

Hoosac Valley Elementary School

Parent/Student Handbook

2021 - 2022



14 Commercial Street
Adams, MA 01220
(413) 743-0876

Principal – Erin Beaulac ebeaulac@hoosacvalley.org
Assistant Principal - Lisa Lesser llesser@hoosacvalley.org

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PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

August 2021

Dear Students and Families,

Welcome to the 2021-2022 school year at Hoosac Valley Elementary School! I am very excited to be the new principal of the school, and I am looking forward to meeting and collaborating with you all. The school staff and I are eager to welcome you and your child into the school and to get this new school year started!

As a school community, we will focus on supporting your child socially, emotionally and academically. In doing so, our students will be prepared to be productive members of an ever-changing 21st century society. We will strive to ensure that each child is welcomed and supported in an environment that fosters growth and joy in learning.

Our hope is that all students will have a partnership of school staff and family members that support them on a daily basis. That being said, establishing and maintaining a relationship between the school and the student's family is a necessity. We look forward to communicating with you regularly about things like your child's academic progress, celebratory classroom news, behavioral concerns, attendance, school events and more!

It is with great pleasure that I join this school community where high expectations are set for all and where students' needs are the priority. I am looking forward to working with you and with your child to make this a positive and productive year.

If you have any questions regarding the handbook's information or about your child's program in general, please feel free to contact me at 413-743-0876 or ebeaulac@hoosacvalley.org.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Erin Beaulac

Principal

Hoosac Valley Elementary School

Our Mission Statement

The mission of the Hoosac Valley Regional School District is to create a partnership of our schools and communities that develops all students into educated, responsible and productive citizens.

Our Guiding Principles

Perseverance - Pursuing a goal, trying repeatedly, asking for help.

Respect - Appreciating and considering the feelings, wishes, rights, and traditions of (self) and others.

Integrity - Doing the right thing even when no one is looking; Being honest and trustworthy.

Diversity - Accepting the differences among us gives our community strength.

Empathy - Considering others points of view to better understand and contribute to the growth of the relationship.

Our Philosophy

The school community will create a learning environment that motivates and actively engages all students in mastering rigorous academic curricula. Our faculty, staff, and administrators are dedicated to a student-centered focus through continuous improvement. Student growth and development are promoted through the following core values and beliefs:

- All students can achieve growth and improve their behavior with guidance, instruction, support, and coaching. These practices fall along a continuum that responds to individuals of all abilities.
- Students need different kinds and amounts of time, attention, tasks, and support to behave responsibly, succeed academically, and achieve at high levels.
- Teaching social and emotional skills is as important as teaching academic content.
- How we teach is as important as what we teach.
- How we work together as adults to create a safe, joyful, and inclusive school environment is as important as our individual contribution or competence.
- Partnering with families—knowing them and valuing their contributions—is as important as knowing the children we teach.

Our Goals

- To deliver timely and personalized supports informed by data.
- To increase the number of students performing at the proficient and advanced levels.
- To engage students through technologically integrated teaching strategies.
- To implement a rigorous and relevant curriculum that improves outcomes for all students with a focus on both college and career readiness.
- To engage the community in developing our pathways for college and career readiness from Pre-K through graduation.
- To establish and nurture meaningful relationships with our students, their families, and our community partners.
- To commit at all levels (teacher, building, district) to review and examine policies, procedure, and available data through an equity lens to both break down barriers and to meet the needs of all students.

Daily Operating Procedures

Daily Operating Procedures Designed to Promote Safety

We lock all doors at 8:50 after students and school personnel have entered the building each morning.

When visiting the school, please come to the main entrance. You will need to press the buzzer and identify yourself before being allowed into the school.

All visitors are required to register at the main office and obtain a “visitor’s badge” which must be worn during the visitor’s stay.

We have instructed staff members to question anyone who does not look familiar and is not wearing a visitor’s badge.

Teachers, support staff, and administration carefully supervise arrival and dismissal of students.

Changes in a student’s dismissal pattern require a written communication (to be sent with the child in the morning) from a parent or guardian with office approval. When questions arise, we contact parents before dismissal.

Phone calls during the day to classroom teachers and paraprofessionals will be handled by leaving a message, unless there is an emergency. This reduces interruptions during the students’ learning time.

All staff will wear an identification badge on a daily basis.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

When severe weather creates hazardous conditions, the regular school schedule may be suspended or delayed to ensure students’ safety. It is the parent’s/guardian’s responsibility to monitor news reports via radio and television stations. Superintendent Dean will notify WNAW, WBRK, WUPE, and WBEC (AM 1420 or FM 105.5). School closings will also be broadcast on WRGB (Ch. 6), WTEN (Ch. 10) and WNYT (Ch. 13); We also implement our ALL CALL phone system to all households. **Please keep your phone number up to date by calling our office with any changes. We will also post on our Facebook page.**

2020-2021 Academic Calendar

We will be shifting to a quarter academic calendar this year. Please see information and dates below.

Quarter 1- Progress report distributed on 11/15/21.

Quarter 2- Report card distributed on 1/31/22.

Quarter 3- Report card distributed on 4/11/22.

Quarter 4- Report card distributed on 6/17/21.

Hoosac Valley Elementary School Staff

Pre-K

Laura Crane
Nicole Crane
Kelly Riechers
Emily Martinelli (LTS)

Kindergarten

Jillian Tietgens
Robin Poirot
Sarah Leidhold
Mara Woolley
Emily White

Grade 1

Katie Chenail
Mia Davis
Heather Emerson
Kelly Ryan

Grade 2

Elizabeth Alibozek
Laurie Cantarella
Christine Kirchner
Kimberly Trimarchi
Ann Prudhomme
Mike Mullany (LTS)

Grade 3

Stephanie McCarthy
Dawn Prokopowicz
Sarah Gagne
Danielle Taylor

Specials

Elizabeth Kick Art
Dan Wehle PE
Karylee Doubiago Music
April Mazzeo STEAM Lab
Laurie Gavazzi Library

Related Services / Specialists

Brianna Shepard Speech and Language
Diane Arduini Speech and Language
Karen Levesque Speech Assistant
Laura Underhill SLPA
Kimberly Biagini BCBA/District Specialist
Lindsay O'Dell School Psychologist
Bethanny Kelly Reading Specialist
Dawn Harrington Math Interventionist/Coach
Vinnie Szymanski School Adjustment Counselor
Courtney Bopp School Psychologist
Suzanne Harnick Occupational Therapist
Deb Silveria OT Assistant
Karissa Kingsley PT Assistant
Jamie Bannon PT
Joshua Kellogg English Language Learners
Lorry Delmolino Title 1
Jennifer Mach Child Care Program Coordinator

Paraprofessionals

Shannon Badorini
Frances Moore
Deborah Ciempa
Heather Witek
Tugba Merino
Becki Zaleski
Shelby Gardener
Nicole Benson
Karen Isbell
Brian McCarthy
Beth Larabee
Julie Lech
Lisa Waltermire
Sarah Tenczar
Susan McLearn
Paula Meczywor
DJ Mullany
Laurie Sobon
Arianna Vincent
Carrie Domanski
Heather Levy
Kim Galli
Lila Fetter
Wendy Gregory

Special Education

Denise Morin
Makayla Dowling
Jessica Christman

K
Gr. 1
Gr. 2

Cafeteria

Laurie Malloy -Cafeteria Manager
Zachary Braman
Gayle Galli

Elizabeth Bean
Caitlin Larabee
Kylie Crawford

Gr. 3
PK-3 Bridges
PK-3 Cornerstone

Hasna Nehme
Lauw Tjea
Brian Belsky

Office Staff

Paula Ciskowski
Cheryl Steuer

Admin. Asst
Office Assistant

Custodians

Chad Carpenter, Head Custodian
Dennis Pisonneault
Lawrence Tucker

Nurse

Ashley Allard

Technology Support

Geoff Kondel

Teacher of Department

Wendy Lamberton

Hoosac Valley Elementary School Menu of Services	
Title of Personnel	Services Provided
Administration	Family support, teacher support, investigation, determination decisions, supervision, team meetings, curriculum, communication, evaluation, observation, budget, parent intervention, court, facilities, deliver admin level consequences
School Psychologist	Evaluation/ testing, specific group counseling, consultant of sped/admin, report writing, Special Education meetings, teacher specific topics, liaison to supporting agencies
School Adjustment Counselor	Counsels students, liaison to private counseling, lunch groups, social skills groups, 504 liaison, consult to teams, consult to admin, help with state testing, consult with SSC
Student Support Center Para	Deals with Tier 2 interventions, consults with teachers to support students, provides student breaks
Nurse	Address student health concerns, manage student health records, vision/ hearing testing, log student visits in computer, consult with teachers, parents, and health care providers
Reading Interventionist	Small group intervention
Math Interventionist	Small group intervention
Literacy Coach	Coordinates ELA curriculum, coaches teachers, coordinates ELA progress monitoring, assists with state testing
ESL	Small group instruction of identified ELL students
Speech Therapists	Small group/ individual therapy to students identified via IEP or 504 plan, testing students referred
Occupational Therapists	Small group/ individual therapy to students identified via IEP or 504 plan, testing students referred
Special Education Liaisons	Write, monitor and implement IEPs for students on caseload, work with gen ed teachers to support identified students
Main Office Staff	Greet visitors, answer phone calls, refer people to appropriate place, create student schedules, maintain school records

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURE **ABSENTEEISM POLICY**

Arrival Time

School begins at 8:45a.m. Our school doors will open at 8:40 for all students. Bus pupils will enter at the back entrances at 8:45. Walking students and parent drop off students will enter at the back entrances from Parent Drop Off. Walkers will enter through the side entrance near McDonald's. All students will go directly to their classrooms. Free breakfast will be served to all students in their classrooms beginning at 8:45. Breakfast will end by 9:00 and the academic day will begin. Students may opt out of breakfast if they choose. Our building doors will lock at 8:50. Students arriving after 8:50 are considered tardy and must enter through the main entrance and report to the office.

Attendance

School attendance is compulsory in Massachusetts until the age of sixteen. Regular attendance is the most effective way to promote positive and productive life-long learners. Please make every effort to assist your child in developing good attendance practices. Please schedule medical and other appointments before or after school hours if possible. **If your child will not be in school on a particular day, please call the office between 7:00 and 8:30 A.M. to report his/her absence.** Simply press the extension for absences. The phone system will prompt the "absentee" line. This phone call is very important so that we don't worry about where your child is on that particular day. If a child is not called in, we will call home to find out why he/she is absent.

Excessive Absenteeism/ Tardiness

Chronic absences and tardiness, whether excused or unexcused, are disruptive to the educational process. The following procedures are in place to deal with excessive absences at the elementary level. Excessive tardiness will be dealt with in a similar way.

