Principal or designee, upon receipt of a viable report, shall promptly contact the parents or guardians of a student who has been the alleged target or alleged perpetrator of bullying. The actions being taken to prevent further acts of bullying shall be discussed.

The Principal or designee shall promptly investigate the report of bullying, using a Bullying Intervention and Prevention Incident Reporting Form, which may include interviewing the alleged target, alleged perpetrator, staff members, students and/or witnesses.

Staff shall assess an alleged target's needs for protection and create and implement a safety plan that shall restore a sense of safety for that student.

Confidentiality shall be used to protect a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or is witness to or has reliable information about an act of bullying. Confidentiality shall be maintained to the extent consistent with the school's obligations under law.

If the Principal or a designee determines that bullying has occurred, he/she shall take appropriate disciplinary action and if it is believed that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator, the Principal shall consult with the school's resource officer and the Superintendent to determine if criminal charges are warranted. If it is determined that criminal charges are warranted, the local law enforcement agency shall be notified.

The investigation shall be completed within fourteen school days from the date of the report. The parents or guardians shall be contacted upon completion of the investigation and informed of the results, including whether the allegations were found to be factual, whether a violation of this policy was found, and whether disciplinary action has or shall be taken. The Principal or designee shall contact the parents or guardians

regarding the status of the investigation throughout the investigation process.

Disciplinary actions for students or staff members who have committed an act of bullying or retaliation shall be in accordance with district disciplinary policies for students and due process/appropriate discipline for staff.

Each school shall document any incident of bullying that is reported per this policy and a file shall be maintained by the Principal or designee. All reports shall be provided to the Superintendent for his/her files.

As required by M.G.L. c. 71B section 3, when a Special Education Team determines that a student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying harassment or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and to respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

The Principal or his/her designee will take any step he/she determines is necessary and/or advisable to protect, to the extent practicable, the complainant, witnesses, and other individuals from further incidents or from retaliation pending the outcome of the investigation.

The Principal or his/her designee will maintain a separate confidential file containing the original completed Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form, investigatory interview notes, and reports, findings made, the results of the investigation, including any decision for action, and other relevant investigatory materials.

### **Retaliation**

Belchertown Public Schools' Faculty and Staff will also investigate retaliation which is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student (target) who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying. Retaliation is prohibited.

### **Target Assistance**

The Belchertown Public Schools shall provide counseling or referral to appropriate services, including guidance, academic intervention, and protection to students, both targets and perpetrators, affected by bullying, as necessary. In the case of a school staff member, the Belchertown Public Schools will refer the individual to the town's Employee Assistance Program.

### **Training and Assessment**

Annual training shall be provided for school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students in preventing, identifying, responding to, and reporting incidents of bullying.

Age-appropriate, evidence-based instruction on bullying prevention shall be incorporated into the curriculum for all K-12 students.

### **Publication and Notice**

Annual written notice of the relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to students and their parents or guardians, in age-appropriate terms.

Annual written notice of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to all school staff. The faculty and staff at each school shall be trained annually on the bullying prevention and intervention plan applicable to the school.

Relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff shall be included in the school employee handbook.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan shall be posted on the Belchertown Public Schools website [www.belchertownps.org](http://www.belchertownps.org).

### **Relationship to Other Laws**

Nothing in our policy prevents the Belchertown Public Schools from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies. In addition, nothing in this policy is designed or intended to limit the authority of the Belchertown Public Schools to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71 sections 37H or 37H ½, other applicable laws, or local or school district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether our policy covers the behavior.

### **BULLYING AMENDMENTS TO SCHOOL BULLYING LAW**

On April 24, 2014, Governor Patrick signed into law "An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools," Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014, which legislation expands the protections of the 2010 anti-bullying law. The law goes into effect 90 days after April 24, that is, July 25, 2014. The new law revises certain provisions of the current anti-bullying law, G.L.c. 71:380, and adds several new subsections to that statute.

There are four main components for the new law: (1) it requires school's anti-bullying plans to recognize that certain enumerated categories of students may be more susceptible to bullying, including LGBTQ students; (2) it requires school districts to annually report bullying incident data to DESE; (3) it requires DESE to develop and school districts to administer surveys at least once every four years on the climate of the school district and prevalence of bullying; and (4) it grants DESE the power to investigate certain alleged incidents of bullying. The law also permits school districts to "adopt an anti-bullying seal to represent the district's or school's commitment to bullying prevention and intervention."

School Committee Approved: August 23, 2016

LEGAL REFS.: Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO Commission

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 603 CMR 26.00  
M.G.L. 71:37O; 265:43, 43A; 268:13B; 269:14A

REGULATORY Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary REFERENCES: Education's Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

DISTRICT POLICY AC, Nondiscrimination

CROSS REFS.: ACAB, Sexual Harassment  
JBA, Student-to-Student Harassment JICFA, Prohibition of Hazing  
JK, Student Discipline

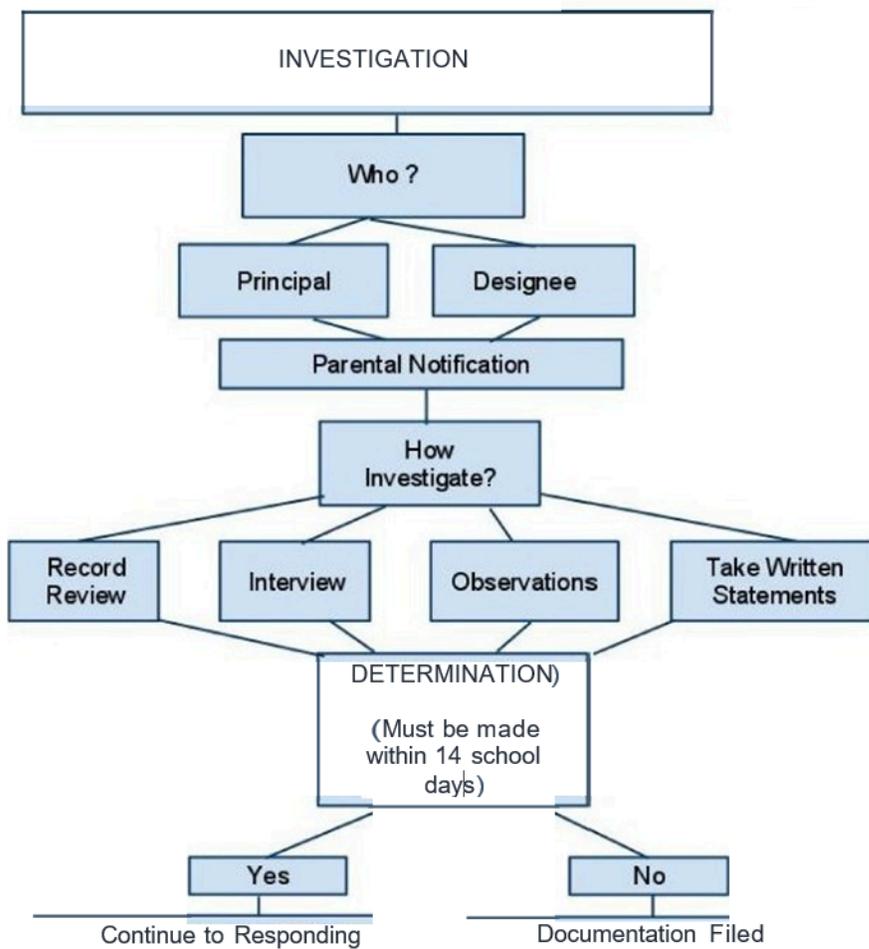
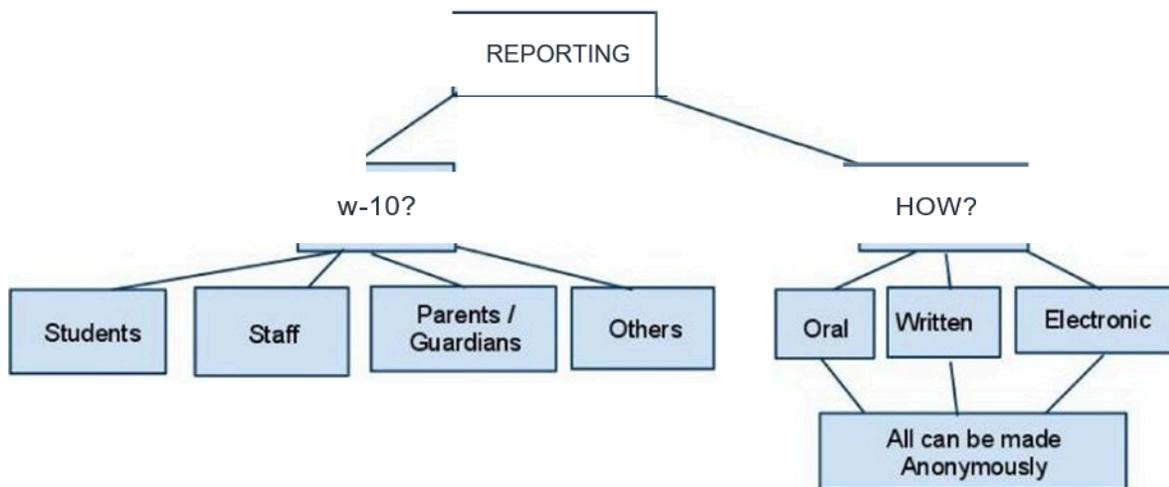
Approved by the Belchertown School Committee: August 13, 2024

