



HARDWICK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Student and Family Handbook 2020-2021

Please note that the guidelines we are required to follow due to COVID-19 are constantly changing and will take precedent over the procedures and protocols in this document.

**135 South Main Street
PO Box 515
Hardwick, VT 05843**

Look us up at Facebook:

www.facebook.com/HardwickElementarySchoolBobcats

802-472-5411 phone

802-472-3325 fax

www.hardwick.ossu.org

We have published this handbook to inform you about our school and its programs.

A careful review of the information will allow you and your child to become familiar with our rules, procedures, opportunities, responsibilities and programs. Please take the time to review relevant procedures with your student so that he/she will be familiar with them. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns that are not addressed in this handbook. This document will be accessible throughout the HES building, on our website at www.hardwick.ossu.org and a hard copy can be requested by contacting Christine Gifford at 472-5411. We look forward to an exciting year of learning with your children.

A word from our Principal

We have published this handbook as one way to keep you informed about our school and its programs. A careful review of the information will allow you and your child to become familiar with our expectations, responsibilities and programs. Please use our website: www.hardwick.ossu.org for events, updates and policies.

Please take the time to review important expectations and procedures with your child before and during the school year. In particular, look closely at the guidelines for bus safety, attendance, lunch and general student responsibilities for learning. The more we work together in guiding our students to become outstanding citizens, the greater the impact on our Hardwick community. Please share your ideas for improvement with us by email, phone call, or personal contact. Let us know if we need to include additional information that will better serve and inform families.

Principal Patrick Pennock

School Daily and Yearly Schedule

Daily - School begins at 7:45 am and students are considered **tardy after this time.**

In an effort to better secure the school and ensure student safety, we ask that parents and/or other family members remain outside the building or in the office lobby area when dropping children off in the morning and picking them up at dismissal.

Dismissal is officially at 1:30 pm..

Dismissal for **early release days** will be at 11:30 am unless otherwise noted. Both breakfast and lunch are served on those days.

Yearly: The first student day of school is August 24, 2020 for students in grades K-6 (PreK begins on August 25th). Please see the attached calendar for all schools in OSSU. It includes vacations, early release days, parent-teacher conference days and other designated days.. Please keep in mind that the final day of school is ultimately determined by how many days we make up in June due to poor weather earlier in the year.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Attendance and more

Arrival – We ask that students do not arrive on school grounds before 7:30 as there is no supervision. Breakfast is served to all students in their classrooms which open at 7:30 am. When students arrive they should go immediately to their classroom.

Daily Attendance- It is so important for your child to be present and on time every day. Our yearly calendar is provided in order to plan family vacations within school vacations. It is required that you call the school when your child is absent at 472-5411. You can also leave a voicemail on the office line so you won't have to wait for the office to open. Excused absences are those that are verified by a parent or guardian (you may be asked to provide a doctor's note), a physician, school nurse, or other school staff.

Excused absences and tardies fall into one of the following categories:

- • Medical*
- • Legal
- • Religious
- • Prior Administrative Approval

* Remember: Families are asked not to send their child(ren) to school if there has been vomiting, diarrhea or fever during the previous 24 hours. A sick child may spread the illness to classmates. If a child becomes ill at school the nurse is available to assist. We will contact **parents first** and then the individuals designated on the emergency form if a student needs to be sent home for illness.

Dismissal - For the 20-21 school year dismissal is at 1:30. Please notify the office of any dismissal plan changes before 12:00 to ensure your student gets the message.

Forms are sent home at the beginning of the year for families to fill out and return with each student's dismissal plan. Please call the school to request new forms. It is important to discuss dismissal plans to your student(s) in advance. Students who have a clear understanding of where they are to go after school have far less anxiety (and are able to learn more) than those who are unsure about dismissal.

Early Dismissal - We ask parents to report to the main office when picking up their child for an early dismissal. We require parents to complete a sign out form before children are released

Tardy - The State of Vermont mandates that school districts have strong attendance policies for all children and our school works hard to ensure that students are here daily and **on time**. Students arriving late to class miss important information, announcements and activities that are all designed to provide a structured and comfortable start to the day. The opening of school tasks help in the transition from home to the classroom and strengthen the sense of belonging essential to learning and success. While there are times when emergencies occur and being late is unavoidable, these should be infrequent, if not rare, occurrences. If there are barriers or issues to your child being able to arrive routinely on time, we are available to work with you to develop solutions.

Truancy Protocol from Lamoille Valley Truancy Prevention – Below is the protocol followed by schools in OSSU regarding absences. It is broken down into procedures based on the number of absences by your student (5, 10, 15, and/or 20 days) for the entire school year.

Five Days Absent Intervention:

1. Documented attempt to make contact with parents/guardians by school.

Ten Days Absent Interventions:

1. Documented attempt to make contact with family by school;
2. Support services offered by school;
3. Letter from school outlining consequences for further absences & possible prosecution;
4. Letter copied to Lamoille Valley Truancy Program (LVTP)
5. Determination by LVTP and school to take further action at this time.

Fifteen Days Absent Interventions:

1. Letter to family notifying them of upcoming meeting (this triggers LVTP involvement);
2. LVTP may hold a meeting with the student, parent(s)/guardian(s) and school to develop a written plan to improve attendance, set guidelines for appropriate absences, to document the impact of absences on academics and behavior and to make referrals to support services;
3. LVTP may make a report to DCF;
4. The superintendent may seek corroboration regarding the student's physical and/or mental fitness to attend school.

Twenty Days Absent Interventions:

1. LVTP facilitates document preparation with Principal, Superintendent and DCF;
2. LVTP helps Superintendent and school submits paperwork to State's Attorney for possible petition to family court;
3. LVTP continues to assist students/families and school as necessary.

Drop Off/Pick Up Parking - Please use the parking lot of our generous neighbors, Mary, Queen of All Saints, Catholic Church (formerly, St. Norbert's). Our families may use this lot for quick stops such as drop off and pick up. Students are escorted across the school driveway by staff at arrival and dismissal times. ***Please drive slowly and cautiously*** in both parking lots at all times to ensure safety. If you are visiting the school during school hours or after school, please use the staff parking lot. If no space is available, use nearby street parking. **Remember that the earliest student arrival time is 7:30 am. Doors to the school open at 7:30. Student pick up is 1:30. Due to COVID precautions, parents and/or other family members are not allowed in the building.**

Bicycles & Skateboards - Bicycles must be kept in the bicycle rack near the red building. Students are responsible for their own locks. The school does not assume any responsibility if a bicycle or skateboard is damaged or stolen. Skateboards are allowed only to come to school and are not to be used on school property during school hours.

Changes in Home/Cell Numbers and Addresses – Any changes in address, phone number, or other information must be given to the school as soon as possible so we can contact you and update our “all call” system. Please update changes for your emergency contacts quickly as well.

Chaperones and Volunteers - ALL volunteers will need to have a background check before being able to volunteer at HES. Background checks are only valid for 2 years, so please check with the school office if it is time to re-apply. This form is sent home at the beginning of the year. Please complete and return this form as soon as possible since it takes a few weeks to process. There is no cost.

Code of Conduct for Acceptable Language in School

Sexually explicit or profane language (swearing) are NOT acceptable at Hardwick Elementary School. This applies to ALL, including adult staff, students, parents/guardians, and visitors. While we acknowledge that our students may hear offensive language in neighborhoods or at home, we teach them that this language cannot be used at school. We explain that there are two kinds of talk: street talk and school talk, and school talk clearly does not allow for obscene or sexually explicit language. We invite and expect families and community members to support us in creating a positive school environment for everyone.

Discrimination - Policy on Nondiscrimination. The Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union, and the Orleans Southwest Union Elementary School District will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex or handicap in admission to, access to, treatment in or employment in its programs and activities. If you have any questions or concerns, contact Patrick Pennock, Principal of Hardwick Elementary, who has been designated to coordinate the school's efforts to comply with Federal laws VI, Title IX and Section 504, or Adam Rosenberg, Superintendent and Equity Coordinator for the Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union.

Dress Code - Parents and guardians are responsible for sending students to school dressed appropriately for a social public setting. We trust families in taking this responsibility seriously. Students wearing clothing that appears to create an improper or disruptive influence on the educational environment will be asked to borrow an article of clothing from the school's extra clothing supply for the remainder of the school day. Dressing for outdoors is a major consideration in sending students to school appropriately dressed.

Drinks Please avoid sending your child to school with soda or caffeinated drinks. Students may be asked to bring these to the office or secure in another location for the duration of the school day. Water is available throughout the building and is the best choice for kids to maintain hydration.

Electronic Devices and Personal Property - The school provides electronic devices for instruction. Teachers, staff, and school administrators are the final authority on the rules governing the use of electronic devices in school. Students

should not bring cell phones or other personal electronic devices to HES. If a parent needs their child to have a cell phone, they should contact the child's homeroom teacher to create a plan for where the phone will be stored during the school day.

- If a staff member observes a student with a personal device, it will be confiscated and brought to the office for parent pickup.
- If a parent needs to get a message to their child during the school day, they should call the front office before 2:00 pm and a message will be delivered.

The school cannot guarantee the safety and security of personal property brought to school and is not responsible for replacing lost or damaged items.

Emergency Closings & Delayed Openings - We subscribe to the “School Messenger” System that allows the school/OSSU office to notify families with up to 3 different phone numbers as well as email. As long as we have a current, working phone number(s) and/or email address for you, you will receive an automated announcement of a delay or closing. (This is another reason to keep your phone information updated with the school.) The announcement will also be posted on the local radio and TV stations: WDEV, WCAX, WLVB, WPTZ, etc.

Field Trips – We provide each student with a “Year Long Field Trip Permission Slip”. This optional form allows families to sign only one permission slip for the entire school year. Otherwise, the parent will need to be sure to provide written permission for each field trip. Information about each field trip will be given to families by teachers at least one week in advance. Most field trips are at no cost to students however, students will not be excluded from a trip for financial reasons. Parents who are chaperoning a class trip MUST have completed the criminal record check and reapply every 2 years.

We ask that chaperones do not bring siblings or other children on field trips without advance permission from the teacher and principal. A copy of the OSSU field trip policy and procedures is available in the school office and on the school website.

Fire/Crisis Drills – Safety drills are mandated by the state and will be conducted monthly. Students and staff practice exiting the building, evacuating a school bus, and finding safe and secure spots within classrooms. The school has a Crisis/Safety Team which meets regularly to create safety procedures, plan with outside agencies for actual emergencies and evaluate drills to ensure successful safety plans.

Friends of HES - Friends of HES is the Parent/Teacher organization at Hardwick Elementary School. They support our teachers and kids in a number of ways including providing opportunities for enrichment, field trips, special events, etc.. Participation in Friends of HES is a great way for parents and guardians to be more involved in helping build bridges between our school and families. If you would like more information please contact the school or you can reach out to friendsofhes@ossu.org.

Internet Use and Safety - The use of the Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union School District (OSSU) electronic resources (meaning the internet services provided at school) is a privilege, not a right. Inappropriate use will result in the loss of these privileges. Students may access electronic resources and the Internet for educational purposes only. Access to network services is given to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. OSSU reserves the right to terminate, suspend, or otherwise limit network access at any time. Users have limited privacy expectations in the contents of their personal files and records of their online activity while on the OSSU Network. System administrators have access to all files and accounts on the network and OSSU reserves the right to inspect or review accounts and/or files at any time. The District is not liable for unacceptable use or violations of copyright restrictions or other laws, user mistakes or negligence, and costs incurred by users.