- 5 days absent: Phone call from teacher or an Attendance Team member to help resolve the issue.
- 8 days absent: Phone call and letter requesting parent/guardian meeting with the classroom teacher and the principal.
- 10 days absent: Letter to parents/guardian advising that a Failure to Send petition through Juvenile Court and/or a 51A through the Department of Children and Families WILL be filed.

Dismissals

Parents may arrange early or alternative dismissal by sending a note the morning of to the classroom teacher stating the details of the dismissal. Teachers will send the notes to the office for verification.

Telephone requests for alternative dismissal arrangements must be for emergency use only. These types of phone calls must be made to the office before 2:00 p.m. to ensure the accommodations can be made.

If your child is going to be dismissed differently from his or her regular daily procedure, it is extremely important that you send a note to your child's teacher. **Without the note, the teacher will send your child home via his/her regular dismissal procedure.** This communication is extremely important. We cannot take a student's word-**we must have a note from a parent.** Thank you for your cooperation in this extremely important matter.

EXTERNAL SUSPENSION (ES)

Students who receive an out-of-school (external) suspension are not permitted to participate in any school activities. However, schoolwork can be made up. Parents will be notified and should take a special interest in this matter. Students suspended on Friday will also not be able to participate in any Friday or weekend school events. Short-term suspension ranges from 1 to 10 days, based on the infraction.

ELECTRONICS

Cell phones, iPads, Nintendo Switch, Gameboys, etc. are not allowed in school. We cannot be responsible for lost or stolen electronics. If a child brings any of these items to school, staff will hold it until a parent picks it up. Thank you for your cooperation.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Attire

Students should wear clothing that does not restrict the learning process and is appropriate for the weather conditions and each child's comfort level. We have many stairwells and our students often play on the playground. Therefore, footwear is of special concern. Shoes should be functional and safe. Students need to wear shoes with backs and wear sneakers on days when they are scheduled for Physical Education. Students are not allowed to wear shoes with wheels on them to school due to safety. Students may not wear hats or bandanas in school. Attire that is deemed revealing, distracting, and dangerous will not be allowed and may require a meeting with students and/or parents/guardians. Students must wear full shirts and shorts with length. Students' fingertips should touch the bottom of shorts or skirts.

Breakfast

Breakfast is FREE to all our students. Breakfast is served in the classroom from 8:45 to 9:00 a.m. A variety of options are available to students.

Cafeteria

Balances can be requested and printed out on your child's account at any time. Please call the school at (413)-743-0876 and dial in extension 2120. You can leave a message with your request.

Counseling

Our school adjustment counselor is _____ and she is available to work with students, parents, and staff on social-emotional concerns that impact learning. You may contact our school adjustment counselor at 743-0876 extension 2225 or at _____@hoosacvalley.org..

Crisis Plan

There is a crisis plan at HVES that contains procedures for many different situations. It is important that our students and staff feel safe at HVES. When you enter the building, please follow our procedures such as checking in at the office and obtaining a visitor's badge, since they are put in place to ensure the safety of our school community. All doors are locked during the day.

E-Mail

E-mail is an excellent way to communicate with any staff member at Hoosac Valley Elementary School. To contact the principal, Erin Beaulac via email please email to ebeaulac@hoosacvalley.org.

End of Day Dismissal Routine

Buses: Teachers will walk all students to the buses at the end of the day. Buses park in the back of the building on the basketball court. This area is NOT open to public parking. When all buses are loaded, they leave the school and proceed to bus stops. Please be patient with drop-off and pick-up times during the first two weeks of school, as there are some new routes for our drivers.

Walkers: These students will gather inside the building at the “McDonald’s Exit” (the north exit) and will wait with staff members until their parents arrive. The parents will remain outside of the building at this location. The students will meet their parents **outside**. No parents will be permitted inside the building to get a walker. This is to ensure the safety for all students. Each child must check out with the designated staff member when they see their family.

Car Pick-Up: These students will be dismissed in the back of the building, by the basketball court. Parents should enter the school driveway (back of the school) on Center Street (Rt. 116). After all the buses depart, staff members will call the cars forward to form a car pick-up line. Please wait for the staff member to direct you to an assigned spot before moving your car. Your child will be accompanied by a staff member from the building to your car.

Family Events

Here at HVES we host several evening events throughout the year including things like Bingo Night, Math Night, Celebration of Success and the Art Show. To participate in these night events your child needs to be in school the day of these events.

Field Trips

We send home a permission slip for each field trip in which your child participates. The parent/guardian approves of the trip by signing the permission form and returning it to school. Field trips requiring a bus are \$1.00 per student. If this is difficult for any family, please feel free to call Erin Beaulac for a confidential conversation and this will be worked out. Walking field trips don’t always require permission slip but notification will be sent home.

Fire Drills, Lockdowns and Evacuations

Every precaution is taken to ensure the safety of your child during normal school hours. Periodic drills are executed to make certain students learn proper safety procedures and adhere to all safety guidelines.

Goals

Please ask for a copy of our School Goals for this school year. These are outlined in our School Improvement Plan which was created by our School Council. Common goals between students, staff, families and administration are important components to our children’s success. They are also posted on our website. The School Improvement Plan can be found on our website. (www.hoosacvalley.org)

Health Care

HVES has a registered nurse, Ashley Allard, on staff. She cares for the physical needs of students at the school on a regular basis. She is responsible for providing first aid, maintaining health and immunization records, administering medication given the proper paperwork, conducting hearing and vision tests, and consulting with parents and staff on the health and well-being of students.

Immunizations – She reviews records of immunizations to ensure compliance with the Commonwealth’s laws. Kindergarten and transfer students must have up-to-date immunization records on file before we permit the student’s enrollment into the school.

Vision and Hearing - Mrs. Allard gives vision and hearing tests each year to all students.

The nurse informs parents if their child needs a referral to a vision professional. Whenever possible, notices will be sent home letting parents know the approximate time during the month that their child will be screened.

Medication If your child requires medication during the school day, you should discuss a medication schedule with your family physician. Please consult Mrs. Allard about the required paperwork for administration of medication during the school day.

In-School Illness or Accident – If a child becomes ill or is injured during the school day, parents will be contacted and are expected to arrange transportation if the child must leave school. If a child is injured and we cannot reach the parent, the school will contact the emergency person designated by the parent. If we cannot reach the emergency person, the school will act in Loco Parentis (in place of the parent). If the child needs immediate attention, an ambulance will transport the child to the emergency room at North Adams Regional Hospital or Berkshire Medical Center.

Homework

Regular homework will be given to the students. Assignments will vary, based on the grade level. When your child is absent from school and needs his/her homework assignment, please telephone the school office in the morning. The homeroom teacher will be notified and will make a folder which includes all homework from each of your child's teachers. Appropriate books will be sent home when necessary. Homework assignments can be picked up in the office at the end of the school day or sent home with another child, if requested. We appreciate your support in ensuring that your child completes any and all homework.

Instructional Programs

Textbooks

The Hoosac Valley Regional School Committee has adopted all textbooks. We design classroom instruction to be in line with the Massachusetts Frameworks guidelines established for each subject at each grade level by the Board of Education of Massachusetts.

Chapter 766 for Students with Special Needs

Parents of children in need of support services may discuss the situation with the building principal or director of pupil services. Students with special education needs receive instruction relevant to the goals outlined in the Individual Education Plan (I.E.P.).

Title I

Title I is the largest federal aid program for elementary and secondary schools. Hoosac Valley Elementary School is eligible to use its Title I fund to operate a school-wide program. Under this format, we will no longer identify specific students as Title I students; rather, we will use funds to upgrade the entire school program.

Join!

There are many ways for you to be involved in your child's education. You are encouraged to join our PTG or our School Council. There are many activities that you will be asked to join throughout the school year. Please join our volunteer list by contacting Erin Beaulac at ebeaulac@hoosacvalley.org.

Kindness

We encourage random acts of kindness at HVES! We try to recognize, model and reinforce kindness.

Library Books

Students may borrow books from the school library on a regular basis. We allow students to check out only one book at a time and it must be returned before borrowing another book. Students must pay for lost books. Mrs. Gavazzi is our librarian!

Literacy

At HVES we celebrate and encourage literacy for all of our children. Home support is very important in literacy support. Developing effective reading and writing skills is essential for all of our students. Please be sure to visit our Literacy Fair which takes place in the spring each year.

Lost and Found

Our school maintains a lost and found area which you are encouraged to check, or have your child check, if an item has been misplaced. **We ask that you please label all belongings.** We advise not letting your child bring items to school that are valuable.

Lunch

Lunch is free for ALL Hoosac Valley Elementary School students every day. Students wanting more than the offered lunch may purchase additional items. Parents may put money in student accounts to cover these purchases. Students who wish may bring their lunches to school on any day.

Meet the Teacher Night/Open House

Meet the Teacher Night gives parents/guardians the opportunity to come to the school and meet your child's teacher. This special night will be held in September. Please watch for a notice to go home or please check our website. (www.hoosacvalley.org).

Notices

Please look in your child's bag for notices each day. There is a great deal of information that goes home with the children on any given day.

OPEN

Our door is always opened to you. Just be sure to use the door in the front of the school as we do lock all doors for safety!! We have a buzzer system on our front door.

P.T.G.

The purpose of the Parent Teacher Group is to provide support to Hoosac Valley Elementary School by enriching the education of our children and establishing lines of communication between the school's teachers, administrators and parents. Meetings are held the second Tuesday of every month from September through June. There is no meeting held in December. The start time is typically 6:00 P.M. in the Hoosac Valley Elementary School library. Meetings generally run for 1 hour. Childcare during the meeting is provided on the school premises free of charge.

Parent Newsletters

Parent emails are sent weekly with updates, upcoming events, announcements, reminders, etc. Please be sure to include your email address when filling out the beginning of the year paperwork to be sure you get these notifications.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

We welcome your requests for conferences. Please schedule all conferences by calling the office at 743-0876.

Physical Education

Physical Education is an integral part of the instructional program. All children will be required to

participate unless a doctor's certificate is presented. If on a particular day, your child cannot participate, please send a signed note to your child's teacher. A daily note will be satisfactory for up to three (3) consecutive days. After that time, a doctor's statement is required. Children should dress appropriately for physical education classes. Sneakers are necessary.

Quiet

Children should develop a homework routine that consists of a consistent quiet setting and a set time of the day to complete any homework given to them.

Reading

Reading aloud to your child every single night is an important activity that you can do with your child for academic and developmental growth. We encourage that every child at every age should be read aloud to on a daily basis. This promotes a valuable education.

Recess

Recess is held outside, except in cases of severe inclement weather. Children should dress appropriately for the weather conditions. We schedule most recess periods in conjunction with the lunch period. We go outside at 20 degrees or above.