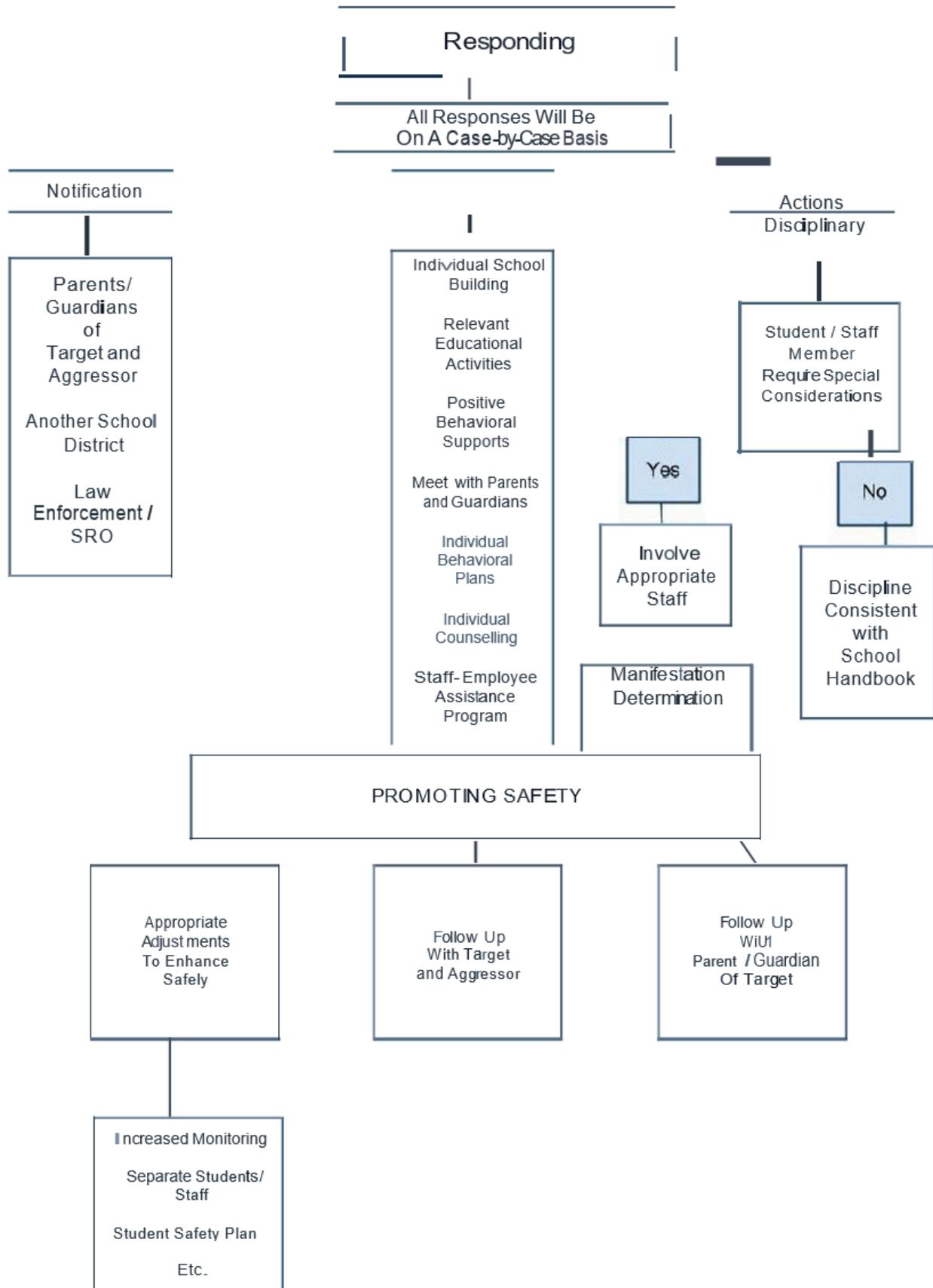
## **Appendix B Bullying Protocol for IEP Meetings**

**The following procedures will be followed at every Team meeting for students who have been found eligible for an Individual Education Plan.**

- 1. While completing “PLEP B” (page 3 of the Individual Educational Plan), the Team Leader will address social and/or emotional issues and the Team will complete a form with their decisions at that meeting. All members present sign off on the form.**
- 2. If it is determined that social and/or emotional issues impact the child’s access to the general curriculum, the Team Leader will direct the Team in a discussion regarding the specific impact as well as specific interventions to address this need.**
3. The Team will create a goal and corresponding objectives, if deemed necessary by them, to address this issue and will identify the type of staff who will provide the interventions.
- 4. For students identified with a disability on the autism spectrum, or for any student whose disability affects social skills development, the IEP Team must consider and specifically address the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing by creating appropriate goals, objectives, and/or interventions.**
5. This discussion will be documented on Team meeting notes, **on the N1 form**, on PLEP B, and on the “Additional Information” page if necessary.

**Appendix C Reporting, Responding, and Investigating Flow Chart**





## **Appendix D Student Safety Plan Form**

**BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**Student Safety Plan**

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose of Plan: \_\_\_\_\_ Duration: \_\_\_\_\_

Plan Component	Person(s) Responsible for Implementing	Frequency of student check-in (daily, weekly, etc.)	Dates of check-in/By whom

## **Appendix E Bullying Allegation Reporting Form**

**BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
BULLYING ALLEGATION REPORTING FORM**

1. **Name of Reporter/Person Filing the Report:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Note: Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.)

2. **Check whether you are the:**      **Target of the behavior**       **Reporter (not the target)**

3. **Check whether you are a:**     **Student**       **Staff member (specify role)** \_\_\_\_\_  
    **Parent**       **Administrator**       **Other (specify)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Your contact information/telephone number:** \_\_\_\_\_

4. **If student, state your school:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

5. **If staff member, state your school or work site** \_\_\_\_\_

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6. **Information about the Incident:**

**Name of Target (of behavior):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Aggressor** (Person who engaged in the behavior) \_\_\_\_\_

**Date(s) of Incident(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time When Incident(s) Occurred** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location of Incident(s)** (Be as specific as possible): \_\_\_\_\_

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7. **Witnesses** (List people who saw the incident or have information about it):

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_       Student    † Staff    † Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_       Student    † Staff    † Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_       Student    † Staff    † Other \_\_\_\_\_

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8. **Describe the details of the incident (including names of people involved, what occurred, and what each person did and said, including specific words used). Please use additional space on back if necessary.**

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FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY

9. **Signature of Person Filing this Report:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

(Note: Reports may be filed anonymously.)

10: Form Given to: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_

**II. INVESTIGATION**

Position(s): \_\_\_\_\_

1. Investigator(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Interviews:

Interviewed aggressor Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewed target Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewed witnesses Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Any prior documented Incidents by the aggressor?  Yes  No

If yes, have incidents involved target or target group previously?  Yes  No

Any previous incidents with findings of  HARASSMENT  BULLYING  RETALIATION

Summary of Investigation:

(Please use additional paper and attach to this document as needed)

**III. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE INVESTIGATION**

1. Finding of bullying or retaliation:

YES  NO

Bullying  Incident documented as \_\_\_\_\_

Retaliation  Discipline referral only \_\_\_\_\_

2. Contacts:

Target's parent/guardian Date: \_\_\_\_\_  Aggressor's parent/guardian Date: \_\_\_\_\_

District Equity Coordinator (DEC) Date: \_\_\_\_\_  Law Enforcement Date: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Action Taken:

- Loss of Privileges       Detention       STEP referral       Suspension
- Community Service       Education       Other \_\_\_\_\_

4. Describe Safety Planning: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Follow-up with Target: scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_ Initial and date when completed:

\_\_\_\_\_

Follow-up with Aggressor: scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_ Initial and date when completed:

\_\_\_\_\_

Report forwarded to Principal: Date \_\_\_\_\_ Report forwarded to Superintendent: Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (If principal was not the investigator)

Signature and Title:

Date: \_\_

## JICG - TOBACCO USE BY STUDENTS

Smoking, chewing, or other use of tobacco products by staff, students, and members of the public shall be banned from all District buildings. All forms of tobacco use shall be prohibited on all District property. In addition, tobacco use by students is banned at all school-sponsored events, even though this use does not take place on school grounds.

LEGAL REF:           M.G.L. 71:37H

# JICH - ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND DRUG USE BY STUDENTS PROHIBITED

A student shall not regardless of the quantity, use or consume, possess, buy or sell or give away any beverage containing alcohol; any tobacco product, including vapor/E-cigarettes; marijuana; steroids, or any illegal or controlled substance, including but not limited to, opioids on school property or at any school function.

Additionally, any student who is under the influence of above mentioned substances prior to, or during, attendance at or participation in a school-sponsored activity, will be barred from that activity and may be subject to disciplinary action.

This policy shall be posted on the district's website and notice shall be provided to all students and parents/guardians of this policy in accordance with state law. Additionally, the district shall file a copy of this policy with DESE in accordance with law in a manner requested by DESE.

The school district shall utilize, in accordance with law, a verbal screening tool approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to screen students for substance abuse disorders. The tool shall be administered by trained staff on an annual basis at grades 7 and 9.

Parents/guardians shall be notified prior to the opening of school each year. Parents/guardians shall have the right to opt out of the screening by written notice prior to or during the screening.

All statements made by a student during a screening are confidential and shall not be disclosed except in the event of immediate medical emergency or in accordance with law. De-identified results shall be reported to the Department of Public Health within 90 days of the completion of the screening process.

When the school administration determines a student(s) has been using and/or distributing alleged above mentioned substances in school or on school grounds or at a school sponsored event, the parents/guardians will be called and asked to meet the administration immediately. DYS, DCF, police and/or emergency medical services may be called if necessary.

School Committee Approved: August 23, 2016

School Committee Revised: May 8, 2018

## JICJ - COMMUNICATION AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Students may possess personal communication devices and personal electronic devices so long as such devices are turned off and stored in backpacks, purses or personal carry-alls. Such devices include, but are not limited to, wearable technology such as eye glasses, rings, or watches that have the capability to record, live stream, or interact with wireless technology; cell phones; laptops; tablets; and mp3 players. However, a teacher may grant permission for the use of these devices to assist with instruction in his/her classroom, and teachers are encouraged to integrate the devices into their course work. The principal or his/her designee may also grant a student permission to use such a device at his/her discretion.

Unauthorized use or improper storage of a device will result in confiscation until such time as it may be released to the student's parents or guardian. A student in violation of this policy is subject to disciplinary action.

Subcommittee Approved: January 11, 2016

School Committee Approved: January 26, 2016

## JIE - PREGNANT STUDENTS

The Belchertown Public Schools wishes to preserve educational opportunities for those students who may become pregnant and/or take on parenting responsibilities.

Pregnant students are permitted to remain in regular classes and participate in extracurricular activities with non-pregnant students throughout their pregnancy, and after giving birth are permitted to return to the same academic and extracurricular program as before the leave.

Every effort will be made to see that the educational program of the student is disrupted as little as possible; that health counseling services, as well as instruction, are offered; that return to school after leave is encouraged; and that every opportunity to complete high school is provided.

LEGAL REFS.:       M.G.L. 71:84  
                          Title IX: 20 U.S.C. § 1681  
                          34 CFR § 106.40(b)

# JIH - SEARCHES AND INTERROGATIONS

## Searches by Staff

The right of inspection of students' school lockers is inherent in the authority granted school committees and administrators. This authority may be exercised as needed in the interest of safeguarding children, their own and school property.

Nevertheless, exercise of that authority by school officials places unusual demands upon their judgment so as to protect each child's constitutional rights to personal privacy and protection from coercion and to act in the best interest of all students and the schools.

Searches by school officials of students' automobiles or the student will be conducted in a way that protects the students' rights consistent with the responsibility of the school system to provide an atmosphere conducive to the educational process.

