

**Westport Community  
Schools  
Student Policy Handbook**



**Student Policy Handbook  
2022-2023**

# SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOALS

Students are our priority and we will work together to establish an environment conducive to learning and continuous improvement for all students by acting on the following goals regarding students:

- To individualize the learning program in order to provide appropriately for all students according to their specific needs, learning styles, aptitudes, and aspirations.
- To protect and observe the legal rights of students.
- To enhance the self-confidence of each student by creating a caring and respectful learning environment that provides positive encouragement through frequent, certified success.
- To provide an environment in which students can develop and apply personal responsibility, and good citizenship for their actions through meaningful experiences as student citizens of our community in their daily school life.
- To deal with students in matters of discipline in a fair and constructive manner.
- To provide for the safety, health, and welfare of all students.
- To encourage regular school attendance, quality work, and continuous progress.
- To achieve academic success.

The *School Citizenship Handbook* was adopted by the Westport School Committee on June 1, 1998 and revised in August 2022, School Committee Members:

Nancy Stanton-Cross  
Melissa Pacheco  
Antonio Viveiros  
Gloria M. Cabral

NOTE: This publication contains the most important current School Committee policies. A complete School Committee Policy Manual is available for review on the district website at <http://www.westportschools.org> and at the Office of the Superintendent of Schools.

Also, please consult each school's handbook for additional rules pertaining to that school.

All programs, activities, and employment of the Westport Community Schools are offered without regard actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex/gender, marital status, homelessness, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, family care leave status, pregnancy or any condition related to pregnancy, or military/veteran status. Furthermore, School Committee policy includes prohibitions of harassment of students and employees, i.e., racial harassment, sexual harassment, and retaliation for filing complaints of discrimination.

For further information or to redress a grievance, contact the district's Civil Rights Compliance Officer or the Superintendent of Schools, by phone at 508-636-1140, or in writing at 17 Main Road, Westport, Massachusetts 02790.

**Translations:**

For a translation of this or any other school notice, please contact the Superintendent of Schools at 508-636-1140.

**Portuguese:**

Contate por favor o Superintendente das escolas pelo telephone 508-636-1140 para qualquer tradução relacionada com esta ou outras noticias da escola.

**Spanish:**

Contacta por favor al Superintendente de escuelas en 508-636-1140 para una traducción de esto o de cualquier otro aviso de la escuela.

**French:**

Veuillez contactez le surveillant des écoles a 508-636-1140 pour une traduction de ceci ou de n'importe quelle autre notification d'école.

**German:**

Treten Sie bitte mit dem Betriebsleiter der Schulen bei 508-636-1140 für eine Übersetzung von diesem oder von jedem möglichem anderen Schulebegriff in Verbindung.

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We have read and are aware of the rules and regulations of the Westport Schools outlined in the Student Policy Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print student name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I would like to receive communications via Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print email address)

I would like to receive communications in print: yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_  
(please check one)

Student's grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher/advisor or homeroom teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

# **S T U D E N T      R I G H T S A N D      R E S P O N S I B I L I T I E S**

**Education is a right of every student, but this right also comes with the responsibility to become a citizen of our community of Westport. We therefore proclaim that among these rights and responsibilities are the following:**

- The **right** to equal educational opportunity, and freedom from discrimination
- The **responsibility** not to discriminate against others
- The **right** to attend free public schools
- The **responsibility** to attend school regularly and to observe school rules essential for permitting others to learn at school
- The **right** to due process of law with respect to suspension, expulsion, and decisions the student believes injure her/his rights
- The **responsibility** to respect the rights of others
- The **right** to free inquiry and expression
- The **responsibility** to observe reasonable rules regarding these rights
- The **right** to privacy, which includes privacy in respect to the student's school records
- The **responsibility** to respect the privacy rights of others

**The Westport Community Schools prohibits discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex/gender, marital status, homelessness, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, family care leave status, pregnancy or any condition related to pregnancy, or military/veteran status. Furthermore, School Committee policy includes prohibitions of harassment of students and employees, i.e., racial harassment, sexual harassment, and retaliation for filing complaints of discrimination.**



# WESTPORT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

## **VISION & MISSION STATEMENTS**

### **Vision**

Westport Community Schools is an exemplary 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning community whose graduates are empowered through an engaging, inspiring and personalized curriculum to meet the challenges of a global, complex, and changing world.

### **Mission**

Westport Community Schools' mission is to ensure that our children achieve academic and personal excellence, become lifelong learners and responsible, productive and engaged citizens of the world.

## WESTPORT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS 2022-2023 School Year Calendar

August 25	New Teacher Orientation/AFSCME Training
August 26	Staff Convocation
August 29	Staff Training
August 30	First Day of School Grades 1-12 and Kindergarten Screening
August 31	Kindergarten Screening
September 1	Kindergarten Screening and Preschool Orientation
September 2	No School
September 5	Labor Day – No School
September 6	Election Day / PreK and Kindergarten Orientation
September 7	First Day of School for PreK and Kindergarten
September 8	First Day of School for Preschool
October 3	First Term Progress Reports (WMHS)
October 10	Columbus Day – No School
November 3	First Term Ends – Marks Close (WMHS)
November 8	Election Day / Staff Training / No School
November 11	Veteran's Day – No School
November 23	Half Day-Thanksgiving Break/ First Trimester Ends (WES)
November 24-25	Thanksgiving Break
December 12	Second Term Progress Reports (WMHS)
December 22	Early Release Students & Staff
December 23-January 2	Winter Break
January 16	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
January 23	Second Term Ends - Marks Close (WMHS)
January 26	Staff Training / Early Release
January 28	Mid-Year Progress Reports (MAC)
February 20-24	President's Day/Winter Vacation
March 2	Third Term Progress Reports (WMHS)
March 8	Second Trimester Ends (WES)
March 9	Staff Training / Early Release
April 3	Third Term Ends – Marks Close (WMHS)
April 7	Good Friday – No School
April 11	Election Day/ Staff Training / Early Release
April 17-21	Patriot's Day/Spring Vacation
May 11	Fourth Term Progress Reports (WMHS)
May 26	Last Day of School for Seniors
May 29	Memorial Day – No School
June 1	Staff Training / Early Release
June 3	High School Graduation
June 14	Last Day for Grades K-11/ Early Release for Students

The School Committee has approved a 180-day school year calendar with an additional 5 days for emergencies. The actual last day of school for grades K-11 will be no earlier than June 14th and no later than June 30th. Early release for seniors may be no sooner than 12 school days before the close of the school year.

**School cancellations and delays due to emergencies** will be aired on the following television stations: WCVB (Channel 5), WLNE (Channel 6), WHDH (Channel 7), WJAR (Channel 10), WPRI (Channel 12) WFXT (Channel 25), WNAC (Channel 64), NECN (New England Cable News) and the following radio stations: WSAR-AM 1480, WHJJ-AM 920, WPRO-AM 630, WBSM-AM 1420, FUN 107.1-FM, WWBB-FM 101, WHJY-FM 94.1, WSNE-FM 93.3. **"SCHOOL BRAINS"** will also notify you by phone or e-mail regarding delays or cancellations. (If you would like to be contacted directly by "SCHOOL BRAINS" – please be sure the schools have your correct phone number and e-mail).

## SCHOOL DELAYS, CLOSINGS AND CANCELLATIONS

Closing or delaying the opening of school by 60, 90, or 120 minutes because of weather conditions is occasionally necessary for the safety of students. The decision to delay or close school is made as early as circumstances permit. Usually the decision is made by 5:00 a.m., but changing weather conditions could result in a later decision. The fact that the decision must be made so early in the morning makes it difficult to make decisions with precision. Also, the expediency with which the Town and State get the snowplows and salt trucks out enters into the decision-making process. The Superintendent makes the final decision to cancel classes based on the best information available at the time and with student safety in mind. Once the decision is made, messages go out through the “**School Brains**” system. We then contact the area radio and TV stations. However, your best option for prompt notification is to sign up for the “**School Brains**” system. The timeliness of radio and TV station broadcasts is beyond our local control. Students and parents are asked to sign up for the “**School Brains**” system at [www.westportschools.org](http://www.westportschools.org) or listen to the radio and television on stormy days. We request that you do not call the schools or school personnel because business telephone lines must be kept clear. Participating stations are:

### Radio Stations

WSAR	1480
WPRO	630
WSNE-FM93.3	
WHJY-FM94.1	
WWLI-FM	105.1

### Television Stations

WBSM	1420	Channel 64
WPRO-FM	92.3	Channel 36
WHJJ	920	Channel 28
WWBB-FM	101.5	Channel 25
WFHN-FM	107.1	Channel 12
		Channel 10
		Channel 7
		Channel 6
		Channel 5

## EARLY DISMISSAL

Early dismissal requires the most cooperation between parents and school. However, if weather and safety issues warrant early dismissal, notification will be made over the same radio and television stations listed above. In addition, though an automated phone call to any phone number and e-mail you have made available to us. The notice will be followed by an email notification to your email address and will be posted on the website. Parents should take appropriate precautions and should listen to local radio and television stations for notification of a cancellation. It is critical that parents work with the school to prepare an emergency plan for various inclement weather contingencies.

“**SCHOOL BRAINS**” will also notify you by phone or e-mail regarding delays or cancellations. If you would like to be contacted directly by School Brains – please be sure the schools have your correct phone number and e-mail. You can use the registration on the website at [www.westportschools.org](http://www.westportschools.org) to input your e-mail and phone numbers, so that you can receive prompt emergency and appropriate notifications.

## **Freedom from Discrimination**

## **EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

State and federal laws as well as School Committee policy guarantee that no person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of a public school on account of actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex/gender, marital status, homelessness, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, family care leave status, pregnancy or any condition related to pregnancy, or military/veteran status. Furthermore, School Committee policy includes prohibitions of harassment of students and employees, i.e., racial harassment, sexual harassment, and retaliation for filing complaints of discrimination.

This law makes it clear that all aspects of public school education must be fully open and available to all students, without discrimination. We may not exclude students from any course, activity, service or resource available on account of actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex/gender, marital status, homelessness, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, family care leave status, pregnancy or any condition related to pregnancy, or military/veteran status. Furthermore, School Committee policy includes prohibitions of harassment of students and employees, i.e., racial harassment, sexual harassment, and retaliation for filing complaints of discrimination.

The Equal Educational Opportunity Regulations, adopted by the Massachusetts Board of Education in 1975, address five areas of school policy: school admissions, admission to courses of study, guidance services, course content, and extra-curricular and athletic activities.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this law and how it affects your children, please contact your school Principal, or the Superintendent of Schools, at 508-636-1140 x 4001, or the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Copies of the law and the regulations can be obtained from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5023, 617-388-3300x285 or x242, and are also available on the Internet at <http://info.doe.mass.edu>.

The Title IX Coordinator and the Civil Rights Coordinator, is the Special Education Coordinator. Direct any complaints regarding any found discrimination to the Superintendent of Schools, Westport Community Schools, 17 Main Road, Westport, MA 02790 or phone 508-636-1140.

## **NONDISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF PHYSICAL CHALLENGE**

The School Committee has designated the Student Services Supervisor as the responsible employee to coordinate school district compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and its administrative regulations. The Student Services Supervisor, as the district's Section 504 compliance officer, shall be responsible for continuing compliance with Section 504 and its administrative regulations.

Any student has a ready means of resolving any claim of discrimination on the basis of physical challenge in the educational programs or activities of the district. In the event a student believes that there has been a violation of Section 504, s/he shall deliver to the Student Services Supervisor a written statement setting out the alleged violations, describing the incident or activity involved, the individuals involved and the dates, times and locations involved. The Student Services Supervisor shall provide the individual filing the written statement an opportunity to discuss the matter personally, if requested. The Student Services Supervisor shall make such investigation as is necessary to determine the complete facts involved. The Superintendent shall then take action as appropriate to bring the district in compliance with all

federal and state regulations or refer the matter to the School Committee for action as appropriate. If the student submitting the written statement of an alleged violation is not satisfied with the handling of the matter by the district, s/he may present the matter directly to the School Committee by contacting the Committee Chairperson.

## **ADMISSION TO CLASSES AND COURSES OF STUDY**

Each and every course of study offered by a public school shall be open and available to students regardless of actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex/gender, marital status, homelessness, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, family care leave status, pregnancy or any condition related to pregnancy, or military/veteran status. Furthermore, School Committee policy includes prohibitions of harassment of students and employees, i.e., racial harassment, sexual harassment, and retaliation for filing complaints of discrimination.

This does not prohibit the use of prerequisite requirements that have been demonstrated to be essential to success in a given program. However, if participation in a course or program is dependent upon completion of a prerequisite which was previously limited to students of one gender, or if scrutiny reveals that administrative arrangements have limited the opportunities of any class of students to participate in such prerequisites, then all members of the previously excluded group shall be given the opportunity to acquire the prerequisites or be allowed to enter the program without such prerequisites. If it cannot be shown that a prerequisite is essential for success in a given program, the prerequisite shall be abolished. The determination of what courses or units of study are to be required of any student shall also be made without regard to the actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex/gender, marital status, homelessness, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, family care leave status, pregnancy or any condition related to pregnancy, or military/veteran status. Furthermore, School Committee policy includes prohibitions of harassment of students and employees, i.e., racial harassment, sexual harassment, and retaliation for filing complaints of discrimination.

This policy shall not be construed to prevent particular segments of a program of instruction from being offered separately to each gender when necessary in order to respect personal privacy.

## **STUDENT TO STUDENT HARASSMENT (Policy JBA)**

Harassment of students by other students will not be tolerated in the Westport Community Schools. This policy is in effect while students are on school grounds, School District property or property within the jurisdiction of the School District, school buses, or attending or engaging in school activities.

Harassment prohibited by the District includes, but is not limited to, harassment on the basis of race, sex, gender identity, creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation, pregnancy and other pregnancy related conditions, religion, marital status or disability. Students whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion.

Harassment means conduct of a verbal or physical nature that is designed to embarrass, distress, agitate, disturb or trouble students when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a student's education or of a student's participation in school programs or activities;

- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a student is used as the basis for decisions affecting the student, or;
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's performance or creating an intimidating or hostile learning environment.

Harassment as described above may include, but is not limited to:

- Verbal, physical or written (including texting, blogging, or other technological methods) harassment or abuse;
- Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature;
- Implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, or other school matter.
- Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at the student.

The District will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of harassment. The Principal of each building will be responsible for handling all complaints by students alleging harassment.

Retaliation against a student, because a student has filed a harassment complaint or assisted or participated in a harassment investigation or proceeding, is also prohibited. A student who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion.

The Superintendent will develop administrative guidelines and procedures for the implementation of this policy.

## **PROHIBITION OF HAZING (Policy JICFA)**

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, the School Committee hereby deems that no student, employee or school organization under the control of the School Committee shall engage in the activity of hazing a student while on or off school property, or at a school sponsored event regardless of the location. No organization that uses the facilities or grounds under the control of the School Committee shall engage in the activity of hazing any person while on school property.

Any student who observes what appears to them to be the activity of hazing another student or person should report such information to the Principal including the time, date, location, names of identifiable participants and the types of behavior exhibited. Students and employees of the District are obligated by law to report incidents of hazing to the police department.

Any student who is present at a hazing has the obligation to report such an incident. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action by the school against that student and could involve suspension from school for up to three days.

Any student who participates in the hazing of another student or other person may, upon the approval of the Superintendent of Schools, be suspended from school for up to ten (10) school days.

Any student determined by the Principal to be the organizer of a hazing activity may be recommended for expulsion from school but will receive no less disciplinary action than that of a participant.

In all cases relating to hazing, students will receive procedural due process.

## **BULLYING PREVENTION (Policy JICFB)**

The School Committee is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive educational environment where students can achieve the highest academic standards. No student shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyber-bullying.

“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 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.

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

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

Bullying is prohibited:

- On school grounds;
- On property immediately adjacent to school grounds;
- At school-sponsored or school-related activities;
- At functions or programs whether on or off school grounds
- At school bus stops;



- On school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the school district; or,
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school district;

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

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

### Prevention and Intervention Plan

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

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

### Reporting

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

Each school shall document any incident of bullying that is reported per this policy and a file shall be maintained by the Principal or designee. 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 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 employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students in preventing, identifying, responding to, and reporting incidents of bullying.

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

## **FREEDOM FROM INTOLERANCE**

Acts of racial, religious, ethnic bigotry, and prejudice will not be tolerated at any level of the Westport School System. Bigotry, in any form, undermines the basic philosophy upon which our country was founded. Not only does it destroy human relationships so vital to the success of our society, but it also inflicts personal pain on those who are its victims. The School Committee strongly enjoins its administrators, staff and students to adopt a constant and continual vigil so that any type of bigotry and prejudice can be detected, reported, and properly addressed. All acts of bigotry and prejudice are to be reported without delay and dealt with expeditiously. Contact the Superintendent of Schools at (508) 636-1140 for further information or to seek resolution of a claim of discrimination.

## **FREEDOM FROM RACIAL, ETHNIC, AND SEXUAL SLURS**

A racial, ethnic or sexual slur is defined as any derogatory remark, word, phrase, act, picture or gesture referencing or directed at or to any individual or group(s) which is of a racial, ethnic or sexual nature. The district recognizes that regardless of intent, such slurs substantially harm both the individuals to whom slurs are addressed and the educational community as a whole.

Harassment or discriminatory behavior that denies civil rights or equal educational opportunities includes comments, name-calling, physical conduct or other expressive behavior directed at an individual or group that intentionally demeans actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex/gender, marital status, homelessness, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, family care leave status, pregnancy or any condition related to pregnancy, or military/veteran status. Furthermore, School Committee policy includes prohibitions of harassment of students and employees, i.e., racial harassment, sexual harassment, and retaliation for filing complaints of discrimination.

Students may file a complaint regarding such discrimination with the school Principal or directly to the Superintendent. The district will thoroughly investigate the complaint and will protect the rights of all parties to the complaint.

## **School Admission**

## **REMOTE LEARNING (Policy IHBHE)**

In the event of a district-specific emergency requiring the use of remote learning, the superintendent of schools may declare such emergency and shall, as soon as possible, obtain the approval of the school committee. The remote learning plan below will be applicable in cases of disease, weather emergencies, destruction or damage to schools rendering them inaccessible, or other extraordinary circumstances, including emergencies declared by government officials, the school committee, or the superintendent.

