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# Westport Community Schools

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**Together, Everyone Achieves More!**



## **Staff Handbook**

### **2022-2023**

## **Westport School Committee**

Nancy Stanton-Cross, Chair	Melissa Pacheco, Vice Chair
Antonio Viveiros	Gloria M. Cabral
Michelle Orlando	Sharon Pinho, Recording Secretary

### **Office of the Superintendent of Schools**

**Thomas F. Aubin**

**508-636-1140**

#### **Schools**

**Westport Middle-High School – 300 Old County Road**

**Westport Elementary School - 380 Old County Road - 636-1075**

**Macomber Primary School - 154 Gifford Road - 678-8671**

***NOTE:** This publication contains the most important current School Committee policies. A complete School Committee Policy Manual is available for review on-line and in the Office of the Superintendent of Schools. Please contact the School Committee Policy Manual for additional policies. All employees should also consult current collective bargaining agreements for detailed information on current wages and working conditions.*

Adopted July 7, 1998

Revised August 19, 2022

The Westport Community Schools is committed in spirit, as well as in action, to abide by all laws dealing with equal employment opportunity. It is the policy of the Westport Community Schools to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from harassment, violence or discrimination based on 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.

Further, the Westport Community Schools will act in good faith, to affirmatively recruit and consider for promotion individuals in protected categories. It is the policy of the Westport Community Schools to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from harassment, violence or discrimination based on 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. For further information or to redress a grievance, contact the district's Civil Rights Compliance Officer by phone at 508-636-1140, or in writing at 17 Main Road, Westport, MA 02790.

## District Staff Directory 2022 - 2023

Superintendent	Thomas F. Aubin	508-636-1140
Business Manager	Michelle Rapoza	508-636-1140 x 4020
Special Education Coordinator	Wendy Miranda	508-636-1140 x 4010
Special Education Coordinator	Nancy Tavares	508-636-1140 x 4010
Director of Curriculum & Instruction	Lisa Kaminski	508-636-1140 x 4005
Head of Maintenance & Facilities	Michael Duarte	508-636-1140 x 4041
Facilities & Custodians	Kim Ouellette	508-636-1140 x 4042
Transportation & Food Services Coordinator	Michelle Rapoza	508-636-1140 x 4020
Human Resources	Kristin McDaniel	508-636-1140 x 4030
District 5-12 Athletics	Jason Pacheco	508-636-1050 x 4230
Induction Coordinator	Kristin McDaniel	508-636-1140 x 4030
Dropout Prevention	TBA	508-636-1150 x 4202

### District Liaisons:

English Language Learners (ELL)	Lisa Kaminski
Homeless Liaison	Wendy Miranda
Special Education Coordinator PreK-4	Nancy Tavares
Special Education Coordinator Gr. 5-12	Wendy Miranda
504 Coordinator	Wendy Miranda
Title IX	Nancy Tavares
Teacher Mentoring	Dianne Pereira

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## **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.

# **GENERAL POLICIES**

## **Conduct - GBEB**

The School Committee reaffirms one of the oldest beliefs in education: One of the best methods of instruction is by personal example.

Each employee of the Westport Community Schools shall comport herself/himself at work in a manner that furthers the mission of the school district and the goals of the Superintendent of Schools. Therefore, each employee should act in a manner that a reasonable person would view as appropriate to the employee's role as a model to children and young people and a public servant. This includes, but is not limited to: using appropriate language at work; working efficiently and conscientiously; addressing other staff, students, and the public respectfully; and promptly and courteously following the directions of the employee's supervisor(s) and superior(s).

In recognition of the fact that harassment (verbal or physical) may create a psychologically harmful atmosphere, inhibit performance, undermine the integrity of the staff-student relationship, and constitute a form of illegal sex discrimination, the School Committee prohibits all forms of inappropriate remarks or conduct between staff and students of the district.

Employees are to comply with School Committee policies, available on the School District's website, and MA General Laws. Violation of policies or laws may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. For the full policy please read School Committee Policy GBEB.

## **Dress Code - GBEB A**

In dress and conduct, teachers and other staff members should recognize that their actions and demeanor will be reflected in the conduct of the students. It is of paramount importance that the members of the staff set good examples in conduct, manners, dress, and grooming. Employees are expected to wear appropriate dress for work, that is in good taste and suitable for the job at hand.

### **Acceptable Attire:**

Open collar shirts, "polo" shirts, dress slacks, trousers, casual pants (e.g. "Dockers"), skirts, blouses, sweaters, pant suits, loafers, dress shoes, and other professional attire. Sports jackets and ties (for men) are optional.

### **Unacceptable Attire:**

Tee shirts, blue jeans or other casual jeans, rib leggings, sneakers, sweatshirts, shorts, or other recreational clothing. Exceptions include attire directly related to an employee's role, (e.g. Physical Education Teacher). Headwear such as hats, caps, visors, sweatbands, or bandanas inside building (except for religion-related caps and turbans) is not acceptable. Dirty, ripped and/or wrinkled clothing and jewelry that may cause injury or a distraction to learning is also prohibited.

For the full policy please read School Committee Policy GBEB A.



## **Staff Responsibilities - GBEB**

All staff members have a responsibility to make themselves familiar with, and abide by, the laws of the state as these affect their work, the policies of the School Committee, and the regulations designed to implement them.

All staff members will be expected to carry out their assigned responsibilities with conscientious concern. The first responsibility of the instructional staff is to enhance student achievement. Also essential to the success of ongoing school operations and the instructional program are the following specific responsibilities, which will be required of all personnel:

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

In their association with students, all school employees will set examples that are an important part of the educational process. Their manner, appearance, work ethic, courteousness, and attitudes establish models that affect young people. The School Committee expects its staff members to be exemplary role models, as well as provide exemplary instruction.

### **Reporting Illegal Acts and Disruptive Behavior:**

All employees of the school system are required to report any illegal act and/or disruptive behavior occurring on school property. The responsible administrator has the obligation to conduct an immediate investigation of the allegation and, upon verification of a criminal act and/or disruptive behavior, report in a manner consistent with procedures established by the Superintendent to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

### **The Mandated Reporter Statute:**

Under Massachusetts General Laws 119: 51A, a mandated reporter who has reasonable cause to believe that a child under the age of eighteen years is suffering physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse, including sexual abuse, or from neglect, shall immediately report such condition to DCF (Department of Children and Family Services) Mandated reporters include public and private school teachers, educational administrators, guidance or adjustment counselors, psychologists, attendance officers, social workers, day care providers, health care professionals, court and public safety officials. In schools, mandated reporters may either report directly to DCF or they may notify the person in charge of the school (or that person's designee), in which case that individual is responsible for making the oral and written report

to DCF. The mandated reporter must make the report orally to DCF immediately, and then make a written report to DCF within 48 hours.