The District is not responsible for ensuring the accuracy, age appropriateness, or usability of any information found on the District's electronic resources network including the Internet. The District is not responsible for any damage experienced including, but not limited to, loss of data or interruptions of service. The District is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through or stored on the electronic resources system including the Internet, or for financial obligations arising through their unauthorized use. The following is a *partial* list of activities that are not permitted.

- The use of email, chat rooms, instant messaging, etc., unless authorized by a staff member

- Using obscene language
- Purposefully accessing or sending materials, which include pictures, video or audio files, that are rude, disrespectful, abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal
- Damaging computers, computer systems or computer networks
- Violating copyright laws
- Using another's password
- Revealing personal identity, address and/or phone number
- Using a false name
- Trespassing in an other's folders work or files
- Intentionally wasting limited resources
- Employing the network for commercial purposes
- Downloading or playing games, unless assigned.
- Any activity that involves money transactions.
- Unauthorized installing or uninstalling software.

Sanctions:

- Violations may result in the loss of access.
- Additional disciplinary action may be determined in line with existing practice regarding inappropriate language or behavior.
- When applicable, law enforcement agencies may be involved.

Locked Doors - To provide a safer environment, all exterior doors will remain locked when students are present. Please use the main entrance to enter during those times. **Please check /sign in at the office when entering the building. You may be asked to wear a visitor or volunteer ID. Visitors are not permitted during the 20-21 school year due to COVID guidelines.**

Lost and Found - The 'Lost and Found' box is located outside the gym. Items found are taken to this box or, in the case of small or valuable items, turned in to the office. Labeling clothing and school belongings with the child's name is extremely helpful, and has led to many happy 'finds.' Items are kept for only a short time before being donated to charity.

Outside Recess Participation - We expect children to go outside for morning and afternoon recess unless the temperature is below zero. Boots and appropriate outerwear will keep your child safe and comfortable as dictated by Vermont's ever changing weather conditions. Hats and gloves are also suggested for very cold days. Outside recess is a very important part of a student's school day!

Personal Property - Students must assume responsibility for loss or damage to personal property brought to school. The school will try to protect such property but is not responsible for replacing lost or damaged personal items.

Pets - Pets are not allowed in the school building or on school grounds (or the church parking lot during drop off and dismissal) without permission of the principal. This does not apply to documented service animals.

Playground - For safety reasons, **playground use is restricted to HES students and staff during the school day and afterschool programs.** Adults and children who are not authorized to be on the playground will be asked to leave school grounds. Alcohol, tobacco products, drugs, and weapons are prohibited on school grounds at all times.

Snacks - Our school participates in a federal **Free Fruits and Vegetable Snack Program.** Each day the school food service provides either a fresh fruit or vegetable. Decisions about other snacks provided from home are at the discretion of families but we encourage parents to provide healthy, sugar-free snacks and drinks for their child. We also ask that children do not bring soda or caffeinated beverages to school.

You may be asked to avoid sending snacks with nuts or other ingredients because of life-threatening allergies for some children.

Student Responsibility for School Materials - If a student loses or damages school materials, we ask families to reimburse the school for the loss or damage. This includes library materials.

Student Use of School Telephones - Telephone communications between a child and a parent should be limited to emergency situations. Planning at home for after school plans and activities can help reduce the need for calls. ***Students will rarely be given permission to call home for forgotten items.*** The natural consequence of not having an item helps improve organizational skills and responsibility.

SCHOOL CHOICE WITHIN OSUED

This procedure references OSUED policy F.31: Intra-District Choice:

Policy F.31:

The Orleans Southwest Union Elementary School District places students in the District's schools based on a student's town of residence. Transportation is provided for K-6 students attending a school within the town of residence.

It is the policy of the Orleans Southwest Union Elementary District (OSUED) to offer intra-district school choice in grades kindergarten through six, for all students residing in the District, which includes Hardwick Elementary, Lakeview Elementary and Woodbury Elementary. Choice may be limited only where necessary to the legitimate operational needs of the District and any applicable legal requirements. Limitations may be imposed only in conformity with the criteria set out in Article 3 of the Articles of Agreement. Processes for intra-district choice of school will be guided by the needs of students, space availability, and available resources.

The Superintendent of Schools will develop procedures consistent with the following guidelines:

- Requests to attend a school in another town within the OSUED will be granted based on space availability and with the goal of creating balanced class sizes in all schools.
- Regardless of residence, every family will have a choice of enrolling in any grade-level appropriate school operated by the District (Hardwick Elementary, Lakeview Elementary, Woodbury Elementary).
- Transportation to K-6 buildings will be provided for students attending school within one's town of residence. For students choosing to attend school in a neighboring town, transportation is not provided by the OSUED, unless the child can access an existing bus route on the way to or from the choice school and there is sufficient space on the bus.
- Younger children may apply to attend the school choice location with an older sibling when capacity is available. We will do our best to keep siblings together whenever possible.
- Intra-district choice does not apply to non-resident students.
- Intra-district choice procedures will be listed in school handbooks and updated and published by March 1st annually.

Procedure:

- If interested in applying for school choice, a family should contact any one of the three OSUED schools for a school choice application and submit the completed application to the preferred school of choice.
- The deadline for submitting the application will be the 2nd Friday in March of any given year.
- After the March deadline, principals will approve applications based on the needs of students, space availability, and available resources.
- If there are more applications than can be accommodated, a lottery will be held to determine which students are approved.

- If there is still availability beyond the March deadline, approval will be on a first come first served basis. After July 31st, superintendent approval will be needed for a school choice request and will be considered on a case by case basis.
- If a change in physical residence occurs mid year from one school within OSUED to another within OSUED, the student may continue to attend their previous school or choose to attend the school in the town of their new residency, without having to undergo an application process. Transportation will be provided to and from only the school within the town of residency.
- Once a school choice application has been approved, the student is obligated to attend the school of choice for the duration of the school year. Once the year is over, the student may return to the school in the town in which they reside without undergoing the application process.

SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Weekly Update email - Each Friday Principal Pennock sends a weekly update to families. This communication will provide the most current information on happenings in the school and upcoming events. The update can also be found on our website.

School Newsletter - We publish a monthly school newsletter, *The Bobcat Gazette* which is sent home with each child in the family each month. The newsletter features a Principal's column, a calendar of events, cafeteria menus, and children's creative writing and art work. We encourage parents to read the newsletter and use it to stay abreast of school happenings and events. **The Bobcat Gazette is also on the school's website.**

School Board Meetings and Mandatory Policies - The School Board meets on a monthly basis. Watch the Bobcat Gazette and the website calendar page for the time and place of meetings. The Annual work plan is posted on the OSSU and the [Orleans Southwest Union Elementary District website](#) (OSUED). All mandatory policies are available on the School Board and Policies page of our website. Printed copies are available upon request.

Staff Contact Information – Email: You can communicate with any Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union employee through email by using the first initial, last name of teacher @ ossu.org (example, to reach Christine Gifford in the main office, use: cgifford@ossu.org). Phone: Please see the staff list for phone extensions. Classroom phones will not ring during the school day but voicemail is always available.

Website – The school Website address is: www.hardwick.ossu.org and is updated regularly. There is a calendar page, contact list, Parent Connections section with forms, menus, policies and more.

Facebook - www.facebook.com/HardwickElementarySchoolBobcats/

STUDENT SUPPORT

Educational Support Team - It is our belief that a comprehensive system of instructional support should be available for any student requiring assistance. We call this system the Educational Support Team or EST. Students may be referred to the EST by teachers, specialists or parents at any time a child appears to be in need of additional instructional

support. The EST team meets regularly to review cases and develop plans to assist children. Instructional supports include, but are not limited to, guidance services, health services, peer tutoring, psychological evaluations, social services referral, or special education referral and supplemental small group instruction. Parents are notified of EST referrals by the classroom teacher. A parent desiring to refer his/her child to the EST may obtain a referral form from the child's classroom teacher.

Responsive Classroom and PBiS - School rules are designed to provide a safe learning environment for everyone. As a faculty we strive to be consistent, positive and fair in applying the rules and in dealing with students who violate the rules. To create a safe and caring school, every member of the school is asked to abide by the same rules. Our school, in conjunction with the OSSU, has adopted the Responsive Classroom philosophy and uses Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (or PBiS) as the system to carry out that philosophy. Our belief is that we must make a positive, trusting relationship with the children first. That relationship continues as we help the children learn to make positive, safe, and respectful choices. Our entire school has adopted three guiding principles and these are posted in every room and hallway. The rules are:

We Are Responsible! We Are Respectful! We Are Safe!

Each year students earn "Paw Prints" when they show great examples of following the rules. Classrooms decide how to celebrate when they reach their goal for earned paws. We also celebrate a few times a year as an entire school. Consistent consequences are also practiced to guide students who struggle with these expectations. Most occur in the classroom with little disruption to learning. For full grids of various behaviors and interventions, please go to our website. Printed copies are available upon request. We also use a social skills curriculum called *Second Step*. This curriculum is intended to provide students with social skills learning to include empathy, communication skills, and conflict resolution.

Seclusion and Physical Restraint Rule 4500 -

STATE RULES FOR THE USE OF RESTRAINT & SECLUSION IN SCHOOL 4500.1 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purposes of these rules are to:

- A. Create and maintain a positive and safe learning environment in schools.
- B. Promote positive behavioral interventions and supports in schools; and
- C. Ensure that students are not subjected to inappropriate use of restraint and seclusion.

4500.2 APPLICABILITY

These rules are applicable to all learning environments that receive public funding, or over which the Vermont Agency of Education has regulatory authority.

For full text and sample forms go to: <https://education.vermont.gov/documents/state-board-rules-series-4500>

Special Education - Students who are **eligible for special education services, as determined by state and federal guidelines, receive additional support from the** special education staff to address their needs. Services offer assistance based on the specific needs of the child. Any parent who feels their child may have special education needs is encouraged to contact their child's teacher. Our goal is to provide services, when possible, in the students' classrooms.

STUDENT PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Breakfast, Lunch, and Afterschool Meal - Breakfast is served as grab and go starting at 7:30. When entering the building, students will be offered breakfast to bring to their classroom. **All meals and snacks are free for all students.** The menu is published and sent home every month in the Bobcat Gazette and is available on the website. A free afterschool meal is available for all students. The meal is served in the cafeteria immediately after dismissal. The meal is offered on days that REACH! is in session but is open to all students.

Busing Information - Hardwick Elementary School contracts for bus services from Wildcat Busing. If you have any questions about routes or stops, please contact "Bear" or Joann at Wildcat Busing, 472-5501.

It is recommended that students be at their bus stop at least five minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive. Bus drivers are required to depart from their pickup stations on time. Drivers are not expected to wait for any student who delays the bus. Expect schedules to fluctuate if weather or road conditions are adverse. During hazardous road

conditions, the driver of the bus will decide if a road is in safe, passable condition. Each bus driver has expectations for the behavior of the students on his/her bus. Students should learn what the driver expects and follow these expectations. Students will be warned by the driver when the rules are not being followed. When an individual chooses to ignore the rules and the driver's warnings, the driver will file a formal report with the school and the Student Support Staff will work with your student to resolve this. Subsequent offenses may result in a loss of bus privileges. Any time riding privileges are revoked, it is the responsibility of the parent to provide transportation.