Report Cards

Students will participate in quarterly marking periods. This year, students will receive a progress report in November and a report card in January, April and June. We hold parent conferences in November and provide the opportunity for you to discuss your child's progress with his/her teacher.

Retention:

It is the policy of Hoosac Valley Elementary School to consider retention on an individual basis. Each student's potential for success through repeating a grade will be determined by the principal, teachers, and family. When two of the three parties agree on retention the student will be recommended to repeat the school year. The principal makes all final recommendations for retention.

School Climate

At HVES we promote the tenets of P.R.I.D.E.- Perseverance, Respect, Integrity, Diversity and Empathy to support our students and school culture. It is important that every student and staff member feels safe and an integral part of our school.

School Council

School Councils assist in:

- Adopting educational goals for the school that are consistent with local educational policies and statewide student performance standards.
- Identifying the educational needs of students attending the school
- Reviewing the annual school building budget
- Formulate a school improvement plan.

The council consists of parents, teachers and community members. The membership is decided by election if more than ten people step forward with interest. Members serve a three-year term. Please be sure to contact the office in early September if you are interested in becoming a member.

Smoking

State law prohibits the use of any tobacco products by any individuals, including students, staff, and visitors, within the school or on the school grounds.

Student Information Forms

Student information forms provide the school with important information about your child. We distribute these forms to parents at the beginning of the school year. Every child is required to have an informational card on file. Please contact the office **immediately** to report any changes that occur during the course of the year to your child's teacher or the office.

Teacher of Department

Our Teacher of Department is Wendy Lamberton. She is in charge of any behavior issues that arise. She also meets with students in small groups to address social skills to improve student behavior. You can reach Ms. Lamberton at 743-0876 ext. 2433 or wlamberton@hoosacvalley.org

Toys

Please do not allow your children to bring their toys to school. These items can get broken and displaced during the day and children get very upset. Students also engage in trading their toys with other children without parent permission. Some of these items can be very expensive, so please be aware of what goes into your child's backpack.

Transportation

The Dufour Bus Company provides transportation. To ensure everyone's safety, we expect all bus riders to adhere to a strict code of behavior that prohibits any unsafe actions when students are on the bus. Any student not adhering to bus rules will be referred to Ms. Lamberton, our Teacher of Department for disciplinary actions. Students are not allowed to change buses (to go to friend's houses or other events). If your child takes the bus on a daily basis and this needs to be changed for an appointment, please be sure to send a note to your child's teacher so that s/he isn't placed on the bus. For children who are taking a bus to daycare, this must be "to and from daily". For example, a child cannot go on the bus to daycare on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and then on a different bus to go home on Tuesday and Thursday. The reason for this is that planning seats on the bus could become impossible with these kids of varying schedules.

Understanding

Understanding and tolerance are two important concepts that we teach at our school.

Visitors

To ensure everyone's safety, all visitors are required to register at the school's main office located on Commercial Street. After registering, you will be issued a "Visitor's Badge" permitting you access to the classroom areas of the school.

Winter

Children love to play outside in the winter. We will try our best to get the children outside unless the weather is too cold for outside play. We would like to kindly ask you to dress your child appropriately for any type of weather. During the winter months, please send your child to school daily with boots, a hat, mittens, and a winter jacket. We go outside at "feels like" 20 degrees or above.

Website

We encourage you to visit our website on a regular basis for information about the happenings in our school. The district's website address is hoosacvalley.org.

X, Y, Z...Z...Z...

Be sure that your children get plenty of Z's. One key ingredient to a productive day is a solid night of sleep. Children should have 9-10 hours of sleep per night.

LEGAL INFORMATION

Equal Rights Statement

Hoosac Valley Regional School District wishes to make known to the residents of the district that no child shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to the public schools of the region or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school on the basis of age, race, color, sex, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, or gender identity, nor do such factors affect the district's employment practices.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Supports for Students with Disabilities

Federal and state laws, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and M.G.L. c. 71B, require schools to provide students with disabilities access to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

All students between the ages of three and twenty-one, who have not yet obtained a high school diploma or equivalent, are entitled to special education services and/or reasonable accommodations/auxiliary aides and services if he or she is determined to be eligible to receive such services and/or accommodations on the basis of a disability. Eligibility is determined through an evaluation and team meeting process. If after evaluation, the Team determines the student qualifies for special education services, the Team will develop and implement special education services through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). In other circumstances, the Team may determine a student qualifies for 504 Plan accommodations and the Team will develop and implement a 504 Plan. Specific questions and concerns regarding special education including referral for evaluation, eligibility and services can be directed to the Office of Special Services at 413-743-2939. Additional information about parent and student rights regarding students with disabilities, including the Parent's Notice of Procedural Safeguards and Notification of Parent and Student Rights under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are also available upon request in the Office of Special Services. Specific questions and concerns regarding 504 accommodations can be directed to your child's building principal.

Disability Nondiscrimination

The Hoosac Valley Regional School District is committed to the belief that people with disabilities have a right to equal access to participate in and benefit from school-related opportunities. Additionally, people with disabilities have a right to participate in the school community in an environment that is free from discrimination, harassment and retaliation on the basis of disability. Under federal and state law, no person shall be excluded from the participation in, or be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination/harassment/retaliation on the basis of disability. Specific questions, concerns and additional information about disability discrimination, including information about the complaint (grievance) process can be directed to the building principal or Director of Special Services. Additional information about parent and student rights, including the Parents Notice of Procedural Safeguards and Notification of Parent and Student Rights under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, is also available upon request in the Office of Special Services.

References: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; Massachusetts Special Education Law (M.G.L. c. 71B); Massachusetts Student Anti-Discrimination Act (M.G.L. c. 76, s 5), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Section 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, commonly called "Section 504," is a federal law that protects students from discrimination/harassment based on disability. Section 504 assures that students with disabilities have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to students without disabilities. To be eligible, a student must have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

You have the following rights:

1. To have your child with disabilities take part in, and receive benefits from public education programs without discrimination or retaliation because of his/her disability or engagement in a protected activity;
2. To receive a copy of this notice when the district takes any action regarding the identification, evaluation and placement of a student pursuant to Section 504;
3. To receive notice from the school with respect to the identification, evaluation, and educational program or placement of your child;
4. Right to inspect and review all of your child's educational records, including the right to obtain copies of education records at reasonable cost unless the cost would deny you access to the records, and the right to add to the record if you believe information contained in the record is inaccurate or misleading;
5. To receive all information in the parent's or guardian's native language or primary other mode of communication;
6. To have your child receive a free appropriate public education which includes the right of the child to be educated with students without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate;
7. To receive accommodations and/or related aids and services without cost to allow your child an equal opportunity to participate in school activities;
8. To be educated in facilities and receive services that are comparable to those provided to students without disabilities;
9. To have your child have equal opportunity to participate in school programs and extracurricular activities sponsored by the school;
10. To refuse consent for any assessments proposed by the school district (the school district may seek substitute consent at an impartial hearing);
11. To have evaluation and placement decisions made by a group of knowledgeable persons (504 Team), including persons who know your child, can interpret evaluation information, and know the accommodations, related aids and service and placement options available;
12. To evaluations from a variety of sources by trained personnel prior to an initial Section 504 placement, any subsequent significant changes in placement, and periodic reevaluations;
13. To have 504 Team consider outside medical and/or independent evaluation information you provide to the 504 Team;
14. To a school district response to your reasonable requests for explanations/interpretations of your child's educational records;
15. Right to file a complaint of disability-based discrimination or harassment with the school district's Section 504 Coordinator, who will investigate the complaint.

16. Right to disagree with the Section 504 Team's decision with regard to his/her child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement may file a grievance with the school district's Section 504 Coordinator.
17. Right to disagree with the school district's decisions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, educational program, or placement under Section 504 and request mediation or an impartial due process hearing at the Massachusetts Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA). You and your child have the right to take part in the hearing and be represented by counsel at your own expense. You also have the right to appeal the impartial hearing officer's decision. The BSEA is located at 14 Summer Street, 4th floor, Malden, MA 02148 and can be reached by phone (781-397-4750) or fax (781-397-4770). You can find more information about the mediation and impartial hearing process on the BSEA's website: <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/bureau-of-special-education-appeals>. If you disagree with the decision of the BSEA's impartial hearing officer, you have a right to review of that decision by a court of competent jurisdiction.
18. Right to file a complaint of discrimination with the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) or to file a complaint in federal court. The regional offices are located at 5 Post Office Square, 8th Floor, Boston, MA 02109 and can be reached by phone (617-289-0111), fax (617-289-0150) and e-mail (OCR.Boston@ed.gov). You can find more information about how to file a complaint on OCR's website: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/howto.html?src=rt>.

Specific questions and concerns regarding Section 504 including referral for evaluation, eligibility and services can be directed to your child's building principal.

Title IX

According to regulations promulgated under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, sexual harassment is conduct on the basis of sex that meets one or more of the following:

- An employee of the District conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the recipient on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
- Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the District's education programs or activities; or
- Sexual Assault, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking as defined by federal laws.

Title IX Grievance Procedures

Response to Sexual Harassment

A student or any individual wishing to report sexual harassment may inform the Title IX Coordinator or any other employee. Any Hoosac Valley Regional School District ("the District") employee with knowledge of an allegation of sexual harassment, must report it, whether they personally witness the sexual harassment, learn of it from a third party or the alleged victim directly.

Once the Title IX Coordinator learns of an allegation of sexual harassment, they will contact the alleged victim, or "the Complainant," to gather preliminary information, offer "Supportive Measures," and inform

that person of the right to file a “Formal Complaint” against the alleged perpetrator, or “the Respondent,” that initiates the Title IX “Grievance Process.”

A “Formal Complaint” is a document filed by the Complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and requesting that the District investigate the allegation of sexual harassment and initiate the Grievance Process. Formal Complaints may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator in person, by mail, or electronic mail. To file a Formal Complaint, the alleged sexual harassment must have occurred in the school’s District educational programming or activity, and within the United States.

In some circumstances, the District will dismiss a Formal Complaint. For example, the District has discretion to dismiss a Formal Complaint where the passage of time results in an inability to gather sufficient evidence for a determination of responsibility or the District lost responsibility over the Respondent. The District must dismiss the Formal Complaint if it does not constitute sexual harassment as contemplated by Title IX regulations. However, the school may investigate the conduct as it pertains to other school policies.

“Supportive Measures” are non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the Complainant or the Respondent before or after the filing of a Formal Complaint or where no Formal Complaint has filed. Such measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to the District’s education and activities, including measures designed to protect the safety of all or the educational environment, or deter sexual harassment.

The District will maintain the confidentiality of any Supportive Measures to the extent possible and document the supportive measures offered by the Title IX Coordinator to the Complainant and Respondent. Examples of Supportive Measures include, but are not limited to the following: counseling, deadline extensions, course adjustments, work or schedule modifications, and increased security.