## Interrogations by Police

The schools have legal custody of students during the school day and during hours of approved extracurricular activities. It is the responsibility of the school administration to make an effort to protect each student's rights with respect to interrogations by law enforcement officials. Therefore:

1. When law enforcement officials find it necessary to question students during the school day or periods of extracurricular activities, the school Principal or his/her designee will be present when possible. An effort will be made to contact the student's parent or guardian so that the responsible individual may be notified of the situation.
2. If custody and/or arrest are involved, the Principal will request that all procedural safeguards, as prescribed by law, be observed by the law enforcement officials.

## JII - STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

The School Committee recognizes that there may be conditions in the school system that are in need of improvement and that students should have some means by which their concerns may be effectively expressed, considered, and dealt with fairly. Such means, if well conceived and understood in advance, can do much to maintain harmonious relationships among the schools and the students and community. Every attempt will be made to seek a satisfactory solution to any concerns in a friendly and informal manner.

Students--and their parents and/or guardians, who believe that a student has received unfair treatment may bring forward their grievance through the appropriate channels. Appeals of disciplinary cases will be required to follow the district's policy on student discipline. Any applicable provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws or federal law will be followed by school officials in conducting hearings.

SOURCE: MASC October 2016

CROSS REF: JIC Student Discipline

Approved: May 8, 2018

# JJAA - FUNDRAISING POLICY

The Superintendent and Principals will approve fundraising activities, to supplement the school budget, which meet the following guidelines:

1. Participation in any fundraising activity must be optional, not required;
2. The fundraising activity must have a stated purpose that will benefit an individual school, the district, or specific recognized groups within the school or district;
3. The fundraising activity must specify how the funds will be allocated prior to approval and implementation;
4. For individual school fundraising proposals the approval process is:
  - Step one: the specific school must have its School Council review and recommend the proposed fundraising activity to the Principal;
  - Step two: the Principal must approve, approve with modifications, or disapprove the proposed fundraising proposal;
  - Step three: the Principal must notify the Superintendent within ten school days prior to the implementation of the fundraising proposal of his/her approval, giving the superintendent the opportunity to approve, further modify, or veto the proposal for good reason.
5. For district-wide fundraising proposals the approval process is:
  - Step one: the fundraising proposal must be submitted to the Superintendent for review;
  - Step two: the Senior Leadership Team must review and endorse the proposed fundraising activity;
  - Step three: the Superintendent or designee shall give final approval or denial of the fundraising activity.
6. The school councils, Principals, and Senior Leadership Team shall consider, at a minimum, the following criteria to evaluate fundraiser proposals:
  - a. Timing of project
  - b. Workload on school personnel
  - c. Appropriateness and value of stated purpose
  - d. Impact on students and families
  - e. Conflicts with other school-related fundraising organizations
  - f. Appropriateness of the promotional materials and items to be sold
  - g. Cost and quality of the merchandise
  - h. Percentage of return to schools from gross revenue earned.
7. No student assemblies, without special permission from the Superintendent or designee, will be allowed to promote fundraisers and no incentives or prizes shall be part of any fundraising activity;
8. All materials used for the promotion of the fundraiser and all materials sold as part of the fundraiser must be pre-screened by the school for appropriateness;
9. All funds collected, except by outside school committee approved school affiliated organizations must be deposited and spent in accordance with the Student Activity Agency Accounts policy guidelines; and
10. No fundraisers shall be approved that use students and the schools to solely promote the interests of a private business.

Approved by the Belchertown School Committee: July 23, 2013

# JJIF - ATHLETIC CONCUSSION POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to provide information and standardized procedures for persons involved in the prevention, training management and return to activity decisions regarding students who incur head injuries while involved in extracurricular athletic activities including but not limited to, interscholastic sports, in order to protect their health and safety as required by Massachusetts law and regulations. The requirements of the law apply to all public middle and high schools, however configured, serving grades six through high school graduation. In addition to any training required by law, the following persons shall complete one of the head injury safety training programs approved by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) as found on its website; coaches; certified athletic trainers; trainers; volunteers; school and team physicians; school nurses; athletic directors; directors responsible for a school marching band; employees or volunteers; and students who participate in an extracurricular activity and their parents.

Upon the adoption of this policy by the School Committee, the Superintendent shall ensure that DPH receives an affirmation on school district letterhead that the district has developed policies and the School Committee has adopted a final policy in accordance with the law. This affirmation shall be updated by September 30, 2013 and every two years thereafter upon review or revision of its policies.

The Superintendent shall maintain or cause to be maintained complete and accurate records of the district's compliance with the requirements of the Concussion Law, and shall maintain the following records for three years or at a minimum, until the student graduates, unless state or federal law requires a longer retention period:

1. Verification of completion of annual training and receipt of materials;
2. DPH Pre-participation forms and receipt of materials;
3. DPH Report of Head Injury Forms, or school based equivalents;
4. DPH Medical Clearance and Authorization Forms, or school based equivalents; and
5. Graduated reentry plan for return to full academic and extracurricular athletic activities.

This policy also applies to volunteers who assist with extracurricular athletic activities.

Such volunteers shall not be liable for civil damages arising out of any act or omission relating to the requirements of law, unless such volunteer is willfully or intentionally negligent in his act or omission.

Most student athletes who sustain a concussion can fully recover as long as their brain has time to heal before sustaining another hit; however, relying only on an athlete's selfreport of symptoms to determine injury recovery is inadequate as many high school athletes are not aware of the signs and symptoms or the severity concussive injuries pose, or they may feel pressure from coaches, parents, and/or teammates to return to play as quickly as possible. One or more of these factors will likely result in under diagnosing the injury and a premature return to play. Massachusetts General Laws and Department of Public Health regulations make it imperative to accurately assess and treat student athletes when concussions are suspected.

Student athletes who receive concussions may appear to be "fine" on the outside, when in actuality they have a brain injury and are not able to return to play. Incurring a second concussion can prove to be devastating to a student athlete. Research has shown that young concussed athletes who return to play before their brain has healed are highly vulnerable to more prolonged post-concussion syndrome or, in rare cases, catastrophic neurological injury known as Second Impact Syndrome.

The attached link ([protocol](#)) will discuss and outline what a concussion is, the mechanism of injury, signs and symptoms, management and return to play requirements, as well as information of Second Impact Syndrome and past concussion syndrome. Lastly, this policy will discuss the importance of education for our athletes, coaches and parents and other persons required by law.

This protocol should be reviewed on a yearly basis with all staff to discuss the procedures to be followed to manage sports-related concussions. This protocol will also be reviewed on a yearly basis by the athletic department as well as by nursing staff.

Any changes in this document will be approved by the school committee and given to athletic staff, including coaches and other school personnel in writing. An accurate synopsis of this policy shall be placed in the student and faculty handbooks.

Marching Band students will follow this policy. Band Director will be responsible for band members (to follow concussion protocol, impact testing, watch DPH video, complete pre participation form).

School Committee Approved: October 27, 2015

Revised: June 6, 2017

Approved by School Committee: August 13, 2024

# JKAA - PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OF STUDENTS

Maintaining an orderly, safe environment conducive to learning is an expectation of all staff members of the school district. Further, students of the district are protected by law from the unreasonable use of physical restraint. Such restraint shall be used only in emergency situations as a last resort and with extreme caution after other lawful and less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate.

When an emergency situation arises, and physical restraint is the only option deemed appropriate to prevent a student from injuring himself or herself, another student or school community member, a teacher or employee or agent of the school district may use such reasonable force needed to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

The definitions of forms of restraint shall be as defined in 603 CMR 46.02.

The use of mechanical restraint, medication restraint, and seclusion is prohibited.

Physical restraint, including prone restraint where permitted under 603 CMR 46.03, shall be considered an emergency procedure of last resort and shall be prohibited except when a student's behavior poses a threat of assault, or imminent, serious, physical harm to themselves and/or others and the student is not responsive to verbal directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions are deemed inappropriate.

The Superintendent will develop procedures identifying:

- Appropriate responses to student behavior that may require immediate intervention;
- Methods of preventing student violence, self-injurious behavior, and suicide including crisis planning and de-escalation of potentially dangerous behaviors among groups of students or individuals;
- Descriptions and explanations of alternatives to physical restraint as well as the school's method of physical restraint for use in emergency situations;
- Descriptions of the school's training and procedures to comply with reporting requirements including, but not limited to making reasonable efforts to orally notify a parent of the use of restraint within 24 hours of its imposition;
- Procedures for receiving and investigating complaints;
- Methods for engaging parents in discussions about restraint prevention and use of restraint solely as an emergency procedure;
- A statement prohibiting: medication restraint, mechanical restraint, prone restraint unless permitted by 603 CMR 46.03(1)(b), seclusion, and the use of physical restraint in a manner inconsistent with 603 CMR 46.00;
- A process for obtaining Principal approval for a time out exceeding 30 minutes.

Each building Principal will identify staff members to serve as a school-wide resource to assist in ensuring proper administration of physical restraint. These staff members will participate in an in-depth training program in the use of physical restraint.

In addition, each staff member will be trained regarding the school's physical restraint policy and accompanying procedures. The Principal will arrange training to occur in the first month of each school year, or for staff hired after the beginning of the school year, within a month of their employment.

Physical restraint is prohibited as a means of punishment, or as a response to destruction of property, disruption of school order, a student's refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive, or verbal threats that do not constitute a threat of imminent, serious physical harm to the student or others.

Physical restraint is prohibited when it is medically contraindicated for reasons including, but not limited to, asthma, seizures, a cardiac condition, obesity, bronchitis, communication-related disabilities, or risk of vomiting;

The use of "time out" procedures during which a staff member remains accessible to the student shall not be considered "seclusion restraint."

This policy and its accompanying procedures shall be reviewed and disseminated to staff annually and made available to parents of enrolled students. The Superintendent shall provide a copy of the Physical Restraint regulations to each Principal, who shall sign a form acknowledging receipt thereof.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:37G; 603 CMR 46.00

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# JKD - SUSPENSION PROCEDURES

## **SUSPENSIONS**

The Belchertown Public Schools adheres to the Student Discipline Laws and Regulations as set forth in Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, §§37H, 37 H1/2 and 37 H 3/4 and 603 CMR 53.00 et seq. Unless the misconduct falls under M.G.L., c. 71, §37H or §37 H1/2 (described below), the following procedures shall apply for in-school suspensions and out-of-school suspensions (including emergency removals, short-term suspensions, and long-term suspensions)

### **IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION PROCEDURES:**

A student may be removed from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises, for up to ten (10) consecutive school days or up to ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions during the school year as an alternative to a short-term suspension. If a student receives in-school suspensions for more than ten (10) consecutive or cumulative school days, the due process procedures described below for a long-term suspension shall apply. Students who are placed in in-school suspension shall have the opportunity to earn credits, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the in-school suspension.