When it becomes necessary for the school district to provide support to students who are unable to attend classes or access appropriate services due to an extended closure, the superintendent shall establish a plan and procedures to ensure that such services are provided. The provision of educational services may include the use of technology and devices, and strategies designed to support student learning away from school.

The remote learning plan will, to the extent possible:

- ☐ Ensure the safety of all students and faculty in coordination with appropriate local and state departments and agencies;
- ☐ Provide support for student social and emotional wellbeing and address the implications of trauma experienced by students or faculty as a result of the emergency;
- ☐ Identify goals and strategies for maintaining standards of student achievement and school improvement plans;
- ☐ Ensure instruction and services are delivered by district educators and personnel as much as practicable;
- ☐ Utilize the most effective tools and resources available for students and faculty, including the skills and talents of district personnel, in the delivery of instruction and services and share resources as needed;
- ☐ Provide resources and services equitably to meet the needs and circumstances of all students;
- ☐ Identify remedial strategies necessary after the emergency to advance student achievement (i.e. after-school, extended day, summer school, and contingency scheduling to cancel vacations.);
- ☐ Gather information both during and after the period of emergency regarding the most effective means of remote learning to implement as appropriate.

In developing a remote learning plan, the superintendent will:

- ☐ Identify and prepare effective means for communicating with faculty, students, parents and community stakeholders.
- ☐ Collaborate with municipal agencies that support the schools and community.
- ☐ Consult with the school committee to identify any extraordinary actions necessary or authority required to administer emergency and remote learning plans. This includes any changes to district policies on the school calendar, grading,

promotions and retentions, local graduation requirements, testing, and standards and accountability.

- ☐ Consult with administrators and principals to ensure the continuing education of students at all levels, including:
  - o use of the most appropriate resources, tools and strategies to deliver the curricula given local circumstances and conditions;
  - o equitable access to appropriate content for all students;
  - o specific accommodations for students at high risk, including clients of special education, students with disabilities, English learners, students at economic disadvantage, homeless students, students in foster care and students of military families.
- ☐ Utilize available technological resources suitable for serving students at all levels. This inventory will be prepared in advance in anticipation of an emergency.
- ☐ Ensure the privacy rights of students, faculty and families are protected, including assessing the security of district technology.
- ☐ Consult with bargaining units to determine if modifications to collective bargaining agreements need to be established for the period of the emergency.
- ☐ Identify the financial implications of the emergency plan and recommend transfer of funds as may be necessary.

## **PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAM**

In keeping with our policy on Special Instructional Programs, the school district will provide special instruction services for three and four year olds within the district. Outside placements for these young children will be recommended only when there is no feasible way to offer the program in-house.

In order to provide quality services and a low student-teacher ratio, Westport will offer at least two pre-school classroom programs staffed by teachers certified in Communication Disorders (all), Special Needs (pre K-9), and/or Young Children with Special Needs (Preschool 3-7 years old). These classes will provide a fully integrated setting in which to offer our special instruction programs. Additional support staff will be hired so as to maintain an adult-student ratio of no greater than 1:8 in pre-school classes.

The special instruction, integrated pre-school program for three and four year olds will be offered in a half day format from two to five days per week unless the Individual Education Program (IEP) states otherwise. A tuition fee per half session will be charged to all students not on an IEP to help offset some of the program expenses. Arrangements will be made to provide public or private grant or state government financial assistance to low-income families who want to participate and need such assistance. All revenues will be placed in a revolving account to be expended at the discretion of the School Committee and without further appropriation, subject to state statutes.

Since it is the Committee's intention that all eligible Westport students as well as the eligible children of school department employees should be able to take advantage of the integrated pre-school program, additional support staff will be employed as needed to remain within Department of Education teacher/student ratio and student/student ratio guidelines and NAEYC requirements for accreditation. No waiting list or deferment will be required.

In special circumstances, the Superintendent will have discretion to approve a full day option for pre-schoolers not on an IEP.

## **ENTRANCE AGE**

Admission into school involves consideration of both chronological age and readiness to approach the challenge of a school program. The School Committee has established the following chronological minimum age requirement for entry into school:

- Children who will be three years of age on or before September 1 of the school year during which they wish to enroll will be eligible to enter the preschool program.
- Children who will be five years of age on or before September 1 of the school year during which they wish to enroll will be eligible to enter kindergarten in September.
- Children who will be six years of age before January 1 of the school year are eligible for initial entry in grade one.

Transfer students from private and/or public kindergarten programs who have completed less than three months in a kindergarten setting will be required to follow the same entrance criteria.

## **SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AND ACCOMMODATIONS**

The goals of this school system's special education program are to allow each child to grow and achieve at his/her own level, to gain independence and self-reliance, and to participate in the mainstream of school society to the fullest extent possible.

The requirements of Chapter 71B and the Massachusetts General Laws (known as Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972) and accompanying state regulations will be followed in the identification of children with special needs, in referrals for their evaluation, in prescribing for them suitable programs and in assessing their educational progress. In keeping with state requirements, all children with special needs between the ages of three through 21 who have not attained a high school diploma or its equivalent will be eligible for special education.

The School Committee believes that most children with special needs can be educated in the regular school program if they are given special instruction, accommodations, and the support they need. These children should also be given the opportunity to participate in the school system's non-academic and extracurricular activities.

The Committee recognizes that the needs of certain children are so great that special programs, special classes or special schools may be necessary. When appropriate programs, services, or facilities are not available with the public schools, the Committee will provide these children with access to schools where such instruction and accommodations are available.

It is the desire of the Committee that the schools work closely with parents in designing and providing programs and services to children with special needs. Parents will be informed, and conferred with, whenever a child is referred for evaluation. In event of any disagreement concerning diagnosis, program plan, special placement, or evaluation, the parents will be accorded the right of due process.

The Committee will secure properly trained personnel to work with the children with special needs. Since the financial commitment necessary to meet the needs of all of these children is extensive, the Committee will make every effort to obtain financial assistance from all sources.

## **RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI) AND CURRICULUM ACCOMODATION PLANS**

The Principal of each school will utilize the district's RTI process or curriculum accommodation plan to remain in compliance with Chapter 766 Regulations, Section 310, regarding referrals and retention that states:

“The Principal, or his/her designee, of the school attended by such child shall determine whether RTI efforts pursuant to Sections 309 or a referral for evaluation should be made if any of the following conditions exist and shall promptly and in writing notify the parents which conditions exist if a referral is being made, and of their right to make such referral.

- (a) Any child who at mid-year presents a substantial risk of non-promotion. For purpose of this paragraph, a substantial risk of non-promotion shall be considered to exist if a child is failing two or more non-elective subjects.
- (b) Any child who fails to be promoted at the end of the year.
- (c) Any child who has been suspended for more than five (5) school days in any quarter or excluded from school.
- (d) Any child who has been absent without medical excuse for more than fifteen (15) school days in any quarter.
- (e) Any child ages sixteen through twenty-one who is planning to leave school without a high school diploma.”

## **ADMISSION PROCEDURES**

Parents of all students being admitted to the Westport Schools must provide the school Principal with:

- 1. Certified proof of age;
- 2. Certified proof of residency in the Town of Westport;
- 3. Certified proof of required immunizations (Pre-kindergarten-12) and evidence of lead testing and a tuberculosis risk screening (Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten);
- 4. Transfer form from previous school (if applicable);
- 5. Copy of Individual Education Program (if applicable);
- 6. Evidence of a physical examination within the past six months (for initial entry into Kindergarten or first grade);
- 7. Authorization to release complete academic and discipline record from the previous school; and
- 8. Statement as to any criminal record.

Any student transferring into the Westport School district must provide a complete school record including but not limited to any incidents involving violation or criminal acts or any incident reports in which the student was charged with a suspended act. This responsibility to transfer records rest with the student who is transferring; the student may either get the records from the former school and present them to the new school, or may request that the former school send the records directly to the new school.

Notwithstanding the privacy provisions relative to student records, state law provides that in a case where a student is expelled from one school district, the Superintendent of the receiving district may request and receive from the Superintendent of the district from which the student was expelled, a written statement of the reasons of the expulsion. A student's admission to the district's school may also be withheld due to the issuance of a pending criminal complaint charging a student with a felony or the issuance of a felony delinquent complaint or conviction



against a student. In such cases, the student is entitled to due process and appeal rights and will receive written notification of the reasons for refusal to admit the student to school.

Readmission to a public school following an expulsion may be denied under state law. However, the Superintendent of Schools has discretion to re-admit students and will base decisions on such factors as the type of offense for which the student was expelled, the age of the student, the period of time the student was out of school, what the student has done in the interim, the recommendation of knowledgeable individuals, and other relevant factors.

For the general safety and welfare of staff and students, the Superintendent is authorized to refuse admission to the schools if any of these requirements are not met.

## **RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT**

The Town of Westport offers students an excellent education at their four public schools, beginning with pre-kindergarten and continuing through high school. To attend Westport Community Schools, students must be full-time residents of the Town of Westport.

Before students can be enrolled in any Westport public school, parents or legal guardians must provide the following information (our staff will photocopy these documents for you):

1. ***The student's birth certificate with seal (original, no photocopy)***
2. ***Proof of health insurance coverage or health insurance ID card***
3. ***Three forms establishing proof of residency (please refer to the acceptable proof of residency chart)***

*Additional documents that may be required:*

- Proof of legal guardianship, if appropriate
- Copies of current custody agreements, if custody is shared by adults living at different addresses
- Copies of current restraining orders
- Any additional court documents that currently apply to the student
- Massachusetts Department of Education Transfer Card
- Health immunization records from the school nurse and/or physician
- Academic records, including coursework, grades and credits to date of withdrawal
- Attendance records
- Discipline records, including in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions and expulsions
- Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan

If you have any questions about the enrollment process, please contact the school that your child

plans to attend. During the school year, our offices are open from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. During the summer and holiday vacations, our offices are open from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The following documents needed for registration can be downloaded and brought in or copies will be provided as part of the registration process. Homeless students or families are asked to contact the Homeless Education Coordinator and SPED Director at Westport Community Schools, 17 Main Road, Westport, MA 02790, phone 508-636-1140 x 4011

## **SCHOOL CHOICE**

It is the policy of this school district to admit non-resident students under the terms and conditions of the Inter-district School Choice Law (MGL c76, §12) and under the following local conditions:

1. That by May of every school year, the administration will determine the number of spaces in each school available to choice students.
2. That by June 1 of every school year, if consideration is being given to withdraw from the provisions of the School Choice Law, a public meeting will be held to review this decision. For the 2019-2020 school year the School Committee has voted to offer school choice in our schools for grades 9 through grade 11.
3. That resident students be given priority placement in any classes or programs within the district.
4. That the selection of nonresident students for admission when the number of requests exceeds the number of available spaces be in the form of a random drawing. There will be two drawings for this purpose. The first will take place during the last week of the current school year but no later than July 1st. The second will be conducted during the week immediately preceding the opening of the next school year and will be based on the possibility of unexpected additional openings.
5. Any student who is accepted for admission under the provisions of this policy is entitled to remain in the district until graduation from high school except if there is a lack of funding of the program.
6. The School Committee affirms its position that it shall not discriminate in the admission of any child on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex/gender, marital status, homelessness, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, family care leave status, pregnancy or any condition related to pregnancy, or military/veteran status.

## **EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE (Policy JFABF)**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the educational stability of students in foster care and their equal access to the same free and appropriate public education through high school graduation as provided to other students as required by law. Educational stability has a lasting impact on students' academic achievement and wellbeing, and the School Committee is committed to supporting district and community effort is to ensure that students in foster care have access to high-quality, stable educational experiences. (See complete policy).

## **EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MILITARY CHILDREN (Policy JFABE)**

In an effort to facilitate the placement, enrollment, graduation, data collection and provision of special services for students transferring into or out of the District because of their parents being on active duty in the U.S. Armed Services, the District supports and will implement its responsibilities as outlined in the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. The School Committee believes it is appropriate to remove barriers to educational success imposed on children of military families because of their parents' frequent moves and deployment. (See complete policy).

## **ADMISSION OF EXCHANGE AND FOREIGN STUDENTS**

Qualified international students with prior approval of the high school Principal may be enrolled and attend school without charge, if they are recommended by the American Field Service or a nationally recognized organization and reside within the boundaries of the district. Proper I-20 forms and other required papers must be processed by the district, the student, and the sponsoring organization before an international student can be formally admitted to school.

A certificate of attendance will be awarded to any foreign student attending Westport High School. The certificate, including the student's name and dates of attendance, will be signed by the Superintendent and the high school Principal.

A record of the academic course of study will be completed and issued with the certificate. This will include subjects taken, grades, units of credit, length of class periods, number of periods per week, and the student's performance as evaluated by the teacher. This dated record will also include a definition of grades on an official high school transcript.

## **STUDENT WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL**

### **Transfer to Another District**

Students who are withdrawing from the Westport schools to attend a school in another district should complete transfer of student file forms.

### **Permanent Withdrawal**

Students are required to attend school until the age of 16 unless exempted. Students over the age of 16 who wish to permanently withdraw from the school program must inform the Principal, complete required "Students Leaving School" forms, and participate in an exit interview with the school guidance counselor.

The School Committee encourages parents to be very involved in the student's decision to withdraw from school since that decision is of such consequence. The school staff will do everything appropriate to encourage students to remain in school or to find an alternative school program.

## **STUDENT RE-ENTRY TO SCHOOL**

If a high school student chooses to withdraw from school and then decides to return to school, the following readmission rules shall apply:

- A student may be re-admitted to the High School within two calendar weeks from the date of withdrawal.

- If s/he returns within that time frame, s/he is responsible for all work missed, and, while teachers are available to assist the student, it is the student's sole responsibility to seek that assistance.
- The time missed will be assessed under the absence policy, and credit may be withdrawn where appropriate.
- If a student does not return within the two-week time frame, s/he may not be re-admitted until the following September. Any evening or summer school course taken in the meantime can be given credit at the discretion of the high school Principal. However, credit may not be given unless the administration has prior knowledge of the plan.

## **Student Records**

## **REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO STUDENT RECORDS**

Westport's student records procedures comply with the Student Record Regulations adopted by the Board of Education. Our regulations are designed to insure parent and student rights of confidentiality, and proper inspection, amendment, and destruction of student records, as well as to assist us in carrying out our responsibilities under state and federal law.

The regulations apply to all information kept by the Westport school district about a student in a way that the student may be individually identified. A student record consists of two parts: the transcript and the temporary record. The transcript includes only the minimum information necessary to reflect the student's educational progress. This information includes name, address, course titles, grades, credits, and grade level completed. The transcript is kept by the school district for at least sixty years after the student leaves the system.

The temporary record contains the majority of the information maintained by the school about the student. This may include such things as standardized test results; class rank, school-sponsored extracurricular activities; evaluations and comments by teachers, counselors, and other persons; disciplinary records; and other information. The temporary record is destroyed within five years after the student leaves the school system.

## **PARENT ACCESS TO RECORDS**

Copies of Massachusetts General Law 603 CMR 23.00 are available on request from the Office of the Superintendent of Schools. State law and school district policy insures parent and student rights of confidentiality, inspection, amendment, and destruction of student records.

1. These rights are also the rights of a student upon reaching 14 years of age or upon entering the ninth grade, whichever comes first. If a student is under the age of 14 and has not yet entered the ninth grade, these rights shall belong to the student's parent.
2. If a student is from 14 through 17 years of age or has entered the ninth grade, both the student and his/her parent, or either one acting alone, may exercise these rights.
3. If a student is 18 years of age or older, s/he alone shall exercise these rights, subject to the following. The parent may continue to exercise the rights until expressly limited by such student. Such student may limit the rights which extend to his/her parent, except the right to inspect the student record, by making such request in writing to the school Principal or Superintendent of schools who shall honor such request and retain a copy of it in the student record. The parent of a student may inspect the student record regardless of the student's age.

## **STUDENTS OF LEGAL AGE (18 years of age)**

Every student upon reaching the age of majority (18 years of age) will be deemed to be an adult of legal age and will have legal capacity to act as such. Such students, like all other students, will comply with the all established rules, pursue the prescribed course of study, and submit to the authority of teachers and others in authority over them.

### **Exceptions**

- ♦ If the parent has sought and received guardianship from a court of competent jurisdiction, then the parent retains full decision-making authority. The parent shall not have authority to override any decision or lack of decision made by the student who has reached the age of majority unless the parent has sought or received guardianship or other legal authority from a court of competent jurisdiction.

- ◆ The student, upon reaching the age of majority and in the absence of any court actions to the contrary, may choose to share decision-making with his or her parent (or other willing adult), including allowing the parent to co-sign the Individual Education Program. (Such choice shall be made in the presence of the Team and shall be documented in written form.) The student's choice shall prevail at any time that a disagreement occurs between the adult student and the parent or other adult with whom the student has shared decision-making.
- ◆ The student, upon reaching the age of majority and in the absence of any court actions to the contrary, may choose to delegate continued decision-making to his or her parent, or other willing adult. Such choice shall be made in the presence of at least one representative of the school district and one other witness and shall be documented in written form and maintained in the student record.

**Residency:** The residency location of a student of legal age, 18 years, who is not residing with his/her parents or guardian, will be considered his/her residency for school purposes. The regulations pertaining to residency requirements will pertain to students of legal age.

**Field Trips/Athletic Programs:** Approved forms for participation will be required of all students. The form should indicate that the signature is that of the parent or of the adult student. Sponsors and/or coaches will be required to confirm the ages of those students signing their own forms.

**Absence-Lateness-Truancy:** Absence notes, normally signed by parents or guardians, may be signed by students who are of legal age. School attendance data will be reported to the parent or guardian on the regular report card.

**Medical Absence:** In order for an absence to be considered a medically excused absence, the note from the doctor must include the date the student was seen, the reason for the visit to the doctor and a prognosis or date of return to the school.

**Suspension/Expulsion:** All suspension and/or expulsion proceedings will conform to the requirements of state statute. Students of legal age are permitted to represent themselves upon reinstatement to school following a suspension. However, notification will continue to be sent to parents or guardians of all such suspensions or expulsions.

**Withdrawal from School:** Students of legal age may withdraw from school under their own cognizance. Counselors will continue to guide and counsel potential school dropouts and encourage their continued attendance. Parents will continue to be notified of impending dropouts by the school Principal (or designee).