Grievance Process

Once the Formal Complaint is filed, the “Grievance Process” commences. The District is committed to treating all parties equitably during the Grievance Process. The District is committed to completing the Grievance Process as soon as possible with the goal of completion within 60 days. However, if required, by good cause, such as the absence of a party, a party’s advisor, or a witness; law enforcement or DCF involvement; or the need for accommodations, the parties will be notified of the need for delay. The Respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination of responsibility has been made.

The District will provide the Complainant and Respondent with written notice of the allegations and the Grievance Process. This notice will include specific detail of the allegations against the Respondent. The parties will be informed at this time of their right to have an advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney, and may accompany them at any point during the process. They will also be informed of their right to inspect and review evidence. The District will remind the parties of the school’s prohibition against knowingly making false statements during this process. Supportive Measures are available to all parties during the Grievance Process.

The Title IX Grievance Process requires the involvement of several different employees that fulfill separate roles. As noted earlier, the Title IX Coordinator oversees Title IX compliance and the Grievance Process. Additionally, each Formal Complaint will be assigned an “Investigator,” who could be a Principal, Vice-Principal, or other employee that is properly trained in investigations. Each Title IX investigation will be assigned a “Decision-Maker,” which similarly could be a Principal, Vice-Principal, or other employee that is properly trained. All appeals will be reviewed by someone who was not involved in the underlying Title IX investigation.

The District will ensure that Title IX coordinators, investigators, Decision-Makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process, receives training on the district’s Title IX policy and his or her respective role.

Informal Resolution of Sexual Harassment

If appropriate, the Title IX Coordinator will offer the parties the option of an informal resolution process, but, pursuant to Title IX, not until a Formal Complaint has been filed and the parties have been fully advised of their Title IX rights. Before beginning an informal resolution process, the District will obtain written consent from the Complainant and Respondent. At any time, the parties can withdraw from the informal resolution and the Grievance Process will resume. Informal Resolution shall not be offered in the event the Respondent is a District employee.

Investigation of Sexual Harassment

A properly trained Investigator will complete an investigation into the Formal Complaint. Both, the Respondent and Complainant, will have an equal opportunity to offer witnesses and other evidence. Prior to any interviews with a witness, the District will provide the witness with notice of the date, time, location, participants, and sufficient time to prepare for that interview. Both parties will have an equal opportunity to examine and inspect evidence. Unless waived by one of the parties, the investigation will not intrude on any information that is legally privileged. Information about a person’s sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant, unless it is offered to prove that someone other than the Respondent committed the alleged act, or the information concerns specific incidents of sexual behavior between the parties and it is offered to prove consent. At the conclusion of the investigation, the Investigator will create an Investigative Report that summarizes the relevant evidence and send it to each party and the party’s advisor.

The parties will have at least 10 days before any hearing or determination of responsibility to review and respond to the report if they so choose. Time periods may be extended or delayed for good cause, including the absence of a party, a party’s advisor, or a witness; concurrent law enforcement activity; or the need for language assistance or accommodations of disabilities.

The designated Decision-Maker will afford each party the opportunity to submit written, relevant questions that a party wants asked of any party or witness, provide each party with the answers, and allow additional, limited follow-up questions. However, before presenting the question, the Decision-Maker will determine if it is relevant. In the event that the Decision-Maker decides to exclude a question, he/she will provide a written decision explaining their reasoning.

Hearings

Though it is not required, the District reserves the right to conduct a full-live hearing as part of the Grievance Process. At such a hearing, the Decision-Maker will permit each party's Advisor to ask the other party and any witnesses relevant questions. If a party does not have an advisor, the District will provide one at no cost. Upon the request of the Complainant or Respondent, the District will utilize technology to separate the parties during the hearing process. If a party or witness does not submit to cross-examination at the live hearing, the Decision-Maker will not consider any statement of that party or witness in determining responsibility.

Finding of Responsibility

Any Respondent found, by a preponderance of the evidence, to have committed Sexual Harassment shall be subject to a range of discipline, including, but not limited to: detention, exclusion of extracurricular activities, suspension, and expulsion, or in the case of an employee termination of employment.

The Decision-Maker will simultaneously issue a written determination of responsibility that includes a description of the allegations, the procedural steps of the grievance process, the findings of facts, the conclusions reached, and a statement and rationale of responsibility and related discipline. If applicable, it will also include remedies designed to restore or preserve equal access to education and activities at the District.

Appeal

Both the Complainant and Respondent shall have the right to appeal the decision of the Grievance Process by notifying the Title IX coordinator in writing within 10 business days of receiving the decision. The grounds for appeal are limited to: procedural irregularity, new evidence that was not reasonably available at the time of the determination or dismissal, or an alleged conflict of interest. Both parties shall have an opportunity to provide a written statement supporting their position on Appeal. The Appeal shall be reviewed by a person who is not the original Decision-Maker, Investigator, or Title IX Coordinator. That person shall issue a written decision and rationale simultaneously to the parties.

Retaliation

The District strictly prohibits retaliation in any form against persons seeking protection under or participating in an investigation related to the district's Title IX policy. As such, the District will investigate any reports of retaliation and take separate disciplinary action against those found to have retaliated against someone.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding Title IX, please contact your building's Title IX Coordinator using the information found below:

Name, Role
School Name
Address
Telephone

Additionally, you may contact the Director of the Regional Office for Civil Rights at the contact information found below:

Mr. John G. Bynoe, Director
Office of Civil Rights Region I
RKO Building Government Center
Boston, Massachusetts 02114
Hoosac Valley Gender Equality

Physical Restraint and Behavior Support

The Hoosac Valley Regional School District is committed to maintaining an orderly, safe and supportive environment conducive to learning for all students. The district implements a variety of behavioral supports and intervention strategies to safely support students and prevent the use of physical restraints whenever possible. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has issued specific regulations concerning prevention and use of physical restraint on students (603 CMR [46.00](#)). The Hoosac Valley Regional School District is committed to ensuring that the use of any physical restraint strictly adheres to these regulations. Physical restraint will be used with two goals in mind, and only after other less intrusive methods have been attempted and/or considered:

- to administer a physical restraint only when needed to protect a student and/or member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious harm; and
- to prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of physical restraint.

Nothing in the physical restraint regulations precludes a teacher, district staff member, or other district contractors from using reasonable force to protect students, themselves, or other persons from assault or imminent, serious physical harm.

Physical restraint regulations do not prohibit any individual from reporting a crime committed by a student or other individual to local enforcement or other appropriate authorities. Law enforcement, judicial authorities and/or school security personnel are not prohibited by the physical restraint regulation from the exercise of their responsibilities, which may include the physical detainment of a student or other person alleged to have committed a crime or who poses a security risk.

An individual who is a mandated reporter pursuant to M.G.L. c. 119, § 51A is not constrained by the physical restraint regulations or the district's physical restraint policy from complying with the responsibility to report neglect or abuse to the appropriate state agency. Nothing contained herein shall relieve staff reporting requirements when a personal injury occurs within the scope of employment.

Preparedness

In-Depth Training for Select Staff. The Principal or designee of each building within the district shall designate at least two (2) individuals at each building who have completed at least sixteen (16) hours of in-depth training in physical restraint and are authorized to serve as a building-wide resource to assist in ensuring proper administration of physical restraint. In the event of the need for physical restraint intervention, fully trained individuals should be called upon. The in-depth training must include:

- a. Appropriate procedures for preventing the use of physical restraint, including the de-escalation of problematic behavior, relationship building and the use of alternatives to restraint;
- b. A description and identification of specific dangerous behaviors on the part of students that may lead to the use of physical restraint and methods for evaluating the risk of harm in individual situations in order to determine whether the use of restraint is warranted;

- c. The simulated experience of administering and receiving physical restraint, instruction regarding the effect(s) on the person restrained, including instruction on monitoring physical signs of distress and obtaining medical assistance;
- d. Instruction regarding documentation and reporting requirements and investigation of injuries and complaints;
- e. Demonstration by participants of proficiency in administering physical restraint; and,
- f. Instruction regarding the impact of physical restraint on the student and family, recognizing the act of restraint has impact, including but not limited to psychological, physiological, and social-emotional effects.

Training for All Staff. Each Principal or designee shall determine a time and method to provide all program staff with training regarding the district's restraint prevention and behavior support policy and requirements when restraint is used. The designated in-depth trained building staff members shall assist the building Principal or designee in providing annual training to respective staff members regarding this policy. Such training shall occur within the first month of each school year and, for employees hired after the school year begins, within a month of their employment. Training shall include information on the following:

- a. The role of the student, family, and staff in preventing restraint;
- b. The program's restraint prevention and behavior support policy and procedures, including use of time-out as a behavior support strategy distinct from seclusion;
- c. Interventions that may preclude the need for restraint, including de-escalation of problematic behaviors and other alternatives to restraint in emergency circumstances;
- d. When behavior presents an emergency that requires physical restraint, the types of permitted physical restraints and related safety considerations, including information regarding the increased risk of injury to a student when any restraint is used, in particular a restraint of extended duration;
- e. Administering physical restraint in accordance with medical or psychological limitations, known or suspected trauma history, and/or behavioral intervention plans applicable to an individual student; and
- f. Identification of program staff who have received in-depth training pursuant to 603 CMR 46.03(3) in the use of physical restraint.

Prevention of Physical Restraint

Hoosac Valley Regional School District uses a variety of behavioral support techniques and strategies as alternatives to physical restraint when a student's (or group of students') behavior requires immediate intervention. Additionally, the district implements a continuum of social-emotional and supports and services, including crisis planning, to foster social-emotional growth, self-regulation and prevent student violence, self-injurious behavior and suicide. These supports and interventions may include, but are not limited to:

Tier 1:

- Responsive Classroom
- Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support (PBIS)
- Trauma Sensitive School Training
- Soft Skills Rubric

Tier 2:

- Responsive Classroom
- Social Skills Groups
- Zones of Regulation

- Building Based Team (BBT)/Student Support Team (SST) Meetings
- Collaborative Problem Solving
- Restorative Practices (family engagement)
- Positive Reinforcement Systems
- Referral to Outside Services

Tier 3:

- Individual/Small Group Counseling
- Collaborative Problem Solving
- Restorative Practices (family engagement)
- Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)
- Referral to Outside Services

The district will engage caregivers about restraint prevention and the use of restraint solely as an emergency procedure by:

- a. making the district's restraint prevention and behavioral support policy and procedures, including complaint procedures available to families;
- b. discussing with families of students who have required and/or may require physical intervention methods of preventing student violence/self-harm, restraint prevention behavioral supports, alternatives to physical restraint, staff training and restraint use requirements, as well as behavioral support services available to student;
- c. collaborate with parents/guardians and student's community providers on use of effective de-escalation strategies and alternatives to restraint across settings; and,
- d. refer families to community-based resources and support, as needed.