#### *Notice of In-School Suspension:*

The principal or his/her designee shall inform the student of the disciplinary offense charged and the basis for the charge, and provide the student with an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident. If the principal or his/her designee determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the principal or his/her designee shall inform the student of the length of the student's in-school suspension.

On the same day as the in-school suspension decision, the principal or his/her designee shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent/guardian orally of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding that the student committed the infraction, and the length of the in-school suspension. On the day of the suspension, the principal or his/her designee shall send written notice (by hand delivery, certified mail, first class mail or email) to the student and parent/guardian including the reason and the length of the in-school suspension, and inviting the parent/guardian to a meeting if the meeting has not already occurred. The notice shall be in English and the primary language of the home if another language is identified in the home language survey, or by other means, as appropriate.

#### *Parent/guardian Meeting:*

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

#### *No Right to Appeal:*

The decision of the Principal or his/her designee is the final decision for in-school suspensions not exceeding ten (10) days, consecutively or cumulatively during a school year.

### **OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION PROCEDURES:**

#### *Due Process Procedures for Out-of-School Suspensions:*

There are two types of out-of-school suspensions, Short-Term Suspensions and Long-Term Suspensions (defined below). The principal or his/her designee shall determine the extent of the rights to be afforded the student at a disciplinary hearing based on the anticipated consequences for the disciplinary offense. If the consequence may be long-term suspension from school, the principal or his/her designee shall afford the student additional rights as described below, in addition to those rights afforded to students who may face a short-term suspension from school. All students facing out-of-school suspension shall have the right to oral and written notice, as described below.

Notice for Any Out-of-School Suspension:

Prior to suspending a student, the Principal or his/her designee will provide the student and the Parent/guardian oral and written notice of the possible suspension, an opportunity for the student to have a hearing, and the opportunity of the Parent/guardian(s) to participate in the hearing. The notice will be in English and in the primary language of the home if other than English as identified in the home language survey, or by other means of communication where appropriate. The notice will set forth in plain language:

- a) the disciplinary offense;
- b) the basis for the charge;
- c) the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension;
- d) the opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the principal or his/her designee concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and for the parent/guardian to attend the hearing;
- e) the date, time, and location of the hearing;
- f) the right of the student and the student's parent/guardian to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate;
- g) If the student may be placed on long-term suspension following the hearing with the principal:
  - 1) the rights set forth in 603 CMR 53.08(3)(b) ; and
  - 2) the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent.

The principal or his/her designee shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent/guardian orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. Prior to conducting a hearing without the parent/guardian present, the principal or his/her designee will document reasonable efforts to include the parent/guardian. The principal or his/her designee is presumed to have made reasonable efforts if the principal or his/her designee has sent written notice and has documented at least two (2) attempts to contact the parent/guardian in the manner specified by the parent/guardian for emergency notification.

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

Emergency Removal of Student:

Under certain emergency circumstances, it may not be practical for the principal or his/her designee to provide prior oral and written notice before removing a student from school. The principal or his/her designee may remove a student from school temporarily when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the principal's (or his/her designee's) judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption. The principal or his/her designee will immediately notify the superintendent in writing of the removal and the reason for it, and describe the danger presented by the student. The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days following the day of the emergency removal, during which time the principal shall:

- a) Make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student's parent/guardian of the emergency removal, the reason for the need for emergency removal, the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, the potential consequences, including potential length of suspension, the

opportunity for a hearing including the date/time/location of the hearing, the right to interpreter services, and other rights permitted for students who may be placed on long-term suspension as set forth in 603 CMR. 53.08(3)(b);

- b) Provide written notice to the student and parent/guardian, including the information described in 603 CMR 53.06(2);
- c) Provide the student an opportunity for a hearing with the principal or his/her designee that complies with 603 CMR 53.08(2) or 53.08(3), as applicable, and the parent/guardian an opportunity to attend the hearing, before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for hearing is otherwise agreed to by the principal, student, and parent/guardian.
- d) Render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day, which meets the requirements of 603 CMR 53.08(2)(c) and 53.08(2)(d) or 603 CMR 53.08(3)(c) and 53.08(3)(d), as applicable.

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

#### SHORT-TERM SUSPENSION PROCEDURES:

A Short-Term Suspension is the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten (10) consecutive school days or less or for ten (10) or fewer cumulative days in the school year. Students facing a short-term suspension are entitled to the oral and written notice described above. Any student facing a potential short-term suspension is entitled to a hearing with the principal or his/her designee with the following process:

#### Principal Hearing - Short-term Suspension:

- a) The purpose of the hearing with the principal or his/her designee is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequences for the infraction. At a minimum, the principal or his/her designee shall discuss the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student also shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts that the principal or his/her designee should consider in determining whether other remedies and consequences may be appropriate as alternatives to suspension. The principal or his/her designee shall provide the parent/guardian, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances that the principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.
- b) Based on the available information, including mitigating circumstances, the principal or his/her designee shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, what remedy or consequence will be imposed.
- c) The principal or his/her designee shall notify the student and parent/guardian of the determination and the reasons for it, and, if the student is suspended, the type and duration of suspension and the opportunity to make up assignments and such other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal, as provided in 603 CMR 53.13(1). The determination shall be in writing and may be in the form of an update to the original written notice.
- d) If the student is in a preschool program or in grades K through 3, the principal shall send a copy of the written determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons for imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the short-term suspension takes effect.

#### No Right to Appeal:

The decision of the Principal or his/her designee is the final decision for short-term out-of-school suspensions not exceeding ten (10) days, consecutively or cumulatively during a school year.

#### LONG-TERM SUSPENSION PROCEDURES:

A Long-Term Suspension is the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. Except for students who are charged with a disciplinary offense set forth in Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, §37 H, or in Massachusetts General laws Chapter 71 § 37H ½, no student may be placed on long-term suspension for one or more disciplinary offenses for more than ninety (90) school days in a school year beginning with the first day that the student is removed from school. No long-term suspension shall extend beyond the end of the school year in which such suspension is imposed. Any student facing a potential long-term suspension is entitled to a hearing with the principal or his/her designee with the following process:

*Principal Hearing - Long-term Suspension:*

- a) The purpose of the hearing with the principal or his/her designee is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequences for the infraction. At a minimum, the principal or his/her designee shall discuss the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student also shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the principal should consider in determining whether other remedies and consequences may be appropriate as alternatives to suspension. The principal or his/her designee shall provide the parent/guardian, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances that the principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.
- b) In addition to the rights afforded a student in a short-term suspension hearing, the student shall have the following additional rights:
  - 1) In advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not;
  - 2) the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's/parent/guardian's expense;
  - 3) the right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so. Note that any minor student may only be called as a witness if the accused student has obtained, in advance of the hearing, written permission from that minor student's parent/guardian for the minor student to participate.
  - 4) the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;
  - 5) the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the principal, and to receive a copy of the audio recording upon request. If the student or parent/guardian requests an audio recording, the principal shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made and a copy will be provided to the student and parent/guardian upon request.
- c) The principal or his/her designee shall provide the parent/guardian, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.
- d) Based on the evidence, the principal or his/her designee shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension, what remedy or consequence will be imposed, in place of or in addition to a long-term suspension. The principal or his/her designee shall send the written determination to the student and parent/guardian by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent/guardian for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent/guardian. If the principal or his/her designee decides to suspend the student, the written determination shall:
  - 1) Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing;
  - 2) Set out the key facts and conclusions reached by the principal;
  - 3) Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school;
  - 4) Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of removal from school;

- 5) Inform the student of the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent or designee, but only if the principal has imposed a long-term suspension.
- e) If the student is in a preschool program or in grades K through 3, the principal shall send a copy of the written determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons for imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the short-term suspension takes effect.

Notice of the right of appeal shall be in English and the primary language of the home if other than English as determined by the home language survey or other means of communication where appropriate, and shall include the following information stated in plain language:

- a) the process for appealing the decision, including that the student or parent/guardian must file a written notice of appeal with the superintendent within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long-term suspension; provided that within the five (5) calendar days, the student or parent/guardian may request and receive from the superintendent an extension of time for filing the written notice for up to seven (7) additional calendar days; and that the long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the superintendent decides to reverse the principal's determination on appeal.

Superintendent's Appeal Hearing:

- 1) A student who is placed on long-term suspension following a hearing with the principal shall have the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent.
- 2) The student or parent/guardian shall file a notice of appeal with the superintendent within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long-term suspension; provided that within the five (5) calendar days, the student or parent/guardian may request and receive from the superintendent an extension of time for filing the written notice for up to seven (7) additional calendar days. If the appeal is not timely filed, the superintendent may deny the appeal, or may allow the appeal in his or her discretion, for good cause.
- 3) The superintendent shall hold the hearing within three (3) school days of the student's request, unless the student or parent/guardian requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days, in which case the superintendent shall grant the extension.
- 4) The superintendent shall make a good faith effort to include the parent/guardian in the hearing. The superintendent shall be presumed to have made a good faith effort if he or she has made efforts to find a day and time for the hearing that would allow the parent/guardian and superintendent to participate. The superintendent shall send written notice to the parent/guardian of the date, time, and location of the hearing.
- 5) The superintendent shall conduct a hearing to determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense of which the student is accused, and if so, what the consequence shall be. The superintendent shall arrange for an audio recording of the hearing, a copy of which shall be provided to the student or parent/guardian upon request. The superintendent shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made of the hearing and a copy will be provided to the student and parent/guardian upon request.
- 6) The student shall have all the rights afforded the student at the principal's hearing for long-term suspension.
- 7) The superintendent shall issue a written decision within five (5) calendar days of the hearing which meets the requirements of 603 CMR 53.08(3) (c) 1 through 5. If the superintendent determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense; the superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than the principal, but shall not impose a suspension greater than that imposed by the principal's decision.
- 8) The decision of the superintendent shall be the final decision of the school district, with regard to the suspension.