School Bus Rules

To provide maximum safety, each driver shall be responsible for enforcing, and each passenger shall be expected to observe the following rules:

1. Be at the bus stop on time and wait on the shoulder of the road or sidewalk.
2. Board the bus in single file without pushing and crowding.
3. Be seated immediately and stay seated until the bus stops at your destination.
4. Follow the driver's instructions regarding where to sit.
5. Talk in a low, calm voice. Loud talk and foul language are not permitted.
6. Be courteous. Throwing objects, changing seats, and rough play are not permitted.
7. Ask for the driver's permission before opening windows. (continued)
8. Look both ways before leaving the bus. Wait for the driver's signal to cross the road.
9. Obey the driver.
10. Wear an appropriate face covering consistent with COVID guidelines
11. Be respectful at all times.

Any acts which are considered flagrant violations of safety may result in an immediate suspension of transportation privileges by the principal. Parents will be held responsible for mutilation and/or destruction of property and equipment on the bus.

REACH! – The REACH! Program operates after school and summer enrichment programs at Hardwick Elementary for students in kindergarten through sixth grade. Normal hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. when school is in session. No programs are offered on snow days, early release days or days when school is closed for emergency reasons.

The year is divided into three sessions and families must re-register each session. Registration forms are generally available to all students two weeks prior to each session. An afterschool meal is available.

Program enrollment is limited, and programs are filled on a first come, first served basis. Register early to reserve a spot for your student. For more information contact the Hardwick Site Coordinator at 472-2587 or check on the HES website or REACH! facebook page www.facebook.com/REACHAfterschool

STUDENT PROGRESS IN SCHOOL

Parent - Teacher Conferences - An important part of our reporting system is the parent-teacher conference, which is held twice each year. The conference offers both parents and teachers the opportunity to discuss academic and social progress, concerns, and share views in general. The conferences are scheduled by the teacher with notification of the conference sent home several days in advance of the conference. The scheduled conference does not preclude calling a conference whenever the need arises. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's teacher to arrange a conference at any time throughout the year. We believe that educating a child is a partnership and we value the time we can spend with parents.

Promotion and Retention - In retaining or promoting a student, the school considers not only the student's academic achievement and needs, but also the child's age, social and emotional maturity and needs, and the wishes of the child's parents. If retention is being considered, the issue will be raised and discussed with the parent no later than April 15. If the parent and/or teacher believe retention should be considered, the next step is to gather as much information as

possible before making the decision. Every factor which MAY affect the student's performance in school is considered and discussed with parents. We are committed to looking at the whole child and involving parents in the decision.

Class Placement - In the spring we begin to work on class placement for the following year. Placing students in classroom groupings is a complicated task. Many different individual needs, often of varying urgency, must be carefully considered when making classroom assignments. The needs of individuals must be blended with the collective needs of all students to create groupings which will provide the best education for all students.

CURRICULUM INFORMATION

Hardwick Elementary School strives to provide a rich and varied curriculum for students. Following is an overview of the programs we offer:

Preschool - Play with a Purpose. A fun first transition between home and school encourages being together and growing a classroom community through playful interactions. Circle time, Story time, Sing-a-longs, Art, Dramatic Play, Puppets, Puzzles, Blocks, Sand and Water play foster learning by doing.

Kindergarten - Community of Learners. Here we learn to make new friends and learn through exploration, hands-on problem solving, and communicating through reading and writing. Where we first learn to be a part of a learning community by discovering our feelings, needs, and strategies for teamwork and collaboration.

First Grade - Seedlings and Saplings. Reading, writing, spelling and math instruction are foundational, as well as, building on classroom routines and group cooperation. Learning through thematic units and hands on activities foster engagement and interest.

Second Grade - Authors and Illustrators. The importance and joy of inquiry, observation and value take on meaning as they interact with books, words, nature and numbers in deeper ways. Students create three books using the Picture and Writing process and share them with their families and the school community. They also plant pumpkins for the Community Pumpkin Walk at the Hazen Greenhouse!

Third Grade - Where the Wind Blows. Mastering multiplication facts, studying ecosystems and animal habitats, and lots of writing; including opinion essays, biographies and cursive handwriting. Memorable learning experiences: harvesting pumpkins and potatoes they planted as second graders and STEM engineering projects.

Fourth Grade - Planting and Harvesting. Fourth Grade - Planting and Harvesting. Connecting with community partners to gain a deeper understanding of our rich history and the natural resources we enjoy, helps us appreciate this small part of the world we live in. These connections, with the focus on high academic standards, invite students to challenge themselves to do their best work in a community of learners who are willing to take risks and ask questions. Academics has a soil to soul mindset and our classroom kitchen is a favorite for science and math. A new science partnership with the ECHO Museum will bring STEM studies into our classrooms. Our study of the history of our state and local area finds us out and about at nearby farms, the Hardwick Historical Society, and Atkins Field.

Fifth Grade - Prosperity and Citizenship. Caring about what we are doing will sustain us and help us grow is an underlying theme in all studies. Science, Language Arts, and Math involve research, communication and computing value in many different ways. Learning how the individual contributes to community through service projects is key.

Sixth Grade - Looking Back, Looking Ahead. --Sixth Grade--Looking Back, Looking Ahead--How has the presence or absence of human rights impacted cultures over time? How do we balance the needs of the natural world with that of human cultures? What can we learn about current and past cultures by examining current and past land use patterns? These are some of the compelling questions sixth graders consider during their final year at HES as elementary school students and begin looking to their future learning as early adolescent middle school students. Studies in literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies are integrated through ECO (Educating Children Outdoors) where students engage in hands-on, place-based outdoor learning at HES and through local field studies. A multi-day field study to the nearby Buck Lake Wildlife Management Area is a fun-filled culminating event focused on the theme "The Intersection of Culture and Nature," a theme that encourages students to apply the knowledge and skills they have developed throughout the year. Students investigate Identity, Community and Culture from a personal perspective and global level, as well as, learning to analyze data, formulate questions and design ways to communicate ideas and information about the environment and current events. Weekly outdoor classroom observations broaden their understanding of the natural world, and Independent Personal Learning projects teach critical thinking skills, evidence based research, and creative ingenuity.

Practical and Fine Arts

One of the best kept secrets at HES is the Practical and Fine Arts programs. We teach and inspire students to develop an appreciation and/or life long passion for Literacy, Music, Art, Wellness and Athletics.

Students learn skills to encourage individual activities, cooperative learning and team sports. Whether it is improving personal fitness, learning to code with robots, participating in the Dorothy's List Reading Challenge, learning to play an instrument, making pottery to learn about another culture, singing in a group, creating a handmade piece of artwork for a gift, or playing on a team with the goal of winning a championship, we spark students imaginations and nurture their dreams.

Special Events each year include Pumpkin Carving for the Hazen Trails Pumpkin Walk, Fall Harvest Dinner, Choral and Band Concerts, River of Light Parade, Professional Musical and Theatrical performances, Winter Carnival, Book Fairs at school and at the Galaxy Book Store, Reading Competitions, Pottery Shows, Art Exhibitions, Jump Rope and Hoops for Heart fundraiser, Spring Festival Marching Band, Whole School Field Day and BBQ.

Guidance Services Include:

- Classroom education for ALL students
- Small group support - Issues including: changing families, stress/anxiety, friendship, loss, social skills, self-esteem, empathy, etc.
- Individual counseling meetings with students
- Mediating conflicts (between students, parents and/or teachers)
- Crisis prevention and intervention
- Consulting with parents, teachers, and other community based professionals to promote student learning and well-being

- Coordinating school-wide prevention efforts
- Creating a safe and positive school climate for all students
- Supporting the placement and transition of new students
- Supporting students with social, emotional and behavioral needs

School – Parent/Guardian Compact **School Year 2020-2021**

Hardwick Elementary School and the parents/guardians of students participating in activities, services, and programs, agree that this compact outlines how the parents, the school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership that will help children achieve high standards.

School Responsibilities:

- Create a welcoming and positive learning environment for students and parents.
- Involve parents in the planning, review, and improvement of the school's Parent Involvement Policy.
- Hold an annual meeting to inform parents of the school's Title I program. This meeting will be held at a convenient time, so that as many parents as possible are able to attend.
- Frequently assess students and provide ongoing feedback to parents, in formats easy to understand and at reasonable intervals, on how the student is progressing academically.
- Provide opportunities for parents to participate in decisions about the education of their child.
- Ensure that all certified teachers are highly qualified.

Parent/Guardian and Family Responsibilities:

- Make sure my child is on time and strives for 100% attendance, and contact the school if my child is absent.
- Establish a time and place for homework to be completed.
- Participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to my child's education.
- Attend conferences and family nights, look at school work, and call the school as needed to monitor my child's progress.
- Stay informed about my child's education and communicate with the school by promptly reading all notice from the school and responding as appropriate.

Student Responsibilities:

- Come to school each day ready to learn and do my best.
- Give my parents or the adult who is responsible for my welfare all notices and information received from my school.
- Complete my class work/homework and ask for help when I need it.

Health Procedure/Illness

Success at school is largely dependent on a child's health and readiness to learn. This success is best achieved when home and school work as partners in assuring the health and well being of all students.

Your children are very important to us, and we consider it a privilege to care for them. Each child comes to us as a unique individual with specific medical and social needs. In order to provide the best care, we ask that parents share information about their children which will ensure that all of his or her needs are met. We believe that communication with home is essential for optimal care, and we will do our best to inform you of any problems that arise in school.

Parents are encouraged to contact the school nurse to communicate any needs of their students, such as activity limitations, due to injuries or surgery. In case of illness, parents will be notified and are requested to provide transportation from school.

Throughout the school day, children come to the health office with a variety of physical complaints. In such cases, we do a brief assessment to determine the validity and extent of the problem. Parents will be notified by phone or health office note of any complaint or problem that is deemed significant. If the child has a fever, is vomiting, or is otherwise too ill to be in school, we will contact you or your emergency contact and ask you to bring the child home. No child will be sent home without first talking to an adult who will assume responsibility for the child.

School health services have expanded over the last few years to meet the changing needs of our students. Our goal is to have healthy children in school as much as possible and to keep absenteeism to a minimum. School health services include:

- Providing care for acute illnesses and injuries
- Coordinating the care of children with special health needs
- Administering and monitoring student medications
- Communicating with physicians and community health providers regarding specific health needs
- Monitoring and tracking communicable diseases within the school
- Assisting families in finding appropriate medical services for their children
- Providing health counseling to students, families, and staff
- In-service education for staff on health-related topics
- Health Screenings (vision, hearing, blood pressure, height and weight if requested by doctor or parent)
- Health Education programs and presentations

If a student feels ill, he/she should report directly to the nurse's office. When the nurse is not in, the student should report to the office where he or she will receive assistance from office staff.