**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 health 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 Family Services (DCF) as mandated by M.G.L. 119:51A.

**Crisis Intervention Team Member:**

Principal, Assistant Principal, Adjustment/Guidance Counselor, School Nurse, School Resource Officer, and other staff deemed necessary by the Principal.

**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 physical punishment upon any student.

However, in extraordinary situations, reasonable force may be used when it has been determined that 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.

**Ethics and Conflict of Interest - GBEA**

All employees of the School Committee are municipal employees whose conduct is regulated by M.G.L. 268A, the Massachusetts Conflict of Interest Statute as well as following the policy of the Westport School Committee.

Employees of the School Committee will not engage in or participate in any activity that conflicts, or raises a reasonable question of conflict, with their responsibilities in the school system. More specifically, employees will not:

- Solicit or receive from anyone other than the Westport School Committee compensation, other than that allowed by law, for performance of her/his duties. This

precludes, among other things, the acceptance of any gratuities, gifts, or favors that might influence, impair, or appear to influence or impair judgment and/or the manner in which the employee performs her/his job responsibilities.

- Knowingly authorize or use the authority or influence of her/his office to secure authorization of any public contract in which s/he, a member of her/his immediate family, or any of her/his business associates has an interest.
- Offer any favor, service, or thing of value to obtain special advantage, privilege, or exemptions.
- Engage in selling any merchandise or services for personal profit to students or parents.
- Furnish lists of students, parents, or school employees to anyone except as may be required by law.
- Use institutional privileges for private gain.

**Employment and Assignment of Relatives:**

Administrators will be excluded from all employment and assignment decisions regarding their family members. Employees will not be placed in any position where prejudicial treatment by a family member may be reasonably expected to occur, or be reasonably perceived to exist.

**Prejudicial Treatment:**

Any treatment (either positive or negative) beyond that which the supervisor would give any other employee in similar circumstances.

Family members will be placed in separate departments within a school, separate work crews, and/or separate sites, whenever possible.

*The Westport school district shall not employ an immediate family member of the Superintendent, a central office administrator, or School Committee member unless two weeks written notice is given to the School Committee. An immediate member of a principal's family also may not be assigned to the principal's school unless such notice is given.*

In the event that marriage or school district reorganization creates a situation which is in noncompliance with this policy, one employee will be transferred as soon as practicable to a position for which s/he is qualified.

The Superintendent will monitor all employment and assignment activities to ensure compliance with this policy. Exceptions will be granted in the best interest of the district and to avoid unfairness to an employee, but only with written permission of the Superintendent.

**Homework Guidelines for PreK-6:**

We, in the Westport Community Schools, believe that homework is an integral part of the total instructional program. Homework extends learning opportunities beyond the confines of the school day. We recognize that meaningful homework contributes toward building responsibility and self-discipline in children, helping children to develop good study habits and lifelong learning habits, and provides parent(s)/guardian(s) a greater appreciation of and an opportunity for involvement in their child's/children's schooling. We further believe that time

spent on homework directly influences the student's ability to meet the State and District's academic standards and to successfully complete classroom assessments. In a “standards-based” academic environment, it is expected that all children will meet all standards. We will strive to ensure that all children succeed! Toward that end, in partnership with parent(s)/guardian(s) we understand that homework may be assigned. Homework needs to be meaningful and grade and level appropriate to benefit the student. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be made aware of homework assignments, expectations, progress, etc. by their child's teacher(s) through agendas, notes, technology, etc. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are welcome to make an appointment with a teacher to discuss homework.

### **FOR GRADES PREK-6\*:**

- Pre-kindergarten may be given periodic activities to complete outside of school, at home.
- Kindergarten may be assigned homework no more than four times per week, requiring an average time of ten (10) minutes each night to complete.
- First grade may be assigned homework, requiring an average time of ten (10) to fifteen (15) minutes each night to complete.
- Second grade may be assigned homework, requiring an average time of twenty (20) minutes each night to complete.
- Third grade may be assigned homework, requiring an average time of thirty (30) minutes each night to complete.
- Fourth grade may be assigned homework, requiring an average time of forty (40) minutes each night to complete.
- Fifth grade may be assigned homework, requiring an average time of Fifty (50) minutes each night to complete.
- Sixth grade may be assigned homework, requiring an average time of Sixty (60) minutes each night to complete.

\*average times may differ because of individual student needs

### **PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S)**

Suggestions to promote Learning Readiness for Your Child(ren):

You can assist your child's learning progress by following a few simple processes:

Please ensure that your child gets a good night's rest on school nights (9-10 hours)

Please limit television and/or video game play

Please be sure to read with your child every week night and on weekends

Please provide a variety of reading material and/or attend a library weekly

Please be sure your child eats a good breakfast before coming to school

Please provide an appropriate place to study away from distractions and TV.

\*Homework may be graded and homework will not account for more than 10% of any final grade for the school year. Every effort will be made to ensure that all students understand the concepts and possess the skills needed to complete any homework assignment. With few exceptions i.e. Summer Reading, special pre-arranged projects, etc. homework will not be assigned and related testing will not be done during a day immediately following a long vacation. Teachers will maintain the discretion to determine meaningful homework assignments, length of assignments, etc.

### **Tutoring:**

The conflict of interest law places some restrictions on teachers tutoring students in their own districts, but does not forbid it. The following are the types of situations that may violate the law, as explained further below:

- A teacher recommends that one of her own students receive private tutoring, and then is paid to do the tutoring.
- A teacher privately tutors her current students.
- A teacher conducts a private tutoring business after hours in his public school classroom.
- A teacher is paid by her own district in a second job to provide tutoring.
- A teacher is paid to provide services that the district has found to be necessary for a child, for instance under an IEP.
- A teacher tells one of his students that he is available for private instruction over the summer.

**Providing Tutoring You Recommended:** A teacher cannot recommend that one of his or her own students get tutoring, and then be paid to tutor that same student in a second job. This would be a conflict of interest, because the teacher has a financial interest in providing those services. This restriction is imposed by M.G.L. 6 (charter school teachers), and M.G.L. 19 (school district teachers).