**Permission to Inspect Student Records:** Students of legal age may request permission to inspect their personal school records. Parents of a student of legal age are entitled to exercise all rights provided by law regarding the student's records, unless the student expressly limits the parents' exercise of those rights by submitting a written request to the school Principal or Superintendent. In no case shall the parents' right to inspect the student's records be limited.

**Report Cards:** Failure letters and progress reports will continue to be sent home.

**Medical Decisions and Consent Forms:** Students at age 18 have the right to make their own educational and medical decisions and must sign all consent forms.

**Financial Responsibility:** Students of legal age can be held financially responsible for damage to school property.

**Special Education:** When the student reaches age eighteen, s/he has the right to make all decisions in relation to special education programs, services, and medical decisions, and must sign all consent forms.

The school district has the obligation to obtain consent from the student to continue the student's special education program. The parent will continue to receive written notices and information but will no longer have decision-making authority unless there is a court appointed guardian or the student chooses to share decision making with his or her parent.

**Transfer of Parental Rights:** Parents and students must be notified about the transfer of parental rights to the student at least one (1) year before the student turns 18 years of age.

## **INSPECTION OF STUDENT RECORDS**

A parent or an eligible student has the right to inspect all portions of the student record upon request. The record will be made available within two days after the request, unless the parent or student consents to a delay. The parent and eligible student have the right to receive a copy of any part of the record. The parent and eligible student may request to have parts of the record interpreted by a qualified professional from the school, or may invite anyone else of their choice to inspect or interpret the record with them.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY OF STUDENT RECORDS**

Except where state regulations specifically authorize access by third parties, no individuals or organizations other than the parent, eligible student, and school personnel working directly with the student are allowed to have access to information in the student record without the specific, informed, written consent of the parent or eligible student.

## **AMENDMENT OF RECORDS**

The parent and eligible student have the right to add relevant comments, information, or other written material to the student record. In addition, the parent and eligible student have a right to request that information in the record be amended or deleted. They are entitled to meet with the Principal (or the Principal's designee) to discuss their objection to information that is in the record, and to receive a written decision. A parent or eligible student who is not satisfied with the Principal's decision may appeal to the Superintendent.

## **PRIVACY AND SECURITY OF STUDENT RECORDS**

1. The Principal or his/her designee is responsible for the privacy and security of all student records maintained in the school.



2. The Superintendent is responsible for the privacy and security of all student records that are not under the supervision of the Principal, for example, former students' transcripts stored in the school department's central administrative offices or student records of children with special needs who have not been enrolled in a public school
3. The Principal and Superintendent will insure that student records under their supervision are kept physically secure, that authorized school personnel are informed of the provisions of 603 CMR 23.00 and are educated as to the importance of information privacy and confidentiality; and that any computerized systems employed are electronically secure.

## **DESTRUCTION OF RECORDS**

A student's temporary record is destroyed within five years after the student transfers, graduates or withdraws from the school system. School authorities are also allowed to destroy misleading, outdated, or irrelevant information in the record from time to time while the student is enrolled in the school system. In each case, the school must first notify the parent and eligible student and give them the opportunity to receive a copy of any of the information before it is destroyed.

## **SOME QUESTIONS OFTEN ASKED ABOUT STUDENT RECORDS**

### **ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS**

#### **Divorced/Separated Parents**

1. **Do guardians or divorced/separated, foster, or unmarried parents have access to the student record?**

Yes, unless a contrary written agreement between parents or a court order governing the rights of such parents is brought to the attention of the Principal.

#### **Withholding Report Cards**

2. **May a school withhold a report card or diploma from a student who has outstanding school fees or unreturned property?**

No. Any information that identifies a student individually - including a report card or a diploma - is considered part of the student record. The eligible student or parent is entitled to have access to the student record (including receiving a copy of it) within two consecutive days.

### **ACCESS OF THIRD PARTIES**

3. **What "directory" information will the school release to third parties without prior consent?**

The school will not release any information to third parties who are not expressly included by state law.

4. **May a school release student names and addresses to regional vocational schools, county agricultural schools, or other school or organizations?**

Yes. The school will release student names and addresses only to the following unless a parent objects:

- Diman Regional Vocational School
- Bristol County Agricultural School
- Post-secondary schools, colleges and universities to which a student has applied
- School alumni organizations

Parents may request that this information not be released by calling the individual school Principal.

**5. Are lists of students in a particular class released to a third party?**

No. The school does not release the names of students in a particular class, etc. Parents who wish to be included in activities related to a parent organization may give their permission to have their child's name or the parent's name included in PTO lists.

**6. May the School Committee's attorney have access to student records?**

Yes. A school district's attorney, acting as an authorized agent of the school district, may obtain access to student records without parental consent when access is necessary in connection with the enforcement of federal and state education laws or programs (for example, in relation to legal proceedings in which the school district and the student are parties). The attorney must protect the confidentiality of any information that personally identifies students or their parents, and destroy it when no longer needed.

**7. May independent auditors conducting audits pursuant to the Single Audit Act obtain access to student records?**

Yes. The district may designate independent auditors, conducting audits under the Federal Single Audit Act, as their authorized agents in connection with the audit or enforcement of federal and state education laws or programs. Any data collected will be protected in a manner that does not permit personal identification of individuals by anyone except those designated, and must be destroyed when no longer needed.

**8. May a school release student record information to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) in cases of suspected child abuse?**

Massachusetts' law requires mandated reporters (including teachers and other school personnel) to report cases of suspected child abuse or neglect to DCF. Mandated reporters must disclose to DCF, upon request, any information that may be relevant to an investigation of a case of suspected abuse or neglect.

**9. May school officials notify the police if a student brings a gun or other dangerous weapon to school?**

Yes. In fact, Massachusetts' law requires school department personnel to report any incidents involving a dangerous weapon to the Chief of Police and the Department of Children and Families allowing school officials to disclose information about a student to appropriate parties without consent, in connection with a health or safety emergency.

**10. What will school officials do when student records are subpoenaed?**

School officials will make a reasonable effort to notify the eligible student or parent before they comply with a lawfully issued subpoena or court order to produce a student record.

**11. What information may a school provide to the Department of Public Safety's Bureau of Special Investigations (Bureau) in cases of welfare fraud investigations?**

The Bureau may inspect enrollment and attendance records of any student who is being investigated for welfare fraud. The law prohibits the Bureau from obtaining access to academic, medical, and evaluative records.

**12. What should school officials do when they are notified by the police that a former student has been reported missing?**

The student record of the missing student will be flagged to indicate that the student has been reported missing, and the school will notify the police whenever there is an inquiry regarding the records.

**AMENDING OR DESTROYING THE STUDENT RECORD**

**13. May a student or parent request that an individual course grade or grades be withheld when the student's transcript is released to a third party?**

Yes. The eligible student or parent may make such a request, but the school is not required to honor it, if the third party receiving the transcript would reasonably assume that the transcript is complete. On the other hand, the school should honor a request to release or withhold a certain category or categories of courses or grades if the third party would not reasonably assume that the transcript is complete. For example, the eligible student or parent may request that only the student's math and science grades, or only the student's grades since ninth or tenth grade, be released.

**14. How long should the school keep the records of students who graduated many years before the Student Record Regulations went into effect?**

The records of students enrolled before February 1975 are not subject to the regulations. Therefore, it is in the school district's discretion to decide how long to keep such records. The time limit for destruction of the record is not less than sixty years for a transcript and not more than five years for the temporary record.

**15. May the school district "destroy" a student's temporary record within five years of the student's graduation, transfer or withdrawal by handing over the only copy to the eligible student and/or parent?**

Yes, as long as the eligible student or parent is notified in writing that this is the only copy and that this is the school's method of disposing of the record.

**16. Are there any situations in which a school should maintain copies of a student's temporary record for more than five years after the student has left the school system?**

Yes. The School Finance Regulations require school districts to maintain school registers, pupil census, IEPs, and other documentation to support data reported to the Department of Education on the annual End of Year Pupil and Financial Report for seven years after its submission. Any records that are the subject of an audit or investigation should be maintained until the audit or investigation is complete. In addition, where school health personnel administer immunizations to students, federal law requires that documentation of immunizations be retained at least 10 years following the end of the calendar year in which the vaccine was administered.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

**17. Is the process of determining selections for the National Honor Society and other awards subject to the confidentiality requirements of the Student Records Regulations?**

Authorized school personnel may obtain access to student records without consent when they need access to perform their duties. Any written material produced or introduced (even from the personal files of school employees) during the selection process becomes part of the student record if it individually identifies the student and is kept by the school. The material

is then subject to the regulations, including the right of an eligible student and parent to obtain access and the prohibition against releasing the information to third parties without consent.

## **TEST AND TEST SCORES**

### **18. Are tests completed by a student and containing his/her name, protected under these regulations?**

Yes. Any information that is organized on the basis of the student's name or in a way that such student may be individually identified, and this is kept by the public schools of the Commonwealth, is part of the student record.

### **19. Will the schools release anonymous S.A.T. scores?**

Yes. Anonymous statistical information or anonymous data that do not individually identify students are not considered part of the student record and may be released under the Student Records Regulation.

## **STUDENT HEALTH RECORDS**

### **20. What record keeping procedures should be followed by school nurses with respect to student health records?**

Student health records are part of a student's temporary record and as such are protected from disclosure to third parties without the written consent of the eligible student or parent.

These records are accessible to the eligible student, the student's parents or guardians and authorized school personnel. Massachusetts public health laws provide special confidentiality protections for certain health records. For example, under G.L. c.111, s.70F, a health care provider cannot disclose information about an individual's AIDS/HIV status without specific, informed, written consent of the individual.

### **21. Should special record keeping procedures be followed with respect to student health records that are maintained by the school physician, or in a health clinic that is affiliated with or based in a school?**

A physician's records, including a school physician's records, regarding treatment are confidential and may not be released to anyone without either the written consent of the parent (or the student in instances where the student consents to treatment), or a proper judicial order. Records kept by a school-based health clinic, such as a mobile health van, operating as a satellite health center are considered medical records of that health center and are subject to medical records regulations, not Student Record Regulations.

## **TRANSFER OF RECORDS**

### **22. Must the school obtain consent from the eligible student or parent before forwarding a student's record to a new school?**

No. It is the practice of the Westport Community Schools that authorized school personnel of the school to which a student seeks or intends to transfer may have access to such student's record without the consent of the eligible student or parent, provided that the school the student is leaving, or has left, gives notice that it forwards student records to schools in which the student seeks or intends to enroll. Such notice may be included in the routine information letter required under 603 CMR 23.10.

**23. When a student transfers from one school to another, what records must be provided to the new school?**

Under Massachusetts law, any student transferring into a new district must provide the new district with “a complete school record,” including but not limited to, “any incidents involving suspension or violation of criminal acts or any incident reports in which such student was charged with any suspended act.” A school district may release the entire student record of a transferring student to the new school without prior consent. This district forwards student records to another school in which the student seeks or intends to transfer.

**24. May a student who is eighteen years of age limit his/her parents’ rights under these regulations?**

Yes, except that a parent always retains the right to inspect the student records. The student’s parent may continue to exercise the rights, until expressly limited by the adult student. (See *Students of Legal Age*)

## **STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHS/FILMS/VIDEOS**

To provide a service to parents and students, individual and/or class group pictures may be taken at school during the regular school day hours. The pictures are made available for purchase by students and/or parents on a voluntary basis. The building Principal or her/his designee shall have final authority in authorizing the picture-taking program and will be responsible for overseeing the process.

Students may be required to have an individual picture taken for the cumulative file or identification purposes; however, no student shall be pressured or required to purchase photographs. The purpose of this practice is to enhance the safety of students through visual identification in an emergency situation.

## **MEDIA INTERVIEWS AND PHOTOGRAPHS**

Members of the public news media wishing to interview or photograph students at school need the prior permission of the school Principal. Additionally, each year parents/guardians will be given the option to withhold permission for public news media interviews or photographs of their child at school. Additional specific parental/guardian permission must be obtained if the story or photograph covers topics of a sensitive nature.

## **PROHIBITION AGAINST USING STUDENTS TO ADVANCE VIEWPOINTS**

Partisan, sectarian, or denominational doctrines may not be advocated in a public school during the hours the school is in session. This includes filming of campaign advertisements or other spots which advocate a certain position or opinion or are used for other commercial purpose. This policy is not intended to limit the use of debates for instructional purposes.

## **FILMING AND VIDEOTAPING**

If any student is to be filmed or videotaped and will be identified or be a primary subject of the filming or videotaping, prior written consent/release/waiver will be obtained from the student’s lawful guardian.

- The exclusive rights for any videotape or film and the soundtrack thereof produced by the school district will be its exclusive property unless other prior written agreements are made.
- Signed consent forms must be obtained from the building Principal and participating employees before videotaping or filming is begun. Signed consent/release/waiver forms must be obtained from the lawful custodian of each handicapped or exceptional student who is identifiable and from the lawful custodian of all students who are identified or made a primary subject on camera.
- Student's lawful custodian signs consent/release/waiver form for student to be filmed or videotaped without broadcast or dissemination outside the school.
- School district productions will not be duplicated without the approval of the Director of Technology
- Commercial distribution of videotapes or films produced by the school district is not permitted without appropriate signed consent/release/waiver forms and the approval of the Superintendent.
- The policy does not apply to students who are filmed or videotaped during voluntary appearances in public or for use in their own classroom.

## **Staying Healthy**

## **STUDENT SAFETY**

The School Committee expects that proper attention will be paid to the safety of students on school property during the normal school day, during their participation in school-sponsored extracurricular activities on school grounds, and at school functions scheduled away from school property.

It is the responsibility of the Principal and teachers to arrange for adequate supervision of students on school property during the normal school day, as well as at extracurricular activities sponsored by the school district on school property, and school sponsored functions held off campus. Special attention should be given to the prevention of accidents and to the development of habits of good citizenship. Students shall be taught safe practices in such areas as physical education, health, and laboratory courses in science as well as in extracurricular athletic activities.

School personnel are authorized to take appropriate action when they believe students or other staff may be in jeopardy or in any emergency situation which requires immediate action. The Principal must be notified of the action taken as soon as practicable.

## **REPORTING CHILD ABUSE/CHILD PROTECTION**

The policy of the Westport Community Schools is to provide a healthy and safe environment in which students can learn and participate in all programs offered. This protocol for the Westport Community Schools Crisis Intervention Team supports the school policy. This protocol describes procedures for staff to follow when a child's safety or healthy is considered at risk. This protocol ensures that essential information, relating to the suspicion that abuse or neglect has occurred, is correctly documented and, if necessary, reported to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) as mandated by MGL c. 119, § 51A.

### **Crisis Intervention Team Members may include:**

- Principal
- Assistant Principal
- Guidance Counselor/School Adjustment Counselor
- School Nurse
- School Resource Officer

### **Protocol**

#### **If a child is identified in crisis or at risk of abuse or neglect by a faculty member or staff:**

1. The faculty member or staff contacts and communicates concern to one of the members of the school's Crisis Intervention Team.
2. Crisis Intervention Team holds an emergency meeting to document and assess the concern (reporting individual may attend the meeting).
3. The Principal chairs the meeting in a confidential setting and the guidance counselor/school adjustment counselor logs all information

#### **If the Team determines that a child is at risk, the guidance counselor will:**

1. Complete a Crisis Intervention Team Report.
2. Obtain pertinent information necessary to begin DCF report.
3. Contact the DCF office by phone and report.
4. If determined appropriate by Team and DCF Intake Worker, contact the parent/guardian to report concerns and inform them of filing.
5. Inform Superintendent and submit copy of Crisis Intervention Report.
6. Inform reporting individual of the team's decision.
7. Complete and mail DCF Abuse/Neglect Report (51A) within 48 hours.
8. All copies of the Crisis Intervention Log and 51A report will be kept confidential and filed in the guidance counselor's office.



**If the Team determines that the child is not in crisis or not at risk, a designated Crisis Team member (guidance counselor) will:**

1. Complete Crisis Intervention Report and forward to Superintendent.
2. Inform reporting individual of decision.
3. Provide documentation to support decision.
4. Provide or offer follow-up services as recommended by the Team.
5. Contact parent/guardian if determined appropriate by Team.

## **STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES AND REQUIREMENTS**

The School Committee recognizes that parents have the primary responsibility for the health of their children. The school will cooperate with appropriate professional organizations associated with maintaining individual and community health and safety and the district shall provide the services of a medical consultant who shall render medical and administrative consultative services for personnel responsible for school health and athletics.

### **Procedures for Emergency at School**

School personnel shall give only emergency first-aid care to students who become ill or injured on school property, buses, or while under school supervision. Each year parents shall supply information indicating where the student is to be taken in case of an emergency; the name, address, and phone number of an emergency contact in case the parent is not available; and any allergies or diseases the student might have. The district shall maintain an Emergency Procedures Handbook which shall be utilized by district personnel for handling emergencies.

Situations requiring care beyond first aid, that is, requiring care by the family or its physician or the Emergency Medical Unit of the Westport Fire Department, shall be handled as follows:

- In instances where the Emergency Medical Unit is called, the school nurse shall provide the Unit with the student's Emergency Form and information about allergies or diseases the student might have.
- Requests made by parents or guardians for administration of any type of medication must be made in writing as described in Policy JLCD, Administering Medicines to Students.

### **Student Illness or Injury**

In case of illness or injury, the parents or guardian will be contacted and asked to call for the student or provide the transportation.

Transportation of an ill or injured student is not normally to be provided by the school. If the parents cannot provide transportation and the student is ill or injured, an ambulance may be called. Expense incurred as a result of emergency ambulance use will not be borne by the district.

Transportation of a student by school personnel will be done only in an emergency and by an individual designated by the school administrator.

## **PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS OF STUDENTS**

Every student will be examined once in each school year for screening in sight, hearing, and for other physical problems as required by Massachusetts's law. A record of the results will be kept by the school nurse. In addition, postural and scoliosis screening is provided at grade levels designated by the state (currently grades 5-9).

Every student must show evidence of a general physical examination by a physician four times: upon entering school and upon admittance to the third, sixth, and ninth grades. The results of these or more frequent examinations will be a basis for determining what corrective measures or modifications of school activities, if any, should be recommended. A record of all examinations and recommendations will be kept.