Annual Health Form

To provide a safe and healthy environment for students, parents are required to complete an annual medical information form for all students. Information requested includes medications taken by students on a regular basis, known medical conditions and allergies. Parents are encouraged to contact the school nurse during the year to communicate any needs of their student, such as activity limitations due to injuries or surgery.

Illness* Please see the COVID guidelines later in this document.

In an effort to minimize the spread of contagious illnesses, we ask that a child with the following symptoms remain home until symptoms subside:

- temperature of 100 or higher
- vomiting or diarrhea within the last 24 hours
- persistent loose cough
- undetermined skin rashes
- flu type symptoms of muscle aches, headaches, sore throat
- untreated head lice
- red eye with purulent discharge

*****It is required that students diagnosed with strep throat infections remain out of school until they are on an antibiotic treatment for 24 hours.**

A combination of symptoms that interferes with learning (chronic cough, a nose, etc will also be cause for a student to need to leave school, fever or fever they must be fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication returning to school. Over-the-counter medications are not meant to keep a



very runny
not.) For a
before
sick person in

Children or staff should remain at home if they have a severe head cold, fever, sore throat, rash, nausea or vomiting during the night, or have any symptoms of a contagious disease. If a child becomes ill at school or is injured the child's parent or guardian will be notified and asked to take the child home. Parents who do not have a phone should give the office a phone number of a friend or relative whom we may contact in case of an emergency. If a student has a prolonged illness of more than one week or is taking an antibiotic, even if it is not taken at school, please notify the school nurse. Generally, a child needs to take an antibiotic for 24 hours before returning to school. (This is especially important with conjunctivitis, and strep throat.) In cases of frequent absences, the school nurse may contact the parent or legal guardian to provide assistance and suggestions if such appears warranted.

When a student has been absent for two or more weeks due to illness, a note from the child's physician is required before the student may return to school.

Individualized health care plans may be warranted for certain students, created in conjunction with families to support student health.

Injuries

Any accident which occurs on school property must be reported immediately to the teacher in charge, to the nurse, or to the office. In cases when the nurse is not available, an Unlicensed Assistive Personnel (UAP) will provide assistance. The office will inform the student's parents/legal guardians if it is necessary to take the student to the doctor or hospital. In cases of serious illness or injury, staff will call 911 and request an ambulance.

All injuries, which occur while participating in athletics, must be reported to your coach no matter how small they may seem. Once a physician treats an athlete, he/she must obtain the doctor's permission to return to the activity.

The school must keep a record of all accidents that take place on school property, on the school bus, or during a school function. If your child has been injured, please make sure that his/her classroom teacher is informed. The school insurance form is available. Contact Tess Martin at 472-6531 x 2904. If you have purchased the school insurance and wish to collect benefits you must complete their accident claim form.

School does not purchase insurance for its athletes. Each year the school district offers a school time insurance program at a nominal fee to all students. This "School Time Plan" covers all sports offered at the school. This "School Time Plan" may be purchased at the beginning of the school year if your son/daughter plans to participate in any sports during the year and is not covered by other insurance. Please inquire with the school office for this paperwork.

Pediculosis

From time to time, we have had a problem with pediculosis (head lice). The nurse will periodically check students for head lice. If a child is diagnosed with pediculosis parents will be asked to treat him/her before the child returns to school. Parents should check children monthly; if head lice or nits are found, the school nurse should be contacted.

Immunizations

If your child is enrolling in Kindergarten she/he must have received the following immunizations:

- 5 doses of DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis) vaccine
- 4 doses of polio vaccine
- 2 doses of MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine
- 3 doses of hepatitis B vaccine
- 2 doses of chickenpox (varicella) vaccine



If your child is enrolling in the seventh grade she/he must have received:

- All of the immunizations listed above and
- One dose of TDaP (tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis) vaccine

According to state health regulations, all students must have the necessary immunizations in order to attend school, unless a family applies for and receives a medical or religious exemption. Applications for a religious exemption to the immunization law are available in the office. When your child receives an immunization, please provide proof of the immunization for the school. Every effort will be made to assist parents in meeting these requirements.

Screenings

The following screening tests are given by the nurse: hearing and vision screening tests, as needed height and weight measurements, a blood pressure check and scoliosis screening. When there is a need for further evaluation by a physician or an eye doctor, the nurse will contact the parent/legal guardian. It is requested that the results of a doctor's evaluation be reported to the nurse.

Policy On Medication In Schools

Prescription Medication:

The OSSU recognizes that at the present time many children are able to attend school because of the effective use of prescribed medication in the treatment of



regular
chronic

disabilities or illnesses. It is more desirable for medication to be administered in the home; however, any student who is required to take prescribed medication during the regular school day must comply with the following regulations:

1. Written orders from a physician detailing the name of the student, the drug dosage, reason for giving, and time medication is to be given must be received by the school nurse and/or building administrator **BEFORE** the medication can be given. A renewal of a long term medication order **is required each school year**.
*In certain instances, emergency medication like inhalers and/or epi-pens will be allowed to be carried on the person or in a backpack, if **written permission from the doctor and the parent** allows for this.
2. Written permission from the parent/guardian of the student requesting that the school district comply with the physician's order must accompany the physician's order.
3. Students with chronic illnesses, including asthma, (e.g. seizure disorders, cystic fibrosis, diabetes, etc.) who are responsible for self administering their medications should be allowed to continue the practice. Medication shall be kept in the school health office.
4. Medication must be brought to school in the original container appropriately labeled by the pharmacy or physician. (**NOT** in baggies or envelopes)
5. The school nurse will store all medications in a locked cabinet, except for those medications used in life-threatening situations (such as inhalers or epi-pens). Those medications, which are needed for life-threatening situations may be carried by the student.
6. The above procedure must be followed for all prescription medication.
7. Unused medication shall be destroyed in the presence of a witness or returned to parent/guardian for disposition.
8. In the nurse's absence medication will be administered by the designated unlicensed assistive personnel (UAP) .
9. The school nurse will keep a record of the administration of medication.

Any student who is required to take medication during the regular school day must complete the "Prescription Medication Order and Permission Form", which is available from the school nurse. The form details the name and purpose of the medication, dosage requirements, and includes signatures from a parent/guardian and the prescribing health care provider. **Students may not bring medicine to school including over the counter drugs such as pain relievers or cold medicines.**

The medication must be brought to school in a container labeled by a pharmacy or practitioner and given to the nurse for safe keeping. The container must have the student's name, the name of the medication, the time the medication is to be given and the name of the doctor who prescribed the medication. Medicines must be brought to school by the parent/guardian in the original container, and given to the school nurse immediately upon entering the building and that the specific amount needed to take at school is brought, not the entire bottle of medication. This will protect all children from accidental ingestion of medication and prevent the medication from being misplaced or lost.

Whenever possible, please request **TWO** labeled containers from the pharmacy so that one may be kept at home and the other kept at school.

Asthma action plans and other medical plans must be provided by the student's doctor and can be faxed to the school. Inhalers labeled with directions for use and the student name should be kept in the nurse's office. Under certain, life-threatening circumstances, a student may carry his or her own medication providing that the condition is documented on the annual health form. No medication should be carried with the student unless written instructions from his/her physician and parent/guardian to carry and self-medicate are provided to the nurse.

Students taking a short course of antibiotics can schedule taking the medication outside of school hours (before school, after school and before bedtime) unless otherwise prescribed. If a prescription is for three times a day, ask your doctor if it can be given before school, after school, and before bed. This avoids medication being transported back and forth to school and from being kept out of refrigeration (i.e. antibiotics).

Medication permission forms are distributed in July/August and extra forms are available at the school. Physicians may use their own stationery for instructions and details.

Non-Prescription Medication:

The school nurse must be notified if a non-prescription medication is to be used during school hours or activities.

Non-prescription medications (examples: Tylenol, Advil, etc.) will be administered only after a signed permission form by a parent/guardian has been received by the school nurse. Non-prescription medication must be left at the health room and **MUST** be in its original, labeled container. (NOT in baggies or envelopes)

Other Medical Guidelines:

Communicable Diseases Policy

OSSU emphasizes illness prevention and wellness. The past several years have seen an increase in the incidence of communicable diseases such as HIV and Hepatitis. The Vermont Department of Health and Occupation and Safety Health Association (OSHA) has mandated certain procedures to prevent exposure to these diseases.

Students and staff learn, thru health education, safety measures when blood or other body fluids are present (not to touch another's blood and to get an adult's assistance).

Age appropriate education about HIV-AIDS is a part of the general wellness program. Good hand washing, no biting or spitting, etc. are ways of disease prevention.

Vermont School Fluoride Mouthrinse Program (Grades 1-6)

The Vermont Department of Health and the Wolcott Elementary School *may sponsor* a FREE valuable program which helps reduce up to 30% of tooth decay (cavities) in children. (The Town of Wolcott and the school do not have fluoridated drinking water)

If implemented, your child uses a 0.2% sodium fluoride mouth rinse solution for 1 minute, once a week during the school year. If the program will run this year, fluoride permission slips with additional information will be distributed; a student can join the program at any time. All school age children should be seeing a dentist on a regular basis.

Tobacco Prohibition

The use of tobacco on school grounds and in any area of the school and library buildings is a violation of state law and is hereby prohibited. This ban extends to any student, employee, or visitor to the school, and applies at all times, whether or not school is in session.

COVID - 19 EMERGENCY INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR ADMITTANCE TO SCHOOL

Children should be kept home if they have any of the following Symptoms. Should a student develop any of these symptoms, they will be contacted (and/or their designated emergency contact) to pick up their child at school immediately.

Symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- Fever of 100.4 and >
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Muscle pain or aches
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Visual Inspection of the child for signs of infection, which could include:
 - Flushed cheeks, fatigue, extreme fussiness, etc.

Exclusions/Inclusions for Students and Staff: Anyone diagnosed with COVID-19 or awaiting test-results should self-isolate until:

- It's been 3 full days of no fever without the use of fever-reducing medication.
- Other symptoms have improved, and at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

STAFF LIST

To reach staff by phone, please call 472-5411 and use the extension numbers below. To email staff, use lower case letters, with the staff member's first initial and last name followed by @ossu.org. See the example for the Principal below.