**Privately Tutoring Current Students:** A teacher may not tutor students who are currently in her class. Even if the teacher does not recommend that her current student receive private tutoring, the teacher should not tutor her current students as this raises issues under M.G.L. 23(b)(3), the appearance of a conflict section, M.G.L. 23(b)(2), the use of position section, and M.G.L.19, the financial interest section.

**Using School Resources for Private Tutoring:** A teacher cannot use his position to get unwarranted privileges for himself or to give them to anyone else. This restriction is imposed by M.G.L. 23(b)(2). For example, a teacher cannot use school resources such as classrooms or materials in connection with a private tutoring business. A public school employee cannot use a school or district website to advertise private tutoring services. A school cannot send home brochures for a particular tutoring service with the children. The only exception to this is that a district may, if it chooses, create a policy permitting the use of its resources in specified circumstances by anyone (teachers or non-teachers) who meets its objective and reasonable criteria. For example, a district could create a policy under which it will list on its website any provider of private tutoring services that meets stated criteria. Any such listing, however, should include a disclaimer that the district is not endorsing any private tutoring service

**Tutoring Paid for by the District:** Apart from their primary employment (which is viewed as a contract for conflict of interest purposes), teachers and other public employees are not allowed to have a financial interest in a contract with an agency at their same level of government, unless an exemption applies. This means that a teacher cannot have a second paid position with her school district or her charter school unless there is an applicable exemption, because the second paid position is a financial interest in a municipal or state contract. This restriction is imposed by M.G.L. 7 (charter school teachers) and M.G.L. 20 (school district

teachers). These sections make it impossible for full-time teachers to tutor in their own district if the district is going to pay for the tutoring (as may be the case, for example, with SES services). A district that wishes to be able to pay its teachers directly to perform tutoring must include a provision in the teachers' collective bargaining agreement providing a set amount of extra pay for tutoring by teachers that will be included in the teachers' regular paychecks. This solves the problem because then teachers only have a financial interest in one contract (that is, their primary employment, which is governed by the collective bargaining agreement). This part of the law applies less restrictively to some part-time employees.

**Tutoring Required by District:** Teachers and other public employees may not be paid by or act for others in matters that are of direct and substantial interest to their public employers. Where a district has determined that a particular child needs tutoring, that is a matter of direct and substantial interest to the district. Consequently, a teacher who works for the district cannot be paid privately to provide that tutoring. For example, if tutoring is required as part of an IEP, a teacher in the district may not accept payment from the student's family to provide that tutoring. The teacher is likewise prohibited from communicating with his own school or district on behalf of a private tutoring program. This restriction is imposed by M.G.L. 4 and 17. These provisions apply less restrictively to some part-time employees. A district paying its own teachers directly to provide tutoring pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement by including tutoring-related compensation in their regular paychecks does not create a problem under this section, because the employees are not being paid by someone other than their employer.

**Approaching Students or Parents for Work:** Teachers and other public employees may not initiate private business relationships with persons under their authority pursuant to M.G.L. 23(b)(2). This means that a teacher may not approach a student, or the student's parents, seeking private tutoring work. A teacher may provide tutoring when the relationship is initiated by the parents or a student, but, if the student is, or in the future may be, under the teacher's authority, the teacher will need to do a written disclosure. **(DISCLOSURE OF APPEARANCE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST AS REQUIRED BY G. L. c. 268A, § 23(b)(3))**

**School District Policies Prohibiting Private Tutoring:** A school district may adopt policies that are more restrictive than the conflict of interest law. For example, a school district may choose to adopt a policy prohibiting teachers from privately tutoring any students in the same school in which they teach or in the same school district in which they work. In that situation, the tutoring would be prohibited, even if it doing so would otherwise be permissible under the conflict of interest law.

In sum, a teacher who is approached by parents of a student in his district but who is not one of his own students, and is asked to tutor their child, for payment by the parents, and using no public resources in connection with that tutoring, may do so. Teachers, however, should avoid tutoring in any of the situations described above that would raise issues under the conflict of interest law or district policy.

**Supervision and Evaluation:**

In order that there is no conflict of interest in the supervision and evaluation of employees, at no time may any administrator supervise and/or evaluate any employee who is a member of that supervisor's family or immediate family.

**Maintaining of Confidential Information:**

It is hereby the policy of the School Committee that no employee of the district will compromise confidential information. The policy affects all employees of the district who come in contact with confidential information, regardless of whether they have or have not the status of confidential employees.

**Former Employees & Restrictions on Future Employment:**

M.G.L. 268A: 5 (state employees), 12 (county employees) and 18 (municipal employees) place restrictions on public employees after they leave public service. In addition, these sections of the conflict of interest law place restrictions on the business partners of current and former public employees.

**The Forever Ban** - M.G.L. 268:5(a), 12(a) and 18(a) prohibit a former public employee from ever receiving compensation from, or acting as agent or attorney for, anyone other than the state/county/municipality, in connection with any particular matter in which the state/county/municipality is a party or has a direct and substantial interest and in which the employee at any time previously participated as a public employee.

If a state/county/municipal employee at any time participated in a particular matter as a public employee, he may never receive compensation from a private employer or act as its agent in connection with the same matter after he leaves his public position.

Under these sections, two basic questions must be asked by a former public employee concerning contemplated private work: (1) what did the employee participate in as a public employee? and (2) is the proposed private work in connection with any particular matter in which the employee participated in his public position?

**The One-Year Ban** - M.G.L. 268:5(b), 12(b) and 18(b) prohibit a former public employee from within one year after leaving public service, acting as an agent or attorney for anyone other than his public employer, before any state/county/municipal agency or state/county/municipal court in connection with any particular matter in which the state/county/municipality is a party or has a direct and substantial interest, for which the public employee had official responsibility within the two years before he left state/county/municipal government

**Confidential Information & Former Public Employees** - Section 23(c) prohibits a current or former public employee from accepting other employment or engaging in any business or professional activity which will require him to disclose confidential information which he has gained by reason of his official position or authority and from improperly disclosing such confidential materials or using such information to further his private interests. See EC-COI-83-154; 84-9.

## **Gifts To and Solicitations by Staff - GBEC**

An employee will not accept or solicit any gift, favor, service, or other benefit that could reasonably be construed to influence the employee's discharge of assigned duties and responsibilities.