Any caregiver with concerns about the use of physical restraint at any school within the Hoosac Valley Regional School district may request a meeting with the building Principal or the Superintendent to discuss such concerns. Any individual who believes that a physical restraint may have been unwarranted or conducted inappropriately may also make use of the Grievance Procedure described below.

Use of Restraint

Hoosac Valley Regional School District's use of physical restraint shall comply with 603 CMR 46.03. The definitions of forms of restraint shall be as defined in 603 CMR 46.02.

Mechanical and medication restraint are prohibited.

Physical restraint, including prone restraints where permitted, shall be considered by Hoosac Valley Regional School District an emergency procedure of last resort and can only be used when a student's behavior poses a threat of assault, or imminent, serious, physical harm to self or others and the student is not responsive to verbal directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions, or such interventions are deemed to be inappropriate under the circumstances. All physical restraints, including prone restraint where permitted, shall be administered in compliance with 603 CMR 46.05.

Physical restraint is defined by regulation as direct physical contact that prevents or significantly restricts a student's freedom of movement. Physical restraint does not include: brief physical contact to promote student safety, providing physical guidance or prompting when teaching a skill, redirecting attention, providing comfort, or a physical escort.

Physical escort is not considered a restraint. Physical escort is defined by regulation as a temporary touching or holding, without the use of force, of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a student who is agitated to walk to a safe location.

Prone restraint is defined by regulation as a physical restraint in which a student is placed face down on the floor or another surface, and physical pressure is applied to the student's body to keep the student in the facedown position. Prone restraints are prohibited in the district, except on an individual student basis and only under the following circumstances:

1. The student has a documented history of repeatedly causing serious self-injuries and/or injuries to other students or staff;
2. All other forms of physical restraints have failed to ensure the safety of the student and/or the safety of others;
3. There are no medical contraindications as documented by a licensed physician;
4. There is psychological or behavioral justification for the use of prone restraint and there are no psychological or behavioral contraindications, as documented by a licensed mental health professional;
5. The program has obtained consent to use prone restraint in an emergency as set out in 603 CMR 46.03(1)(b), and such use has been approved in writing by the principal and supervisor of ABA services.
6. The program has documented 603 CMR 46.03(1)(b)1-5 in advance of the use of prone restraint and maintains the documentation.

District staff shall not restrain students:

- a. as a means of discipline or punishment;
- b. when the student cannot be safely restrained because it is medically contraindicated for reasons including, but not limited to, asthma, seizures, a cardiac condition, obesity, bronchitis, communication-related disabilities, or risk of vomiting;
- c. as a response to property destruction, disruption of school order, a student's refusal to comply with a public education program rule or staff directive, or verbal threats when those actions do not constitute a threat of assault, or imminent, serious, physical harm; or
- d. as a standard response for any individual student. No written individual behavior plan or individualized education program (IEP) may include use of physical restraint as a standard response to any behavior. Physical restraint is an emergency procedure of last resort.

Limitations on use of restraint:

- a. Physical restraint in the district shall be limited to the use of such reasonable force as is necessary to protect a student or another member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.
- b. Physical restraint must end as soon as the student is no longer an imminent threat to the physical harm of self or others.
- c. Only public education program personnel who have received training required for all staff, pursuant to 603 CMR 46.04(2) or the in-depth training required for select staff, pursuant to 603 CMR 46.04(3) shall administer physical restraint on students.
- d. Whenever possible, the administration of a restraint shall be witnessed by at least one adult who does not participate in the restraint.
- e. A person administering physical restraint shall use the safest method available and appropriate to the situation subject to the safety requirements set forth in 603 CMR 46.05(5). Floor restraints, including prone restraints otherwise permitted under 603 CMR 46.03(1)(b), shall be prohibited unless the staff members administering the restraint have received in-depth training according to the requirements of 603 CMR 46.04(3) and, in the judgment of the trained staff members, such method is required to provide safety for the student or others present.
- f. All physical restraint must be terminated as soon as the student is no longer an immediate danger to himself or others, or the student indicates that he or she cannot breathe, or if the student is observed to be in severe distress, such as having difficulty breathing, or sustained or prolonged crying or coughing.

Additional requirements for the use of physical restraint:

- a. No restraint shall be administered in such a way that the student is prevented from breathing or speaking. During the administration of a restraint, a staff member shall continuously monitor the physical status of the student, including skin temperature and color, and respiration.
- b. Restraint shall be administered in such a way so as to prevent or minimize physical harm. If, at any time during a physical restraint, the student expresses or demonstrates significant physical distress including, but not limited to, difficulty breathing, the student shall be released from the restraint immediately, and school staff shall take steps to seek medical assistance.
- c. If a student is restrained for a period longer than 20 minutes, staff must contact the Principal and obtain the approval of the Principal prior to the restraint continuing beyond 20 minutes. The Principal's approval shall be based upon the student's continued agitation during the restraint justifying the need for continued restraint.
- d. Program staff shall review and consider any known medical or psychological limitations, known or suspected trauma history, and/or behavioral intervention plans regarding the use of physical restraint on an individual student.
- e. After the release of a student from a restraint, the public education program shall implement follow-up procedures. These procedures shall include reviewing the incident with the student to address the behavior that precipitated the restraint, reviewing the incident with the staff person(s) who administered the restraint to discuss whether proper restraint procedures were followed, and consideration of whether any follow-up is appropriate for students who witnessed the incident.

Reporting and Review Requirements

Hoosac Valley Regional School District shall report and review the use of physical restraints as follows:

Informing the Principal or Designee. The staff member who administered the restraint shall verbally inform the Principal or designee of the restraint as soon as possible, and by written report no later than the next school working day. The written report shall be provided to the Principal or designee for review of the use of the restraint. If the Principal has administered the restraint, the Principal shall prepare the report and submit it to an individual or team designated by the Superintendent for review. The Principal or designee shall maintain an on-going record of all reported instances of physical restraint, which shall be made available for review by the parent or DESE upon request.

Informing the Director of Special Services. The staff member who administered the restraint shall also verbally inform the Director of Special Services of the restraint as soon as possible, and submit a completed copy of the written report no later than the next school working day.

Informing Parents/Guardians. The Principal or designee shall make reasonable efforts to verbally inform the student's parent of the restraint within 24 hours of the event, and shall notify the parent by written report that must include all the elements described below sent either within three (3) school working days of the restraint to an email address provided by the parent for communications about the student, or by regular mail postmarked no later than three school working days of the restraint. If the program customarily provides a parent of a student with report cards and other necessary school-related information in a language other than English, the written restraint report shall be provided to the parent in that language. The Principal or designee shall provide the student and the parent an opportunity to comment orally and in writing on the use of the restraint and on information in the written report.

Written Report. The written report required by 603 CMR 46.06(2) and (3), maintained by school and provided to parent/guardian, must include:

- a. The name of the student; the names and job titles of the staff who administered the restraint, and observers, if any; the date of the restraint; the time the restraint began and ended; and, the name of the Principal or designee who was verbally informed following the restraint; and, if applicable, the name of the principal or designee who approved continuation of the restraint beyond 20 minutes pursuant to 603 CMR 46.05(5)(c).
- b. A description of the activity in which the restrained student and other students and staff in the same room or vicinity were engaged immediately preceding the use of physical restraint; the behavior that prompted the restraint; the efforts made to prevent escalation of behavior, including the specific de-escalation strategies used; alternatives to restraint that were attempted; and the justification for initiating physical restraint.
- c. A description of the administration of the restraint including the holds used and reasons such holds were necessary; the student's behavior and reactions during the restraint; how the restraint ended; and documentation of injury to the student and/or staff, if any, during the restraint and any medical care provided.
- d. Information regarding any further action(s) that the school has taken or may take, including any consequences that may be imposed on the student.
- e. Information regarding opportunities for the student's parents to discuss with school officials the administration of the restraint, any consequences that may be imposed on the student, and any other related matter.

Report all restraint-related injuries to DESE. When a physical restraint has resulted in an injury to a student or program staff member, the program shall report it to DESE as required by 603 CMR 46.06(4) no later than three school working days after the restraint. The program shall also send DESE a copy of the record of physical restraints maintained by the Principal or designee pursuant to 603 CMR 46.06(2) for the 30-day period prior to the date of the reported restraint.

Report all physical restraints to DESE. Every program shall collect and report data to DESE regarding the use of physical restraints. Such data shall be reported in a manner and form directed by the DESE.

Individual student review. The Principal or designee shall conduct a weekly review of restraint data to identify students who have been restrained multiple times during the week. If such students are identified, the principal shall convene one or more review teams as the Principal or designee deems appropriate to assess each student's progress and needs. The assessment shall include at least the following:

- a. review and discussion of the written reports submitted in accordance with 603 CMR 46.06 and any comments provided by the student and parent about such reports and the use of the restraints;
- b. an analysis of the circumstances leading up to each restraint, including factors such as time of day, day of the week, antecedent events, and individuals involved;
- c. consideration of factors that may have contributed to escalation of behaviors, consideration of alternatives to restraint, including de-escalation techniques and possible interventions, and such other strategies and decisions as appropriate, with the goal of reducing or eliminating the use of restraint in the future;
- d. agreement on a written plan of action by the program.

If the Principal or designee directly participated in the restraint, a duly qualified individual designated by the Superintendent or designee shall lead the review team's discussion. The Principal shall ensure that a record of each individual student review is maintained and made available for review by DESE or the parent, upon request.

Administrative review. The Principal or designee shall conduct a monthly review of school-wide restraint data. This review shall consider patterns of use of restraints by similarities in the time of day, day of the week, or individuals involved; the number and duration of physical restraints school-wide and for

individual students; the duration of restraints; and the number and type of injuries, if any, resulting from the use of restraint. The Principal or designee shall determine whether it is necessary or appropriate to modify the school's restraint prevention and management policy, conduct additional staff training on restraint reduction/prevention strategies, such as training on positive behavioral interventions and supports, or take such other action as necessary or appropriate to reduce or eliminate restraints.

Grievances. A parent/guardian, student and/or a Hoosac Valley Regional School District staff member may file a complaint about district restraint practices with the Director of Special Services via US or electronic mail. The Director of Special Services shall designate a school administrator to investigate the complaint by reviewing relevant records and/or interviewing relevant parties. The designated school administrator shall notify the complainant of the findings and if applicable, any corrective action steps.

Use of Time-Out

Seclusion Prohibited. Hoosac Valley Regional School District prohibits seclusion. Seclusion (sometimes referred to as “seclusion restraint”) is defined by regulation as the involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area from which the student is physically prevented from leaving. Seclusion does not include a time-out as defined in 603 CMR 46.02.