Principal	Patrick Pennock, X 2598 or ppennock@ossu.org
Preschool	Jessica Lamberton, X 2547 Ashley Foster, X 2530
Behavior Specialist	Marquise Drown, X 2538

Kindergarten	Amber Saras, X 2516 Lauren Trautman, X 2518
Grade 1	Holli Smith, X 2520 Melissa Hall, X 2582
Grade 2	Jessica Baitz, X 2521 Megan Amell, X 2522
Grade 3	Stephanie Appleton , 2534 Lisa Sedore, X 2535
Grade 4	Suzanne Bader, X 2543 Kevin Broderick, X 2546
Grade 5	Nathan Demers, X 2551 Lisa Forbes, X 2552
Grade 6	Desiree Hodgdon, X 2548 Danielle Hodgdon, X 2549
Art Music Physical Education Library/Tech	Beth LeCours, X 2501 Jeffrey Reed, X 2553 Mike Baker, X 2527 Lisa Baranyay, X 2592
Math Interventionist	Monica Cross, X 2519
Literacy Interventionist	Cynthia Burnham, X 2505
School Counselor	Noreen Hopkins, X 2596
Athletic Director	Tammi Smith, X 2529
Special Education	Jacky Burgess, X 2585 Molly Ciecierski, X 2536 Aimee Harnden-McPhee, X 2585 Heather Wright, X 2537
Nurse	Andrea Dobson, X 2593
Administrative Assistant	Christine Gifford, X 2599 or cgifford@ossu.org Ashley Foster, X 2530
Para Educators (Instructional AssistantsStaff) (please use 472-5411)	Annette Meservey Nichole Clark Elisha Hersey Diane Holbrook Lisa Princ Tammi Smith Chelsea Smith Mabel Putvain Amber Foster

Brittany Lumsden
Leiah Devenger

REACH! Site Coordinator
Four Winds Coordinator
Building & Grounds Director

Erica Baker, 472-2587
Peggy Sprague, hes4winds@ossu.org
TBD

Maintenance

Richard Coolbeth, X 2594
Michael Hall, X 2594
Gerard LeBlanc, X 2594

School Nutrition Team

Val Hussey, Director X 2528
Ruth McAllister X 2531
CeeCee Perry-Miller X 2531

OSUESD BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS:

Katharine Ingram, Chair	472-2295 or kingram@ossu.org
Rose Modry, Vice Chair	585-9743 or rmodry@ossu.org
Orise Ainsworth, Member	or oainsworth@ossu.org
Samantha Friend, Member	or sfriend@ossu.org
Lauren Arcuri, Member	or larcuri@ossu.org
Luke Garguilo, Member	or lgarguilo@ossu.org
Phoebe Slater, Member	or pslater@ossu.org
Kim Silk, Member	or ksilk@ossu.org

ORLEANS SOUTHWEST SUPERVISORY UNION: (website: www.ossu.org) 802-472-6531

Superintendent	Adam Rosenberg x 2901
Chief Financial Officer	Brittany Currie x 2902
Director of Student Services:	Heather Freeman x 2903
Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment:	Amy Masse x 2905
Human Resources	Tess Martin x 2904

For a complete OSSU staff list, visit the website above or call, 472-6531.

Mandatory Policies for a complete file of our policies, go to <https://osuesd.ossu.org/resources/ossu-policies>. Paper copies are available upon request.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that Hardwick Elementary School, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, Hardwick Elementary School may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, **unless you have advised the District to the contrary in accordance with District procedures**. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the Hardwick Elementary School to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production;
- The annual yearbook;
- Honor roll or other recognition lists;
- Graduation programs; and

- Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members.

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent’s prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the following information – names, addresses and telephone listings – **unless parents have advised the LEA that they do not want their student’s information disclosed without their prior written consent.**

If you do not want Hardwick Elementary School to disclose directory information from your child’s education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the District in writing by October 1st. Hardwick Elementary School has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student’s name
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Electronic mail address
- Photograph/Video
- Date and place of birth
- Major field of study
- Dates of attendance
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- The most recent educational agency or institution attended
- Student ID number, user ID, or other unique personal identifier used to communicate in electronic systems that cannot be used to access education records without a PIN, password, etc. (A student’s SSN, in whole or in part, cannot be used for this purpose.)

1 These laws are: Section 9528 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 7908) and 10 U.S.C. § 503(c)

Prohibition of Firearms and Weapons

The Hardwick Town School District Board is concerned with and interested in protecting the health, safety, and welfare of students, employees, and visitors. The board recognizes that school buildings, facilities, vehicles, grounds, and other school property are best utilized in the educational process in the absence of threats to physical well-being and safety by individuals possessing weapons.

Section I: Firearms

POLICY

It is the policy of the Hardwick Town School District Board to comply with the federal Gun Free Schools Act of 1994, and 16§1166 requiring school districts to provide for the possible expulsion of students who bring weapons to school. It is further the intent of the Board to maintain a student discipline system consistent with the requirements of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Vermont State Board of Education rules.

For the purposes of this policy, the terms “firearm,” “destructive device,” “school” and “expelled” shall have the following meanings:

● “Firearm” means a firearm as defined in Section 921 of Title 18 of the United States Code and 13 V.S.A. §4016, including: (A) any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; (B) the frame or receiver of any such weapon; (C) any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or (D) any destructive device. A firearm that is for activities approved and authorized by the School District shall not be considered a firearm for the purposes of this policy if the appropriate safeguards to ensure safety as adopted by the District are followed.

● “Destructive Device” means

A. any explosive, incendiary or poison gas, including a bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one quarter ounce, mine, or similar device.

B. any type of weapon that will, or that may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and which has a barrel with a bore of more than one-half inch in diameter.

C. any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device described in subparagraph (A) or (B) and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled.

- “School” means any setting which is under the control and supervision of the School District for the purposes of student activities approved and authorized by the School District. It includes school grounds, facilities, and school-sponsored events whether held on or off of school grounds and vehicles used to transport students to and from school or school activities.

- “Expelled” means. Unless modified by the superintendent pursuant to policy, the termination for at least a calendar year of educational services to a student.

Procedures

Any student who brought a firearm to school, or who possesses a firearm at school shall be brought by the Superintendent to the School Board for an expulsion hearing.

The Superintendent shall refer to appropriate law enforcement agency any student who brings a firearm to a school under the control and supervision of the School District.

The Superintendent shall annually provide the Commissioner of Education with descriptions of the circumstances surrounding expulsions imposed under this policy, the number of students expelled and the type of firearms involved.

Sanctions

A student found by the Board after a hearing to have brought a firearm to school shall be expelled for at least one calendar year. However, the Board may modify the expulsion on a case by case basis when it finds circumstances such as, but not limited to:

1. The student was unaware that he or she had brought a firearm to school.
2. The student did not intend to use the firearm to threaten or endanger others.
3. The student is disabled and the misconduct is related to the disability.
4. The student does not present an ongoing threat to others and a lengthy expulsion would not serve the best interests of the pupil.

At the discretion of the Board and administration, an expelled student may be afforded limited educational services at a site other than the school during the period of expulsion under this policy.

An expulsion hearing conducted under this policy shall afford due process as required by law and according to procedure developed by the Superintendent or his or her designee.

Section II: Weapons

POLICY

It is the policy of the district to prohibit the possession by students of knives, weapons or dangerous instruments, as defined by administrative rules, at school and shall allow disciplinary action up to and including expulsion for violations of the prohibition against knives, weapons and dangerous instruments. This policy is to be applied in conjunction with the school's overall discipline plan developed pursuant to 16 VSA §1161a.

Definitions

- **“Knife”** means any instrument that is capable of ready use as a stabbing weapon that may inflict bodily injury.
- **“Weapon”** means a device, instrument, material or substance, whether animate or inanimate which when used in the manner it is intended to be used, is known to be capable of producing death or bodily injury
- **“School”** means any setting which is under the control and supervision of the School District for the purposes of student activities approved and authorized by the School District. It includes school grounds, facilities, and school-sponsored events whether held on or off of school grounds and vehicles used to transport students to and from school or school activities.
 - **“Expelled”** means termination of educational services for the remainder of the school year or up to 90 school days, whichever is longer.

Procedures shall be established by the principal for allowing items that fall under any of the definitions of this policy into school for educational purposes.

Hardwick Elementary School Administrative Procedure regarding weapons

When a student is found in possession of a weapon the principal or designee will

- confiscate the weapon or call police if assistance is needed
- notify the Superintendent
- notify parent/guardian
- If appropriate, hold an administrative hearing with student, which will:
 - inform the student of the policy provision that has been violated
 - confront the student with the evidence
 - provide an opportunity for the student to respond to the allegations

Except for firearms and guns, the administrator will assess, based on the hearing, whether it is necessary to continue with procedures listed below for suspension, police involvement and possible expulsion. For example, there are objects that are questionable regarding whether they are considered weapons and whether the presence of these objects requires activation and enforcement of this policy. The administrator may use his or her discretion when interpreting use and intent with such objects. Such potentially dangerous objects may include but are not limited to: small pocket knives, throwing darts, nuisance items and toys, unauthorized tools.

Procedure if administrative hearing indicates there is sufficient evidence that the policy has been violated:

- Initial suspension
- Involvement of police
- Notification of Superintendent

Any student who after administrative review is determined to have violated the weapons policy shall be brought by the Superintendent to the School Board for an expulsion hearing. However, the Board may modify the expulsion on a case-by-case basis when it finds circumstances such as, but not limited to:

- The student was unaware that he or she had brought a weapon to school.
- The student is disabled and the misconduct is related to the disability.
- The student does not present an ongoing threat to others and a lengthy expulsion would not serve the best interests of the pupil.

School includes but is not limited to: school district owned or leased or rented property, school sponsored activities, school rented, leased or owned vehicles, school sponsored field trips, school bus stops, school athletic events and other school related gatherings

A student who represents that they have a weapon and threaten students/staff or cause students/staff to feel threatened will also be subject to the procedures and consequences described above.

Prevention of Harassment, Hazing and Bullying of Students

Type: Mandatory Policy

Area: Students 12

Date Warned: July 29, 2015

Due Date for Adoption: September 15, 2015

I. Statement of Policy

The Hardwick Town School District (hereinafter "District") is committed to providing all of its students with a safe and supportive school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with respect.

It is the policy of the District to prohibit the unlawful harassment of students based on race, color, religion, creed, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. Harassment may also constitute a violation of Vermont's Public Accommodations Act, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and/or Title IX of the federal Education Amendments Act of 1972.

It is also the policy of the District to prohibit the unlawful hazing and bullying of students. Conduct which constitutes hazing may be subject to civil penalties.

The District shall address all complaints of harassment, hazing and bullying according to the procedures accompanying this policy, and shall take appropriate action against any person - subject to the jurisdiction of the board

- who violates this policy. Nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit punishment of a student for conduct which, although it does not rise to the level of harassment, bullying, or hazing as defined herein, otherwise violates one or more of the board's disciplinary policies or the school's code of conduct.

II. Implementation

The superintendent or his/her designee shall:

1. Adopt a procedure directing staff, parents and guardians how to report violations of this policy and file complaints under this policy.
2. Annually, select two or more designated employees to receive complaints of hazing, bullying and/or harassment at each school campus and publicize their availability in any publication of the District that sets forth the comprehensive rules, procedures, and standards of conduct for the school.
3. Designate an Equity Coordinator to oversee all aspects of the implementation of this policy as it relates to obligations imposed by federal law regarding discrimination. This role also may be assigned to one or both of the Designated Employees.
4. Respond to notifications of possible violations of this policy in order to promptly and effectively address all complaints of hazing, harassment, and/or bullying.
5. Take action on substantiated complaints. In cases where hazing, harassment and/or bullying is substantiated, the District shall take prompt and appropriate remedial action reasonably calculated to stop the hazing, harassment and/or bullying; prevent its recurrence; and to remedy the impact of the offending conduct on the victim(s), where appropriate. Such action may include a wide range of responses from education to serious discipline.

Serious discipline may include termination for employees and, for students, expulsion or removal from school property. It may also involve penalties or sanctions for both organizations and individuals who engage in hazing. Revocation or suspension of an organization's permission to operate or exist within the District's purview may also be considered if that organization knowingly permits, authorizes or condones hazing.