If the parents do not have a physician, the school physician, with signed permission of parent, will make a prompt examination of all children referred to her/him by the school nurse. Except in an emergency, the school physician will not prescribe for or treat any student.

Annually, every candidate for a school athletic team will present the signed consent of parent or guardian as well as a physician's certification in order to participate in the extracurricular athletic program.

## **COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

The district is required to provide educational services to all school age children who reside within its boundaries. By law, however, admission to school may be denied to any child diagnosed as having a disease whereby attendance could be harmful to the welfare of other students and staff, subject to the district's responsibilities to handicapped children under the law.

Management of common communicable diseases shall be in accordance with Massachusetts Department of Public Health guidelines. A student who exhibits symptoms of a communicable disease may be temporarily excluded from school attendance. The district reserves the right to require a physician's statement authorizing the student's return to school.

In the event a student with a life-threatening communicable disease qualifies for services as a handicapped child under state and federal law, the procedures for determining the appropriate educational placement in the least restrictive environment shall be used in place of the procedures designated above.

Neither this policy nor the placement of a student in any particular program shall preclude the administration from taking any temporary actions including removal of a student from the classroom as deemed necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the student, staff, and others.

## **ADMINISTERING MEDICINES TO STUDENTS**

Medication, including prescription and/or over-the-counter drugs may not be administered while at school unless such medicine is given to them under specific written request of the parent or guardian and under the written directive of a licensed prescriber. Only the registered school nurse may administer medication to a student. However, in age-appropriate circumstances, the registered school nurse may authorize self-administration of such medications as inhalers but only with the written order of the licensed prescriber and with parent authorization.

During field trips and short-term special school events, the registered school nurse may delegate the administration of medication to unlicensed school personnel with parent permission pursuant to "limited delegation" authorization under 105 CMR 210.000. A licensed practical nurse may administer medication functioning under the general supervision of the registered school nurse.

**Procedure to be followed:**

Consistent with state law, it shall be the responsibility of the school nurse to manage the total medication administration program. State law requires that the following forms must be on file in the student's health record:

- A signed consent by the parent or legal guardian to give the medication.
- A signed medication order from a licensed prescriber which is renewed as necessary, including the beginning of each academic year.
- A medication administration care plan completed and signed by the school nurse and parent for each medication to be administered in school.
- A medication administration log for each medication.

Medications should be delivered to the school in a pharmacy or manufacturer-labeled container by a parent/guardian or designated responsible adult. No over-the-counter medication, including aspirin or Tylenol, will be given in school without the required signed medication forms.

**ROLE OF THE SCHOOL PHYSICIAN**

- Serves as consultant to school personnel on medical matters regarding school health programs, including Health Education.
- Serves with others in developing written policies for the total school health program.
- Advises about the development of written instructions for handling health emergencies.
- Assists in, coordination of school health services with the school health education program.
- Serves as liaison between community physicians and the school.
- Advises on the control of communicable diseases in the school.
- Carries out health appraisals in accordance with established regulations.
- Makes medical referrals to family physicians.
- Renders first aid only when immediately available.
- Assists in planning and participation in health education programs for school personnel and parents.
- Does not provide medical treatment.

**ROLE OF SCHOOL NURSE**

- Serves as health resource consultant to students, teachers, and parents.
- Administers Prescription medications and treatments according to MDPH Regulations.
- Supervises others (health aid technicians, etc.).
- Renders services relating to health service programs.
- Complies with and interprets health regulations.
- Conducts hearing and vision screenings for all students.
- Maintains up-to-date cumulative health records for all students.
- Assists in identifying students with physical, social, and emotional problems.
- Completes follow-up on all students identified as having health problems.
- Provides school personnel with up-to-date information about student health status.
- Confers with teachers about students with health handicaps for educational placement.
- Provides student health counseling.
- Renders first aid when immediately available.
- Assists with development of written school policies.
- Contributes to development of written emergency procedures.
- Serves with school personnel in developing health education curriculum.

# **Student Attendance Regulations**

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

An understanding of the importance of day to day school work is an important factor in developing personal responsibility for success in the school instructional program. Parents can help their children by developing good school attendance habits. Parents must provide a written explanation for the absence and/or tardiness of a child. This will be required in advance for types of absences where advance notice is possible.

The School Committee recognizes that regular school attendance is not only required by law but is vital for meeting the educational needs of all pupils. The Committee also believes that the responsibility for such attendance is shared by parents, students, and school personnel. The Superintendent is charged with the task of developing attendance procedures which encourage students to come to school regularly and on time, prepared to participate actively in their classes. While attendance procedures at each school will be compatible, but not necessarily identical, this policy will be administered consistently at all levels.

It is not the purpose of this attendance policy to use attendance requirements to raise or lower grades or to promote the notion that seat-time alone has value. We define good attendance as *in-class, on-time behavior*. The purpose of promoting good attendance is to provide sequential, continuous learning opportunity for personal interaction and to develop personal responsibility for being punctual. A large percentage of instruction consists of oral work. Therefore, oral contributions in class can influence a student's mastery of a subject. Participation in classroom instruction is impossible to make up.

### **Legitimate Absences**

According to state law, schools must be in session for a minimum of 180 days each school year. Furthermore, every elementary school student's program must consist of 900 hours of instructional time. Middle school students and high school students must complete 990 hours. This regulation implies that every student must attend school except when absent with parental consent for legitimate reasons. For the purposes of state and local regulations, legitimate absence will include the following:

1. student's illness;
2. a death in the immediate family;
3. observance of family religious holidays;
4. appearance in court;
5. temporary relocation due to extreme emergencies such as fire, flood, or hospitalization of parent;
6. business which cannot be reasonably transacted when school is not in session; and
7. medical and dental appointments which cannot possibly be scheduled outside school hours.

The Principals have the right to question all excuses for absence. The parent shall be notified in writing when the Principal finds that an unexcused absence has occurred. Although students will not be punished by receiving a failing grade on material covered during an excused absence, a student will receive an Incomplete for any make up work not completed as a result of an excused absence. Unexcused absences may result in a grade of Incomplete or loss of credit at the high school level. Make up work cannot really replace classroom instruction.

### **Family Vacations**

Absences for independent family vacations taken during school time may not be approved by the school Principal and will be considered as unexcused absences for the purpose of the state law.

### **Unexcused Absences**

Extremely late arrivals (more than half the school day) and extremely early dismissals (more than half the school day) are considered absences under state attendance regulations. Excessive absence is a serious matter. Consequences of excessive or unexcused student absence include but are not limited to:

1. Notification to state authorities of a parent's failure to educate their children in the case of absences of more than seven (7) days within a six (6) month period (state law).
2. Request for physician's certification of illness.
3. A grade of incomplete and/or possible loss of credit at the high school level.
4. Conference with the Principal.
5. Completion of school work or course work during extended school year instructional programs.

### **Calling Parents**

School Principals are responsible for maintaining accurate school attendance records and for investigating and acting on cases involving excessive student absenteeism. Principals are also expected to promote good student attendance through positive reinforcement and parent conferences.

The following procedures apply to all schools:

1. The Principal will check all absences daily.
2. A written note from the parent or guardian explaining the absence or tardiness is required. Such notes will be kept on file in the office of the school nurse for a period of one year.
3. Parents of absent students will be contacted by telephone if they have not notified the school of their child's absence and the reasons for it. A log of telephone contacts will be kept in the school office. This type of absence notification program is required by Massachusetts Law, Ch. 76, S.1A.
4. Principals will ask parents of students who have been truant or suspected truants to call the school on any day that the student is absent with parental consent. If this call is not received promptly at the start of school, the absence will be investigated immediately.

### **Excessive Absences**

When absences persist after the above steps have been taken, the Principal will report the facts of the case to the Superintendent, and the Principal and Superintendent may take any or all of the following actions:

1. The parent will be required to have a conference with the Principal.
2. Medical documentation of illness may be requested.
3. A 51A, child abuse report may be filed with the Massachusetts Department of Social Services.
4. Court action may be instituted.
5. Parents of students who have been absent more than seven days in any one school year will receive a written notice from the Principal. The Principal will advise the parent of any action taken or recommendations for improving attendance.
6. Absences of more than fifteen days in any one school year must be reported by the Principal to the Department of Children and Family (DCF) Services, regardless of the individual attendance.
7. Court action may result following an investigation that suggests that parents may not have met their responsibilities relative to the care and protection of their children.

## **TARDINESS**

The term “tardy” is defined as being late to school, class or an activity, with or without permission of parents/guardian or school personnel. The building administrator, in consultation with the School Council, will establish a specific building definition of what constitutes “being late to school, class or an activity.” All teachers will inform their respective classes of the School Council’s definition of “being late to school, class or an activity.” The teacher will counsel with those students who are developing a pattern of being tardy. The teacher will refer to a school administrator those students who in the teacher’s judgment are not making progress towards correcting the problem.

Upon the referral by a teacher, the Principal will attempt to determine the nature of the problem, inform the student of the tardy policy, and will notify the parent or legal guardian.

## **EXCLUSIONS AND EXEMPTIONS FROM SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

Exclusion from school means the withholding of the privilege of enrolling in a school of the district. The following shall be the grounds for denial of admission to Westport schools:

- Graduation from the twelfth grade of any school or receipt of any document evidencing completion of the equivalent of a secondary curriculum;
- Failure to meet the age six requirement for first grade attendance before January 1<sup>st</sup> of a given school year.
- Not being a resident of the district unless attending under School Choice.
- Failure to comply with the provisions of the Massachusetts School Entry Immunization Law or to provide adequate school transfer information.
- Discipline action by another Massachusetts school for possession of a dangerous weapon, controlled substance, or felony charges or conviction.

Exemptions from school attendance for students over the age of fourteen will be approved by the Superintendent when such cases meet the terms and definitions set forth in Chapter 76, Section 1 of the Massachusetts, General Laws.

# **Academic Regulations**



## **ASSIGNMENT OF STUDENTS TO CLASSES AND GRADE LEVEL**

Students are assigned to a grade level based on their chronological age. However, the Committee also recognizes that not all students learn at the same rate and children have varied learning styles and intelligences.

### **Grades K-8**

Research on retention shows that students retained in grades K-8 are more likely to drop out of school. Therefore, it is preferable for students to progress through the grades with their chronological peers. However, students who have failed to master the basic skills in one level will have difficulty dealing successfully with the school program at the next grade level. In grades K-8, students who have shown a performance deficiency in either language arts or mathematics or who receive two failing grades in any subjects other than language arts/mathematics, will not be promoted. If these students attend an approved summer semester program and achieve a passing grade as defined by the school Principal, they will be promoted to the next grade.

### **High School Diploma**

Beginning with the Class of 2003, high school students must achieve a qualifying score on the Department of Education MCAS test in order to be eligible for a diploma in accordance with the Board of Education regulations. They must also successfully complete the prescribed credits in both required and elective courses. Students may repeat coursework to achieve a passing grade and the required number of credits. Only coursework approved by the Principal and Superintendent can be used as valid transfer credits to the Westport program. Students who have not received sufficient credits to move to the next grade level by October 1st. will remain at that grade level until the following September.

## **REPORT CARDS**

Regularly issued report cards, combined with progress reports and parent-teacher conferences, serve to promote a process of continuous evaluation of student performance. This process informs students and their parents and provides a basis for bringing about continuous improvement of a student's academic performance.

Parents will be informed at regular intervals of the academic progress of their children. To receive written reports and notification of conferences, a non-custodial parent must make such request through the office of the individual school Principal keeping with Department of Education regulations.

### **Citizenship**

For grades 9-12, Citizenship is defined as participating in creating a positive school climate by treating others with the respect they deserve as individuals and as members of the school community. Rating: Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory

1. Attends class regularly
2. Comes to class on time
3. Comes to class prepared to learn
4. Completes assignments on time
5. Works independently and models academic honesty
6. Shows respect for others
7. Exercises good conduct

**Conduct**

For Pre-K–grade 8, Conduct is defined as participating in creating a positive school climate by treating others with the respect they deserve as individuals and as members of the school community. Rating: Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory

(4 out of 4 = Satisfactory)

1. Treats others with respect
2. Follows school and class rules
3. Works cooperatively in teams
4. Solves conflicts peaceably

**Effort**

For Pre-K – grade 8, Effort is defined as taking responsibility for one’s own success in school by completing homework assignments and by making decisions that will lead to improved performance in school. Rating:

**Grades 1-8**

Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory

(3 out of 3 = Satisfactory)

1. Keeps agenda book up to date
2. Maintains good class effort
3. Completes homework assignments

**Kindergarten**

Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory

(2 out of 2 = Satisfactory)

1. Maintains good class effort
2. Completes homework assignments

**EVALUATING STUDENT PROGRESS**

It is the position of the Westport Community Schools that a close working relationship between home and school is essential. Regular communication with parents or guardians about the scholastic progress of their student is a basic component of this working relationship. Utilization will be made of a variety of strategies including telephone conference, personal conference, and/or written report to communicate student progress. It is the responsibility of the Principal to keep parents well informed.

Progress reports may be issued at any time. However, no grade of Incomplete (I) or Failure (F) will be issued without a written mid-term progress report having been sent home with a plan for student improvement.

Progress reports may also be issued for student commendation purposes. Positive reinforcement contributes to development of the student’s confidence and sense of self-worth.

**STANDARDIZED TESTS**

The Westport Community Schools will conduct standardized achievement testing on an annual basis using national norms for students in Kindergarten through grade 10.

Validated standardized tests will be utilized to test Westport students in the basic skill areas of Mathematics and English Language Arts. Since the tests are designed to measure achievement in specified curriculum areas, time spent in this type of assessment may be included in the school’s total instructional hours.

All students in grades Kindergarten through grade 10 will participate in the testing program unless formally exempted as follows:

1. A statement of alternative assessment to replace standardized tests has been placed in the student's Special Education IEP.
2. A formal, written request for alternative assessment to replace standardized testing has been submitted by the parent as per previously established School Committee Policy.

## **MASSACHUSETTS COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (MCAS)**

As mandated by the Education Reform Law of 1993, the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) testing program will require students in certain grades to be tested in the various school subjects. The subject areas for the test are those included in the Curriculum Frameworks. English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Technology, and History and Social Science. All students, even those with special educational needs, are required to participate in the MCAS testing process. Beginning with the graduating class of 2003, students must pass the 10th grade test to be eligible for a high school diploma. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) administers the tests and passing scores as well as retaking tests is determined by that agency. Call your school Principal for further information.

## **DUAL ENROLLMENT FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

The Dual Enrollment Program was authorized in the Education Reform Act of 1993. Today, qualified high school students can earn both high school and college credits through this program. The Commonwealth, through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), will reimburse public colleges and universities a per credit cost figure for tuition and fees for participating students.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has limited funds to administer this program. To ensure that dollars are available to reimburse the colleges and universities, high schools must receive written confirmation from the DESE. Encumbrment of funds for high school participation is on a first come, first served basis.

With this in mind, interested students must determine eligibility and begin the application process as early as possible. Students should contact the Office of Student Placement by May 1 for the fall semester and November 1 for the spring semester.

- Juniors or seniors who have completed one full school year at Westport Sr. High School and who have a GPA of 85 or higher
- Approval of the Principal
- This program is not a replacement for Advanced Placement or other academic courses offered at the Sr. High School.
- All courses must be pre-approved by the Principal.
- Students may take no more than one courses per semester.
- Students are responsible only for the costs associated with transportation and books/materials for classes.
- Upon successful completion of a course, a student will receive high school credit.
- If funding is not available from the DESE, the School Department has no responsibility to provide such funding.

- Once eligibility has been determined, the student will research potential courses at the college or university.
- The student must submit a completed dual enrollment course request and college registration form to the Office for Student Placement. This form will then be submitted to the DESE for funding approval.
- If funding is not available from the DESE, the student may take the course and pay all costs involved.
- At the completion of the course, the student must forward a transcript or grade report to the High School for inclusion on the student's high school transcript.

## **EXEMPTIONS FROM HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Students in grades K-12 are required by law to participate in Health & Physical Education. In Westport, grades K-12 will participate in a planned physical education program. Students will be expected to participate in scheduled classes unless exempted by the school Principal.

### **Health**

Where health materials or sexuality education are contrary to the religious beliefs and/or teachings of the student or the student's parent/guardian, exemption from that specific portion of the health education curriculum will be reviewed by the Principal in accordance with state statute.

The Principal of each school will insure that parents have prior notice of health units and topics at the beginning of each school year. Effective communication between the school and the parent is an important ingredient in a successful health education program.

A request for exemption must be submitted by the parent or guardian in writing to the Principal in advance of instruction in that portion of the curriculum for which the exemption is requested. The request must state the particular conflict involved.

The Principal will confer with the teacher and the parent to determine the length of time a student will be exempt. The teacher will develop an alternative activity for which the student will receive credit.

The Principal will inform the parent/guardian of the disposition of the request within a reasonable number of school days on receipt of the request and will notify the Superintendent of Schools of the decision. The decision of the Principal can be appealed to the Superintendent of Schools, then to the School Committee, and finally, the Commissioner of Education.

### **Physical Education**

Exception to the physical education requirement will be as follows:

- **long term condition (5 days or more):**
  - requires parent and physician authorization. Students who qualify for long term exemptions will be assigned to a class by the Principal.
- **short term (2 days-4 days):**
  - written parental authorization approved by the Principal. A medical exemption requires that the student will present documentation to the school nurse prior to physical education class. The school nurse will issue a pass to be presented to the physical education teacher at the beginning of the class. The student will remain under the supervision of the physical education teacher.
- **one day:**
  - passes with school nurse authorization.

Students who have permanent medical conditions and are requesting permanent exemption should present physician's documentation to the Principal at the beginning of the year. The Principal must forward his/her recommendation to the Superintendent and a copy of the permanent exemption status will be kept in the students' cumulative folder.

## **DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY (Policy IJKA)**

Education is built on sharing: of ideas and information; of facts and opinions; of input and output. With this collaboration comes the ability to generate extraordinary change—to make a difference in our own lives and in the lives of others. The Westport Community Schools supports the building of learning communities, the pursuit of academic achievement, and the realization of personal fulfillment for our stakeholders through the use of traditional, current, and emerging technologies. In order to achieve this growth and collaboration, the Westport Community Schools encourages the use of digital technology for exploring the world, for completing educational assignments, and for meeting professional responsibilities. Thus, the primary purpose of providing digital technology within the district is to support the educational goals and objectives of Westport Community Schools with the expectation that all digital technology users will respect the rights of others and will act in a way that reflects proper ethical and legal standards.