Occasionally, a student or a class or group of students may want to give a token "thank you" gift to a particular teacher or staff member. Although staff may accept gifts as a token of appreciation, accepting any gift(s) over \$49.99 will be considered unprofessional and inappropriate on the part of the teacher or staff member.

## **Copyright Compliance**

The Westport School Committee prohibits illegal duplication of copyrighted materials in any form within the school district. Any employee who willfully disregards this policy and the law assumes all liability and responsibility for such action.

Copyrighted materials, whether print, non-print or computer software, may be duplicated only when such reproduction meets "fair use" standards (*Section 107, P.L. 94-553 and P.L. 96-517*) or when written permission for duplication has been obtained from the copyright holder.

All employees will be expected to adhere to the provisions of Public Law 96-517, Section 7(b) which amends Section 117 of Title 17 of the United States Code to allow for the making of back-up of computer programs. This states that "...it is not an infringement for the owner of a copy of a computer program to make or authorize the making of the copy or adaptation of that computer program provided:

- that such a new copy or adaptation is created as an essential step in the utilization of the computer program in conjunction with the machine and that is used in no other manner, or
- that such a new copy and adaptation is for archival purposes only and that all archival copies are destroyed in the event that continued possession of the computer program should cease to be rightful."

## **Online Fundraising And Solicitations - Crowdfunding - GBEBD**

School District employees shall comply with all provisions relating to online solicitations and the use of crowdfunding services for school--related purposes as well as all applicable laws, regulations and district policies. Crowdfunding services are defined as any online service used for the solicitation of goods, services, or money from a large number of people via the internet or other electronic network. Examples include GoFundme, Kickstarter, Indiegogo, YouCaring, and DonorsChoose. No online fundraising may occur except as provided below:



- The Principal of each school shall approve all online fundraising activities within their buildings prior to any employee posting any such fundraising solicitation.
- The Superintendent shall have final authority to approve any online fundraising activities by school district employees.
- Any solicitation shall be for educational purposes only (field trips, supplies, supplemental materials, books, etc.).
- The solicitation of personal items (coats, nutritional snacks, etc.) shall only be to benefit students directly.
- All solicitations for technology software or hardware shall require the prior written approval of the Director of Technology or designee.
- Employees may not use shared email addresses that have been provided for the purposes of communicating about students and may not directly solicit from people with whom they have authority over or with whom they have official dealings (ie. the solicitation cannot be directed to parents in your class explicitly).
- Employees may only use crowdfunding services that send the items or proceeds solicited by the employee directly to the employee's school or to the school district.

Employees using crowdfunding services shall periodically disclose in writing to the Superintendent the names of all individuals whom the employee has directly solicited in any manner including but not limited to oral, written, or electronic solicitation. The Superintendent shall maintain these disclosures as public records available for public review.

Unless otherwise approved by the Superintendent in writing, all goods and/or proceeds solicited and received through any online solicitation shall become the property of the School Committee, and not of the individual employee who solicited the item(s) or funds. The employee is prohibited from taking any such item(s) or funds to another school or location, without the Superintendent's written approval.

### **Digital Technology - IJKA**

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 Digital Technology Responsible 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 may result in loss of access to district digital technology and/or disciplinary/legal action. It is the sole responsibility of each staff member to read the Digital Technology Responsible Use Policy in its entirety and be aware of the risks and consequences.

- The Westport Community Schools network is intended for educational purposes.
- All activity over the network or using district technologies may be monitored and retained.
- Access to online content via the network may be restricted in accordance with our policies and federal regulations, such as the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA).

- Students and staff are expected to follow the same rules for good behavior and respectful conduct online as offline.
- Misuse of school resources can result in disciplinary action.
- Westport Community Schools makes a reasonable effort to ensure the safety and security of staff and students online, but will not be held accountable for any harm or damages that result from use of technology at school.
- Users of the district network or other technologies are expected to alert IT staff immediately of any concerns for safety or security.

### **Monitoring & No Expectation of Privacy**

Westport Community Schools information technology resources, including Internet access and email, are the property of the school district. As such, the school district retains the right to inspect any user's computer and the files contained therein. The firewall between the Internet and the network automatically checks all data moving between the network and the Internet, identifying the sending and receiving destinations.

Individual computer and workstation activity is logged and monitored, and any files created or received by users, any messages sent or received by users, and any Internet websites accessed by users are subject to monitoring at all times. In addition, any use of the school district's information technology resources is subject to monitoring by Westport Community Schools at any time without notice and notwithstanding any password(s).

Therefore, users should have no expectation of privacy in any access or use of the school district's information technology resources, including, but not limited to, data, incoming and outgoing emails and attachments, Internet websites accessed or viewed, and files downloaded. In fact, the mere deletion of emails, data, or files may not eliminate them from the system.

Use of the Westport Community School's information technology resources constitutes consent to monitoring and is conditioned upon strict adherence to the school district's Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy

### **Recycling & Waste Prevention Town Policy**

Whereas, The Town of Westport can make more efficient use of natural resources by maximizing recycling and prevention waste whenever possible, and;

Whereas, the Selectmen are determined to strengthen the role of the Town as an environmentally conscious and concerned consumer and should serve as a model in this regard for private and other public institutions, and;

Whereas, the use of recycled and environmentally preferred products and services by the Town can spur private sector development of new technologies and the use of such products, thereby creating new business and employment opportunities, reducing solid waste volume and disposal costs.

Now, therefore, we, the Westport Board of Selectmen, institute the following policy:

The head of each town department should incorporate waste prevention and recycling in daily operations and should work to increase and expand markets for recovered materials through greater preference and demand for such products and by reviewing current purchasing and whenever possible and cost-effective changing to recycled and postconsumer products.

Consistent with the policies established at the Federal level by President William Clinton, Town departments shall comply with policies set forth within this Executive Order for the acquisition and use of environmentally preferable products and services and implement cost-effective procurement programs favoring the purchase of these products and services.

All contractors working for the Town of Westport, when submitting any report or document, shall be required to use recycled paper with a percentage of post-consumer waste no less than 20% and the report or document, when feasible, shall be printed on both sides of the paper.

### **Alcohol-Free Workplace**

In addition to comply with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 and it's implementing regulations. Employees of Westport Community Schools will not bring in, promote, gift, display, or use alcohol regardless of the purpose. Employees will refrain from using alcohol containers for transportation purposes or enhancing quality of nonalcoholic products.