**A parent/guardian conference (re-entry meeting) with the Principal or his/her designee is strongly encouraged before students who are suspended return to school. This conference will be used to promote the engagement of the parent/guardian in discussions of the student's misconduct and to assist the student in re-engaging with the school community.**

**EXCLUSION UNDER M.G.L., c. 71, §37H:**

A student may be expelled or suspended from school under Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 37H as follows:

- a) Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun, a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in Chapter 94 C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
- b) Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide, or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
- c) Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at a hearing before the principal. After said hearing, a principal may, in his/her discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b).
- d) Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of his/her appeal. The student has the right to counsel at his/her expense at a hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.
- e) Any school district that suspends or expels a student under this section shall continue to provide educational services to the student during the period of suspension or expulsion, under section 21 of chapter 76. If the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student in an education service plan, under section 21 of chapter 76.
- f) Districts shall report to the department of elementary and secondary education the specific reasons for all suspensions and expulsions, regardless of duration or type, in a manner and form established by the commissioner. The department of elementary and secondary education shall use its existing data collection tools to obtain this information from districts and shall modify those tools, as necessary, to obtain the information. On an annual basis, the department of elementary and secondary education shall make district level de-identified data and analysis, including the total number of days each student is excluded during the school year, available to the public online in a machine readable format. This report shall include district level data disaggregated by student status and categories established by the commissioner.
- g) Under the regulations promulgated by the department, for each school that suspends or expels a significant number of students for more than 10 cumulative days in a school year, the commissioner shall investigate and, as appropriate, shall recommend models that incorporate intermediary steps prior to the use of suspension or expulsion. The results of the analysis shall be publicly reported at the school district level.

**EXCLUSION UNDER M.G.L., c. 71, §37H 1/2:**

Pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 37 H ½, the following procedures shall be implemented for students charged with or convicted of a felony:

- 1) Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony or upon the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may suspend such student for a period of time determined appropriate by said principal or headmaster if said principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of this right to appeal and the reasons for such suspension taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his/her right to appeal and the process

for appealing such suspension; provided however, that such suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

The student shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent in writing of his/her request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the suspension. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent/guardian within three calendar days of the student's request for an appeal. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his/her behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town, or regional school district with regard to the suspension.

- 2) Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such felony or felony delinquency, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may expel said student if such principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and reasons for such expulsion prior to such expulsion taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his/her right to appeal and the process for appealing such expulsion; provided, however, that the expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

The student shall have the right to appeal the expulsion to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent, in writing, of his/her request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent/guardian within three calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his/her behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town, or regional school district with regard to the expulsion.

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

### **Disciplining Students with Disabilities**

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

In general, a student with a disability may be excluded from his or her educational program, to the same extent that a non-disabled student can be, for up to ten (10) school days per year. Under state law, whenever any student is excluded from school for more than ten (10) school days in the school year, that student is entitled to the opportunity to receive educational services during the period of exclusion. M.G.L., c. 76, s. 21. For students with a disability, the student's Team determines what FAPE services are necessary to enable him or her to continue to access the curriculum and make effective progress during the period of exclusion.

No later than the date of the start of any disciplinary action, the district will notify the parent of the decision and provide written notice of procedural safeguards.

In addition, within ten (10) school days of the decision to remove a student with a disability for disciplinary reasons beyond ten (10) school days, the parent(s) and relevant members of the student's Team must convene to determine whether the student's behavior was a manifestation of his/her disability. This meeting is referred to as a Manifestation Determination Review.

At the Manifestation Determination Review, the Team must review all relevant information in the student's file, including the student's IEP, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parent(s), in order to determine:

- 1) Was the student's behavior a direct result of the school district's failure to implement the IEP? and
- 2) Does the behavior have a direct and substantial relationship to the disability?

If the answer to either of the above questions is "Yes", then the conduct was a manifestation of the student's disability. If the Team determines that the behavior **was** a manifestation of the student's disability, the student may not be excluded and must be immediately returned to his/her educational program, unless the Special Circumstances apply (see below), or unless the parent(s) and the school district otherwise agree. The Team must also conduct a functional behavior assessment (FBA) and develop a behavior plan for the student, or review and modify an existing behavior plan as needed.

If the answer to both questions is "No", then the behavior **was not** a manifestation of the student's disability and the school district may apply the relevant disciplinary procedures to the student with a disability in the same manner and for the same duration as would be applied to non-disabled students. The Manifestation Determination Review should also consider whether a functional behavior assessment (FBA) or behavior plan would be appropriate for the student.

*Special Circumstances regarding discipline of students with disabilities:*

The school district may remove a student with a disability to an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) for not more than 45 school days, whether or not the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability, if the student:

- 1) Carried a weapon to or possessed a weapon at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function; or
- 2) Knowingly possessed or used illegal drugs, or sold or solicited the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function; or
- 3) Inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function

*BSEA proceedings regarding discipline of students with disabilities:*

If the parent(s) disagrees with the manifestation determination, or with any decision regarding placement in the discipline context, the parent(s) may request an expedited hearing from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA). This right is more fully described in the Parents' Notice of Procedural Safeguards.

If the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability, and no Special Circumstances apply, and the parent(s) do not otherwise agree to a change in placement, the school district may also seek an expedited hearing at the BSEA if the school district believes that maintaining student in his/her current program is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others. If the school district prevails, the BSEA may order a change of placement or order the student to be placed in an IAES for up to 45 school days.

The Belchertown Public Schools adheres to nondiscrimination in the student disciplinary process

**Students Not Yet Identified as Having a Disability**

A student who has not been determined to be eligible for an IEP or 504 Plan and who has engaged in behavior that violated the policies and rules of conduct, may assert any of the protections provided for in this part if the District/school had knowledge that the student was a student with a disability before the behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred.

The District/school must be deemed to have knowledge that a student is a student with a disability if before the behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred:

- The parent/guardian of the student expressed concern in writing to supervisory or administrative personnel of the school, or a teacher of the student, that the student is in need of special education and related services;
- The parent/guardian of the student requested an evaluation of the; or
- The teacher of the student, or other school personnel, expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the child directly to the Director of Special Education, the Section 504 Coordinator, or other supervisory or administrative personnel.

The District/school would not be deemed to have knowledge if:

- The parent/guardian has not allowed an evaluation of the student or has refused services; or
- The student has been evaluated and determined to not be a student with a disability.

If the District/school did not have knowledge that a student is a student with a disability (in accordance with above) prior to taking disciplinary measures against the student, the student may be disciplined in accordance with the same process afforded to all students. If a request is made for an evaluation of a student during the time period in which the student is subjected to disciplinary measures, the District must conduct the evaluation in an expedited manner. If the student is determined to be a student with a disability, then he/she receives all the protections set forth above following the finding of eligibility.

#### ***EDUCATION SERVICES AND ACADEMIC PROGRESS UNDER SECTIONS 37H, 37H1/2 AND 37H3/4:***

In accordance with the Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Sections 37H, 37H ½, and 37H ¾, in conjunction with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 76, Section 21, the Belchertown Public Schools must provide opportunities for students to earn credits, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of his or her in-school suspension, short-term suspension (10 days or less), long-term suspension (10 days or more), or expulsion.

In addition, any student who is expelled or long-term suspended from school may select one of the following education service options for the duration of his or her exclusion:

#### **Access to tutoring services:**

Students choosing this option are expected to attend tutoring sessions at a designated public site identified by the school district. The tutoring will be provided by qualified Belchertown Public Schools' personnel or contracted providers as assigned by the Belchertown Public Schools. Notice shall be provided in English and in the primary language spoken in the student's home if other than English as determined by the home language survey, or other means of communication where appropriate. The academic work will be consistent with the academic standards and curriculum frameworks established for all students under G.L. c. 69 §§1D and 1F. Students' tutoring schedule is by appointment and prepared weekly. \*\*

\*\*Based upon the availability of qualified tutors, tutoring services may only be available before or after school hours.

### **Collaborative for Educational Services**

The Belchertown Public Schools collaborates with the Collaborative for Educational Services (CES) to ensure that students are offered an opportunity that is appropriate for them, depending on the severity of the student behavior and the individual needs of the student.

Other options may be added to this plan in the future.

The Belchertown Public Schools will facilitate and verify enrollment of the student in the service, upon selection of an educational service by the student and the parent/guardian.

School Committee Approved:	11/10/2015
School Committee Amended:	10/11/2016
Approved by School Committee:	10/13/2024

## JLA - STUDENT INSURANCE PROGRAM

A non-compulsory accident insurance plan totally administered by an insurance company may be made available to students. The District does not assume any responsibility regarding service, claims, or other matters relating to the insurance program.

All students participating in competitive athletics shall be required to be covered by a medical insurance plan provided by parents or guardians.

## JLCC - COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

The District is required to provide educational services to all school age children who reside within its boundaries. By law, however, admission to school may be denied to any child diagnosed as having a disease whereby attendance could be harmful to the welfare of other students and staff, subject to the District's responsibilities to handicapped children under the law.

The School Committee recognizes that communicable diseases which may afflict students range from common childhood diseases, acute and short-term in nature, to chronic, life-threatening diseases.

Management of common communicable diseases shall be in accordance with Massachusetts Department of Health guidelines. A student who exhibits symptoms of a communicable disease may be temporarily excluded from school attendance. The District reserves the right to require a physician's statement authorizing the student's return to school.

The educational placement of a student who is medically diagnosed as having a life-threatening communicable disease shall be determined on an individual basis in accordance with this policy and accompanying administrative procedures. Decisions about the proper educational placement shall be based on the student's behavior, neurological development, and physical condition; the expected type of interaction with others in school setting; and the susceptibility to other diseases and the likelihood of presenting risks to others. A regular review of the placement decision shall be conducted to assess changes in the student's physical condition, or based on new information or research that may warrant a change in a student's placement.

In the event a student with a life-threatening communicable disease qualifies for services as a handicapped child under state and federal law, the procedures for determining the appropriate educational placement in the least restrictive environment shall be used in lieu of the procedures designated above.

Neither this policy nor the placement of a student in any particular program shall preclude the administration from taking any temporary actions including removal of a student from the classroom as deemed necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the student, staff, and others.

In all proceedings related to this policy, the District shall respect the student's right to privacy. Only those persons with a direct need to know shall be informed of the specific nature of the student's condition. The determination of those who need to know shall be made by the Superintendent.

SOURCE: MASC October 2016

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:55

Approved: May 8, 2018

# JLCD - ADMINISTERING MEDICINES TO STUDENTS

Medication may not be administered to students while at school unless such medicine is given to them by the school nurse acting under specific written request of the parent or guardian and under the written directive of the student's personal physician. No one but the school nurse, and those others listed in the medical administration plan (example: Epinephrine and a field trip) may give any medication to any student.

The school district shall, through the district nurse leader, register with the Dept. of Public Health for field trips and Epinephrine administration. The School Nurses will train personnel in the use of Epinephrine and limited medication delegation for field trips. (Source MDPH regulations 105 CMR 210.005)

The school district may, in conjunction with the School Physician and the School Nurse Leader, stock nasal naloxone (Narcan) and trained medical personnel and first responders may administer nasal naloxone to individuals experiencing a life threatening opiate overdose in a school setting.