III. Constitutionally Protected Speech

It is the intent of the District to apply and enforce this policy in a manner that is consistent with student rights to free expression under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The purpose of this policy is to (1) prohibit conduct or communication that is directed at a person's protected characteristics as defined below and that has the purpose or effect of substantially disrupting the educational learning process and/or access to educational resources or creates a hostile learning environment; (2) prohibit conduct intended to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate students in a manner as defined under this policy.

IV. Definitions. For the purposes of this policy and the accompanying procedures, the following definitions apply:

- A. **"Bullying"** means any overt act or combination of acts, including an act conducted by electronic means, directed against a student by another student or group of students and which:
 - a. Is repeated over time;
 - b. Is intended to ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate the student; and
 - c. (i) occurs during the school day on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity, or before or after the school day

on a school bus or at a school sponsored activity; or

- (ii) does not occur during the school day on school property, on a school bus or at a school sponsored activity and can be shown to pose a clear and substantial interference with another student's right to access educational programs.
- B. **"Complaint"** means an oral or written report information provided by a student or any person to an employee alleging that a student has been subjected to conduct that may rise to the level of hazing, harassment or bullying.
- C. **"Complainant"** means a student who has provided oral or written information about conduct that may rise to the level of hazing, harassment or bullying, or a student who is the target of alleged hazing, harassment or bullying.
- D. **"Designated employee"** means an employee who has been designated by the school to receive complaints of hazing, harassment and bullying pursuant to subdivision 16 V.S.A. 570a(a)(7). The designated employees for each school building are identified in Appendix A of this policy.
- E. **"Employee"** includes any person employed directly by or retained through a contract with the District, an agent of the school, a school board member, a student teacher, an intern or a school volunteer. For purposes of this policy, "agent of the school" includes supervisory union staff.
- F. **"Equity Coordinator"** is the person responsible for implementation of Title IX (regarding sex-based discrimination) and Title VI (regarding race-based discrimination) for the District and for coordinating the District's compliance with Title IX and Title VI in all areas covered by the implementing regulations. The Equity Coordinator is also responsible for overseeing implementation of the District's *Preventing and Responding to Harassment of Students and Harassment of Employees* policies. This role may also be assigned to Designated Employees.
- G. **"Harassment"** means an incident or incidents of verbal, written, visual, or physical conduct, including any incident conducted by electronic means, based on or motivated by a student's or a student's family member's actual or perceived race, creed, color, national origin, marital status disability, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity, that has the purpose or effect of objectively and substantially undermining and detracting from or interfering with a student's educational performance or access to school resources or creating an objectively intimidating hostile, or offensive environment.

Harassment includes conduct as defined above and may also constitute one or more of the following:

- (1) Sexual harassment, which means unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, that includes sexual violence/sexual assault, sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, written, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature, and includes situations when one or both of the following occur:
 - (i) Submission to that conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a student's education, academic status, or progress; or
 - (ii) Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a student is used as a component of the basis for decisions affecting that student.

Sexual harassment may also include student-on-student conduct or conduct of a non-employee third party that creates a hostile environment. A hostile environment exists where the harassing conduct is severe, persistent or pervasive so as to deny or limit the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the educational program on the basis of sex.

- (2) Racial harassment, which means conduct directed at the characteristics of a student's or a student's family member's actual or perceived race or color, and includes the use of epithets, stereotypes, racial slurs, comments, insults, derogatory remarks, gestures, threats, graffiti, display, or circulation of written or visual material, and taunts on manner of speech and negative references to cultural customs.
- (3) Harassment of members of other protected categories, means conduct directed at the characteristics of a student's or a student's family member's actual or perceived creed, national origin, marital status, disability, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity and includes the use of epithets, stereotypes, slurs, comments, insults, derogatory remarks, gestures, threats, graffiti, display, or circulation of written or visual material, taunts on manner of speech, and negative references to customs related to any of these protected categories.

H. **"Hazing"** means any intentional, knowing or reckless act committed by a student, whether individually or in concert with others, against another student: In connection with pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization which is affiliated with the educational institution; and

- (1) Which is intended to have the effect of, or should reasonably be expected to have the effect of endangering the mental or physical health of the student.

Hazing shall not include any activity or conduct that furthers legitimate curricular, extra-curricular, or military training program goals, provided that:

- (1) The goals are approved by the educational institution; and
- (2) The activity or conduct furthers the goals in a manner that is appropriate, contemplated by the educational institution, and normal and customary for similar programs at other educational institutions.

With respect to Hazing, **"Student"** means any person who:

(A) is registered in or in attendance at an educational institution;

(B) has been accepted for admission at the educational institution where the hazing incident occurs; or

(C) intends to attend an educational institution during any of its regular sessions after an official academic break.

I. **“Notice”** means a written complaint or oral information that hazing, harassment or bullying may have occurred which has been provided to a designated employee from another employee, the student allegedly subjected to hazing, harassment or bullying, another student, a parent or guardian, or any other individual who has reasonable cause to believe the alleged conduct may have occurred. If the school learns of possible hazing, harassment or bullying through other means, for example, if information about hazing, harassment or bullying is received from a third party (such as from a witness to an incident or an anonymous letter or telephone call), different factors will affect the school’s response. These factors include the source and nature of the information; the seriousness of the alleged incident; the specificity of the information; the objectivity and credibility of the source of the report; whether any individuals can be identified who were subjected to the alleged harassment; and whether those individuals want to pursue the matter. In addition, for purposes of violations of federal anti-discrimination laws, notice may occur when an employee of the district, including any individual who a student could reasonably believe has this authority or responsibility, knows or in the exercise of reasonable care should have known about potential unlawful harassment or bullying.

J. **“Organization”** means a fraternity, sorority, athletic team, association, corporation, order, society, corps, cooperative, club, or other similar group, whose members primarily are students at an educational institution, and which is affiliated with the educational institution.

K. **“Pledging”** means any action or activity related to becoming a member of an organization.

L. **“Retaliation”** is any adverse action by any person against a person who has filed a complaint of harassment, hazing or bullying or against a person who assists or participates in an investigation, proceeding or hearing related to the harassment complaint. Such adverse action may include conduct by a school employee directed at a student in the form of intimidation or reprisal such as diminishment of grades, suspension, expulsion, change in educational conditions, loss of privileges or benefits, or other unwarranted disciplinary action. Retaliation may also include conduct by a student directed at another student in the form of further harassment, intimidation, and reprisal.

M. **“School administrator”** means a superintendent, principal or his/her designee assistant principal//technical center director or his/her designee and/or the District’s Equity Coordinator.

N. **“Student Conduct Form”** is a form used by students, staff, or parents, to provide, in written form, information about inappropriate student behaviors that may constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying.

APPENDIX A

Designated Employees:

The following employees of the Hardwick Elementary School have been designated by the District to receive complaints of bullying and/or harassment pursuant to this policy and 16 V.S.A. § 570a(a)(7) and 16 V.S.A.

§570c(7) and under federal anti discrimination laws;

Name: Pam Cushman Title: Guidance Counselor

Contact Information: 802-472-2596 or shalpin@ossu.org

Name: Marquise Drown Title: Guidance Counselor

Contact Information: 802-472-2599 or mdrown@ossu.org

Prevention of Harassment, Hazing and Bullying of Students

PROCEDURES

I. Reporting Complaints of Hazing, Harassment and/or Bullying

A. **Student Reporting:** Any student who believes that s/he has been hazed, harassed and/or bullied under this policy, or who witnesses or has knowledge of conduct that s/he reasonably believes might constitute hazing, harassment and or/bullying, should promptly report the conduct to a designated employee or any other school employee.

B. **School employee reporting:** Any school employee who **witnesses conduct** that s/he reasonably believes might constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying shall take reasonable action to stop the conduct and to

prevent its recurrence and immediately report it to a designated employee and immediately complete a Student Conduct Form.

- Any school employee **who overhears or directly receives information** about conduct that might constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying shall immediately report the information to a designated employee and immediately complete a Student Conduct Form. If one of the designated employees is a person alleged to be engaged in the conduct complained of, the incident shall be immediately reported to the other designated employee or the school administrator.
- C. Other reporting: Any other person who witnesses conduct that s/he reasonably believes might constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying under this policy should promptly report the conduct to a designated employee.
- D. Documentation of the report: If the complaint is oral, the designated employee shall promptly reduce the complaint to writing in a Student Conduct Form, including the time, place, and nature of the alleged conduct, the identity of the complainant, alleged perpetrator, and any witnesses. Both the complainant and the alleged perpetrator will have the right to present witnesses and other evidence in support of their position.
- E. False complaint: Any person who knowingly makes a false accusation regarding hazing, harassment and/or bullying may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion with regard to students, or up to and including discharge with regard to employees. There shall be no adverse action taken against a person for reporting a complaint of hazing, harassment and/or bullying when the person has a good faith belief that hazing, harassment and/or bullying occurred or is occurring.
- F. Rights to Alternative Complaint Process: In addition to, or as an alternative to filing a harassment complaint pursuant to this policy, a person may file a harassment complaint with the Vermont Human Rights Commission or the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education at the addresses noted below:

Vermont Human Rights Commission
14-16 Baldwin Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-6301
(800) 416-2010 or (802) 828-2480 (voice) (877) 294-9200 (tty)
(802) 828-2481 (fax)
Email: human.rights@state.vt.us

Office for Civil Rights, Boston Office
U.S. Department of Education
8th Floor
5 Post Office Square
Boston, MA 02109-3921
617-289-0111 (voice)
877-521-2172 (tdd)
617-289-0150 (fax)
Email: OCR.Boston@ed.gov

II. Responding to Notice of Possible Policy Violation(s)

- A. Upon **notice of information** that hazing, harassment and/or bullying may have occurred the designated employee shall:
- i. Promptly reduce any oral information to writing, including the time, place, and nature of the conduct, and the identity of the participants and complainant.
 - ii. Promptly inform the school administrator(s) of the information;
 - iii. If in the judgment of the school administrator, the information alleges conduct which may constitute harassment, hazing or bullying, the school administrator shall, as soon as reasonably possible, provide a copy of the policy on hazing, harassment and bullying and these procedures to the complainant and accused individual, or if either is a minor, cause a copy to be provided or delivered to their respective parent or guardian.
- B. Upon **initiation of an investigation**, the designated employee shall:
- i. Notify in writing both the complainant and accused individual (or if either is a minor inform their respective parent or guardian) that:
 1. an investigation has been initiated;
 2. retaliation is prohibited;
 3. all parties have certain confidentiality rights; and

4. they will be informed in writing of the outcome of the investigation.
- C. All notifications shall be subject to state and/or federal laws protecting the confidentiality of personally identifiable student information. Pursuant to 34 CFR Part 99.30, a school administrator may seek the consent of the parent/guardian of the accused student, or the accused eligible student (if 18 or older, the accused student has the ability to consent), in order to inform the complainant of any disciplinary action taken in cases where the school determined that an act(s) of harassment, hazing, and/or bullying, or other misconduct occurred. The parent/guardian or eligible student shall provide a signed and dated written consent before an educational agency or institution discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records.