Westport Community Schools recognize that the use of alcohol and the problems associated with it are becoming increasingly commonplace in our society and among youth. Westport Community Schools also recognize that the use of alcohol may also lead to problems in daily living. When staff members are identified as using any of these substances, prompt and appropriate intervention steps will be taken to assist these individuals to address the issues of alcohol and drug use. Westport Community Schools also recognize that a person's use of alcohol can lead to the illness of chemical dependency. Recovery is possible if such dependency is identified early and treated appropriately. Westport Community Schools regards alcoholism and dependency as it does any other chronic illness. Our primary purpose is to eradicate any moral judgment or blame that would only continue to stigmatize those with such problems and make their recovery difficult or impossible. For these reasons, the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of alcohol in the workplace, on school premises or as part of any school-sponsored activities is strictly prohibited.

### **Drug-Free Workplace - GBEC**

The school district is a drug-free workplace in accordance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 and it's implementing regulations. The school district will:

1. Notify all employees that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance, is prohibited in the district's workplace and specify the actions that will be taken against employees for violations of such prohibitions.
2. Establish a drug-free awareness program to inform employees about the dangers of drug abuse in the workplace; the district's policy of maintaining a drug-free

workplace; any available drug counseling, rehabilitation, and employee assistance programs; and the penalty that may be imposed on employees for drug abuse violations occurring in the workplace.

3. Make it a requirement that each employee whose employment is funded by a federal grant be given a copy of the statement as required.
4. Notify the employee in the required statement that as a condition of employment under the grant, the employee will abide by the terms of the statement and will notify the district of any criminal drug statute conviction s/he sustains for a violation occurring in the workplace no later than five working days after such conviction.
5. Notify the federal agency within ten working days after receiving notice from an employee or otherwise receiving notice of such conviction.
6. Take one of the following actions within 30 calendar days of receiving notice with respect to any employee who is so convicted: a) take appropriate personnel action against such an employee, up to and including termination; or b) require such employee to participate satisfactorily in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by federal, state, or local health law enforcement, or other appropriate agency.

### **Tobacco-Free Schools - GBED**

The use of tobacco and tobacco products, including, but not limited to: cigarettes, cigars, little cigars, chewing tobacco, pipe tobacco and snuff and electronic cigarettes, electronic cigars, electronic pipes or other similar products that rely on vaporization or aerosolization, is prohibited in all school buildings, on school grounds, and at all off-campus school-sponsored events. This policy applies to staff, students, and guests of the school department. The no-smoking policy is applicable on all days of the week, twenty-four hours per day.

The use of school buildings and grounds by non-school groups will be permitted to the extent that such individuals or organizations are willing to respect this no-smoking policy.

For further information regarding the hazards of smoking or for information on no-cost and low-cost smoking cessation programs, contact Human Resources, Westport Community Schools, 17 Main Road, Westport, MA at 508-636-1140, or by fax at 508-636-1145.

### **Participation in Political Activities - GBI**

The School Committee opposes those actions which transform the schools into arenas for political activity, including the espousing of any political party or of any candidate for public office. It is deemed that such activity can and does create friction within the school and thus is disruptive to the educational processes and programs of the school.

No employee will, during her or his employment day, and on school property, influence or attempt to influence any pupil, teacher, parent, or other persons to vote for or against any candidate or political party, or use any property of the School Committee or any property

located on School Committee premises for the purpose of espousing any particular candidate, political party, referendum vote, or Town Meeting article.

### **Personnel Records and Files - GBJ**

The Superintendent will be the records manager for personnel files and will have the overall responsibility for maintaining and preserving the confidentiality of the files. The Superintendent may, however, designate another official to perform the duties of records management on the understanding that this official is to be held responsible for granting or denying access to records on the basis of these guidelines.

A staff member may have access to her/his own personal file at all reasonable times during regular office hours with an appointment. No information is to be removed from the staff member's file without the express consent of the Superintendent nor can the file be removed from the view of a designated central office employee.

### **School Committee - GBD**

#### **Committee Communication with Staff:**

The School Committee wishes to maintain open channels of communications between itself and the staff. The basic line of communications will, however, be through the Superintendent.

#### **Communications to the School Committee:**

All communications or reports to the Committee or any of its subcommittees from Principals, supervisors, teachers, or other staff members will be submitted through the Superintendent. Staff members are reminded that Committee meetings are public meetings. As such, they provide an excellent opportunity to observe first-hand the Committee's deliberations on issues.

#### **Visits to Schools:**

Individual School Committee members interested in visiting schools or classrooms will inform the Superintendent who will make arrangements for visitations through the Principals of the various schools. Such visits will be regarded as informal expressions of interest in school affairs and not as "inspections" or visits for supervisory or administrative purposes. Official visits by Committee members will be carried on only under Committee authorization.

### **Background Checks - ADDA**

It shall be the policy of the Westport Community Schools to obtain all available Federal and State background information through both SAFIS (Statewide Applicant Fingerprint Identification Services) and CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information), as allowed by law, of all employees and prospective employees of the school department including any individual who regularly provides school related transportation (including taxi cab drivers) to children. Any fees associated with such background checks shall be the responsibility of the individual. The Superintendent, Human Resources, or their certified designees shall complete a CORI check on all employees every two years and one year for anyone who is not an employee but may have direct and unmonitored contact with children.

## **Restraint Policy – JKAA**

In order to ensure that every student participating in Westport Community School activities is free from unreasonable use of physical restraint, the School Committee directs that physical restraint be used in accordance with 603 CMR 46.00. Physical restraint (hereinafter called “restraint”) shall be limited to the use of such reasonable force as is necessary to protect a student or another member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm. Restraint shall be administered with extreme caution, only in emergency situation, and after other less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate.

Only school personnel who have received training pursuant to 603 CMS 46.03(2) OR 603 CMR 46.03(3) shall administer restraint on students. Whenever possible, at least one adult who does not participate in the restraint shall witness the administration of a restraint. Personnel administering a restraint shall only use the amount of force necessary to protect the student or others from physical injury or harm.

## **McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act – Excerpt**

The goal of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act is to ensure that each homeless child or youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other children and youths.

School districts must immediately enroll homeless students in school, even if they do not have the documents usually required for enrollment – such as school records, medical records or proof of residency.

**A complete copy of this Act is available on the DESE website**

## **Field Trips - IJOA**

The Committee will only approve field trips that are curriculum related. Such trips will be approved only if the students at the grade level have completed the necessary Time and Learning Hours required by the Department of Education, and applicants provide proof of proper adherence to School Committee guidelines for adult to student ratio and demonstrate consistency with Westport Community School district curriculum standards.