The following Digital Technology Acceptable Use Policy applies to all faculty, staff, students, community members and guests who use the district's digital technology or who access our network. Any violation of the terms spelled out below may result in loss of access to district digital technology and/or disciplinary/legal action.

### **1. Definitions and Purposes**

- 1.1. **Network:** Westport Community Schools provides access to its data network and Internet portal (the "network") for employees, students and authorized guests. This network includes all hardware used to deliver and receive data, as well as all software instrumental in viewing and working with data over the network. Any computer—whether purchased by the district or owned by an individual—that is connected to our network at any time is considered to be part of the network and, thus, is subject to the terms of this DTAUP.
  - 1.1.1. The network has been developed for educational purposes. It is intended to assist students and teachers by providing access to a wide range of information resources. The network also allows for efficient communication within the district, with parents, social service agencies, government agencies, businesses, and other educational entities.
  - 1.1.2. Incidental personal use of digital technology and the network may be permitted as long as it does not interfere with the educational mission of the Westport Community Schools and the completion of professional duties or educational obligations.
- 1.2. **User:** "User" refers to any staff member, administrator, student, community member or guest who connects to the Westport Community Schools' network, who uses digital technology belonging to the Westport Community Schools or who accesses our network.
- 1.3. **Digital Technology:** "Digital technology" is any device that creates, transmits, or accesses digital information, whether connected to the network or used in a stand-alone situation. "Digital information" or "digital media" is any data that is created, transmitted, or accessed by digital technology.

## **2. Staff and User Responsibilities**

- 2.1. The Technology Department will oversee access to the network and will establish processes for authorizing software installation, for the archiving of email and databases, for maintaining virus and spam protection, and for complying with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). CIPA requires school districts that receive federal funding through E-rate, which Westport does, to filter all access points to the Internet in order to block content that CIPA deems to be harmful to minors. For more information, please, visit the following site:  
<http://www.fcc.gov/guides/childrens-internet-protection-act>.
- 2.2. The building principal will maintain user agreements for students and staff; he or she is responsible for enforcing the DTAUP on-site.
- 2.3. When using the Internet for class activities, teachers will preview and select materials appropriate to the students and relevant to course objectives. Teachers will help students develop critical thinking skills (i.e. assessing the reliability of information found on the Internet) and provide guidelines and resources to assist their students in focused research activities. While their students are online and under their supervision, staff must be actively vigilant of websites visited by students.
- 2.4. No staff member may access the online grades or personal information of any student except for those students with whom he or she has a direct, professional relationship at that time.
- 2.5. No staff member may access the online personal or professional information of another staff member unless he or she is the employee's direct supervisor or is fulfilling his or her professional responsibilities.
- 2.6. Accessing or attempting to access another user's account without permission is strictly prohibited. Users may not intentionally seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files, data or associated with other users on the network.
- 2.7. All passwords or other means of accessing computers, servers, software, or the network within the Westport Community Schools is the property of the school district. No person shall access the Westport Community Schools' network or the district's databases stored by companies with whom the district does business without authorization.
- 2.8. Each user will protect his or her personal safety by not giving out his or her full name, home address, or phone number.
- 2.9. Any user who finds objectionable material on any digital device should inform an administrator immediately. This includes material that any user might locate by connecting to a website—whether intentionally or accidentally—or might find residing on a computer or the network.
- 2.10. The network will not be used for commercial purposes.

## **3. District Limitation of Liability**

- 3.1. Westport Community Schools makes no warranties of any kind, either expressed or implied, that the functions or the services provided by or through its network will be error-free or without defect.

- 3.2. The district will not be responsible for any damages users may suffer, including but not limited to, loss of data or interruptions of service, or personal physical, psychological, or monetary damages.
- 3.3. The district is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained through or stored on the network.
- 3.4. The district will not be responsible for unauthorized financial obligations arising through the use of the network.

#### **4. Due Process**

- 4.1. While on the network, the user agrees to take full responsibility for his or her actions. The Westport Community Schools will not be held liable for the actions of anyone connecting to the Internet through this network. Therefore, all users shall assume full liability—legal, financial, or otherwise—for their use of the network.
- 4.2. Violations of the DTAUP can carry serious consequences and could result in the immediate suspension of the user's privileges. The administration and/or town, county, state, or federal authorities may take further disciplinary action. Disciplinary actions will be tailored to meet specific concerns related to the violation, which may include termination of employment or student suspension or expulsion.
- 4.3. Any questions, suspicions, or allegations concerning adherence to the Digital Technology Acceptable Use Policy should be brought to the attention of the Technology Department, building principal, or the Superintendent of Schools.

#### **5. Search and Seizure**

- 5.1. The network and all devices (except those purchased by the user) attached to it are the property of the Westport Community Schools; the storage systems of these devices and files contained therein are therefore subject to inspection by the administration at any time. District-owned computers, whether attached to the network or not, are subject to inspection by the administration at any time.
- 5.2. System users should expect limited privacy regarding the contents of their files stored on the network. The district will cooperate with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to the misuse of the district's network and digital devices.
- 5.3. An individual search will be conducted if there is suspicion that a user has violated the DTAUP or the law. The nature of the investigation will be in relation to the context of the nature of the alleged violation.

#### **6. Acceptable Use of Westport's Digital Technology**

- 6.1. All students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to explore any and all digital technology offered by the Westport Community Schools, whether through installed hardware and software or through approved network connections.
- 6.2. All students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to share the digital media that they create (along with production techniques) with all other members of the Westport community. Please, contact the Technology Department for methods of dissemination.

- 6.3. In the digitally-connected world, social networking—the sharing of ideas, opinions, and media across networks—brings us all closer. Anyone who discovers interesting websites of educational value is encouraged to contact his or her teacher, school principal or the Technology Department for posting these sites in the appropriate places.

## **7. Unacceptable Use of Digital Technology**

- 7.1. When faculty, staff, students or guests of the Westport Community Schools use the network they become an extension of the Westport Community Schools and are expected to follow the guidelines of this policy.

- 7.2. The user will not:

- use obscene, mean-spirited, pornographic, profane, inflammatory, racist, threatening, or disrespectful language;
- engage in prejudicial or discriminatory attacks, sexual harassment, or other forms of online bullying;
- post false or defamatory information about a person or organization, or post information that could cause damage, panic, or disruption; this includes, but is not limited to, the posting of broadcast messages or any other actions that cause congestion of the network or interfere with the work of others;
- install unauthorized software or download unauthorized software from a remote location or copy software that belongs to the Westport Community Schools without expressed permission of the Technology Department;
- attempt to go beyond his or her authorized access (hack), make deliberate attempts to disrupt system performance, destroy data (by spreading computer viruses or by any other means), or engage in other illegal activities;
- access blocked or prohibited websites non-educational gaming sites through proxy servers that remove identifying information about the user for the purpose of anonymity;
- use the network to access material that is profane or pornographic or that advocates illegal acts, violence, or discrimination towards other people (e.g., hate literature);
- use the network for political lobbying, advertising or for passing on information of a purely personal interest;
- disseminate passwords, codes, access telephone numbers, or account numbers to unauthorized persons;
- change the configuration of a computer or network without administrative permission;
- damage or vandalize district computers, computer systems, or networks either through physical alteration or through the introduction of malicious digital agents, such as viruses;
- trespass in another person's folders, work or files, or use another's password; or
- engage in cyberbullying, which is the repeated use by one or more students of an electronic expression (including the 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, creation of web pages or blogs in which the creator assumes the identity of another person, the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, or the distribution of communications to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons), alone or in combination with any written or verbal expressions or physical acts or gestures, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of the school. See Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71. Section 370.

- 7.3. No member of the faculty, the staff, or the student body will engage in any illegal activities or use district technology for purposes other than as intended in an educational setting.

## **8. Social Networking**

- 8.1 Improper fraternization between staff members and students through social networking sites created by Westport Community Schools (e.g., Edmodo, Moodle, Blogger, Twitter et cetera) is prohibited.
- 8.2 All postings to Westport Community Schools social networking sites (e.g., Edmodo, Moodle, Blogger, Twitter et cetera) will display appropriate conduct, good judgement, and proper writing skills. Posts shall not contain sexual content, advocacy of violence, or promotion of drug or alcohol use.

## **9. Email**

- 9.1. All email created or received by an employee of a governmental unit is a public record. According to Massachusetts General Laws:
- "public records" shall mean all...documentary materials or data, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by any officer or employee of any agency...to serve a public purpose (G.L. c. 4, § 7, cl. 26).
- 9.1.1. Email is, therefore, a public record and it is subject to the requirements of the Public Records Law, G.L. c. 66. Any member of the public may request copies of email. Please note that even deleted messages are subject to disclosure because they are required to be backed up in our archives.
- 9.1.2. Users should consider email messages to be equivalent to letters sent on official letterhead and therefore should be written in a professional and courteous tone. As the AUP of the Springside School in Pennsylvania states, "tone is difficult to discern in electronic communication. Electronic communication is best used as a medium for disseminating factual information and should not be regarded as a replacement for face-to-face communication."

- 9.2. The Technology Department monitors the network to ensure proper network operations. Principals, department heads, or supervisors may request detailed reports indicating email and internet usage.
- 9.3. Faculty, staff, or students must not subscribe to mass emails (e.g., chain letters, “jokes of the day,” “horoscopes,” “trivia,” et cetera) which take up valuable network space that should be used for educational purposes. If a faculty member joins a professional (educational) listserv, it is requested that he or she subscribe in digest format. Please, contact the listserv administrator or the Technology Department for instructions on how to accomplish this.
- 9.4. All e-contracts by coaches and club advisors with students shall be sent to all team and club members, except for messages concerning medical or academic privacy matters, in which case the messages will be copied to the athletic director and school principal.
- 9.5. Students are not allowed to access non-school email accounts, including chat and instant messaging. In the event that students are given email accounts through the Westport Community Schools, all email rules stated in this DTAUP apply.
- 9.6. Email accounts issued by Westport Community Schools may not be used to bully, harass, or threaten any individual or organization; accounts will not be used to send chain letters, viruses, or hoaxes to other students, faculty, or individuals.
- 9.7. Student email accounts may be filtered for language and content; any email that contains inappropriate language or content may not be delivered.
- 9.8. Inappropriate contact with students via email is prohibited.

## **10. Research and Digital Publishing**

- 10.1. The Westport Community Schools websites are designed to provide a portal to enable communication among teachers, students, staff, administration, and the community. Material posted on the district’s websites or web portal must reflect the high educational standards of the Westport Community Schools in purpose, content and presentation.
- 10.2. To help to protect the safety of our students and the accuracy and security of district information, the guidelines and procedures listed below must be followed:
  - 10.2.1. No student’s personal information such as home address or telephone number may be posted on the Westport Community Schools' websites. The use of a student's name, picture, or demographic information on the website must be done in accordance with sections JRC and JRD of the Westport Community Schools Policy Manual.
  - 10.2.2. Material posted on school websites as well as links from a school's website to sites outside of the Westport Community Schools must have prior approval of the principal or his/her designee. At all times, a good faith effort must be made to verify the authenticity of material posted on the district's websites.
  - 10.2.3. Photographs and images must be used in accordance with district policy.
  - 10.2.4. Logos or trademarks used must have written permission from the person or organization that owns the logo or trademark. The Westport Community Schools' name or copyrighted logos must not be used on a personal web page without permission of the Superintendent.

- 10.2.5. The creator of any district web page is responsible for ensuring that the information contained therein is of the highest editorial standards (spelling, punctuation, grammar, style, et cetera). The information should be factually accurate and current. If errors are observed, the Technology Department, principal, or designated school webmaster should be contacted to make the necessary corrections.
- 10.3. All teacher and staff professional websites must reflect the high educational standards of the Westport Community Schools. There may be no links from a teacher's or staff member's professional website to his or her personal website or to other websites of a non-educational nature except with permission from the building principal or the Superintendent of Schools.
- 10.4. Existing copyright law will govern the use of material accessed through the network. The user—any student, faculty member, administrator, staff member, or guest—will not infringe upon the copyright of works found on the Internet or within the network.
- 10.5. Westport Community Schools does not guarantee the quality of links to material published on its website nor to the quality of the material linked to on other sites. The end user must judge the quality of the material he or she derives from the Internet. Please, verify sources whenever and wherever possible.

## **11. Personal Digital Technology**

- 11.1. Faculty, staff, and student personal digital technology may be configured for Westport Community Schools' network with approval from the Technology Department.
- 11.2. Personal digital technology is not the property of Westport Community Schools and will not be serviced by the Technology Department.
- 11.3. Personal digital technology must have up-to-date virus protection software when applicable in order to be placed on the district's network.

## **WEBSITE ACCEPTABLE POSTING POLICY**

The district website (<http://www.westportschools.org>) AND individual teacher websites are designed as a window into our district for the public to view and interact with the many facets of the Westport Community Schools. These sites are meant to be an effective tool for students, parents, teachers and the community at large to share school activities, to find classroom specific information, to locate resources, and to support curriculum content. They also offer a convenient format for parents to communicate with their child's teacher and enable students to display their projects and publish their writing for parents, relatives and other interested community members.

This information when placed online becomes public, which is its intention. In an attempt to keep the website a safe and secure location, the following guidelines have been established.

### **Referencing of Student Names, Addresses, or Telephone Numbers**

The name of a student will only be placed on the website in a "first name, last initial" format. This is to indicate the author of a particular piece of work or project. In the case of an award or achievement, a last name may be used with parental permission. A child's home address, email address, and/or telephone number will NEVER be displayed on the Westport Website.

### **Student Projects**

Student projects displaying class research projects or the published works of individual students may be displayed on the website. This work is the property of its creator, and may not be copied without permission. The name of the creator should be appropriately displayed (see "Referencing student names" above). Parents who do not wish their student's work to be published will indicate this on the ***Parent/Guardian Public Communications Release Form*** sent home each year. Teachers will verify appropriate permissions for all students prior to posting. The supervising teacher and the building Principal will review student work prior to publishing.

### **Pictures of Students**

Pictures of teams, groups of students, or the activities of children as seen from a distance may be posted on the website. However, close-up frontal pictures of individual students will not be posted on the website without the written permission of the parents obtained from the ***Parent/Guardian Public Communications Release Form***.

### **Content Standards**

The school Principal or designee is responsible for school web page approval, in consultation with the school web team member and district webmaster. All web pages must be well-written, and free of spelling and grammatical errors. Documents may not contain objectionable material or link directly to objectionable material.

### **Teacher Materials**

Teacher research or classroom curriculum materials will often be displayed on the school websites. This work is the property of its creator, and may not be copied without permission. The name of the author will be appropriately displayed.

### **Subject Matter**

Subject matter on web pages should relate to curriculum, instruction, school activities, and general information that is consistent with the district's mission. The development of staff pages that provide curricular information is encouraged. Staff members should not include personal information in a school or district web site. Staff or students may not publish personal home pages as part of a school or district web site. A staff member may request to post a personal home page on the district server, subject to review. School e-mail addresses of staff members may be included at their discretion.

Any staff member who creates a page that includes links to pages outside a district site must preview the outside pages for inappropriate or objectionable content. The district reserves the right to remove any pages with links to objectionable material at any time.

### **Technical Standards**

All web sites should be created with software licensed to the district. Any sites created with other software will not be supported by the district webmaster. Web pages must meet current standards for accuracy, accessibility and copyright. Pages may not be posted to the server without approval. The district reserves the right to remove files on the server at any time.

*Any Westport building webmaster or individual teacher posting school information is expected to follow the guidelines above.*

## **STUDENT CELL PHONE AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES (JICJ)**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students' use of cell phones, and other electronic devices does not interfere with the educational program or school activities within the Westport Community Schools. The use and possession of cell phones and electronic devices at school or on school property is a privilege, not a right. Therefore, students who choose to bring cell phones and electronic devices to school or onto school property, including buses, agree to the following policy.

- Cell phones and electronic devices must be turned off and kept out of sight during class time and at other times as directed by school staff.
- For safety reasons, students may not use ear buds or headphones during school hours *unless* they have explicit permission from the principal. (This includes during recess, lunch or in hallways during passing time.)
- Any allowable use of cell phones and electronic devices must not violate existing school policies including but not limited to policies regarding:
  - bullying, intimidating, and harassing behaviors via texting and social networking sites;
  - academic integrity (e.g. sharing of assessment or assignment information);
  - safety protocols (e.g. fire drill procedures, hallway passing, etc);
  - acts that may interfere with the learning opportunities of other students or the orderly operation of the school; and
  - use of a cell phone or electronic device with camera, video or voice recording function in a way or under circumstances which infringe the privacy rights of others.
- Inappropriate content is unacceptable

Violations of this policy will be subject to progressive discipline in accordance with respective school handbook. Multiple violations may result in the loss of the privilege to possess cell phones and electronic devices at school.

### **Cell Phone and Electronic Device Searches**

The search of cell phones and other electronic devices for pictures, text messages, video, audio, or uploaded/downloaded material in connection with an investigation regarding an alleged violation of school inception and justified in its scope. Acceptable searches may include, but are not limited to, searches for video, audio, pictures, text messages, emails or other data regarding:

- assaults and/or fights;
- harassment/intimidation/bullying or sexting;
- possession, use, or distribution of controlled substances, illegal drugs, or alcohol;
- identification of ownership of stolen or lost devices; and,
- documentation of cheating.

If a search of an electronic device is found to contain evidence pertinent to an investigation, the school administration has the sole discretion to confiscate the device, contact the police, or give the device to law enforcement officials.

## **STUDENT FEES, FINES, AND CHARGES**

Given the district's fiscal constraints, the School Committee recognizes the need for student fees to fund certain school activities, including sports and transportation for students not covered by state law. It also recognizes that some students may not be able to pay these fees. No student will be denied access into any program because of inability to pay these supplementary charges.

A school may exact a fee or charge only upon School Committee approval. The schools, however, may:

1. Charge students enrolled in certain courses for the cost of materials used in projects that will become the property of the student. Such funds will be deposited in the appropriate revolving account.
2. Charge for lost and damaged books, materials, supplies, and equipment that have been clearly identified by specific inventory to have been in the possession of the student. Such funds will be deposited in the appropriate revolving account.