If the school district wishes medical personnel to train non-medical staff in the administration of nasal naloxone, Superintendent will notify the School Committee and the Superintendent shall ensure that medical personnel have a written protocol which complies with medical directives and regulations from the Dept. of Public Health.

Following consultation with the school nurse with physician orders and parental permission, students who fall into the following exceptions may self-administer medications:

1. Students with life threatening allergies may possess and administer prescription Epinephrine.
2. Students with asthma or other respiratory diseases may possess and administer prescription inhalers.
3. Students with cystic fibrosis may possess and administer prescription enzyme supplements.
4. Students with diabetes may possess and administer glucose monitoring tests and prescription insulin delivery systems.

## **Naloxone (Narcan)**

The Belchertown Public Schools will maintain a system-wide plan for addressing potential life threatening opioid overdose reaction. This plan shall include:

- Building-based general medical emergency plan
- The Director of School Nursing Services will have the responsibility for the development and management of the naloxone administration program in the school setting in accordance with MDPH protocols.
- The school physician will provide oversight to monitor the program and ensure quality improvement and quality control.
- Training per MDPH protocols will be provided for all school nurse responders.
- Integration with the local emergency medical services (EMS) system will be included in the implementation of this program.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:54B  
Dept. of Public Health Regulations: 105 CMR 210.00

CROSS REF: GBGA/JLCE, Nalaxone (Narcan) Policy

Personnel & Policy Subcommittee Approved: February 1, 2016  
School Committee Approved: February 9, 2016  
School Committee Revised and Approved: September 27, 2016  
Approved by School Committee: August 13, 2024

## JLCG - FOOD ALLERGY POLICY

The Belchertown Public Schools recognize that some students have mild, severe, and even life threatening allergies. It is imperative that parents/guardians notify school administration regarding allergies and health issues with their children. Upon notification and identification of a student with mild, severe, and life-threatening allergies by a parent/guardian, and with complete documentation from a physician, the school will follow the plan of care as identified below.

### **Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) or 504 Plan:**

#### 1. Role of School Nurse

- a. The school nurse will initiate the development of an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) for all students with diagnosed food and other significant allergies with the parent/guardian and meet with them before school opens if possible.
- b. The Individual Health Care Plan would include warning signs, type of allergen, emergency care, and medications to administer. IHCP will be signed by parent/guardian, school nurse, student's physician, student, if self-administering, and have physician documentation of allergy and medication needed.
- c. A copy of IHCP will be given (with parent/guardian permission) to appropriate school district teachers, specialists, before and after school program personnel, coaches, and cafeteria staff.
- d. The medication plan portion of the IHCP must be updated yearly and as needed when there are changes in medications. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to obtain the necessary forms and assure that the completed forms are returned to the school prior to the start of each school year.
- e. IHCP will have emergency protocol for accidental exposure. If an Epi-Pen is needed, the student will be sent via ambulance to the hospital. If Benadryl is administered by a school nurse, the student will be sent home to be monitored by parent/guardian. When a school nurse is not available to administer Benadryl (e.g., field trips, before and after school programs), the IHCP will be followed (i.e., follow physicians directions), since Benadryl can only be administered by a school nurse.
- f. School nurses will train staff (including cafeteria staff, bus drivers and recess paraprofessionals) in Epi-Pen administration, with review. Those trained in Epi-Pen administration will be noted on the student's plan. The location of the medication that is to be administered during the school day will be noted on the IHCP. Training will include information on signs and symptoms of allergic reactions.
- g. The school will register with the Department of Public Health for Epi-Pen administration of non-licensed staff, for field trips and emergencies, such as accidental exposure.
- h. The school nurse will, while the student is on an IHCP, refer the student to the District Section 504 Coordinator for an evaluation and eligibility determination if his/her allergy has been diagnosed by a physician as severe or life-threatening (i.e., having a significant impact on one or more major life functions).

#### 2. Parent /Guardian Responsibility

- a. The parent/guardian will provide documentation of the allergy from the student's primary care provider (PCP) or preferably, allergist. Documentation from the physician must include the specific type of allergy, the severity of the allergy (i.e., is the allergy mild, severe, or life-threatening), the

major life functions impacted, specific symptoms, and include a specific plan of action including the type of medication that is to be administered in school. The doctor's order should note if the student has ever had an anaphylactic reaction, and the date of the last reaction.

- b. The parent/guardian is responsible for obtaining an order for epinephrine and/or other medications on an annual basis and more often, if there is a change in the medication protocol for the student.
- c. The parent/guardian who wishes to request a meeting before the start of the school year should contact the school principal or nurse directly with the request.
- d. The parent/guardian is responsible for granting consent for staff to administer medication to their child in the event of an emergency during school or at a school-based event.
- e. The parent/guardian will document what type of allergy their child has and what type of reactions occur when the student is exposed to the allergen(s). This information will include triggers and warning signs. Emergency numbers for parents and PCP will be on this information sheet.
- f. The parent/guardian, PCP, and nurse will decide if student can self-medicate and selfcarry medication,
- g. The parent/guardian will provide medication for the school and provide medication for after school hours. The medication must be in original packaging and clearly labeled with the student's name,
- h. The parent/guardian will contact the Food Service Director if the student will participate in the school lunch program. This will allow for alternate food selections to be discussed. The student's physician must provide the Food Services Director with recommendations for appropriate and safe food alternatives if such food alternatives are to be provided by the Food Services Department.

1. The parent/guardian will provide the child with a medic alert bracelet or chain for identification.

3. Annual Meeting for Individual Health Care Plan or 504 Plan

- a. IHCP or 504 Plan Team meeting will be held yearly, as close to the opening of school as possible, or even a pre-meeting held at the end of the year with the next year's staff.
- b. The nurse, for an IHCP, and guidance counselor, for a 504 plan, will invite teachers, principal, parents/guardians, and the student, if age appropriate, to the meeting. Other individuals may be invited per the request of the parent/guardian.
- c. If it is an IHCP meeting, the nurse will give an overview of the food allergy and IHCP. If it is a 504 Plan meeting, the District Section 504 Coordinator will give the overview. Plan implementation, management, and prevention will be discussed. If individuals are not able to attend the IHCP or 504 meeting, the nurse will share information from the IHCP and the guidance counselor or District Section 504 Coordinator will share the 504 Plan with the appropriate staff, pending written permission of the parent/guardian.
- d. Protocols/Guidelines will be developed that are age appropriate for: cafeteria, classroom, gym, recess, field trips, bus, before and after school activities, custodian, and emergency care.

4. Cafeteria Guidelines

- a. The food service will arrange for an allergy free table during lunch time and training for food service staff in cleaning tables.
- b. The food service staff will have identification of the student.
- c. The Food Service Director will post a monthly menu so parents and children can choose appropriate foods. However, the student's physician must provide the Food Services Director with recommendations for appropriate food substitutes if such substitutes are to be provided by the Food Services Department.
- d. If a student's parents have requested an allergy free zone in the classroom, the student must sit at an allergy free table in the cafeteria.

5. Classroom Guidelines

- a. Classroom teachers and aides will be educated about food allergies for the students within their classroom(s) and/or designated area(s). Teachers and aides will become Epi- Pen trained yearly, with a review.
- b. Parents of all students within the classroom will be notified via letter that there is a student with a Life Threatening Allergy (LTA) in class for grades K-8.
- c. Within this classroom, an allergy free desk and/or table will be designated, as necessary, and this will be cleaned on a daily basis.
- d. Hand washing techniques for students before and after eating will taught by the school nurse as age appropriate. Additional training for the students within the classroom will be provided and may include a video on LTA.
- e. Only allowable foods for snacks and parties, preferably in wrapped containers, will be brought into the classroom. If there is a question about food being served in the classroom, the parent/guardian will provide a snack for the student that the teacher will have available for the student's consumption.
- f. There will be no sharing of food between students.
- g. The teacher will send an adult with the student to the nurse, if accidental exposure is suspected (or call the nurse to the classroom).

6. School District After-School Activities

- a. Staff involved with after school activities that are school sponsored will be aware of LTA, signs and symptoms and trained in Epi-Pen administration, and know where it is stored.
- b. Parents/guardians are to inform the school nurse two weeks prior to their child's participation in any after school activity. The nurse will identify responsible staff for keeping/administering Epi-Pen.
- c. Unless specified, there will not be a nurse for before or after school activities.

7. Field Trip Protocol

- a. Teachers will notify the school nurse at least 2 weeks in advance of a field trip. The Nurse will make arrangements according to the IHCP or 504 Plan following field trip protocol for that student. Staff will be knowledgeable of the requirements in the IHCP or 504 Plan, have access to a phone and know how to activate 911, contact the school and parents, if the need arises.
- b. The teacher will be trained in Epi-Pen administration.

8. Bus Policy

- a. The parent/guardian, in addition to the school district, is responsible to share medical information with the bus driver. A student with LTA, and who is recommended for preferred bus seating according to his/her IHCP or 504 Plan, is to sit in the right front seat of the bus. Bus drivers will be trained in the identification of serious food allergy reaction symptoms, administration of Epi-Pens, and how to implement the proper emergency protocol procedures (i.e., who to contact for emergency care) yearly. If appropriate, the students will carry their own Epi-Pen (if parent, MD, and school nurse are in agreement). The Epi-Pen will be in front zippered pocket of backpack, with emergency instruction sheet.
- b. Please refer to the district-wide Bus Policy for further information
- c. Parents must complete the school bus Epi-Pen plan and return it to their child's school nurse before their child carries their approved Epi-Pen on any school bus.

Approved by School Committee: August 13, 2024

# JLD - GUIDANCE PROGRAM

Guidance is defined as helping individuals understand themselves in the light of their abilities, aptitudes, interests, attitudes, strengths and limitations. This process should assist students in the development of their potential; their decisions relating to personal, educational, and vocational matters, and also in becoming capable of mature self-guidance.

The school system's guidance program will be based on this definition and developed from these broad fundamental principles:

1. Individuals are different from one another in their capabilities, aptitudes, interests, needs, goals, desires and values.
2. Conditions may be improved. Equality of educational opportunity will benefit the individual and society.
3. Guidance is a continuous and developmental process. Every experience of the individual influences his performance in some way.
4. Guidance does not propose to program an individual's course of action but rather tries to assist him in arriving at his own satisfactory solutions.

Guidance services will include: educational guidance; testing programs; occupational, career, and higher education assistance and information; study aids; consultation services; and personal developmental guidance as needed. These services will be available to all students.

While some of the problems of the individual may relate to behavior and consequently entail guidance on behavior, student discipline will not be a regular function of guidance personnel.