Time-Out. The district uses time-out as a behavioral support strategy. Time-out is defined by regulation as when a student temporarily separates from the learning activity or the classroom, either by choice or by direction from staff, for the purpose of calming. During time-out, a student must be continuously observed by a staff member. Staff shall be with the student or immediately available to the student at all times. The space used for time-out must be clean, safe, sanitary, and appropriate for the purpose of calming. Time-out includes inclusionary time-out and exclusionary time-out.

Inclusionary Time-Out. When the student is removed from positive reinforcement or full participation in classroom activities while remaining in the classroom. The use of inclusionary time-out functions well as a behavior support strategy while allowing the student to remain fully aware of the learning activities of the classroom. Inclusionary time-out includes practices used by teachers as part of their classroom behavior support tools, such as "planned ignoring," asking students to put their heads down, or placing a student in a different location within the classroom. These strategies, used to reduce external stimuli in the student's environment while keeping the student physically present and involved in learning, have proven to be useful tools for classroom management.

Exclusionary Time-Out. The separation of a student from the rest of the class either through complete visual separation (e.g. walled off rooms located within the classroom) or from actual physical separation from the classroom. The following applies to exclusionary time-outs:

- a. Should not be used as a method of punishment for noncompliance, or for incidents of misbehavior that are no longer occurring.
- b. Should be reserved for use only when students are displaying behaviors which present, or potentially present, an unsafe or overly disruptive situation in the classroom.
- c. Must end when the student has calmed.
- d. Unless it poses a safety risk, a staff member must be physically present with the student. If it is not safe for the staff member to be present with the student, the student may be left in the time-out setting with the door closed. However, in order to ensure that the student is receiving appropriate support, staff member must be immediately available outside where the individual can continuously observe and communicate with the student as appropriate to determine when the student has calmed. Students must never be locked in a room.
- e. For students displaying self-injurious behavior, a staff member must be physically present in the same setting with the student.

- f. If it appears that the use of exclusionary time-out exacerbates the student's behavior, or the continuation of the exclusionary time-out beyond 30 minutes has not helped the student to calm, then other behavioral support strategies should be attempted.
- g. For any exclusionary time-out that may last longer than 30 minutes, a staff member must contact and seek approval from the Principal for the continued use of time-out beyond 30 minutes. The Principal may not routinely approve such requests but must consider the individual circumstances, specifically whether the student continues to be agitated to determine whether time-out beyond 30 minutes is justified.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR [46.00](#)

STUDENT CONDUCT

Good citizenship in schools is based on respect and consideration for the rights of others.

Students will be expected to conduct themselves in a way that the rights and privileges of others are not violated. They will be required to respect constituted authority, to conform to school rules and to those provisions of law that apply to their conduct.

Any of the following actions may subject a student to expulsion by the Principal under the terms of M.G.L. 71:37H:

- Found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon or a controlled substance.
- Who assaults a Principal, Assistant Principal, teacher, teacher's aid or other educational staff member on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events including athletic games.

Any of the following actions will subject a student to suspension, expulsion, subject to School Committee action, or other discipline any measures:

- Intentionally causing or attempting to cause damage to school property; or stealing or attempting to steal school property.
- Intentionally causing or attempting to cause damage to private property; stealing or attempting to steal private property.
- Intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical injury to another person except in self-defense.
- Using or copying the academic work of another and presenting it as his/her own without proper administrators.
- Repeatedly and intentionally defying the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, or administrators.

School building administrators will not suspend a student, or recommend a student for suspension or expulsion, unless the student has engaged in one of the prohibited actions mentioned above while on school property or taking part in a school activity off school grounds.

STUDENT CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES

The School Committee and its staff share with students and parents/guardians the responsibility for student safety during transportation to and from school. The authority for enforcing School Committee requirements of student conduct on buses will rest with the Principal.

To ensure the safety of all students who ride in buses, it may occasionally be necessary to revoke the privilege of transportation from a student who abuses this privilege. Parents of children whose behavior and misconduct on school buses endangers the health, safety, and welfare of other riders will be notified that their children face the loss of transportation privileges in accordance with regulations approved by the School Committee.

Procedures for Drivers and Parents

1. In case of any misconduct on a bus, the incident will be reported on the proper form to the school Principal or the Teacher of Department.
2. After a second offense, if a third such incident occurs, bus privileges will be denied to the student and the responsibility for transportation will then rest with the parent/guardian.

Loading and Unloading at Bus Stop

1. Riders must be on time. Bus drivers will not wait.
2. Riders will enter or leave the bus at regular stops only.
3. Orderly behavior and respect for private property will be required.
4. Instructions and directions of the driver must be followed by the riders when entering or leaving the bus.

Required Conduct Aboard the Bus

1. Riders must remain in seats or in place when the bus is in motion.
2. Whistling and shouting are not permitted.
3. Profanity and obscene language are forbidden.
4. Smoking is prohibited.
5. The following disturbances are prohibited:
 - Pushing or wrestling
 - Annoying other passengers or disturbing their possessions
 - Talking to the driver
 - Throwing objects within the bus or out of windows
 - Climbing over seats
 - Opening or closing windows
 - Leaning out of windows
 - Littering the bus
6. Parents will be held responsible for any defacing or damaging of the bus.

Parents and students will be informed of these regulations at the beginning of each school year, and parents/guardians will be asked to return signed forms indicating that the regulations have been received and read.

STAFF CONDUCT

All staff members have a responsibility to familiarize themselves with and abide by the laws of the State as these affect their work, the policies of the Hoosac Valley Regional School Committee, and the regulations designed to implement them.

In the area of personal conduct, the Committee expects that teachers and others will conduct themselves in a manner that not only reflects credit to the school system but also sets forth a model worthy of emulation by students.

All staff members will be expected to carry out their assigned responsibilities with conscientious concern.

Essential to the success of ongoing school operations and the instructional program are the following specific responsibilities, which will be required of all personnel:

- Faithfulness and promptness in attendance at work.
- Support and enforcement of policies of the Committee and their implementing regulations and school rules in regard to students.
- Diligence in submitting required reports promptly at the times specified.
- Care and protection of school property.
- Concern for and attention to their own and the school system's legal responsibility for the safety and welfare of students, including the need to ensure that students are under supervision at all times.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37H; 264:11; 264:14

Bullying Prevention

The Hoosac Valley Regional School District is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive educational environment where students can achieve the highest academic standards. Acts of bullying, including cyber-bullying and retaliation are prohibited

Definitions and Bullying Prohibition:

“Bullying” is the repeated use by one or more students or school staff members of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a target student that:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target’s property;
- places the target in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself, or of damage to his/her property;
- creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

"Cyber-bullying " means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a:

- wire
- radio
- electromagnetic
- photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications.

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

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

“Retaliation” means any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment directed against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation about bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

“School Staff” means all Hoosac Valley Regional School district staff members including, but not limited to educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activities and or paraprofessionals.

For the purpose of this section, whenever the term bullying is used it is to denote either bullying , cyber-bullying and/or retaliation. When bullying is alleged, the full cooperation and assistance of parents and families are expected.

Bullying is prohibited:

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

Bullying is prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the Hoosac Valley Regional School District if the act or acts in question:

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

Prevention and Intervention Plan

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

1. Include descriptions of and statements prohibiting bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation,
2. Establish clear procedures for students and staff to report bullying or retaliation,
3. Include a provision that reports of bullying or retaliation may be made anonymously, provided that no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report,

4. Establish clear procedures for promptly responding to and investigating reports of bullying or retaliation,
5. Identify the range of disciplinary actions that may be taken against the perpetrator for bullying or retaliation,
6. Establish clear procedures for restoring a sense of safety for a victim and assessing that person's needs for protection,
7. Establish strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation or is witness to or has reliable information about an act of bullying,
8. Establish procedures for promptly notifying the parents or guardians of a victim and a perpetrator, for notifying the parents or guardians of a victim of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying, and for notifying local law enforcement officials where criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator,
9. Include a provision that a person knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action, and
10. Include a strategy for providing counseling in-house or referral to appropriate services for perpetrators and victims and for appropriate family members of students.

The Hoosac Valley Regional School District has developed administrative guidelines and procedures for implementation of this Bullying Prevention Plan, including:

- A student complaint process,
- A reporting process for staff,
- An investigation process,
- A process for communication with parents/guardians,
- Record keeping and reporting, and
- Annual report of bullying incidents to the School Committee.

The Superintendent will publish disciplinary policies in Student Handbooks, which shall prohibit bullying and shall include reference to this Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan required by Chapter 71 Section 37 of the Laws of the Commonwealth. Student Handbooks shall include age-appropriate summaries of the student-related sections of the district's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and available in language which are most prevalent among school community members.

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

Reporting

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

Each school shall have a means for anonymous reporting by students of incidents of bullying. No formal disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

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

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

A member of a school staff shall immediately report any instance of bullying the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the school principal or their designee.

Investigation Procedures

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

The school principal or a designee shall promptly investigate the report of bullying, using a Bullying /Cyber-bullying Report Form which may include interviewing the alleged target, alleged perpetrator, staff members, students and/or witnesses.

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

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

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

The investigation shall be completed within a reasonable time frame. The parents or guardians shall be contacted upon completion of the investigation and informed of the results, including whether the allegations were found to be factual, whether a violation of this policy was found, and whether disciplinary action has or shall be taken. At a minimum the Principal or his/her designee shall contact the parents or guardians as to the status of the investigation on a weekly basis.

Disciplinary actions for students who have committed an act of bullying or retaliation shall be in accordance with district disciplinary policies and the district's bullying prevention and intervention plan. The district's disciplinary action shall balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior.

Each school shall document any incident of bullying that is reported per the district's policy and a file shall be maintained by the Principal or designee. A monthly report shall be provided to the Superintendent.

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

Retaliation

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

Target Assistance

The Hoosac Valley Regional School District shall provide counseling or referral to appropriate services, including guidance, academic intervention, and protection to students, both targets and perpetrators, affected by bullying, as necessary.

Training and Assessment

Annual training shall be provided for school staff with students in preventing, identifying, responding to, and reporting incidents of bullying.

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

Publication and Notice

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

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

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

The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be posted on the Hoosac Valley Regional School District website.

LEGAL REFS.: Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended

Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO Commission

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

603 CMR [26.00](#)

+ m.G.L. [71:37O](#); [265:43](#), [43A](#); [268:13B](#); [269:14A](#)

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

Student Discipline

While the infractions and consequences outlined are meant to provide clear expectations for behavior, each disciplinary incident involves unique elements. Therefore, situations may be handled differently by the administration because of contributing factors.

For disciplinary actions that are deemed less severe in nature, a warning and/or parent notification may occur before first offense consequences are implemented. For those of a more serious nature, parent meetings may be required.