Students who are indigent are exempt from paying fees. However, indigent students are not exempt from charges for lost and damaged books, locks, materials, supplies, and equipment. All student fees and charges, both optional and required, will be listed and described annually in each school's student handbook or in some other written form and distributed to each student.

Any fee or charge due to any school in the district and not paid at the end of the school year will be carried forward to the next succeeding school year, as such debts are considered to be debts of the student to the district and not to a particular school.

## **Conduct and Discipline**

## **STUDENT CONDUCT**

Good citizenship in school is based on personal responsibility and consideration for the rights of others. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a way that the rights and privileges of others are not violated. We expect all students to respect constituted authority, to conform to school rules and to those provisions of the law that apply to their personal conduct as members of the school community.

School officials are charged with the responsibility of general student conduct and behavior regulations to maintain good order and a safe school environment. In keeping with that responsibility, a student may be suspended from school if more positive alternatives are not available.

When a school withdraws the privilege of school attendance, the Principal's office shall notify the parent prior to sending any student home during the school day. If the parent cannot be contacted, the student shall be kept at school until the end of the school day. A letter explaining the suspension will be sent home with the student at the end of the school day. A copy of the letter shall also be sent to the parent or guardian by mail. A student may be suspended from school when the student:

- violates district or school building policies or regulations;
- engages in conduct which interferes with the maintenance of school discipline;
- engages in conduct which, in the judgment of school officials, warrants the reasonable belief that disruption of school operations will likely result; and is insubordinate, disorderly, or defiant of school rules and common standards of behavior.

**NOTE:** No student will be deprived of due process by school officials in implementing any rules or regulations relative to student conduct.

## **STUDENT DISCIPLINE**

The Massachusetts General Laws require the School Committee to adopt written policies, rules and regulations not inconsistent with law, which may relate to study, discipline, conduct, safety, and welfare of all students enrolled in the public schools of the district. However, the Committee gives consideration to recommendations of each School Council in approving disciplinary standards. The School Council's recommendation for rules which are different from district policy should appear in the student handbook submitted to the School Committee each year.

The purpose of disciplinary action is to hold students accountable for behaviors which impinge on the rights of others. When disciplinary action is necessary, it shall be administered with fairness and shall relate to the individual needs and the individual circumstances.

Research has shown that coercive discipline policies do not have the intended positive effect. The disciplinary codes of the Westport Community Schools will emphasize self-discipline and individual responsibility. Whenever possible, the Principal will apply principles of restitution and conflict resolution strategies to manage disruption of school rules. The Committee expects that students will take personal responsibility for their own behaviors and will be able to manage conflict successfully.

Students violating any of the policies on student conduct and control will be subject to disciplinary action. The degree, frequency, and circumstances surrounding each incident shall determine the method used in enforcing these policies. Most of the situations which require



disciplinary action can be resolved within the confines of the classroom or as they occur by reasonable but firm reprimand, and/or by teacher conferences with the student and/or parents or guardians.

## **CORPORAL PUNISHMENT**

State law provides that the power of the School Committee or of any teacher or other employee or agent of the Committee to maintain discipline on school property shall not include the right to inflict corporal punishment upon any student.

In extraordinary situations, reasonable force may be used by a trained staff member when no other effective means are available to:

- Quell a disturbance;
- Prevent an act that threatens physical injury to any person;
- Obtain possession of a weapon or other dangerous object within a student's control;
- Defend oneself or others;
- Protect property;
- Remove a disruptive student from school premises, a school motor vehicle, or a school-sponsored activity;
- Prevent a student from harming himself or herself;
- Protect the safety of others; and
- Maintain order and control.

## **WEAPONS IN SCHOOL**

Possession or use of a weapon in a school building is prohibited. A student found to be in possession of a weapon on school premises before, during, or after school or at any school-sponsored activity is subject to administrative and/or legal action.

Dangerous weapons are identified in two categories:

- a. Guns, knives, explosive devices, chains, martial arts weapons, and the like.
- b. Items designed for other purposes but which are used to inflict bodily harm and/or intimidate including bats, Exacto knives, compasses, pencils, scissors, and the like. A

student acting in an aggressive or belligerent manner with any article will be administratively judged to be in possession of a weapon. Disciplinary action will be taken. A student using a weapon in a fight or altercation will be administratively judged to be a danger to others and self and will be subjected to extended suspension or expulsion proceedings, or other appropriate disciplinary action.

Administrators or other delegated school officials, in their professional judgment, will confiscate any article previously identified as a weapon under (a) or (b) above. Such weapons will be submitted to the Westport Police Department. Students will be subject to criminal charges for weapons possession that meet the statutory definition in addition to school disciplinary action.

**School officials from time to time may invite local and/or state police to assist in such searches with or without the aid of a trained canine unit.**

## **LOCKER SEARCHES**

Students are assigned lockers for storing books and coats; however, such assignment does not restrict the right of the school officials to examine the lockers when they believe it necessary to insure the safe operation of the school. The lockers are at all times the sole property of the school.

Search of lockers is permissible by school authorities, without prior warning, when the Principal has a reasonable suspicion that the health, welfare, and safety of the students under their care is in question.

**School officials from time to time may invite local and/or state police to assist in such searches with or without the aid of a trained canine unit.**

## **STUDENT AUTOMOBILE USE AND PARKING**

The policy concerning authorization for students to drive personal cars to school will be that students enrolled in 11th and 12th grades will have permission to drive to school, subject to availability of parking spaces in school parking lots.

Students may apply for permission to obtain parking privilege. Requests for permission are to be considered only under conditions of student possessing valid driver's license, with parental consent and evidence of insurance coverage.

Students enrolled in grades lower than 11th grade are not authorized to drive cars to school. Exceptions will not be granted. Parking space will be available for motorcycles and bicycles.

The following will be minimum requirements for consideration of application for a student parking permit:

1. Parental consent in written form
2. Possession of valid Massachusetts driver's license
3. Evidence of insurance coverage
4. Current valid vehicle inspection.
5. Students required to attend orientation briefing by school staff designed by high school Principal.

Students may obtain a permit for only one vehicle for the school year. The Principal may authorize multiple car permits based on special circumstances.

A reasonable charge may be assessed by the Principal to cover costs involved in providing parking permits, applications, and related expenses. Such funds will be deposited in the Use of Facilities Revolving Account.

Regular review of valid parking permits will be completed by the Principal (or assigned staff member). Parking privileges may be terminated for students whose status no longer qualifies them for a permit, for students who are suspended from school, or students who operate vehicles in a reckless or unsafe manner.

All student drivers are expected to drive in a careful and prudent manner. Speed limit on the school grounds is 15 mph. Driving on the school premises, "cruising" around the school or in the parking lot is unnecessary. All students' vehicles must be parked in the area designed for student vehicles.

**School officials from time to time may invite local and/or state police to assist in such searches with or without the aid of a trained canine unit.**

## **MIDDLE-HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT SEARCHES**

Students who have a valid driver's license are permitted to park on school premises as a matter of privilege, not of right. The school retains authority to conduct routine patrols of student parking lots and inspections of the exterior of student automobiles on school property. The interiors of student vehicles may be inspected whenever a school authority has reasonable suspicion to believe that illegal or unauthorized materials are contained inside. Such patrols and inspections may be conducted without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant. If a properly conducted search yields illegal or contraband materials, such findings will be turned over to proper legal authorities for ultimate disposition.

**School officials from time to time may invite local and/or state police to assist in such searches with or without the aid of a trained canine unit.**

## **ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY ON DRUGS AND ALCOHOL**

The Westport Community Schools is committed to achieving a zero-tolerance drug-and alcohol-free learning environment. Use or possession or intent to distribute at school or in any connection with any school-sponsored activities on or off school grounds threatens the health and safety of our students and our employees and adversely affects the mission of the school system. The use, possession, or intent to distribute illicit drugs or alcohol is both illegal and harmful.

It is the policy of the Westport Community Schools that no person may use, possess, sell, or distribute alcohol or a controlled substance or prescription medication, nor may use or possess drug paraphernalia nor may conspire to distribute, on school grounds or at school sponsored events. The terms "alcohol and controlled substances" will be construed throughout the policy to refer to the use of all substances including, but not limited to: alcohol, inhalants, marijuana, cocaine, LSD, PCP, amphetamines, heroin, steroids, and look-a-likes, including any unauthorized use of prescription medication. Additionally, any person exhibiting behavior, conduct, or personal and physical characteristics indicative of having used such substances will be prohibited from entering school grounds and will be subject to disciplinary action.

No person is permitted to sell, or represent they are selling, dispense, or represent they are dispensing, possess, use, abuse or be under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances, on school property or at school-sponsored events. Any person in violation of this policy will be suspended, expelled, or disciplined in accordance with state law.

The district will endeavor to prevent substances use/abuse through communication, dissemination of information, community awareness, curriculum development, staff development, intervention and discipline as appropriate and as needed.

Compliance with this policy is made a condition of school attendance. Disciplinary sanctions up to and including exclusion from school and referral for prosecution, will be imposed on any person who violates this standard of conduct. Satisfactory completion of an appropriate rehabilitation program may be made a condition for withholding or terminating sanctions.

Drugs as prescribed by a physician of which the school administration has been made aware and over the counter medications kept by the school nurse for distribution to students with parental consent are excluded from the above prohibition.

**School officials from time to time may invite local and/or state police to assist in such searches with or without the aid of a trained canine unit.**

## **SPECIAL DISCIPLINARY PROVISIONS FOR WEAPONS, ASSAULTS, AND CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE USE/POSSESSION**

All parents must be aware of the following state laws:

- (a) Any student who is found on school premises or at a school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, as defined by statute, including but not limited to, a gun or knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter 94C of the Massachusetts General Laws, 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, or 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. A Principal may, in her/his discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the Principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b).
- (c) When a Principal determines not to issue an expulsion order for a violation of sections (a) or (b) above against possession of a dangerous weapon as defined by statute, or for possession of a controlled substance as defined by statute, the Principal must, within 48 hours of the incident, notify the Superintendent in writing of the circumstances and rationale for imposing a consequence short of expulsion.
- (d) When a student is expelled under the provisions of sections (a) or (b) above, state law provides that no school or school district within the commonwealth is required to admit such student or to provide educational services to said student. If the student does apply for admission to another school or school district, the Superintendent of the school district to which the application is made may request and shall receive from the Superintendent of the school expelling said student a written statement of the reasons for said expulsion.
- (e) Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of any weapon or object that might injure, threaten, or intimidate a person or destroy property, or for threatening physical harm to staff or other students may be subject to suspension or expulsion. When imposing a consequence of less than a forty-five day out-of-school long-term suspension for violation of this section, the Principal must include with the Actions and Consequences report, a memorandum to the Superintendent stating the relevant circumstances and rationale for the imposed consequence.
- (f) 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 if said Principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.
- (g) Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony

delinquency, the Principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may expel said student if such Principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. Upon expulsion of such student, no school or school district shall be required to provide educational services to the student.

- (h) When a Principal knows that a student has been charged with or convicted of a felony and does not issue a hearing notice for long-term suspension or expulsion, the Principal will document her/his assessment supporting her/his finding that the student does not pose a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. Such a report will be filed with the Superintendent within 48 hours of learning of the felony charge or conviction.

Due process protection shall apply to students who are suspended or expelled including the rights to notice, hearing, representation and appeal depending on the length of the suspension and in accordance with Policy JIC, Student Discipline and all applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

The Superintendent shall review all disciplinary actions taken in regards to the above sections and will coordinate a consistent response to such matters.

## **ACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES**

### **Actions**

This policy applies to any student who is on school property, including school transportation, who is in attendance at school or at a school sponsored activity or whose conduct at any time or in any place interferes with or obstructs the mission or operations of the school district or the safety or welfare of students, employees, or invited guests. Any of the following actions will result in appropriate consequence:

- Defiance of the authority of the teacher, Principal or other school employee including failing to comply with lawful directives or rules issued by school staff.
- Refusal to identify oneself or giving false verbal or written information to a school employee.
- Stealing or forgery, or the attempt to do either.
- Possession of any weapon, knife, gun, explosive device, instrument or article that might injure, threaten or intimidate a person, or destroy property (including realistic simulations).
- Violation of the district's drug and alcohol policy and/or use or possession of tobacco products.
- Physically assaulting or causing bodily injury to an employee of the district, a visitor or another student. This includes nonconsensual touching.
- Verbally assaulting or threatening an employee of the district, a visitor or another student.
- Engaging in verbal abuse, such as name calling, ethnic or racial slurs, or derogatory statements addressed publicly to others, that may bring about disruption of the school program, incite violence, or otherwise detract from the educational mission of the district.
- Psychological intimidation or bullying or harassment toward other students or school staff including conspiring with others to commit such violence.
- Violation of public criminal or civil statute, law, or School Committee regulation.
- Scholastic dishonesty which includes, but is not limited to, cheating on school assignments, violation of copyright, plagiarism, and collusion.

--Cheating on a test includes:

- copying from another's test paper;
- using material during a test which is not authorized by the person giving the test;
- collaborating with another student during the test without authority;
- knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test;
- substituting for another student or permitting another student to substitute for one's self, to take a test;
- bribing another person to obtain a test that is to be administered; or
- securing copies of the test or answers to the test in advance of the test.

--Plagiarism means the appropriation of another's work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one's own written work for credit.

--Collusion means the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work offered for credit.

- Throwing objects, outside supervised school activities, that can cause bodily injury or damage property.
- Leaving school grounds when not permitted to do so.
- Directing profanity, vulgarity, obscenity, or sexual innuendo toward students or staff.
- Committing robbery or theft, or the attempt to do so, of any property belonging to the district at any time or of any property belonging to an employee or other student.
- Acts of vandalism or arson or other malicious damage to real or personal property belonging to the School Department, its employees, visitors or other students.
- Engaging in misconduct on school buses or at bus stops.
- Committing or attempting extortion, coercion, or blackmail, i.e., obtaining money or other object of value from an unwilling person, or forcing an individual to act through the use of force or threat of force.
- Knowingly violating the school district's Acceptable Use Policy while using on-line services.
- Tampering with, changing, or altering school records or documents by any method including electronic means.
- Gambling.
- Hazing as defined by state law
- Engaging in conduct not in conformity with accepted principles of right and wrong behavior and which is contrary to the moral standards of our community.
- Participating or engaging in any activity which interferes with or disrupts the educational process.

### **Consequences**

Students have a personal responsibility to act in a way that does not violate others' rights. A student whose actions violate the rights of others will be subject to consequences, which may include:

- short-term suspension - fewer than 10 days;
- long-term suspension - more than 10 days, including expulsion;
- alternative school program;
- restitution or community service activity;
- participation in a rehabilitation program;
- summary recommendation for permanent exclusion

When withdrawal of the privilege of participating in school programs is necessary, it is the policy of the School Committee that a suspended student:

1. Shall not report to school during the period of suspension unless coming to the office on official business by prior arrangement with an administrator.
2. Shall not be allowed to attend any school event at any school campus.
3. Shall complete any assignments or tests missed as required.
4. Shall have the right to appeal the suspension first to the Principal and then to the Superintendent.
5. Shall have the right to access to his/her school records.

## **STUDENT DUE PROCESS RIGHTS**

Procedures for suspension of a student from participating in school instructional programs must respect the civil rights of the student. Therefore, the School Committee has established procedures to be followed in the event that it becomes necessary for a Principal to consider either short-term or long-term suspensions.

In the event a student faces suspension, one of the following due process procedures shall be used:

### **Short-Term Suspension: (10 school days or fewer)**

- The Principal or Assistant Principal shall advise the student orally and in writing of the charges.
- If the student denies the charges, the Principal or Assistant Principal shall explain the evidence against the student and give the student an opportunity to present the student's side of the story.
- If, on the basis of this discussion, the official believes the student is guilty of the misconduct charged, and that suspension from the school society is the appropriate response under the circumstances, the Principal or Assistant Principal may suspend the student for ten school days or fewer.

In all such cases, the Superintendent, the student and her/his parents or guardians shall be informed of the circumstances and action taken. This notification will be in writing. Short term suspensions do not require a formal hearing with the parent although the Principal may hold such a hearing.

The Principal's office shall notify the parent prior to sending any student home during the school day. If the parent cannot be contacted, the student shall be kept at school until the end of the school day. A letter explaining the suspension will be sent home with the student at the end of the school day. A copy of the letter shall also be sent to the parent or guardian by mail. There is no appeal to the Superintendent or School Committee for short term suspensions.

### **Long-Term Suspension: (More than 10 school days)**

Where the alleged misconduct of a student would, if proved, warrant a suspension of more than ten school days, or the remainder of the school term, semester, or year, the following procedure shall be provided prior to the long-term suspension:

**NOTE:** Prior to the hearing outlined below, the student may be suspended for up to 10 days if the procedures for a short-term suspension are followed.

**Notice of Charges:** The student and the student's parent or guardian shall be notified in writing of the specific charges against the student. These charges must be stated clearly enough for the student and the parent to understand the grounds of the charges and to be able to prepare a defense.

**Notice of Nature of Testimony and Witnesses:** A hearing will be held and the student and the student's parent or guardian shall be advised of the nature of the evidence against the student and be provided the names of any witnesses whose testimony may be used against the student.

**Notice of Hearing:** The student, the student's parent or guardian shall be notified of the date of a hearing to be held before the Principal within a reasonable time after notice. The date of the hearing may be advanced at the request of the student or postponed on the showing of reasonable grounds.

**Notice of Right to Present Evidence:** At the time notice of the hearing is given to the student and the student's parent or guardian, they may present witnesses or documentary evidence to rebut the charges against the student.

**Impartial Hearing:** The student is entitled to a hearing before an impartial administrator. The Principal shall conduct the hearing. If the Principal has had such involvement in the case that the Principal feels s/he cannot be fair and impartial, the Principal shall ask the Superintendent to appoint another administrator to conduct the hearing.

**Adult Representation:** The student, or her or his parent or guardian, may be represented and/or assisted at the hearing by a lawyer or other adult. A parent or guardian who is unable to attend the hearing may designate another adult to assist the student in the parent's absence. Notification of the representative's identity shall be given in advance of the hearing, or the representative shall furnish evidence of appointment at the time of the hearing.