No field trip that includes late night or overnight travel may be taken without prior School Committee approval. Overnight trips should be appropriate to the grade level and should offer significant educational benefits to students. Carriers must be licensed with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). All Chaperones attending the field trip must have a completed SAFIS and CORI on file with Human Resources prior to the start of the field trip.

# **EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS**

## **Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity - AC**

It is the policy of the Westport Community Schools to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from harassment, violence or discrimination based on 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 district will require all persons, agencies, vendors, contractors and other persons and organizations doing business with or performing services for the district to subscribe to all applicable federal and state laws, executive orders, rules and regulations pertaining to contract compliance.

In keeping with the principles of equal opportunity and nondiscrimination, it is the policy of the Westport Community Schools to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from harassment, violence or discrimination based on 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.

## **Title VI, Title IX, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964**

The School Committee complies with Title IX and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and all requirements imposed by or pursuant to the regulations of the Massachusetts Department of Education. It is the policy of the Westport Community Schools to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from harassment, violence or discrimination based on 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.

## **Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Ethnicity and Race**

Racial or ethnic bias is a violation of law, when it infringes on the basic rights of any person. The School Committee is aware that racism and ethno cultural discrimination are societal problems. However, it realizes that it has a key role in achieving the objective of racial equity within its jurisdiction and in contributing to positive relationships among people of different backgrounds in the wider society.



## **Harassment**

### Chapter 265: Crimes against the person

- (a) Stalking - Section 43. (a) Whoever (1) willfully and maliciously engages in a knowing pattern of conduct or series of acts over a period of time directed at a specific person which seriously alarms or annoys that person and would cause a reasonable person to suffer substantial emotional distress, and (2) makes a threat with the intent to place the person in imminent fear of death or bodily injury, shall be guilty of the crime of stalking and shall be punished by imprisonment in the state prison for not more than 5 years or by a fine of not more than \$1,000, or imprisonment in the house of correction for not more than 2 1/2 years or by both such fine and imprisonment. The conduct, acts or threats described in this subsection shall include, but not be limited to, conduct, acts or threats conducted by mail or by use of a telephonic or telecommunication device or electronic communication device including, but not limited to, any device that transfers 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.
- (b) Criminal Harassment - Section 43A. Whoever willfully and maliciously engages in a knowing pattern of conduct or series of acts over a period of time directed at a specific person, which seriously alarms that person and would cause a reasonable person to suffer substantial emotional distress, shall be guilty of the crime of criminal harassment and shall be punished by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than 2 1/2 years or by a fine of not more than \$1,000, or by both such fine and imprisonment. The conduct or acts described in this paragraph shall include, but not be limited to, conduct or acts conducted by mail or by use of a telephonic or telecommunication device or electronic communication device including, but not limited to, any device that transfers 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. Section 43A. (a) Whoever willfully and maliciously engages in a knowing pattern of conduct or series of acts over a period of time directed at a specific person, which seriously alarms that person and would cause a reasonable person to suffer substantial emotional distress, shall be guilty of the crime of criminal harassment and shall be punished by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than 2 1/2 years or by a fine of not more than \$1,000, or by both such fine and imprisonment. The conduct or acts described in this paragraph shall include, but not be limited to, conduct or acts conducted by mail or by use of a telephonic or telecommunication device or electronic communication device including, but not limited to, any device that transfers 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.

## **Harassment Complaint Procedure**

Employees or applicants who believe they have been subjected to sexual harassment or any other unlawful employment discrimination because of their sex should immediately report the basis of such belief to the Superintendent of Schools who serves as the district's EEO/AA Officer. The complaint should be in writing, stating completely the basis for the complaint, the names of the persons involved, and the dates of any specific incidents. Should the Superintendent be the complainant or the source of the complaint, or should there be a conflict of interest, the complaints should be made directly to the School Committee Chairperson. All complaints will be investigated immediately. Upon completion of the investigation, the Superintendent will take any appropriate action. The School Committee shall have jurisdiction to take appropriate action under this policy only when the Superintendent is either the complainant or the source of the complaint.

The Superintendent or a designee will promptly investigate every complaint of harassment. Such investigation may include discussions with all involved parties, identification and questioning of witnesses, and other appropriate actions. If the investigator determines that harassment has occurred, s/he will take action to end the harassment and ensure that it is not repeated. Steps which may be taken may include, among others, warnings, transfers, suspension, probation, and discharge. It is unlawful to retaliate against, or punish, any person who files a complaint of sexual harassment or who cooperates in an investigation of a complaint of sexual harassment.

The Westport Community Schools will not tolerate any retaliation against any person who files such complaint or who cooperates in an investigation into possible harassment. Disciplinary action will be taken against any employee or student who engages in unlawful retaliation. Any individual who is dissatisfied with the results or progress of an investigation may discuss his/her dissatisfaction directly with the Superintendent of Schools. The Westport Community Schools urges all employees to bring any concerns or complaints of harassment to our attention so that we can resolve the issue.

The state agency responsible for enforcing the laws prohibiting harassment is the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination ("MCAD"). The MCAD is located at One Ashburton Place in Boston, Massachusetts. The agency responsible for enforcing federal laws prohibiting harassment is the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The EEOC is located at One Congress Street, Boston, Massachusetts.

## **Requirement to Report Educator Misconduct**

As a reminder, Massachusetts Superintendents are required to report to the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education in writing whenever a licensed educator is dismissed, not renewed or resigns after committing misconduct that might warrant revocation or other limitation of the educator's license. The reporting requirement is designed to ensure that, as the licensing authority for Massachusetts educators, the Commissioner is made aware of misconduct that may call into question the "sound moral character" that state law requires of

every licensed educator. The grounds that may trigger license action are set forth in the Educator Licensure Regulations at 603 CMR 7.14(8)(a)

The grounds include conviction of certain crimes, loss of another professional license, demonstrated unfitness, and gross misconduct or negligence in the conduct of the license holder's professional duties. Please note that the regulation does not require reporting of dismissals or non-renewals for reasons of poor job performance or other factors that do not implicate the grounds for license action in 603 CMR 7.14 (8)(a).