List of Possible Consequences (additional/other/different consequences may be assigned at any time as determined by school administration):

Conferences are a formal warning where the school administration will clarify the behavior expectation and outline potential consequences for future infractions. These conferences are documented in a student's disciplinary record. Parents/guardians may participate in the conference or be contacted by the school administration to be informed of the purpose of the conversation.

Teacher Detentions are assigned by individual teachers or grade-level teams for violations of classroom academic or behavioral expectations. Students are expected to report to assigned detentions/extra help and to work productively. Any student who fails to report to the teacher detention or who refuses to work as asked will be referred to the administration.

Office Detentions are formally recorded in a student's disciplinary record and result from a failure to report to a teacher detention or if he or she commits an infraction deemed by the administration to be serious in nature. After being assigned three office detentions, a student will face more severe consequences for poor behavior such as in-school suspension.

In-School Suspension is assigned to a student when a disciplinary offense warrants action more severe than detention but less severe than one that warrants an out-of-school suspension. Students assigned to in-school suspension must complete work sent to them. Those who refuse to work productively may remain in in-school suspension until work is completed. Those who are assigned to a full-day of in-school suspension will not be allowed to participate in extracurricular activities on the day of the assigned suspension unless the administration feels an exception is warranted.

Exclusion from Extracurricular Activities and School-Sponsored Events is assigned by the principal or designee based on the student's misconduct. Such a removal is not subject to M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H 3/4 or 603 CMR 53.00.

Out-of-School Suspension is assigned when a student has committed a serious disciplinary offense or when other consequences have proven ineffective at modifying behavior. Students who are suspended out-of-school may not attend school events and are prohibited from being on school grounds unless they have prior permission from school administration.

Severe disciplinary infractions such as drug or alcohol possession, weapon possession, bullying, fighting/assault, and threats directed at faculty/staff may result in a long-term out-of-school suspension/possible exclusion hearing.

Due Process for Certain Disciplinary Consequences:

I. In-School Suspension

The principal or designee may use in-school suspension as an alternative to short-term suspension for disciplinary offenses. The principal or designee will inform the student of the disciplinary offense charged and the basis for the charge, and provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charge or explain the circumstances. If the principal determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the principal will inform the student of the length of the student's in-school suspension, which is not to exceed 10 days, cumulatively or consecutively, in a school year.

The principal or designee will notify the caregiver orally on the day of the in-school suspension decision. The principal will also invite the caregiver to a meeting to discuss the student's academic performance and behavior as well as strategies for student engagement and responses to the behavior. The meeting will be scheduled on the day of the suspension if possible, and if not, soon thereafter.

The principal will send written notice on the day of the in-school suspension to the student and caregiver about the in-school suspension, including the reason and the length of the in-school suspension, and inviting the caregiver to a meeting with the principal, if a meeting has not already occurred.

II. Short Term Suspension (<10 days)

Prior to a short-term suspension, a hearing will be conducted with the principal or designee. The purpose of this hearing is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges, explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident and present mitigating information, determine if the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequences for the infraction. Caregivers are permitted to participate in the hearing.

The principal shall notify the student and caregiver in writing of the determination and the reasons for it, and, if the student is suspended, the type and duration of suspension and the opportunity to make up assignments and such other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal.

The principal shall notify the Superintendent of the written determination, explaining the reasons for imposing an out-of-school suspension for a student in preschool or in grades K through 3, before the short-term suspension takes effect.

Notice of Suspension and Hearing:

Except for emergencies provided in 603 CMR 53.07 and in-school suspension authorized by 53.10, a principal will not impose a suspension as a consequence for a disciplinary offense without first providing the student and the caregiver oral and written notice, along with an opportunity for a hearing on the charge and an opportunity for the caregiver to participate in the hearing.

The principal will provide oral and written notice to the student and the caregiver in English and in the primary language of the home if other than English. The notice will include:

1. The disciplinary offense;
2. The basis for the charge;
3. The potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension;
4. The opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the principal concerning the proposed suspension, and for the caregiver to attend the hearing;
5. The date, time, and location of the hearing;
6. The right to an interpreter, if needed;

7. If the student may be placed on long-term suspension following the hearing:

- a. the rights set forth in 603 CMR 53.08 (3)(b); and
- b. the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent.

In all cases, once a student has been assigned to suspension, he/she will not be allowed to take part in or attend any school-related function or activity. This remains in effect until the student has officially returned to school from suspension. Suspension days will be counted as excused absences. Students who are suspended will be given the number of days they are out to make up their work.

III. Long Term Suspension (>10 days)

The purpose of the hearing is the same as the purpose of a short-term suspension hearing. At a minimum, in addition to the rights afforded a student in a short-term suspension hearing, the student will have the following rights:

1. Prior to the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents on which the principal may rely in making a determination;
2. To be represented by counsel or a lay person at their own expense;
3. To produce witnesses and to present the student's explanation of the incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so;
4. To cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;
5. To request that the hearing be recorded by the principal, and to receive a copy of the audio recording upon request. The principal will advise all parties if an audio recording is requested. The principal will send the written determination to the student and caregiver. If the principal decides to impose a long-term suspension, the written determination will:
 1. Identify the disciplinary offense, the date of the hearing, and the participants at the hearing;
 2. Record the key facts and conclusions reached by the principal;
 3. Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school;
 4. Notify the student of their opportunity to receive services to make academic progress during the suspension;
 5. Inform the student of the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent. Notice will include the following information:
 - a. the appeals process requires the student or caregiver to file a written notice of appeal with the superintendent within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long-term suspension subject to an extension of the filing, upon agreement with the superintendent, for up to seven (7) calendar days;

b. the long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the superintendent decides to reverse the principal's determination on appeal.

IV. Superintendent's Hearing for Long-Term Suspension:

A student who is placed on long-term suspension following a hearing with the principal shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the superintendent. The student or caregiver must file a notice of appeal with the superintendent within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long-term suspension subject to an extension of the filing, upon agreement with the superintendent, for up to seven (7) calendar days. If the appeal is not timely filed, the superintendent may deny the appeal or allow it to go forward.

Hearings by the superintendent will occur within three (3) school days of the request, unless the student or caregiver requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days. The superintendent will make a good faith effort to include the caregiver in the hearing and will send written notice to the caregiver of the date, time, and location of the hearing.

The superintendent will conduct a hearing to determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the appropriate consequence. The superintendent will advise all parties that a hearing will be audio recorded and a copy will be provided to the student or caregiver upon request. The student will have all the rights afforded the student at the principal's hearing for long-term suspension under 603 CMR 53.08(3)(b).

The superintendent will issue a written decision within five (5) calendar days of the hearing. If the superintendent determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than the principal, but will not impose a suspension greater than that imposed by the principal.

The decision of the superintendent is the final decision.

V. Emergency Removal

A student may be temporarily removed from school when the student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption.

The principal will immediately notify the superintendent in writing and describe the danger presented by the student. The temporary removal will not exceed two (2) school days following the day of the emergency removal. During the emergency removal period, the principal will:

1. Make immediate efforts to orally notify the student and the student's caregiver of the emergency removal, the reason for the removal, and other matters set forth in

603 CMR 53.06(2);

2. Provide written notice to the student and caregiver;

3. Provide the student an opportunity for a hearing with the principal, and the

caregiver an opportunity to attend the hearing, before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless the principal, student, and caregiver otherwise agree to an extension of time;

4. Render a decision orally on the date of the hearing and in writing no later than the following school day. A principal may not remove a student from school on an emergency basis for a disciplinary offense until adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation.

VI. Student Expulsion (Disciplinary Offenses Under M.G.L. 71 §§37H)

a. Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

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

c. Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal. After said hearing, a principal may, using discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b).

d. Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of their appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.

e. Any school district that suspends or expels a student under this section shall continue to provide educational services to the student during the period of suspension or expulsion, under section 21 of chapter 76. If the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student in an education service plan, under section 21 of chapter 76.

f. Districts shall report to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education the specific reasons for all suspensions and expulsions, regardless of duration or type, in a manner and form established by the commissioner. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education shall use its existing data collection tools to obtain this information from districts and shall modify those tools, as necessary, to obtain the information. On an annual basis, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education shall make district level de-identified data and analysis, including the total number of days each student is excluded during the school year, available to the public online in a machine-readable format. This report shall include district level data disaggregated by student status and categories established by the commissioner.

g. Under the regulations promulgated by the Department, for each school that suspends or expels a significant number of students for more than 10 cumulative days in a school year, the commissioner shall investigate and, as appropriate, shall recommend models that incorporate intermediary steps prior to the

use of suspension or expulsion. The results of the analysis shall be publicly reported at the school district level.

VII. Disciplinary Offenses Under M.G.L., Chapter 71, §§37H1/2

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

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

ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Any student who is serving an in-school suspension, short-term suspension, or long-term suspension will have the opportunity to make academic progress during the period of removal from the classroom or school. Any student who is expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days, whether in school or out of school, will have an opportunity to receive education services and make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, through the school-wide education service plan. The principal will notify the caregiver and student of the opportunity to receive education services at the time the student is expelled or placed on long-term suspension. The notice will include a list of the specific education services that are available to the student and contact information for a school district staff member who can provide more detailed information.

Discipline of Students with Disabilities

1. All students are encouraged to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in the Code of Conduct. Chapter 71B of the Mass. General Laws require that additional provisions be made for students who have been found by an IEP team to have a disability and whose program is described in an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). Students with disabilities may be suspended for up to ten (10) days under current state and federal laws and may also be suspended in excess of ten (10) days as fully outlined under M.G.L., Ch. 71B, and the Individuals with

Disabilities Education Act, the IDEA. The due process procedures, in addition, will reflect all state and federal laws as they come into effect.

2. The IDEA allows school personnel to remove a student with disabilities to an interim alternative educational setting for up to 45 school days, if that student has brought a weapon to school or a school function or on school grounds, possesses or uses illegal drugs (including prescription drugs which are not prescribed for the student) or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance or what the student says is a controlled substance, while at school or a school function or on school grounds, or inflicts serious bodily injury on a person, including themselves. The appropriate interim alternative educational setting shall be determined by the IEP Team.
3. The IDEA also allows school personnel the option of asking a hearing officer or a court to move the child with disabilities to an interim alternative educational setting for up to 45 days, if they are substantially likely to injure themselves or others in their current placement.
4. When a student with a disability(ies) has been suspended for more than ten (10) days in a school year, such that substantial change in placement is occurring or will occur, relevant members of the IEP Team will meet to conduct a manifestation determination.
5. The Principal (or designee) will notify the Director of Special Services of the offense leading to the pending suspension of a special needs student and a record will be kept of such notices.