III. Investigating Hazing, Harassment and/or Bullying Complaints

- A. Initiation of Investigation - Timing. Unless special circumstances are present and documented, such as reports to the Department for Children and Families ("DCF") or the police, the school administrator shall, no later than one school day after Notice to a designated employee, initiate or cause to be initiated, an investigation of the allegations, which the school administrator reasonably believes may constitute harassment, hazing or bullying.
- B. Investigator Assignment. The school administrator shall assign a person to conduct the investigation; nothing herein shall be construed to preclude the school administrator from assigning him/herself or a designated employee as the investigator. No person who is the subject of a complaint shall conduct such an investigation.
- C. Interim Measures. It may be appropriate for the school to take interim measures during the investigation of a complaint. For instance, if a student alleges that he or she has been sexually assaulted by another student, the school may decide to place the students immediately in separate classes and/or transportation pending the results of the school's investigation. Similarly, if the alleged harasser is a teacher, allowing the student to transfer to a different class may be appropriate.

In all cases, the school will make every effort to prevent disclosure of the names of all parties involved – the complainant, witnesses, and the accused -- except to the extent necessary to carry out the investigation. In all cases where physical harm has resulted and/or where the targeted student is known to be expressing suicidal ideation, or experiencing serious emotional harm, a safety plan will be put in place. Safety plans must also be considered in cases where the targeted student is known to have difficulty accessing the educational programs at the school as a result of the inappropriate behavior. No contact orders, or their enforcement, may also be appropriate interim measures.

and District employees who are accused of certain types of infractions, including but not limited to sexual harassment under Federal Title IX. The rights established under Title IX must be interpreted consistent with any federally guaranteed due process rights involved in a complaint proceeding, including but not limited to the ability of the complainant and the accused to present witnesses and other evidence during an investigation. The District will ensure that steps to accord due process rights do not restrict or unnecessarily delay the protections provided by Title IX to the complainant.

- E. Standard Used to Assess Conduct. In determining whether the conduct constitutes a violation of this policy, the investigator shall consider the surrounding circumstances, 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. The complainant and accused will be provided the opportunity to present witnesses and other evidence during an investigation. The school will also consider the impact of relevant off- campus conduct on the school environment where direct harm to the welfare of the school can be demonstrated or the conduct can be shown to pose a clear and substantial interference with another student's equal access to educational programs. Whether a particular action constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances.
- F. Completion of Investigation – Timing. No later than five school days from the filing of the complaint with the designated employee, unless special circumstances are present and documented, the investigator shall submit a written initial determination to the school administrator.
- G. Investigation Report. The investigator shall prepare a written report to include a statement of the findings of the investigator as to whether the allegations have been substantiated, and as to whether the alleged conduct constitutes hazing, harassment and/or bullying. The report, when referencing student conduct, is a student record and therefore confidential. It will be made available to investigators in the context of a review conducted by either Vermont AOE, or investigations of harassment conducted by the Vermont Human Rights Commission or U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights.
- H. Notice to Students/Parents/Guardians. Within five school days of the conclusion of the investigation, the designated employee shall:

i. Notify in writing both the complainant and accused individual (or if either is a minor inform their respective parent or guardian) that:

1. the investigation has been completed;
2. whether or not the investigation concluded that a policy violation occurred (and which policy term was violated, i.e. harassment, hazing and/or bullying);
3. that federal privacy law prevents disclosure of any discipline imposed as a result of the investigation unless the

eligible student consents to such disclosure, pursuant to 34 CFR Part 99.30, as set forth in Section II, Part C, above.

ii. Notify the Complainant Student - or if a minor, their parent(s) or guardian - in writing of their rights to:

1. an internal review by the school of its initial determination as a result of its investigation as to whether harassment occurred;
2. request an Independent Review of the school's "final" determination as to whether harassment occurred within thirty (30) days of the final determination or although a "final" determination was made that harassment indeed occurred the school's response to that harassment was inadequate to correct the problem; and that the review will be conducted by an investigator to be selected by the superintendent from a list developed by the Agency of Education;
3. file complaints of harassment with either the Vermont Human Rights Commission and/or the federal Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights.

iii. Notify the Accused Student - or if a minor, their parent(s) or guardian - in writing of their right to appeal as set forth in Section V of these procedures.

I. Violations of Other Policies. In cases where the investigation has identified other conduct that may constitute a violation of other school disciplinary policies or codes of conduct, the designated employee shall report such conduct to the school administrator for action in accordance with relevant school policies or codes of conduct.

IV. Responding to Substantiated Claims

A. Scope of Response. After a final determination that an act(s) of hazing, harassment and/or bullying has been committed, the school shall take prompt and appropriate disciplinary and/or remedial action reasonably calculated to stop the hazing, harassment and/or bullying and prevent any recurrence of harassment, hazing and/or bullying, and remedy its effects on the victim(s). In so doing, the following should be considered:

(i) Potential Remedial Actions. Remedial action may include but not be limited to an age appropriate warning, reprimand, education, training and counseling, transfer, suspension, and/or expulsion of a student, and warning, reprimand, education, training and counseling, transfer, suspension and/or termination of an employee. A series of escalating consequences may be necessary if the initial steps are ineffective in stopping the hazing, harassment and/or bullying. To prevent recurrences counseling for the offender may be appropriate to ensure that he or she

effects it can have. Depending on how widespread the hazing/harassment/bullying was and whether there have been any prior incidents, the school may need to provide training for the larger school community to ensure that students, parents and teachers can recognize hazing/harassment/bullying if it recurs and know how to respond.

(ii) School Access/Environment Considerations. The District will also take efforts to support victims' access to the District's programs, services and activities and consider and implement school-wide remedies, where appropriate. Accordingly, steps will be taken to eliminate any hostile and/or threatening environment that has been created. For example, if a female student has been subjected to harassment/bullying by a group of other students in a class, the school may need to deliver special training or other interventions for that class to repair the educational environment. If the school offers the student the option of withdrawing from a class in which a hostile environment/bullying occurred, the District will assist the student in making program or schedule changes and ensure that none of the changes adversely affect the student's academic record. Other measures may include, if appropriate, directing a bully/harasser to apologize to the affected student. If a hostile environment has affected the entire school or campus, an effective response may need to include dissemination of information, the issuance of new policy statements or other steps that are designed to clearly communicate the message that the school does not tolerate harassment and/or bullying and will be

responsive to any student who reports that conduct.

(iii) Hazing Case Considerations. Appropriate penalties or sanctions or both for organizations or individuals who engage in hazing and revocation or suspension of an organization's permission to operate or exist within the institution's purview if that organization knowingly permits, authorizes, or condones hazing.

(iv) Other Remedies: Other remedies may include providing counseling to the victim(s) and/or the perpetrator(s), and additional safety planning measures for the victim(s).

B. Retaliation Prevention. It is unlawful for any person to retaliate against a person who has filed a complaint of harassment or against a person who assists or participates in an investigation, proceeding or hearing related to the harassment complaint. A person may violate this anti-retaliation provision regardless of whether the underlying complaint of harassment is substantiated.

The District will take reasonable steps to prevent any retaliation against the student who made the complaint (or was the subject of the harassment), against the person who filed a complaint on behalf of a student, or against those who provided information as witnesses. At a minimum, this includes making sure

that the students and their parents, and those witnesses involved in the school's investigation, know how to report any subsequent problems and making follow-up inquiries to see if there have been any new incidents or any retaliation.

C. Alternative Dispute Resolution. At all stages of the investigation and determination process, school officials are encouraged to make available to complainants alternative dispute resolution methods, such as mediation, for resolving complaints. Certain considerations should be made before pursuing alternative dispute resolution methods, including, but not limited to:

(1) the nature of the accusations (for example, face-to-face mediation is not appropriate for sexual violence cases), (2) the age of the complainant and the accused individual, (3) the agreement of the complainant, and (4) other relevant factors such as any disability of the target or accused individual, safety issues, the relationship and relative power differential between the target and accused individual, or any history of repeated misconduct/harassment by the accused individual.

V. Post Investigative Reviews

Rights of Complainants

A. Internal Review of Initial Harassment Determinations By Complainant.

A complainant or parent of a complainant may request an internal review by the District of a designee's initial determination (following investigation) that harassment has not occurred via written request submitted to the District superintendent. All levels of internal review of the investigator's initial determination, and the issuance of a final decision, shall, unless special circumstances are present and documented by the District, be completed within

30 calendar days after review is requested.

B. Independent Reviews of Final Harassment Determinations By Complainant.

A complainant may request an independent review within thirty (30) days of a final determination if s/he: (1) is dissatisfied with the final determination as to whether harassment occurred, or (2) believes that although a final determination was made that harassment occurred, the school's response was inadequate to correct the problem.

The complainant shall make such a request in writing to the superintendent of schools within thirty (30) days of a final determination. Upon such request, the superintendent shall promptly initiate an independent review by a neutral person as described under 16 V.S.A. § 570a.(b)(1) and shall cooperate with the independent reviewer so that she/he may proceed expeditiously. The review shall consist of an interview of the complainant and relevant school officials and a review of the written materials from the school's investigation.

Upon completion of the independent review, the reviewer shall advise the complainant and school officials in writing: (1) as to the sufficiency of the school's

investigation, its determination, and/or the steps taken by the school to correct any harassment found to have occurred, and (2) recommendations for any steps the school might take to prevent further harassment from occurring. A copy of the independent review report shall be sent to the Secretary of Education.

The reviewer shall advise the student of other remedies that may be available if the student remains dissatisfied and, if appropriate, may recommend mediation or other alternative dispute resolution. The independent reviewer shall be considered an agent of the school for the purpose of being able to review confidential student records. The costs

of the independent review shall be borne by the District. The District may request an independent review at any stage of the process.

- C. Rights to Alternative Harassment Complaint Process. In addition to, or as an alternative to filing a harassment complaint pursuant to this policy, a person may file a harassment complaint with the Vermont Human Rights Commission or the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education at the addresses noted below:

Vermont Human Rights Commission

14-16 Baldwin Street

Montpelier, VT 05633-6301

(800) 416-2010 or (802) 828-2480 (voice) (877) 294-9200 (tty)

(802) 828-2481 (fax)

Email: human.rights@state.vt.us

Office for Civil Rights, Boston Office

U.S. Department of Education

8th Floor

5 Post Office Square

Boston, MA 02109-3921

617-289-0111 (voice)

877-521-2172 (tdd)

617-289-0150 (fax)

Email: OCR.Boston@ed.gov

Rights of Accused Students

- A. Appeal. Any person determined to have engaged in an act(s) of hazing, harassment and/or bullying may appeal the determination and/or any related disciplinary action(s) taken, directly to the school board of the school district. The school board shall conduct a review on the record. The standard of review by the school board shall be whether the finding that an act(s) of hazing, harassment, and/or bullying has been committed constitutes an abuse of discretion by the school level fact finder. Appeals should be made to the school board within ten (10) calendar days of receiving the determination that an act(s) of hazing, harassment

and/or bullying has occurred and/or any announced discipline. The school board shall set the matter for a review hearing at the next scheduled school board meetings to the extent practicable, but not later than 30 days from receipt of the appeal filing.