The state regulation, 603 CMR 7.14 (8)(h), reads as follows:

(h) Administrators' Obligation to Report. Any administrator who has dismissed, declined to renew the employment of, or obtained the resignation of any educator for any of the reasons cited in 603 CMR 7.14 (8) (a) shall report in writing such resignation or dismissal and the reason therefore to the Commissioner within 30 days. This obligation to report also applies when an administrator acquires relevant information after an educator's dismissal, resignation, or non-renewal. Failure to make such reports shall be grounds on which the Commissioner may revoke the administrator's license.

Please note that this reporting requirement is separate from the duty of a school administrator or other mandated reporter under the child abuse law, Mass. General Laws c. 119, § 51A, to report suspected child abuse or neglect immediately to the Department of Children and Families (formerly called the Department of Social Services), regardless of whether the suspected perpetrator is an educator.

# **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

## **Staff Health**

Through its overall safety program and various policies pertaining to school personnel, the School Committee shall seek to insure the safety of employees during working hours and assist them in the maintenance of good health. It shall encourage all its employees to maintain good health and practice good health habits.

Under the following circumstances, the School Committee may require physical examinations of its employees.

### **Special Examinations:**

The School Committee recognizes that an individual's medical diagnosis is privileged information between the patient and medical professionals. However, whenever a staff member's medical condition is such that it interferes with her/his ability to perform her/his duties or there is a risk to the health and safety of others, the district has a responsibility to take necessary steps to evaluate the employee's condition and make appropriate employment decisions.

If the employee has a physical and/or mental health condition, disease or illness which may interfere with her/his ability to perform her/his duties or which may pose a significant risk to the health, safety or welfare of the employee or others, the School Committee may request physical examinations and/or mental health examinations of the employee. The school district and the employee shall select a mutually agreeable medical professional to conduct such examination and the School Committee shall pay for such examination.

### **Communicable Diseases:**

An employee with an acute, common communicable disease shall not report to work during the period of time in which s/he is contagious/infectious. The district reserves the right to require a physician's statement prior to the employee's return to work.

Any employee who becomes aware that s/he has a long-term, communicable disease, which, although life-threatening, poses little risk of transmission in a school setting, is encouraged to report to a designated school administrator that s/he is afflicted with the disease. In all instances, district personnel shall respect the individual's right to privacy and treat any medical diagnosis as confidential information. Special precautions should be taken to protect information regarding an employee's health condition in order to prevent instances of disclosure that may invade the personal privacy of the employee.

The school district shall endeavor to treat these employees in a fair, non-discriminatory, and confidential manner consistent with the district's legal obligations. Federal and state law mandate, pursuant to provisions protecting handicapped individuals, which such employees shall not be discriminated against on the basis of their handicaps and that, if it becomes necessary, some reasonable accommodations be made to enable qualified individuals to continue work.

## **Personal Security and Safety**

Any assault on a staff member will be promptly reported to the immediate supervisor who will report to the Superintendent or her/his other designated representative. In the case of a student assaulting a teacher, the student will be suspended pending a parent, teacher, and principal conference. The district will render all reasonable assistance to the staff member in connection with handling the incident by law enforcement and judicial authorities.

## **Workers' Compensation**

The district will provide Workers' Compensation insurance for all employees. Employees who are injured at work and subsequently receive Workers' Compensation benefits may supplement the benefit pay with deductions from available sick or vacation leave until such leave is exhausted.

## **Safety and Security**

Safety and Violence Prevention Education, as implemented in various curriculum areas, is the responsibility of each building principal and classroom teacher. The building principal is responsible for a comprehensive safety and violence prevention education program in the building including peer relations, conflict resolutions, school climate. The building principal will provide teachers with guidelines describing safety and security procedures in the various areas. The classroom teacher is responsible for obeying and implementing all safety and security policies and for establishing and maintaining the practice of good safety techniques in all instructional activities.

Safety and security inspection of the facilities, equipment, and materials is the responsibility of the building principal. The building principal is responsible for the overall safety inspection of the building. The building principal will conduct an inspection of the physical facilities, equipment, and materials in the building at least annually. The principal will complete the inspection with the Head of Maintenance & Facilities. A safety inspection check list will be completed. One copy of the safety/security inspection checklist will be submitted to the Superintendent's office and one copy will be filed in the principal's office. The Head of Maintenance & Facilities is responsible for correcting hazardous and unhealthful conditions listed on the safety inspection checklist recommendation sheet completed by the principals.

Safety and health conditions relating to buildings and equipment are the joint responsibility of the building principal, the Head of Maintenance and Facilities, and the Supervisor of Custodians. Extremely hazardous, unhealthful, or unsafe conditions requiring immediate attention should be reported by calling the office of the Head of Maintenance & Facilities. Facilities personnel will assign the highest priority for immediate correction of the hazard.

Hazardous, unhealthful, or unsafe conditions not requiring immediate attention will be identified by the building principal, Supervisor of Custodians, or Head of Maintenance & Facilities. A written request form for alteration to building or site, service, or safety will be submitted to the Head of Maintenance & Facilities.

A high level of building security will be maintained at all times through secure entrance locking systems at all buildings to restrict public access to schools when school is in session. A visitor and staff identification program will be maintained at all schools and at school offices.

Health, safety, and security guidelines for the district are the responsibility of the Superintendent and include:

- Monitoring reports of the Health Advisory Committee at each building and taking appropriate action as recommended.
- Insuring that system resources are appropriate to maintain meaningful safety and security education programs.
- Insuring that school plant facilities meet appropriate standards of health and safety.

### **Automated External Defibrillators (AED)**

Automated External Defibrillators are available in public areas of every school building and are accessible to the general public in the event of a cardiac emergency in the building when school is not in session. AED's are located in the Main Lobby of every school. The Westport Junior/Senior High School AED has an additional AED located outside the Gymnasium. The Athletic Trainer for Westport Community Schools also has an AED which is not under the school nurses care for use during school sponsored events.

### **School Safety Program**

Every reasonable precaution will be taken to prevent accidents, and to protect the safety of all students, employees, and others present on school property or at school-sponsored programs and events.

The School Committee requires that staff members and students adhere to recommended safety practices and behaviors as they pertain to the school plan, special types and areas of instruction, student transportation, school sports, occupational safety, classroom safety, etc. It will be the responsibility of the Superintendent to see that appropriate staff members are kept informed of current state and local requirements relating to fire prevention, civil defense, sanitation, public health, and occupational safety.

School personnel are required to be particularly observant of conditions that affect the health and safety of children in classrooms, on the playgrounds, or in any other areas where children work or play. All staff members will take appropriate precautions to protect students and other personnel from accident, injury, or health hazard, and will concern themselves with ongoing health and safety instruction. Following an incident, staff are expected to complete a written report within 24 hours to their immediate supervisor.