Discipline of Students Not Yet Determined Eligible for Special Education

The IDEA protections summarized above also apply to students who have not yet been found eligible for IEPs if the school district is deemed to have knowledge that the students were eligible for IEPs before the conduct that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred. The IDEA provides that a school district is “deemed to have knowledge” if:

- (1) the child’s parent had expressed concern in writing to district supervisory or administrative personnel or the child’s teacher that the child needs special education and related services;
- (2) the child’s parent had requested an evaluation of the child to determine eligibility for special education services; or
- (3) the teacher of the child or other school district personnel had expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior by the child directly to the district’s director of special education or to other supervisory personnel. However, a school district is not “deemed to have knowledge” if the district evaluated the student and determined that the child was not eligible for special education services or the child’s parent refused an evaluation of the child or IDEA services.

If the school district has no knowledge that a student is an eligible student under the IDEA before taking disciplinary measures against the student, the student may be disciplined just as any other student may be. If, however, a request is made for an evaluation to determine eligibility while the student is subject to disciplinary measures, the district must conduct the evaluation in an expedited manner. Pending the results of the evaluation, the student must remain in the educational placement determined by school authorities, which may include suspension or expulsion without services. If the student is determined eligible for an IEP as a result of the evaluation, the school district must provide the student with special education and related services in accordance with the IDEA.

The district may not be deemed to have had knowledge if the parent has not consented to an evaluation of the student or has refused special education services, or if an evaluation of the student was completed and resulted in a determination of ineligibility.

DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS ON A 504 PLAN

Students are expected to meet the expectations for behavior identified in the Code of Conduct. A student on a Section 504 plan may be disciplined like any non-eligible student. Students on 504 plans have substantially similar rights to a Manifestation.

Review and the Manifestation Determination Review Process with a few exceptions:

- i. Students who are currently engaging in the use/possession of illegal drugs or alcohol are not entitled to a MDR prior to disciplinary removal.
- ii. A student is not automatically entitled to a Functional Behavior Assessment/Behavior Intervention Plan.
- iii. The student is not entitled to Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE) during a removal.

School personnel may not suspend a student on a 504 plan for more than ten consecutive school days without a manifestation determination.

STUDENT DRESS CODE PROPOSED UPDATE POLICY

Appropriate dress and personal grooming are expected of all students and are to be encouraged. However, the rights of students to Freedom of Expression shall not be abridged unless it can be established that student dress constitutes cause for significant disruption of school order or violates reasonable standards of health, safety and cleanliness.

Specifically, it shall be prohibited for any student to wear in school or at any school-sponsored event, program, or activity any garment or article of clothing that is sexually revealing or provocative. It shall likewise be prohibited for any student to wear, display, or brandish any article of clothing or garment, or any jewelry or other personal adornment, athletic bag, knapsack, or other possession, in school or at any school-sponsored event, program, or activity, that: depicts or describes any sexual activity or gesture, any sexual organ, or any bodily waste function; that supports, condones, endorses, or otherwise glorifies or advocates the use of any weapon, illegal drug, controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant; that is associated with membership in or that supports, condones, endorses, or otherwise glorifies or advocates any criminal or violent activity, behavior, or enterprise; or that can be otherwise demonstrably determined by the building principal, or by the program or activity supervisor, to pose a substantial risk of disrupting the educational process at the school or of the school-sponsored activity or program.

Personal appearance is an individual matter. No one, however, has the privilege of disregarding the norms of reasonable dress. Attire that could interfere with the learning process is not allowed. Students will be counseled on an individual basis if their attire is improper. Parents will be contacted if there is a question regarding a student's attire. Clothing must always conform to safety standards of the particular class.

- Obscene, vulgar, racist, sexist or other offensive pictures, words, or slogans are prohibited.
- Shoes/sandals must be worn at all times.

- Flip flops are not sandals and cannot be worn at the elementary school level.
- Undergarments should not be visible.
- Any other dress that distracts, disrupts, intimidates or provokes can be deemed inappropriate by the principal or designee.

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE CURRICULUM OR INSTRUCTION MATERIALS

The Hoosac Valley School Committee, though it is ultimately responsible for all curriculum and instructional materials (including library books), recognizes the need and right of students to have free access to many different types of books and materials. It also recognizes the right of the professional staff to select books and other materials supportive of the school system's educational philosophy and goals.

Criticism of a book or other materials used in the schools may be expected from time to time. In such instances:

1. If a parent/guardian requests that his/her own child not read a given book, the teacher and/or school administrator should resolve the situation, perhaps by arranging for use of alternative material meeting essentially the same instructional purpose. This does not apply however, to basic program texts and materials that the Committee has adopted.

2. The Committee will not permit any individual or group to exercise censorship over instructional materials and library collections, but recognizes that at times a reevaluation of certain material may be desirable. Should an individual or group ask to have any book or other material withdrawn from school use:

- a) The person who objects to the book or other material will be asked to sign a complaint on a standard form on which he/she will document his/her criticism.
- b) Following receipt of the formal complaint, the Superintendent will provide for a reevaluation of the material in question. He/she will arrange for the appointment of a review committee from among the faculty to consider the complaint.
- c) The Superintendent will review the complaint and the Committee's reevaluation and will render a decision in the matter. Should the decision be unsatisfactory to the complainant, he/she may appeal it to the Committee.

In summary, the Committee assumes final responsibility for all books and instructional materials it makes available to students; it holds its professional staff accountable for their proper selection. It recognizes rights of individual parents/guardians with respect to controversial materials used by their own children; it will provide for the reevaluation of materials in library collections upon formal request. On the other hand, students' right to learn and the freedom of teachers to teach will be respected.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26.09 and 26.10

CROSS REFS.: IJ, Instructional Materials

IJJ, Selection and Adoption of Textbooks

IJL, Selection and Adoption of Library Materials

CITIZEN'S REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF SCHOOL BOOKS AND/OR MATERIALS

Author
Hard -Cover
Paper-Back
Title
Publisher (if known)
Requested by
Phone
Address
City/ Region
Zip Code
Complainant represents:
Himself
Organization
Other

1. To what in the book do you object: (Please be specific and cite pages).
2. What do you feel might be the result of reading this book?
3. For what age group(s) would you recommend this book?
4. What do you find good about this book?
5. Did you read the entire book? What parts?
6. Are you aware of the judgment of this book by literary critics?
7. What do you believe is the theme of this book?
8. What would you like your school to do about this book?
 - a. Do not assign it to my child.
 - b. Withdraw it from all students as well as my child.

In its place, what book of equal literary quality would you recommend that would convey as valuable a picture and perspective of our civilization?

Signed
Date

Completed complaint forms should be handed to the school Principal then sent to the Superintendent of schools. The matter will be taken up with the School Committee as soon as possible. Challenged materials will remain until a final decision has been made.

IDENTIFICATION OF LIMITED-ENGLISH-PROFICIENT STUDENTS

The district uses qualified staff and appropriate procedures and assessments to identify students who are limited-English-proficient and assess their level of English proficiency.

PROGRAM MODIFICATIONS AND SUPPORT SERVICES FOR LIMITED-ENGLISH-PROFICIENT STUDENTS

The district implements necessary program modifications and support services to serve effectively limited-English-proficient students who need special language assistance.

Hoosac Valley Regional School District
INTERNET USE AGREEMENT

File: IJNDB-E - USER AGREEMENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN AN ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

HOOSAC VALLEY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT RESPONSIBLE USE POLICY

ELECTRONIC DEVICE USE RULES

- a. Abide by the HVRSD Acceptable Use, Social Media and Electronic Device Use Policies
- b. Academic use of Electronic Devices always takes priority over personal use in school.
- c. You must always practice good digital citizenship.
- d. You may access only appropriate documents and media.
- e. You may not harass, bully, cyber-bully, or threaten others in any way.
- f. You must use appropriate language in all communications.
- g. You must not attempt to gain access to unauthorized accounts, files or devices.
- h. You must not attempt to bypass the District's web filtering or Google Safe Search.
- i. You must abide by copyright laws. You must not plagiarize works or illegally download files, music, movies or other commercial files.
- j. You must keep all personal information private. This includes your passwords, user IDs, home address, photographs, personally identifiable information, and phone numbers as well as those of other students and district employees.
- k. You must not photograph, make audio or video recordings without the consent of those being recorded.
- l. Do not insert foreign objects (paperclips, pens, etc.) into the ports (openings) of the Chromebook.
- m. Do not eat or drink near the Electronic device. There should never be any food or drink around the device.
- n. Do not use water or other cleaning solutions on the Electronic Device unless they are approved for use on electronics. Wipe the surfaces lightly with a clean soft cloth. Always avoid touching the screen.
- o. Do not loan your Electronic Device to someone else.
- p. Do not damage, degrade the performance of, or abuse any Electronic Device in any way.

VIOLATIONS OF THIS ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY MAY HAVE DISCIPLINARY REPERCUSSIONS, INCLUDING:

- Suspension of network, technology, or computer privileges
- Notification to parents
- Detention or suspension from school and school-related activities
- Legal action and/or prosecution

GRADES K - 3: USING TECHNOLOGY IN SCHOOL

It is recommended that K-3 teachers read this policy aloud with their students, pausing as necessary to explain and clarify.

WHAT IS THE RUP?

RUP are three letters that mean Responsible Use Policy. This is a grown-up phrase. It means a list of rules that we follow when we use technology at school.

WHY DOES MY SCHOOL HAVE AN RUP?

Many children and grown-ups use technology. We need to make sure that everyone is safe when using it. We also need to take care of our equipment, so we need rules to follow.

WHY DO I HAVE TO BE VERY CAREFUL TO FOLLOW THE RULES?

Using technology and going on the Internet at school is a privilege. Our school trusts us to follow the rules. Your work on computers is not private. Your teachers watch you in class, and when you are on the internet, people who work for our school district can see what you are doing. Do not do anything on the computer that you would not like a grown-up to see you do!

WHAT HAPPENS IF A STUDENT DOES NOT FOLLOW THE RULES IN THE RUP?

Our school has consequences for students who do not follow the rules. You could lose your technology privileges in school. You should also tell a grown-up if you see someone who breaks the rules in the RUP.

RESPONSIBLE USE POLICY (RUP) RULES

- 1. I WILL BE KIND AND RESPECTFUL WHEN USING TECHNOLOGY.** I will use appropriate words and will not write mean things about another person on the computer. I will tell a grown-up if I know someone in my class is breaking this rule.
- 2. I WILL USE THE INTERNET PROPERLY.** I will stay on the sites where I am supposed to be, and will only go to sites my teachers have approved. I will tell a grown up if I see any bad words or see any bad pictures on a computer.
- 3. I WILL TAKE CARE OF THE TECHNOLOGY EQUIPMENT I USE IN SCHOOL.** I will not change anything on the equipment without a teacher's permission. I will not hurt any part of it on purpose. I will not write on it with pencil, pen, crayon, or markers. I will use and care for any equipment I am assigned in a responsible and safe manner.