To ensure that counseling and counseling materials are free from bias and stereotypes on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, and homelessness, all counselors:

1. Encourage students to consider programs of study, courses, extracurricular activities, and occupational opportunities on the basis of individual interests, abilities, and skills;
2. Examine testing materials for bias and counteract any found bias when administering tests and interpreting test results;
3. Communicate effectively with limited-English-proficient and disabled students and facilitate their access to all programs and services offered by the district;
4. Provide limited-English-proficient students with the opportunity to receive guidance and counseling in a language they understand;
5. Support students in educational and occupational pursuits that are nontraditional for their gender.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:38A through 71:38E; 71:46G  
603 CMR 26.04

School Committee Approved: August 23, 2016

## JN - VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer forms will always be available in each School's Office and at the Central Office. To be approved, a volunteer must be on an approved volunteer list which will be regularly updated and on file with each Principal. To become eligible for this list, the volunteer must have on file at the Central Office the following:

1. A completed School Volunteer Registration Form;
2. An approved CORI Report;
3. A signed Sexual Harassment Policy Acknowledgement Form; and
4. A signed Code of Ethics

In addition, volunteers must sign in/out and wear an official volunteer badge while volunteering. It is very important to always know who is out and about in our school buildings and to keep track of volunteer hours. If you have any questions regarding the Volunteer Program, please do not hesitate to call the school office or the Central Office.

## JP - STUDENT GIFTS AND SOLICITATIONS

Because of the embarrassment that might result among children, students will be discouraged from giving gifts to classroom teachers and other school personnel. For the same reason, there will be no formal exchange of gifts between students in the classroom.

Solicitation of funds for charitable purposes from students of the school system will be made only after approval by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

Any organization desiring to distribute flyers or other materials to students in connection with fund drives may do so only with the approval of the Superintendent.

CROSS REFS.:     GBEBC, Staff Gifts and Solicitations  
                  JJE, Student Fund-Raising Activities  
                  KHA, Public Solicitations in the Schools  
                  KHB, Advertising in the Schools

## JQ - STUDENT FEES, FINES, RENTALS, AND CHARGES

The School Committee recognizes the need for student fees to fund certain school activities. It also recognizes that some students may not be able to pay these fees. No student will be denied access into any program because of inability to pay these supplementary charges.

Some programs or courses may have student rental fees (i.e., musical instruments).

A school may exact a fee or charge only upon Board approval. The schools, however, may:

- Charge students enrolled in certain courses for the cost of materials used in projects that will become the property of the student.
- Charge for lost and damaged books, materials, supplies, and equipment.

Students who are indigent are exempt from paying fees. However, indigent students are not exempt from charges for lost and damaged books, locks, materials, supplies, and equipment.

All student fees and charges, both optional and required, will be listed and described annually in each school's student handbook or in some other written form and distributed to each student. The notice will advise students that fees are to be paid and of the penalties for their failure to pay them. Permissible penalties include the denial of participation graduation services and in extra class activities while the student is enrolled in this District.

Any fee or charge due to any school in the District and not paid at the end of the school year will be carried forward to the next succeeding school year, as such debts are considered to be debts of the student to the District and not to a particular school.

**Source: MASC Approved: July 28, 2015**

**Approved: May 8, 2018**

Approved by School Committee: August 13, 2024

## JRA - STUDENT RECORDS

In order to provide students with appropriate instruction and educational services, it is necessary for the school system to maintain extensive and sometimes personal information about them and their families. It is essential that pertinent information in these records be readily available to appropriate school personnel, be accessible to the student's parents or legal guardian and/or the student in accordance with law, and yet be guarded as confidential information.

The Superintendent will provide for the proper administration of student records in keeping with state and federal requirements, and shall obtain a copy of the state student records regulations (603 CMR 23.00). The temporary record of each student enrolled on or after June 2002 will be destroyed no later than seven years after the student transfers, graduates or withdraws from the School District. Written notice to the eligible student and his/her parent of the approximate date of destruction of the temporary record and their right to receive the information in whole or in part, shall be made at the time of such transfer, graduation, or withdrawal. The student's transcript may only be destroyed 60 years following his/her graduation, transfer, or withdrawal from the school system.

The Committee wishes to make clear that all individual student records of the school system are confidential. This extends to giving out individual addresses and telephone numbers.

LEGAL REFS: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974,

P.L. 93-380, Amended

P.L. 103-382, 1994

M.G.L. 66:10 71:34A, B, D, E, H

Board of Education Student Record Regulations adopted 2/10/77, June 1995 as amended June 2002.

603 CMR: Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education 23.00 through 23:12 also Mass Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education publication Student Records; Questions, Answers and Guidelines, Sept. 1995

CROSS REF: KDB, Public's Right to Know

## JRA-R - STUDENT RECORDS

603 CMR 23.00 is promulgated by the Board of Education pursuant to its powers under M.G.L.c.71, s.34D which directs that "the board of education shall adopt regulations relative to the maintenance of student records by the public elementary and secondary schools of the Commonwealth," and under M.G.L.c.71, s.34F which directs that "the board of education shall adopt regulations relative to the retention, duplication and storage of records under the control of school committees, and except as otherwise required by law may authorize the periodic destruction of any such records at reasonable times." 603 CMR 23.00 was originally promulgated on February 10, 1975, and was reviewed and amended in June 1995. 603 CMR is in conformity with federal and state statutes regarding maintenance of and access to student records, and is to be construed harmoniously with such statutes.

### Application of Rights

603 CMR 23.00 is promulgated to ensure parents'/guardians' and students' rights of confidentiality, inspection, amendment, and destruction of students' records and to assist local school systems in adhering to the law. 603 CMR 23.00 should be liberally construed for these purposes.

- (1) These rights shall be the rights of the student upon reaching 14 years of age or upon entering the ninth grade, whichever comes first. If a student is under the age of 14 and has not yet entered the ninth grade, these rights shall belong to the student's parent.
- (2) If a student is from 14 through 17 years or has entered the ninth grade, both the student and his/her parent, or either one acting alone, shall exercise these rights.
- (3) If a student is 18 years of age or older, he/she alone shall exercise these rights, subject to the following. The parent may continue to exercise the rights until expressly limited by such student. Such student may limit the rights and provisions of 603 CMR 23.00 which extend to his/her parent, except the right to inspect the student record, by making such request in writing to the school Principal or Superintendent of Schools who shall honor such request and retain a copy of it in the student record. Pursuant to M.G.L. c.71, s.34E, the parent of a student may inspect the student record regardless of the student's age.
- (4) Notwithstanding 603 CMR 23.01(1) and 23.01(2), nothing shall be construed to mean that a school committee cannot extend the provisions of 603 CMR 23.00 to students under the age of 14 or to students who have not yet entered the ninth grade.

### Definition of Terms

The various terms as used in 603 CMR 23.00 are defined below:

Access: shall mean inspection or copying of a student record, in whole or in part.

Authorized school personnel: shall consist of three groups:

- (1) School administrators, teachers, counselors and other professionals who are employed by the School Committee or who are providing services to the student under an agreement between the School Committee and a service provider, and who are working directly with the student in an administrative, teaching, counseling and/or diagnostic capacity. Any such personnel who are not employed directly by the School Committee shall have access only to the student record information that is required for them to perform their duties.
- (2) Administrative office staff and clerical personnel, including operators of data processing equipment or equipment that produces microfilm/microfiche, who are either employed by the School Committee or are employed under a School Committee service contract, and whose duties require them to have access to student records for purposes of processing information for the student record. Such personnel shall have access only to the student record information that is required for them to perform their duties.

(3) The evaluation team that evaluates a student.

Eligible student: shall mean any student who is 14 years of age or older or who has entered 9th grade, unless the School Committee acting pursuant to 603 CMR 23.01(4) extends the rights and provisions of 603 CMR 23.00 to students under the age of 14 or to students who have not yet entered 9th grade.

Evaluation Team: shall mean the team, which evaluates school-age children pursuant to M.G.L.c.71B (St. 1972, c.766) and 603 CMR 28.00.

Parent: shall mean a student's father or mother, or guardian, or person or agency legally authorized to act on behalf of the child in place of or in conjunction with the father, mother, or guardian. Any parent who by court order does not have physical custody of the student, is considered a non custodial parent for purposes of M.G.L. c. 71, s.34H and 603 CMR 23.00. This includes parents who by court order do not reside with or supervise the student, even for short periods of time.

Release: shall mean the oral or written disclosure, in whole or in part, of information in a student record.

School-age child with special needs: shall have the same definition as that given in M.G.L. c. 71B (St. 1972, c.766) and 603 CMR 28.00.

School committee: shall include a school committee, a board of trustees of a charter school, a board of trustees of a vocational-technical school, a board of directors of an educational collaborative and the governing body of an M.G.L. c.71B (Chapter 766) approved private school.

Student: shall mean any person enrolled or formerly enrolled in a public elementary or secondary school or any person age three or older about whom a school committee maintains information. The term as used in 603 CMR 23.00 shall not include a person about whom a school committee maintains information relative only to the person's employment by the School Committee.

The student record: shall consist of the transcript and the temporary record, including all information, recording and computer tapes, microfilm, microfiche, or any other materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics concerning a student that is organized on the basis of the student's name or in a way that such student may be individually identified, and that is kept by the public schools of the Commonwealth. The terms as used in 603 CMR 23.00 shall mean all such information and materials regardless of where they are located, except for the information and materials specifically exempted by 603 CMR 23.04.

The temporary record: shall consist of all the information in the student record which is not contained in the transcript. This information clearly shall be of importance to the educational process. Such information may include standardized test results, class rank (when applicable), extracurricular activities, and evaluations by teachers, counselors, and other school staff.

Third party: shall mean any person or private or public agency, authority, or organization other than the eligible student, his/her parent, or authorized school personnel.

Log of Access: A log shall be kept as part of each student's record. If parts of the student record are separately located, a separate log shall be kept with each part. The log shall indicate all persons who have obtained access to the student record, stating: the name, position and signature of the person releasing the information; the name, position and, if a third party, the affiliation if any, of the person who is to receive the information; the date of access; the parts of the record to which access was obtained; and the purpose of such access. Unless student record information is to be deleted or released, this log requirement shall not apply to:

- (a) Authorized school personnel under 603 CMR 23.02(9)(a) who inspect the student record;
- (b) Administrative office staff and clerical personnel under 603 CMR 23.02(9)(b), who add information to or obtain access to the student record; and
- (c) School nurses who inspect the student health record.

Access of Third Parties. Except for the provisions of 603 CMR 23.07(4)(a) through 23.07(4)(h), no third party shall have access to information in or from a student record without the specific, informed written consent of the eligible student or the parent. When granting consent, the eligible student or parent shall have the right to designate which parts of the student record shall be released to the third party. A copy of such consent shall be retained by the eligible student or parent and a duplicate placed in the temporary record. Except for the information described in 603 CMR 23.07(4)(a), personally identifiable information from a student record shall only be released to a third party on the condition that he/she will not permit any other third party to have access to such information without the written consent of the eligible student or parent.