**Right to Present Evidence:** At the hearing, the student, parent, attorney or adult representative shall have the right to present witnesses and documentary evidence to refute the charges.

**Suspension Order:** The decision to suspend the student shall be based exclusively on evidence presented at the hearing. If the evidence supports the charges against the student, a suspension order appropriate to the charges and the facts established may be issued. Written notice of the decision shall be sent promptly to the student, the parent, and the Superintendent.

**Record:** Minutes shall be kept of the hearing. A written copy of the minutes will be made. When the Principal determines it is necessary, a hearing may be recorded by a court reporter. **Reporting to Superintendent:** In event any student is suspended from school for more than 10 days, the Principal shall make a written report to the Superintendent outlining the facts established at the hearing and the action taken.

**Appeals to the Superintendent:** The student and her/his guardian shall have the right to appeal her/his suspension to the Superintendent. The Superintendent must be notified of the desire to appeal within five school days after the Principal has rendered a decision. The appeal to the Superintendent will be based upon the record (the minutes of the hearing, correspondence and any other documents used at the hearing). That is, no new evidence shall be presented to the Superintendent unless good cause can be shown why it was not previously presented. The Superintendent shall render a decision within five school days after s/he receives the notice of appeal.

**Action When No Appeal:** If a student who is suspended more than 10 school days does not appeal the suspension to the Superintendent, the Superintendent shall enter an order suspending the student in accordance with the order of the Principal.

**Summary Suspension:** Immediate suspensions of a student may be imposed by the Principal with the approval of the Superintendent without prior notice and hearing when the student's continued presence in school poses a continuing danger to the student or to other persons or property, or an ongoing threat of disruption of the academic process. In such cases, the necessary notice of the date and place of the subsequent hearing shall be given to the student and to the parents or guardian of the student. Such hearing shall be held within ten days after the student's removal from school. The Committee may continue the summary suspension or take other action as the facts warrant.



**Emergency Removal of Special Needs Students:** Special Needs students may be removed from class or school for health, safety or welfare reasons. These reasons include, but are not limited to, the fact the student is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, highly agitated, or suffering from any other condition which temporarily threatens her/his welfare, other individuals' welfare, or the efficient operation of the school.

## **STUDENT DRESS CODE**

The responsibility for the dress and appearance of the students will rest with individual students and parents. They have the right to determine how the student will dress providing that attire is not destructive to school property, complies with requirements for health and safety, and does not interfere with the educational process. The administration is authorized to take action in instances where individual dress does not meet the stated requirements.

This does not mean that student, faculty, or parent groups may not recommend appropriate dress for school or special occasions. It means that a student will not be prevented from attending school or a school function, or otherwise be discriminated against, so long as their dress and appearance meet the requirements set forth above.

The School Councils of the Middle-High School support the following additional guidelines, which the School Committee endorses:

### **Westport Middle-High School**

The appearance of any young person is primarily the responsibility of the individual and his/her parents. However, should a student's dress violate health or safety standards, the school reserve the right to require the student to make all necessary changes. The administration believes that students should dress in such a manner as to indicate their respect for the importance of their activities in school. Any child deemed inappropriately dressed will be given appropriate clothing to borrow from the school or will need to call home for other clothing. A second offense will result in a detention. The guidelines below provide some specific restrictions regarding dress: Students should wear garments, shoes, jewelry, accessories and hairstyles that:

- are appropriate and modest in length and coverage
- reflect a positive image of the school and contribute to a distraction-free learning environment and
- lead teachers and/or staff to reasonably believe that the issue does not interfere with, disturb, or distract from the classroom and/or learning environment.

Students are not to wear clothing that is tight, loose, sagging, baggy, revealing, spaghetti strapped, backless, low cut, or short.

**Pants:** must be worn at the waist or upper hip and must not reveal underclothing. Pants must not have excessive rips, slashes, or wear holes which reveal underclothing, upper thigh, or buttocks. Leggings worn must be covered by a long shirt or skirt.

**Shorts/Skirts:** must be fitted at the waist or upper hip, must not reveal underclothing, and must be mid-length or longer. Arms down by sides, fingers shouldn't be longer than skirt or shorts.

**Tops, Shirts, Blouses:** must not reveal underclothing, midsection, torso, back, chest, breasts, or cleavage. Any tank top like shirt worn must have straps from the neckline to shoulder.

**Dresses:** must not reveal underclothing, midsection, torso, back, chest, breasts, or cleavage, and must be mid-thigh or longer.

**Shoes:** must not detract from or interfere with the learning environment or present a safety or health hazard. Tennis or closed toe shoes are preferred. Flip Flops are strongly discouraged. Footwear must be worn at all times.

**Head Coverings:** no type of head covering (including bandanas, head bands, or hats) are to be worn. A note from a physician or religious beliefs are excluded.

**Jewelry/Piercing:** Noisy, distracting, and excessive jewelry or accessories are prohibited (including wallet chains). Jewelry or piercings cannot be a distraction from the learning environment.

**Tattoos:** tattoos of any kind are prohibited from being visible at school. This includes both temporary and permanent tattoos.

**Backpacks:** Backpacks are allowed at the discretion of the teacher. Larger classes may need to leave backpacks in their lockers if they interfere with the learning environment. Administration has the right to search any child's backpack or locker at anytime if there is a suspicion of negative or illegal activity.

**T-Shirts:** must not have symbols, mottos, words, or acronyms that convey crude, vulgar, profane, violent, gang related, or sexually explicit or suggestive messages. Symbols or mottos of suggestive alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drug use are also forbidden.

**Sunglasses:** Any eyewear, unless prescribed by a physician is forbidden.

*Note:* The administration reserves the right to make the determination as to what is considered acceptable. Students whose dress is questionable, as well as those not following the dress code, will be required to change into acceptable attire or will be sent home.

## **GANG ACTIVITY/SECRET SOCIETY OR ASSOCIATION**

The type of dress, apparel, activities, acts, behavior or manner of grooming displayed, reflected or participated in by the student, shall not:

- Lead school officials to reasonably believe that such behavior, apparel, activities, acts, or other attributes are gang related or would disrupt or interfere with the school environment or activity and/or educational objectives;
- Present a physical safety hazard to self, students, staff, and other employees;
- Create an atmosphere in which a student, staff, or other person's well being is hindered by undue pressure, behavior, intimidation, overt gesture or threat of violence; or
- Imply gang or secret society membership or affiliation by written communication, marks, drawing, painting, design, or emblem upon any school or personal property or on one's person.

If the student's behavior or other attribute is in violation of these provisions, the Principal shall request the student to make the appropriate correction. If the student refuses, the parent/guardian may be notified and asked to make the necessary correction. The Principal shall take appropriate action.

Students identified as being gang/secret society involved, influenced or affiliated shall be provided assistance and/or programs which discourage gang/secret society involvement or affiliation, enhance self-esteem, encourage interest and participation in school or other positive activities and promote membership in authorized school organizations.

## **BREATHALYZER TESTING AT SCHOOL DANCES AND PROMS**

Despite our best efforts at educating and persuading students to say no to alcohol, many students continue to choose to make alcohol part of their culture. Much of this is beyond our control and is encouraged by our culture and society at large. However, within the smaller school community, we have the authority and responsibility to control alcohol use. We know that there is no place for alcohol on school property and at school-sponsored events. Our singular goal is to maintain a safe and orderly environment, free of alcohol.

The breathalyzer test is an effective deterrent to student drinking and sends a message to students and parents that there is zero tolerance for drinking. By adopting a breathalyzer test regulation, we can provide parents with a reasonable assurance that their child will not be drinking prior to or during high school social events.

Therefore, all Westport High School students attending high school sponsored proms, after-prom parties, school dances, and similar high school social events are required to take and pass a breathalyzer test. It shall be done at the conclusion of the event, as well. If the results of the first test are positive, a second test using a different portable unit will be administered. If the second test is positive, a third test will be administered. Students testing positive will be denied admission to the event, held until a parent or guardian arrives to take custody of the student, and suspend from school, and/or recommended for participation in a drug/alcohol awareness program.

## **STUDENT USE OF TOBACCO**

Possession or use of tobacco products in school buildings, on school grounds, or at school-sponsored events may result in disciplinary action up to and including long-term suspension from school in addition to any fines or other consequences imposed by local Board of Health or police authorities of the Town of Westport.

The Principal may substitute participation in a smoking cessation program in place of suspension from school.

The School Committee policy and regulations will be included as a part of the package distributed to groups who request information for building utilization. If it is discovered that an individual group is not in compliance with this policy and regulations, that group will be denied use of district facilities for a period of no less than 12 months. Community members attending school events will be dealt with using the same procedures.

**NOTE: The use of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) in indoor establishments or on school premises will be prohibited by local law. (Per order of the Town of Westport Board of Health effective October 1, 2012)**

## **STUDENT TRANSPORTATION (Policy EEA)**

In general, the Massachusetts's General Law requires that a school district provide transportation for resident elementary pupils –and those with physical or mental disabilities which make walking impossible or unsafe. The transportation of students in grades 7-12 is made optional with the district and may therefore charge a fee established by School Committee vote for students in those grade levels who wish to use School Committee provided transportation. Students who qualify for the free or reduced lunch program qualify for free transportation, based on MGL Chapter 71, Section 68. Transportation is only provided to and from school and home. It is not provided to transport students to work or to a friend's home.

It is the School Committee's policy to furnish school bus transportation to all elementary and secondary school pupils regardless of the distance from their residence to the school because of safety considerations and obvious hazards along the roadways leading to each of the schools.

## **BUS SCHEDULING AND ROUTING**

The Administration reserves the right to determine and schedule transportation routes, services, and bus stops.

Pupils who are not residents of the school district will not be considered for transportation.

Routinely, students will only be picked up and dropped off at their place of residence or designated bus stop. Transportation is **not** provided to transport students to work or to a friend's home.

Because of safety issues, liability issues, and seating code regulations, students will be granted transportation at the end of the school day to a location other than home for day care or emergency purposes under the following circumstances:

- A 24 hour request written on a transportation form must be signed by a parent or legal guardian and must state the specific location other than home to which the student is to be transported. Transportation forms are located on the website at [www.westportschools.org](http://www.westportschools.org) or at the main office of your child's school.
- Requests for such alternate transportation must be submitted to, and approved by, the Principal who in turn will forward it to the Director of Transportation with her/his opinion as to whether the requirements have been met. If the requirements have been met, then the Director of Transportation will determine whether the request can be met by taking into account A-C below, and whether space is available. This request will be kept on file at the student's school. Request for alternate transportation will not be accepted the week before the first day of classes in September or during the first week of school. Request must be made 24 hours in advance.
  - A. The request for such transportation may not require that a bus deviate from an established route.
  - B. The request for such transportation may not cause the school district to incur any additional cost.
  - C. In fulfilling such request, the school district will not be required to comply with any other policy or practice limiting the length of time a student may spend on a bus.

**Any exceptions to this policy must be cleared with the Student Services Coordinator.**

## **BUS SAFETY PROGRAM**

The safety and welfare of student riders will be their first consideration in all matters pertaining to transportation. Safety precautions will include the following:

1. The district's transportation program will meet all state requirements regarding the approval of bus drivers, standards for buses and safe speeds.
2. Bus stops will be limited, where possible, so that students from several homes can meet at a central point safely for group pickup.
3. Emergency evacuation drills will be conducted regularly to thoroughly acquaint student riders with procedures in emergency situations.
4. All vehicles used to transport children will be maintained in such condition as to provide safe efficient transportation service with a minimum of delays and disruption of service due to mechanical or equipment failure.
5. All bus drivers will participate in an annual safety training program.

## STUDENT CONDUCT ON BUSES

The purpose of this regulation is to provide for the safety of all students and transportation staff when riding school buses.

1. The school bus driver has complete responsibility and authority while transporting students on the bus. However, only the Principal/Assistant Principal is authorized to suspend bus riding privileges.
2. All school rules (see Actions and Consequences) apply to students beginning at the moment the school bus is in the sight of the student at the bus stop and until the bus is out of sight of the student at the bus stop.
3. In addition to suspension of the bus riding privilege, a student may also be suspended from school for violation of school rules in keeping with the Actions and Consequences policy.
4. The Principal/Assistant Principal may suspend bus riding privileges for up to one school year, depending on the severity of the endangerment of the safety of the bus driver and/or students. Usually, a warning will be given to parents before the bus riding privilege is suspended. However, the Principal/Assistant Principal reserves the right to suspend a student for up to one school year for serious offenses including, but not limited to: assault on a bus driver; smoking; lighting a fire or matches; carrying a weapon on the bus; carrying a controlled substance; or sexual harassment or improper touching of another student. (Due process protection will apply to a school bus suspension of longer than 10 days).
5. Suspension of bus riding privileges are completely within the discretion of the Principal/Assistant Principal. The following suspensions are guidelines only, and the Principal reserves the right to waive the warning, increase the suspension, or attach additional consequences depending on the severity of the offense or the frequency of offenses:

First violation:	Verbal warning by driver
Second violation:	Written warning
Third violation:	Up to Five day suspension
Fourth violation:	Up to Ten day suspension
Fifth violation:	Long term suspension up to one school year

Any of the above may be accompanied by an out of school suspension, assignment to a particular seat, restitution for damages, or other consequence pursuant to the specific action of the student.

6. Student behaviors which may lead to a suspension for up to one school year:
  - Unsafe boarding/departing
  - Possession of an unsafe, dangerous/illegal item
  - Failure to remain properly seated
  - Tampering with or damaging property
  - Throwing object at or from the bus
  - Loud talk or yelling

- Failure to obey the bus driver
- Physical/verbal assault or intimidation of others including the driver
- Failure to ride in assigned seat
- Consuming food/drink
- Other behavior that endangers the safety, well-being of others

7. No student will be suspended from the bus without notice to the parent(s)/guardian(s). Whenever possible, parents will be given reasonable advance notice to make other transportation arrangements. However, the school district reserves the right to refuse to allow a student to board a school bus on short notice if there is an obvious safety issue and/or potential disruption that would negatively impact school disciplinary standards.

### **STUDENT CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES (Policy JICC)**

The right of students to ride a school bus is contingent upon their good behavior and their observance of established regulations.

The driver of a school bus shall be responsible for the safety of the students on a bus, both during the ride and while students are entering or leaving the vehicle. Therefore, it is the bus driver's duty to notify the Student Services Coordinator and/or the Principal of the school involved if any student violates the established rules of conduct which are published annually in the student handbook.

The Superintendent shall notify staff and students through student/parent and staff handbooks that video surveillance may occur on district school buses.

Video recordings may become part of a student's educational record or a staff member's personnel record. The district shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws related to record maintenance and retention.

A Principal may withhold from any student the privilege of riding the school bus for a violation of established regulations as stated in the student handbook. A Principal may also suspend a student from school for violation of school rules that occur on the bus or at a bus stop if the bus is in the line of sight of the student. Bus privilege suspensions can be for up to one school year.

### **WALKING OR RIDING A BICYCLE TO SCHOOL**

Parents who want their children to walk or ride a bicycle to school must provide written authorization to the school Principal and assume all liability.

## **Student Activities**

## **STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN DECISIONMAKING**

School organizations and school government organizations such as School Councils and Student Councils offer experiences in applying the process of democracy and serve as channels for the expression of students' ideas and opinions.

The School Committee will consider student opinions in establishing policies that directly affect student programs, activities, privileges and other areas of student sensitivity. Students will be welcomed at School Committee meetings and granted privileges of speaking in line with the privileges extended to the general public.

As required by state law, the Committee will meet at least once every other month, while school is in session, with its student advisory committee, which is composed of five students elected by the high school student body. The Chairperson of the student advisory committee shall be an ex-officio nonvoting member of the School Committee without the right to attend executive sessions unless such right is expressly granted by the School Committee.

## **STUDENT PUBLICATIONS**

Students will enjoy the constitutional rights of freedom of expression. They will have the right to express their views in speech, writing, or through any other medium or form of expression within limitations comparable to those imposed on all citizens but specifically designed for students in a school setting.

The School Committee will encourage student publications not only because they offer an educational activity through which students gain experience in reporting, writing, editing, and understanding responsible journalism, but also because they provide an opportunity for students to express their views.

All student publications will be expected to comply with the rules for responsible journalism. This means that libelous statements, unfounded charges and accusations, obscenity, defamation of persons, false statements, material advocating racial or religious prejudice, hatred, violence, the breaking of laws and school regulations, or materials designed to disrupt the educational process will not be permitted. The Principal may prohibit the distribution in school buildings of a specific issue or publication if it does not comply with the above rules for responsible journalism. The time, place, and manner of distribution of literature may be reasonably regulated by the Principal.

## **STUDENT PROTESTS, DEMONSTRATIONS, AND STRIKES**

Students who willfully disrupt the routine and daily schedule of the school or a school-sponsored event by participating in individual or group activity which has as its purpose the encouragement of noncompliance with an existing school policy, regulation, or administrative decision will be subject to disciplinary action as appropriate. They may also be required to forfeit all recognition, student-body participation, honors, awards, and scholarships. Any instance of truancy, insubordination, or overt acts of behavior detrimental to the welfare of others resulting from their participation will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including arrest.

Student complaints or grievances can be addressed through proper channels. The school district's policy on Student Complaints and Grievances provides a productive conflict resolution process.



## **STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES**

The School Committee recognizes that there may be conditions in the school system that are in need of improvement and that students should have some means by which their concerns may be effectively expressed, considered, and dealt with fairly. Such means, if well conceived and understood in advance, can do much to maintain relationships between the school and the students.

The traditional "open door" policy in the public school system will be continued. Students who think that a school policy, regulation, or practice is unfair may ask for a review of their grievance. In resolving grievances, the Superintendent must respect and apply all federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

Every attempt will be made to seek a satisfactory solution to any legitimate grievance in a friendly and informal manner. In order to keep such discussions within a practical size, no more than six student representatives will be permitted to participate with the school Principal, staff members, Superintendent, or School Committee members who may be involved.

## **COCURRICULAR AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

The School Committee believes that student activities are a vital part of the total educational program and should be used as a means for developing interests, aptitudes, skills, and a lifelong learning attitude. Therefore, subject to availability resources, the schools will provide a broad and balanced program of activities geared to the various ages, interests, and needs of students. Fees may be applied on an annual basis by a vote of the School Committee depending upon fiscal constraints.