- B. Accused Student/Appellant Access to Investigative Reports/Findings. The school district shall make available upon request of the Accused Student/Appellant, any relevant information, documents, materials, etc. related to the investigation and related finding on appeal that can be redacted and de-identified in compliance with the requirements set forth at 34 CFR Part 99. For those documents that cannot be provided due to the requirements set forth at 34 CFR Part 99, when an Accused Student/Appellant seeks a review on the record before the school board of the school district, a school administrator may seek the consent of the parent/guardian of the targeted student, or the accused eligible targeted student (if 18 or older, the targeted student has the ability to consent), in order to inform the accused student of the findings which gave rise to the school's determination that an act(s) of harassment, hazing, and/or bullying occurred. The parent/guardian or eligible student shall provide a signed and dated written consent before an educational agency or institution discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records.

VI. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

- A. Privacy Concerns. The privacy of the complainant, the accused individual, and the witnesses shall be maintained consistent with the District's obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to comply with laws governing the disclosure of student records or other applicable discovery or disclosure obligations.

- i. Concerns Related to Harassment Complaints. The scope of appropriate response to a harassment complaint may depend upon whether a student or parent of a minor student reporting the harassment asks that the student's name not be disclosed to the harasser or that nothing can be done about the alleged harassment. In all cases, school officials will discuss confidentiality standards and concerns with the complainant initially. The school will inform the student that a confidentiality request may limit the school's ability to respond. The school will remind the student that both federal Title IX and Vermont Title 9 prevent retaliation and that if he or she is afraid of reprisals from the alleged harasser, the school will take steps to prevent retaliation and will take strong action if retaliation occurs. If the student continues to ask that his or her name not be revealed, the school should take all reasonable steps to investigate and respond to the

complaint consistent with the student's request as long as doing so does not prevent the school from responding effectively to the harassment and preventing harassment of other students.

The school will evaluate the confidentiality request in the context of its responsibility to provide a safe and nondiscriminatory environment for all students. The factors the school might consider in this regard include the seriousness of the alleged harassment, the age of the student harassed, whether there have been other complaints or reports of harassment against the alleged harasser, and the rights of the accused individual to receive information about the accuser and the allegations if a formal proceeding with sanctions may result. If information about the incident is contained in an "education record" of the student alleging the harassment, as defined by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. 1232g, the school will consider whether FERPA prohibits it from disclosing information without the student's consent.

B. Document Maintenance. The Superintendent or school administrator shall assure that a record of any complaints, its investigation and disposition, as well as any disciplinary or remedial action taken following the completion of the investigation, is maintained by the District in a confidential file accessible only to authorized persons. All investigation records, including but not limited to, the complaint form, interview notes, additional evidence, and the investigative report, shall be kept by the Equity Coordinator, Designated Employees and District/Supervisory Union Central Office for at least six years after the investigation is completed.

VII. Reporting to Other Agencies

A. Reports to Department of Children and Families. When a complaint made pursuant to this policy includes allegations of child abuse, any person responsible for reporting suspected child abuse under 33 V.S.A. § 4911, *et seq.* must report the allegation to the Commissioner of DCF. If the victim is over the age of 18 and a report of abuse is warranted, the report shall be made to Adult Protective Services in accordance with 33 V.S.A. § 6901 *et seq.*

B. Reports to Vermont Agency of Education. If a harassment complaint is made in a public school about conduct by a licensed educator that might be grounds under Vermont law for licensing action, the principal shall report the alleged conduct to the Superintendent and the Superintendent shall report the alleged conduct to the Commissioner. If a harassment complaint is made in an independent school about conduct by a licensed educator that might be grounds under Vermont law for licensing action, the head of school is encouraged to report the alleged conduct to the Secretary of Education.

C. Reporting Incidents to Police

a. FERPA Rights. Information obtained and documented by school administration regarding the school's response to notice of student

conduct that may constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying may constitute an "educational record" regarding the student or student(s) involved as defined by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act. Accordingly, such information may not be disclosed without prior parent approval to local law enforcement except in response to a lawfully issued subpoena, or in connection with an emergency if disclosure is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.

b. First Hand Reports. Nothing in this policy shall preclude persons from reporting incidents and/or conduct witnessed first-hand that may be considered to be a criminal act to law enforcement officials.

c. Hazing Incidents. It is unlawful to (1) engage in hazing; (2) solicit direct, aid, or attempt to aid, or abet another person engaged in hazing; or (3) knowingly fail to take reasonable measures within the scope of the person's authority to prevent hazing. It is not a defense in an action under this section that the person against whom the hazing was directed

consented to or acquiesced in the hazing activity. Hazing incidents will be reported to the police in a manner consistent with the confidentiality rights set forth above in this section.

D. Continuing Obligation to Investigate. Reports made to either DCF or law enforcement shall not be considered to absolve the school administrators of their obligations under this policy to pursue and complete an investigation upon receipt of notice of conduct which may constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying.

VIII. Disseminating Information, Training, and Data Reporting

A. Disseminating Information. Annually, prior to the commencement of curricular and co-curricular activities, the District shall provide notice of this policy and procedures to students, custodial parents or guardians of students, and staff members, including references to the consequences of misbehavior contained in the plan required by 16 V.S.A. 1161a. Notice to students shall be in age-appropriate language and include examples of

hazing, harassment and bullying. At a minimum, this notice shall appear in any publication of the District that sets forth the comprehensive rules, procedures and standards of conduct for the District.

- B. Student Training. The school administrator shall use his/her discretion in developing age-appropriate methods of discussing the meaning and substance of this policy with students to help prevent hazing, harassment and bullying.
- C. Staff Training. The board or its designee shall ensure that teachers and other staff receive training in preventing, recognizing and responding to hazing, harassment and bullying.
- D. Data Gathering. Public school districts shall provide the Vermont Agency of Education with data requested by the Secretary of Education.

Legal References:

Title V, Section B, 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. §794 et seq.; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. §2000d;
Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act of 1972, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681 et seq.;
Family Education Rights Privacy Act; 20 U.S.C. §1232g; Public Accommodations Act, 9 V.S.A. §§4500 et seq.;
Education, Classifications and Definitions, 16 V.S.A. §11(26);(30)(A);(32);
Education, 16 V.S.A. §140(a)(1); Education, 16 V.S.A. §166(e); Education, Bullying, 16 V.S.A. §570c;
Education, Harassment, Hazing and Bullying, 16 V.S.A. § 570; Education, Harassment, 16 V.S.A. §570a;
Education, Harassment, 16 V.S.A. §570c;
Education, Harassment, 16 V.S.A. §570f; Education, Hazing, 16 V.S.A. §570b;
Education, Hazing, 16 V.S.A. §570f Education, Discipline, 16 V.S.A. §1161a;
Education, Suspension or Expulsion of Pupils; 16 V.S.A. §1162;
Child Abuse, 33 V.S.A. §§4911 et seq.;
Adult Protective Services, 33 V.S.A. §6901 et seq., all as they may be amended from time to time.
Washington v. Pierce, 179 VT 318 (2005)

Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union **Meal Charge Procedure**

Serving: Craftsbury, Hardwick, Hazen, Lakeview, Wolcott, and Woodbury Schools

Meal Charge Procedure

Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to establish consistent procedures for the Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union

to provide meals to students who have insufficient funds in their school meal accounts and the collection of unpaid meal debt.

General Statement:

A. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to provide for the nourishment of his/her child during the school day either by sending the child with a meal from home, applying for free and reduced meals or by making the necessary provisions for the student to purchase school meals.

B. The Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union recognizes proper nutrition is essential for adequate learning to occur and to establish lifelong, healthy eating habits while also working to maintain the financial integrity of the school food service program.

C. The Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union Wellness Policy ensures the offering of high quality,

healthy breakfasts and lunches that meet the federal guidelines to all students at a reasonable cost to ensure no child goes hungry.

D. Payments to student accounts are made by sending cash or checks, payable to the school, with the student(s) name included to ensure the payments are applied to the correct account(s).

E. Families may apply for free and reduced-price meals at any time during the school year. Meal applications are distributed to households by mail prior to the first day of school, and sent home with students on the first day of school. The meals form is a permanent part of the enrollment packet for new students regardless of the date of enrollment. Parents are encouraged to complete and return the applications as soon as possible. In addition, applications are available at the school office during regular business hours and online at ossu.org. If household size changes or income changes, families may re-apply for meal benefits any time during the school year.

1) Households who apply for free and reduced-price meal benefits are responsible for payment of all school meals and accumulated charges until approval is granted. Federal guidelines allow a maximum of 10 days to approve a new application. No child is allowed a free or reduced price meal without an approved application or direct certification information on file. Parents will receive a notification letter of the student's eligibility showing the effective date. If a notification letter is not received within 10 days, the parent should check with the approving official at the school to see if the application has been received.

2) Households who are receiving 3SquaresVT or Reach-Up benefits will receive a notification of eligibility letter based on Direct Certification from the school if the school has received information about your child(ren). If your household receives these benefits and you have not received this letter from the school, the school has not received information regarding eligibility of your child(ren), the household must contact the school immediately to provide current information.

3) Free and reduced-price eligible students may receive breakfast and lunch each day at no charge.

4) A la carte items, such as a separate carton of milk or a second entrée, are not allowed to be charged.

Meal Charge:

A. If the student account has insufficient funds to pay for breakfast and/or lunch meals:

After \$10.00 has been charged:

- The parent/guardian will be contacted by phone, notifying them of the account status;
- The student will be allowed to charge a maximum of fifteen dollars (\$15.00);
- Payment is expected the next day.

After \$15.00 has been charged:

- An invoice and letter will be mailed to the parent/guardian, along with a copy of the policy and a free and reduced meal application form;
- An emergency meal, consisting of a sandwich, milk and a fruit or vegetable, will be provided for a maximum of fifteen dollars (\$15.00). This meal will be charged at the regular price;
- Payment is expected the next day;

After \$30.00 has been charged:

- A certified letter will be mailed to the parent/guardian notifying them that a meal will NOT be provided to the student until the account has been paid in full.
- B. Adults who do not have money in their accounts or who do not bring money for meals will be permitted to charge a maximum of one (1) meal. Payment will be expected the following day.
- C. All negative balances must be paid prior to the end of the school year. Any remaining balances will be carried over to the next school year.
- D. Free and reduced-price eligible students will always be provided a meal regardless of unpaid student accounts.
- E. A student eligible for paid meals who has “cash in hand” at the time of meal service will be provided a meal regardless of unpaid student accounts. The “cash in hand” will not be applied to past due accounts.
- F. Students with an overdrawn account are not allowed to charge a la carte items.

Account Status Notifications:

A. Households are strongly encouraged to keep sufficient funds in the student accounts to cover weekly meal purchases. The Administrative Assistant or School Food Service Manager will notify each household of account balances as follows:

- After \$10.00 has been charged the parent/guardian will be contacted by phone, notifying them of the account status.
- After \$15.00 has been charged an invoice and letter will be mailed to the parent/guardian, along with a copy of the policy and a free and reduced meal application form;
- After \$30.00 has been charged a letter will be mailed, certified delivery, to the parent/guardian notifying them that a meal will not be provided to the student until the account has been paid in full.

B. Families can check their account balances through PowerSchool.

C. Families may contact the Administrative Assistant or Food Service Manager.

Collection of Unpaid Meal Debt:

- The Administrative Assistant or Food Service Manager will contact the parent/guardian.
- All funds owed to the food service program will be paid in full on the last day of school.
- Checks returned with non-sufficient funds will follow the district’s policy.