(a) A school may release the following directory information: a student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance, weight and height of members of athletic teams, class, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, degrees, honors and awards, and post-high school plans without the consent of the eligible student or parent; provided that the school gives public notice of the types of information it may release under 603 CMR 23.07 and allows eligible students and parents a reasonable time after such notice to request that this information not be released without the prior consent of the eligible student or parent. Such notice may be included in the routine information letter required under 603 CMR 23.10.

Access Procedures for Non-Custodial Parents. As required by M.G.L. c.71, s.34H, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with the following provisions.

(a) A non-custodial parent is eligible to obtain access to the student record unless:

1. The parent has been denied legal custody based on a threat to the safety of the student or to the custodial parent, or
2. The parent has been denied visitation or has been ordered to supervised visitation, or
3. The parent's access to the student or to the custodial parent has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record.

(b) In order to obtain access, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student record to the high school principal annually. The initial request must include the following:

1. A certified copy of the court order or judgment relative to the custody of the student that either indicates that the requesting parent is eligible to receive access as set forth in 603 CMR 23.07(5)(a), or a certified copy of a court order specifically ordering that the student records be made available to the non-custodial parent, and
2. An affidavit from the non-custodial parent that said court order or judgment remain in effect and that there is no temporary or permanent order restricting access to the custodial parent or any child in the custodial parent's custody.

(c) The non-custodial parent must submit a written request for a access each year stating that said parent continues to be entitled to unsupervised visitation with the student and is eligible to obtain access as set forth in 603 CMR 23.07(5)(a).

(d) Upon receipt of the request (initial and annual) the school must immediately notify the custodial parent by certified and first class mail, in English and the primary language of the custodial parent, that it will provide the non-custodial parent with access after 21 days, unless the custodial parent provides the principal with documentation that the non-custodial parent is not eligible to obtain access as set forth in 603 CMR 23.07(5)(a).

(e) The school must delete the address and telephone number of the student and custodial parent from student records provided to non-custodial parents. In addition, such records must be marked to indicate that they shall not be used to enroll the student in another school.

(f) Upon receipt of a court order which prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to M.G.L. c.71, s.34H, the school shall notify the non-custodial parent that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial parent.

At least once during every school year, the school shall publish and distribute to students and their parents in their primary language a routine information letter informing them of the following:

(a) The standardized testing programs and research studies to be conducted during the year and other routine information to be collected or solicited from the student during the year.

(b) The general provisions of 603 CMR 23.00 regarding parent and student rights, and that copies of 603 CMR 23.00 are available to them from the school.

LEGAL REFS:           Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974,  
                          P.L. 93-380, Amended  
                          P.L. 103-382, 1994  
                          M.G.L. 66:10 71:34 A, B, D, E, H  
                          Board of Education Student Record Regulations adopted 2/10/75, as amended June  
                          2002  
                          603 CMR: Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education 23.00 through 23:12  
                          Mass Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education publication Student Records;  
                          Questions, Answers and Guidelines, Sept. 1995

CROSS REF:           KDB, Public's Right to Know

## JRD - STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHS

Individual schools may arrange, in cooperation with the school's parent organization, student council, designated student committee, or a staff committee, to take individual student and/or class group pictures.

Individual and/or class group pictures may be taken at the school facility and during the regular school day hours. The pictures shall be made available for purchase by students and/or parents on a voluntary basis. The building Principal or his/her designee shall have final authority in authorizing the picture-taking program and will be responsible for overseeing the process.

Students may be required to have an individual picture taken for the cumulative file or identification purposes; however, no student shall be pressured or required to purchase photographs.

The purpose of the policy is to:

**Enhance the safety of students through visual identification in an emergency situation.**

**Facilitate the social, educational, and administrative activities conducted in the school.**

**Provide a service to parents and students.**

**Allow the profits gained from the picture-taking program to be used by the sponsoring group and authorized by the building Principal.**

## KE - PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

Although no member of the community will be denied the right to bring their complaints to the Committee, they will be referred through the proper administrative channels for solution before investigation or action by the Committee. Exceptions will be made when the complaints concern Committee actions or Committee operations only.

The Committee believes that complaints are best handled and resolved as close to their origin as possible, and that the professional staff should be given every opportunity to consider the issues and attempt to resolve the problem prior to involvement by the Committee. Therefore, the proper channeling of complaints involving instruction, discipline or learning materials will be as follows:

1. Teacher
2. School building administrator
3. Superintendent
4. School Committee

If a complaint, which was presented to the Committee and referred back through the proper channels, is adjusted before it comes back to the School Committee, a report of the disposition of the matter will be made to the Committee and then placed in the official files.

Matters referred to the Superintendent and/or School Committee must be in writing and should be specific in terms of the action desired.

The Committee expects the professional staff to receive complaints courteously and to make a proper reply to the complainant.

LEGAL REFS.:       MG.L. 76:5

## KEB-R - PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT SCHOOL PERSONNEL

The following procedures are established to ensure that a citizen's complaint is given respectful attention and that the integrity of the educational program is upheld. "Complaint" in this regulation will be restricted in meaning to that criticism of particular school employees by a citizen of the School District which includes or implies a demand for action by school authorities. Other comments and suggestions will be referred informally to affected personnel.

1. If a complaint comes first to the person against whom it is directed, he/she will listen courteously and may try to resolve the difficulty by explaining the background and educational purpose involved. If the complaint remains unsatisfied, the employee will refer him/her to the building Principal or other immediate supervisor to have his/her views considered further. Whether the complaint terminates with the individual staff member involved or seems likely to go further, the staff member will immediately inform his/her supervisor of the complaint.

2. If a complaint comes first to the Principal or other supervisor of the person criticized, he/she should listen courteously or acknowledge a letter promptly and politely, but should make no commitments, admissions of guilt, or threats. If the complaint involves a particular employee, the supervisor should suggest a conference between the complainant and the person criticized and should inform that person immediately of the complaint.

If the complainant has already met with the person criticized and remains unsatisfied, the supervisor should invite the complainant to file his complaint in writing and offer to send him the appropriate form regarding a school employee's behavior, character or qualifications.

3. If a complaint comes first to any other school employee, that employee will refer the complainant to the person criticized or his immediate supervisor and immediately inform both.

4. No further action on the complaint should be taken unless the complainant submits the complaint in writing.

5. When a written complaint form is received, the Principal or other supervisor will schedule a conference with himself, the complainant, the person criticized, and if advisable, the department chairman or other personnel that either the supervisor or the person criticized feels could contribute resolution of the problem.

6. If the complainant is not satisfied with the results of the conference above, he/she should then be referred to the Superintendent, who may handle the complaint personally or refer it to other personnel, as he/she may see fit.

7. Should dissatisfaction remain after the above steps have been taken, the matter will be placed on the agenda for the next regularly scheduled Committee meeting. The decision of the Committee will be communicated in writing to all interested persons.

LEGAL REFS.: 603 CMR 26.09 and 26.10

## KEC - PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE CURRICULUM OR INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

The School Committee, though it is ultimately responsible for all curriculum and instructional materials (including library books), recognizes the need and right of students to free access to many different types of books and materials. It also recognizes the right of the professional staff to select books and other materials supportive of the school system's educational philosophy and goals.

Criticism of a book or other materials used in the schools may be expected from time to time. In such instances:

1. If a parent requests that his/her own child not read a given book, the teacher and/or school administrator should resolve the situation, perhaps by arranging for use of alternative material meeting essentially the same instructional purpose. This does not apply, however, to basic program texts and materials that the Committee has adopted.

2. The Committee will not permit any individual or group to exercise censorship over instructional materials and library collections, but recognizes that at times a reevaluation of certain material may be desirable. Should an individual or group ask to have any book or other material withdrawn from school use:

a. The person who objects to the book or other material will be asked to sign a complaint on a standard form on which he/she will document his criticism.

b. Following receipt of the formal complaint, the Superintendent will provide for a reevaluation of the material in question, he/she will arrange for the appointment of a review committee from among the faculty to consider the complaint.

c. The Superintendent will review the complaint and the committee's reevaluation and will render a decision in the matter. Should the decision be unsatisfactory to the complainant, he/she may appeal it to the Committee.

In summary, the Committee assumes final responsibility for all books and instructional materials it makes available to students; it holds its professional staff accountable for their proper selection. It recognizes rights of individual parents with respect to controversial materials used by their own children; it will provide for the reevaluation of materials in library collections upon formal request. On the other hand, students' right to learn and the freedom of teachers to teach will be respected.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 76:5

CROSS REFS.: IJ, Instructional Materials

IJL, Selection and Adoption of Library Materials

# KI - CLASSROOM VISITATIONS

The School Committee welcomes parents and guests to visit classrooms to observe and learn about the instructional programs taking place in our schools. Such visits can prove most beneficial in promotion of greater school-home cooperation and community understanding of how we carry out the school system's mission and goals.

Visits by parents to several classrooms in a given grade for the purposes of comparing teaching styles to provide a basis for a request for student assignment to a particular teacher are strongly discouraged because the School District's policy of assigning a student to a particular class is the sole responsibility of the building Principal in consultation with the staff of that school.

The following guidelines to classroom and school visits should be followed:

1. Parental requests for classroom visitations will be welcomed as long as the educational process is not disrupted. To this end we require that such requests be made at least forty eight hours in advance to allow for proper arrangements to be made.
2. The building Principal has the authority to determine the number, times, and dates of observations by visitors. This will be done in consultation with staff members so as to give adequate notice to the staff members of the impending visits.
3. For security purposes, it is requested that all visitors report to the main office upon entering and leaving the building to sign a guest log showing arrival and departure times along with picking up a visitor's badge to wear while in the building. The staff is encouraged to ask visitors if they have registered in the Principal's office.
4. Under ordinary circumstances, classroom observations will be strongly discouraged during the first three weeks of school in September and during the month of June.
5. Any student who wishes to have a guest in school MUST ask permission of one of the administrative staff 24 HOURS in advance of the proposed visit. If permission is granted, the guest is expected to follow the standards of behavior expected of all students. Upon arrival, the guest must register in the office. Any guest who fails to comply with student regulations will be asked to leave the school building and grounds immediately.
6. Since younger children distract the attention of both the visitor and the class, parents are strongly urged to make arrangements for them.

SOURCE: Belchertown High School and other Handbooks

CROSS REF.: IHBAA, Observations of Special Education Programs

Approved: June 12, 2018

Approved by the School Committee: August 13, 2024