The following will serve as guides in the organization of student activities:

- The students, parents and the School Councils will have input in planning activity programs.
- The goal for each student is to balance academic studies and personal responsibility with extracurricular activities. This should be a shared responsibility between the school, the parents, and the students.
- Guidelines will encourage participation of all students in appropriate activities without over-emphasis on extracurricular activities at the cost of academic performance.
- All activities will be supervised; all clubs and groups will have a faculty advisor or designated adult advisor.
- All activities offered by the school system will not exclude students from any course, activity, service or resource available on account of actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex/gender, marital status, homelessness, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, family care leave status, pregnancy or any condition related to pregnancy, or military/veteran status. Furthermore, School Committee policy includes prohibitions of harassment of students and employees, i.e., racial harassment, sexual harassment, and retaliation for filing complaints of discrimination.

The School Committee will adhere to the following state regulation regarding equal access to extracurricular activities:

Advantages and privileges of public schools include all extracurricular activities made available, sponsored or supervised by any public school. No school shall sponsor or participate in the organization of outside extracurricular activities which exclude students from any course, activity, service or resource available on account of actual or perceived race, color, creed,

religion, national origin, sex/gender, marital status, homelessness, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, family care leave status, pregnancy or any condition related to pregnancy, or military/veteran status. Furthermore, School Committee policy includes prohibitions of harassment of students and employees, i.e., racial harassment, sexual harassment, and retaliation for filing complaints of discrimination. No student shall be denied the opportunity in any implied or explicit manner to participate in an extracurricular activity on account of actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex/gender, marital status, homelessness, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, family care leave status, pregnancy or any condition related to pregnancy, or military/veteran status., i.e., racial harassment, sexual harassment, and retaliation for filing complaints of discrimination.

Each school system shall provide a fair distribution of athletic and activity expenditures. Each school within such system shall provide equal opportunity for male and female students to participate in intramural and interscholastic sports. Factors considered in determining equal opportunity shall include budgetary allocations, the proportion of male and female students in the student body, the number and nature of activities offered, levels of competition, equipment (including rate of replacement), supplies, awards, uniforms, facilities, scheduling of games and practice times, travel opportunities and allowances, opportunities to receive equitable coaching and instruction at each level of competition and the availability of services such as medical and insurance coverage, publicity, clerical and administrative staff, scouting services and audio-visual aids.

In developing its athletic program, a school shall be required to demonstrate good faith by taking into account determined student interest.

In order to insure fair distribution of athletic expenditures as defined in 603 CMR 26.06 (4), each school shall indicate in the budget that is reviewed by the School Committee the anticipated expenditure for each interscholastic and intramural athletic activity and the anticipated student participation in the activity by number and sex.

A school may establish separate teams for males and females for interscholastic and intramural compensation in a particular sport, provided that the requirements of 603 CMR 26.06 (8) are satisfied.

Teams comprised primarily or solely of persons of one sex shall be granted equal instruction, training, coaching, access to available facilities, equipment and opportunities to practice and compete as teams engaged in a similar activity comprised primarily or solely of persons of the opposite sex.

Participation in extracurricular activities shall be actively encouraged by each school for both boys and girls and for racial and ethnic minorities. When offering extracurricular programs, schools shall take into consideration the ethnic traditions of the student body. Criteria not related to skill levels which act to exclude members of one sex of any racial, religious, or ethnic group represented in the school from participation in specific athletic or other extracurricular activities cannot be permitted.

The Title IX Coordinator and the Civil Rights Coordinator, is the Director of Special Education. Direct any complaints regarding any found discrimination to the Superintendent of Schools, Westport Community Schools, 17 Main Road, Westport, MA 02790, Phone 508-636-1140 x 4001.

## **STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**

Student organizations in the district shall be encouraged when they operate within the framework of state statutes, School Committee policies, and administrative procedures.

The Superintendent will develop guidelines for the establishment and operation of student organizations within the particular school. Among other provisions, such guidelines shall

require the approval of the Principal prior to the formation of any club or organization in the school and the assignment of at least one faculty or designated adult advisor to each approved student organization. Within such guidelines will be provisions for a periodic review of all student organizations. All student organizations shall be required to open membership to all interested and/or eligible students. Disruptive groups, secret societies, and/or gangs shall not receive recognition in any manner under this policy. All forms of hazing in initiations shall be prohibited in a student organization. No initiation shall be held for a student organization which will bring criticism to the school system or be degrading to the student. The faculty or designated adult advisor must attend every meeting of the student organization whether conducted on school premises or at another location, and management of student activity funds will be in accordance with state regulations on Student Activity Funds.

### **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY ELIGIBILITY**

Students who take advantage of extracurricular programs must demonstrate personal responsibility in their academic program and good citizenship as a member of the school community.

Students may be denied the right to participate in extracurricular activities for:

- use or possession of alcohol, drugs, steroids, or tobacco;
- poor sportsmanship;
- lack of attendance at practices, meetings, events, or games;
- two or more unsatisfactory conduct, effort, or citizenship grades; and/or
- an overall grade average below 70 in the previous grading period; including last term grades for fall activities. Students who fail a course and then successfully pass an approved summer semester program will have their summer school grade averaged in with their cumulative course grade which can remove the grade deficiency and render the student eligible for fall sports;
- more than one failing academic grade;
- failure to pass the required physical examination for participation in sports; and
- Suspension from school (applies only to high school students);
- Lack of fee payment, barring fiscal need.

Extracurricular activities include: dances, after-school hours field trips, rallies, athletics, cheerleading, all clubs, band and chorus, class officers, student council, and other activities sponsored by the school that are not part of the academic program.

A student who is denied participation in activities will be notified of the reasons in writing by the Principal. A student notified of ineligibility will have a right to appeal the decision of the Principal at a hearing with the Superintendent of Schools.

In grades K-8, students denied eligibility as the result of failing grades or unsatisfactory conduct, effort, or citizenship grades must be notified of the deficiency at the time of mid-term progress report. Without such notification and an opportunity to correct the deficiency, the student may continue to participate but will be placed on probation until the next mid-term grades are issued. In such a case, deficiencies not corrected by the next mid-term marking period will render a student ineligible.

## Notification of Rights Under FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

(1) The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should submit to the school Principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

(2) The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the school to amend a record should write the school Principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

(3) The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Committee; a person or company with whom the School has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

(4) The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the *School District* to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-5901

## **Notification of Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)**

PPRA affords parents certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

- *Consent* before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED)-
  1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent;
  2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
  3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
  4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
  5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
  6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
  7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
  8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.
- *Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of* -
  1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
  2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
  3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.
- *Inspect*, upon request and before administration or use -
  1. Protected information surveys of students;
  2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
  3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights transfer to from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.

The school or school system will also notify parents and guardians of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation of the specific activity or survey. Parents/guardians will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys

listed below and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution.
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

*Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:*

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-5901

### **SCHOOL DISTRICT WELLNESS POLICY ON PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION (Policy ADF)**

The Westport Community Schools are committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activities.

The policy, in part, addresses the following:

1. The nutritional quality of foods and beverages served in the schools;
2. Meal times and scheduling;
3. The qualifications of food service staff;
4. The sharing of foods and beverages;
5. Parameters for fundraising activities;
6. The need for nutrition education;
7. Integrating physical activity into the classroom setting;
8. The parents' role in healthy nutrition; and
9. Monitoring and periodic review of the policy.

To obtain a copy of the complete policy, please contact your child's school, the Superintendent's office, or the district website at [www.westportschools.org](http://www.westportschools.org), under School Committee.

## **USE OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS AFTER SCHOOL**

WHEREAS, the School Committee wishes to address the circumstances under which students may be allowed to remain in its buildings after the conclusion of the academic school day so as to avoid having students unsupervised and/or to prohibit students from behaving in a disruptive manner without appropriate supervision;

NOW, THEREFORE, The Westport School Committee does hereby establish the following policy on "Use of School Buildings After School:"

1. Students who are not otherwise engaged in extracurricular activities within the school or the school district, which shall include but not be limited to, interscholastic athletics, intramural athletics sponsored by the school department, or other school-sponsored clubs, must exit the school buildings and grounds by no later than the end of the school day. In each such instance, the extracurricular activity in question must be supervised by either a member of the professional staff and/or an adult authorized by the Westport School Department to supervise the activity in question.
2. Students who are staying after school to receive additional academic assistance shall be deemed to be in compliance with this policy. However, at the conclusion of receiving after-school help from a teacher or other member of the Westport School Department staff, the student in question shall be expected to promptly exit the building.
3. The school department shall ensure that this policy is distributed to all students either as part of the student handbook or as a separate hand-out. Violations of this policy shall be deemed to be knowing and shall be addressed through the student disciplinary process.
4. Repeated violations of this policy shall be referred to the Superintendent of schools for additional disciplinary action consistent with the nature of the violation(s).

## **FIELD TRIPS (Policy IJOA)**

Field trips can bring the school and the community closer together, which can result in real life experiences that enrich the curriculum for students and also bring about better public relations. The School Committee will also encourage field trips as an integral part of the instructional programs in the schools.

The Superintendent will establish regulations to assure that:

1. All students have parental permission for trips.
2. All trips are properly supervised.
3. All safety precautions are observed.
4. All trips contribute substantially to the educational program.
5. All trips allow student access without regard of family ability to pay.

All out-of-state or extended (overnight) trips and excursions, except those required for student participation in tournament competition or contests, must have advance approval of the School

Committee. Fundraising activities for such trips will be subject to approval by the appropriate Administrator.

#### Field Trips Involving Late Night or Overnight Travel (JJH)

All student trips which include late night or overnight travel must have prior approval of the School Committee. Initial approval by the School Committee is required before engaging students in fundraising activities. The School Committee will also consider the educational value of the trip in relation to the cost prior to granting initial approval. Overnight trips should offer significant educational benefits to students that clearly justify the time and expense of the trip. Such trips should be appropriate for the grade level.

Final approval will not be granted until all preparations for the trip have been completed including, but not limited to, all logistical details involving transportation, accommodation arrangements and fundraising efforts. The School Committee requires that final approval be sought no less than 30 days prior to the scheduled trip dates.

Teachers and other school staff are prohibited from soliciting for privately run trips through the school system and in the schools. The School Committee will only review for approval school-sanctioned trips. The School Committee will not review or approve trips that are privately organized and run without school sanctioning.

#### **EMERGENCY PLANS (Policy EBC)**

Advance planning for emergencies and disasters is essential to provide for the safety of students and staff. It also strengthens the morale of all concerned to know that plans exist and that students and staff have been trained in carrying out the plans.

The Superintendent will develop and maintain plans that meet the requirements of state law for preparedness in case of fire, civil emergencies, and natural disasters.

The Superintendent shall develop, in consultation with school nurses, school physicians, athletic coaches, trainers, and local police, fire and emergency personnel, an Emergency Medical Response Plan for each school in the district. Each Plan shall include:

1. A method establishing a rapid communications system linking all parts of the school campus, including outdoor facilities, to local Emergency Medical Services along with protocols to clarify when EMS and other emergency contacts will be called.
2. A determination of EMS response times to any location on the campus.
3. A list of relevant contacts with telephone numbers and a protocol indicating when each person shall be called, including names of experts to help with post-event support.
4. A method to efficiently direct EMS personnel to any location on campus, including the location of available rescue equipment.
5. Safety precautions to prevent injuries in classrooms and on the school campus.
6. A method of providing access to training in CPR and first aid for teachers, athletic coaches, trainers, and other school staff which may include CPR training for High School students; provided that School Committees may opt out of instruction in CPR pursuant to Section 1 of Chapter 71.



7. The location of all Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs), whether fixed or portable, will be posted in the main office, nurse's office and be made available to staff. Appropriate training will be made available annually to all staff.

The Superintendent shall annually review the response sequence with local police and fire officials. Plans shall be submitted to local police and fire officials and the DESE at least every 3 years by September 1 or when changes occur. Plans must be updated in the case of new construction or other physical changes to the school campus.

Building Principals will meet all requirements for conducting fire drills and Emergency Response drills to give students practice in moving with orderly dispatch to designated areas under emergency conditions, and the staff practice in carrying out their assigned responsibilities for building evacuation. State regulations require four (4) fire drills per year. The first drill of the year will be scheduled within the first three (3) days of the start of the school year.

### **MEAL CHARGE POLICY (Policy EFD)**

The School Committee is committed to providing students with healthy, nutritious meals each day so they can focus on school work, while also maintaining the financial integrity of meal programs and minimizing any impact on students with meal charges. However, unpaid meal charges place a large financial burden on the school district, as food services is a self-supporting entity within the district. The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with federal reporting requirements of the USDA Child Nutrition Program, as well as provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances.

The provisions of this policy pertain to regular priced school meals only. The School Committee will provide a regular meal to students who forget or lose their lunch money.

#### **Meal Charges and Balances**

Students will pay for meals at the regular rate approved by the School Committee and for their meal status (regular, reduced-price, or free) each day. Payment options will be delineated in student handbooks and provided to parents of incoming students. After the balance reaches zero and enters the negative, students will not be allowed to purchase a la carte items including but not limited to a second entree, snack, ice cream, or an additional beverage. The student will still be allowed to take a meal, and that meal will continue to be charged to the account at the standard lunch rate based on their meal status. The parent/guardian is responsible for any meal charges incurred. If there is a financial hardship, a parent/guardian should contact food services directly to discuss payment options such as an individualized repayment plan.

#### **Payments**

Parents/Guardians are responsible for all meal payments to the food service program. Notices of low or deficit balances will be sent directly to parent/guardians via email or regular postal mail at regular intervals during the school year. At no time shall any

staff member give payment notices to students unless that student is known to be an emancipated minor who is fully responsible for themselves or over the age of 18. If parent/guardians have issues with student purchases they should contact food services for assistance.

Parents/Guardians may pay for meals in advance. Further details are available on the school district webpage and in student handbooks. Funds should be maintained in accounts to minimize the possibility that a child may be without meal money on any given day. Any positive remaining funds for a particular student will be carried over to the next school year.

All school cafeterias possess computerized point of sale/cash register systems that maintain records of all monies deposited and spent for each student and those records are available to parents by setting up an online account (see student handbooks for more details) or by speaking with the school's food service manager. The point of sale system is designed to prevent direct identification of a student's meal status. Parents will receive automated low-balance emails or mailed notices weekly, if applicable. If notices do not result in payment, parents will receive a phone call from food services. If the phone call does not result in payment the food service manager shall turn the account over to the business office.

#### Refunds

Refunds for withdrawn and/or graduating students require a written request (email, postal, or in person) for a refund of any money remaining in their account to be submitted. Graduating students also have the option to transfer funds to a sibling's account or to donate to a student in need with a written request.

#### Delinquent Accounts/Collections

Failure of a parent or guardian to maintain reasonably current accounts may result in a referral to the Superintendent for his/her review. The Superintendent shall ensure that there are appropriate and effective collection procedures and internal controls within the school district's business office that meet the requirements of law.

If a student is without meal money on a consistent basis, the administration may investigate the situation more closely and take further action as needed. If financial hard ship exists, parents and families are encouraged to apply for free or reduced price lunches for their child. Each school handbook shall contain detailed instructions for parental assistance.

#### Policy Communications

This policy shall be communicated to all staff and families at the beginning of each school year and to families transferring to the district during the year.

## **COLLECTION OF MONEY/FOOD TICKETS (Policy EFDA)**

The purpose of this policy is to insure compliance with federal reporting requirements for the Child Nutrition Program and to provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances. Federal reporting requirements do not allow the Child Nutrition Program to charge meals. Students may pay for meals in advance, at the time of purchases or make electronic payments.

Westport Community Schools Food Service Department is a self-funded program. Staffing levels do not allow for the extensive time involved in billing for charged lunches. USDA Federal Management Circular 796.1 (RV.2) list bad debts as non-allowable expenditures of federal funds, therefore losses on meals charged and /or NSF checks cannot be paid out of Child Nutrition funds. To assure compliance with Federal Management Circular 796-1 (RV.2) annually a transaction should be made for uncollectable charges or insufficient fund checks by general funds to record reimbursement for all said bad debt. USDA federal regulations state that all meal payments are to be made at the point of service. The State Agency's position is that Child Nutrition Program funds cannot be used for program purposes to resolve bad debt as noted by USDA, FNS Instruction 796-1 Rev. 2.

All school cafeterias possess computerized point of sale/cash register systems that maintain a record of all monies deposited and spent for each student and said record will be made available to the parent upon request. Each school shall inform parents that meals can be paid for in advance and that balances may be maintained in their child's account to minimize the possibility that the child may be without meal money on any given day. If a student is without meal money on a consistent basis, the Food Service Director will investigate the situation more closely, including contacting the parent/guardian to bring money to the school and/or encouraging the parent to apply for free or reduced price meals, or to make payments through the online payment system, [MySchoolBucks.com](http://MySchoolBucks.com)

Students may be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Applications are available in the main office at all schools, the Food Service Department Office, 17 Main Road, Westport and on the Food Service Department website at [www.westportschools.org](http://www.westportschools.org). We strongly encourage all families that may qualify to apply for free or reduced price meals at any time to help during financially difficult times.

Parents/Guardians may be notified in writing when 3 charges have accumulated. It is expected that all incurred charges will be paid within 5 days of written notice; by sending cash, check or money order payable to the Town of Westport. Payment must be sent with the child to the cafeteria, by mailing a check or money order to the appropriate school, and through the online payment systems [MySchoolBucks.com](http://MySchoolBucks.com). Students will be served a differentiated meal if the accumulated balance is not paid in full. The differentiated meal shall consist of a sandwich (not peanut butter and jelly), fruit, vegetable and eight-ounce low fat milk. If the charge balance has not been paid within the expected time of the written notification and a pattern of not providing a bag lunch or money for lunch for a child is noted, the Massachusetts Department of Children and Family Services may be informed of the situation.

In addition, if a student has a negative balance, they will not be allowed to purchase a double lunch or an additional slice of pizza on "special pizza" days.

This policy's provisions pertain to regular school breakfast and lunch meals only. Federal policy prohibits the withholding of meals from a child as a form of discipline. The Superintendent shall develop regulations and procedures to support this policy.