### **Accident Reports**

The Town of Westport requires that an accident report be filed for every accident that takes place on school property, or that involves a school vehicle, students or staff on school-sponsored trips, or staff members on authorized school business trips. Such accident reports are required whether or not there is physical injury or property damage.

All student accidents on the way to and from school and on school property will be reported to the Superintendent through the principal. Any on the job accidents involving employees will also be reported in a timely manner, **within 24 hours of the accident**.

For accidents involving students, the teacher responsible for the student when the accident occurred will file an accident report with the principal on the same day. School personnel will report other accidents occurring off school grounds at school-sponsored events or involving school transportation vehicles within 24 hours to the school nurse and principal.

Accident report forms provided to each school principal will be used to document information that (1) might be helpful in preventing similar accidents in the future; (2) is needed for filing insurance claims; (3) might be important in case of litigation.

### **Emergency Evacuations**

More than one type of incident can cause a school building to be evacuated: fire, bomb threat, civil emergencies, natural disaster, and so on.

Special evacuation drill activities related to fire safety or other emergencies will be planned and implemented by each principal in coordination with the central office and/or civil authorities to insure orderly movement of students to the safest available space in the event of a true emergency or disaster.

A clearly identified evacuation plan will be developed and communicated to all personnel. The Superintendent will insure that student evacuation procedures are regularly reviewed.

### **Disaster Plans**

In recognizing the responsibility for the safety of its employees and pupils, the School Committee sets forth the following statements in regard to policy in the event of disaster.

It is imperative that pupils, staff, and the public be protected in case of emergency and that the educational process of the school be carried out with the least amount of disruption.

Common sense should indicate the reaction of school personnel to emergency situations. All situations cannot be neatly defined into a category for which hard and fast guidelines can be drawn.

Emergency procedures should be designed to give guidelines to those having responsibility for the safety of pupils, school staff, and others who are present in school facilities.

The Superintendent has the responsibility for developing the building disaster plans and for the dissemination of emergency procedures. In addition, s/he must set up a designated chain of command so the safety procedures are carried out in event of her/his absence from the district. If and when the Board of Selectmen declare a state of emergency, the Superintendent will be personally notified by a Board member and will proceed to prepare the school site for Civil Defense occupation.



During periods of disaster or state of emergencies, appropriate personnel will be on-call for additional duty as required.

### **Evacuation Procedures**

In the event of a building evacuation due to disaster, equipment malfunction, or other emergency, the school principal will take the following steps:

1. Remove staff and students to a safe, nearby campus location, as appropriate.
2. Notify organization which has regulatory or emergency functions.
3. Notify central office and designate one staff member to serve as communications liaison with central office.
4. Make a determination as to the need to house students at a supervised off-campus, safe location.
5. Notify television and radio stations if dismissal of students is appropriate under the circumstances. A parent phone tree may also be activated in which case students whose parents can come for them may be dismissed. Otherwise, students will remain at the designated location and will be dismissed to school transportation vehicles at the standard dismissal time.

### **Bomb Threats**

The School Committee will take action against any individual who seriously disrupts or threatens to disrupt the educational process. Of particular concern to the Committee is the making of a threat that a bomb or other explosive device has been placed in a school.

Therefore, the Committee directs that any and all legal remedies and actions be taken against any person apprehended and proven to have made such a threat. Further, the Committee directs the Superintendent to implement the procedures prescribed in the Student Code of Conduct against any student of the district who has been apprehended and proven to have made such a threat. As detailed in the Student Code of Conduct this action may be a recommendation by the principal, following due process hearings that the student so charged will be excluded from school for either the balance of the semester or for the balance of the school year or permanent exclusion.

In the event of a call or notice to the effect that a bomb has been placed in a school or any other building or establishment, the following procedures are recommended:

- Immediate notification to fire and police departments and the central office.
- A search of the building or premises should be conducted under the direction of the senior officer present from either the fire or police departments.
- Evacuation of the school or building(s) or relocation of staff and students.

If a thorough search has been conducted and nothing found, the principal of the school will make the decision on re-entry or relocation/dismissal of students in consultation with the Superintendent.

If, in the search of the premises, any strange, foreign or suspicious object is found, the object should not be moved by school personnel. The object should be removed by the proper authorities. Once an object is identified as a potential explosive device, the principal should evacuate the school or relocate staff and students within the school to a safe location.

**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**” notification 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.

**Radio Stations**

WSAR	1480
WPRO	630
WSNE-FM	93.3
WHJY-FM	94.1
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
		NECN

**Security**

The School Committee expects the Superintendent to develop and implement procedures designed to ensure the security of school property for the protection of students, school personnel, and citizens. Security includes not only maintenance of a safe building, but also protection from fire hazards and faulty equipment, and safe practices in the use of electrical, plumbing, heating and air-conditioning equipment.

**School Access:**

All entrances to the school will be kept locked. Entrance to the school will be limited to a door equipped with an electronic answering device, video system, and electronic entry system.

Access to school buildings after regular school hours will be limited to personnel whose work requires it. An adequate key control system, which will limit access to authorized personnel

and will safeguard against the potential of entrance to buildings in the hands of unauthorized persons, will be developed by the Head of Maintenance and Facilities.

Use of school buildings by individuals and/or organizations will be restricted to those who have received proper clearance and authorization.

**Staff I.D.'s:**

All staff are required to wear district-issued staff I.D.'s at all times on school property. Staff I.D.'s also act as access to each designated building and therefore must be immediately reported to Human Resources in the event the I.D. is lost or stolen. Staff I.D.'s are not to be shared and each staff member is responsible for the use of their I.D.

**Personal Identification and Right to Eject:**

School personnel may require identification of any person on school property. Also, the principal or her/his designee may refuse to allow persons with no legitimate business to enter school grounds and/or may eject any person from school grounds if that person refuses to leave peacefully upon request.

**Violations of State or Local Law:**

Persons who violate state or local laws including but not limited to trespassing on school grounds, smoking on school grounds, damage to school property, or loitering, will be reported to school authorities as well as the Westport Police Department.

**Access to Buildings**

Unauthorized persons, including employees, found in restricted areas of school buildings, and in buildings after school hours, may be reported to the Westport Police.

Individuals who attend functions or meetings of an organization or group are restricted to the immediate area where the activity is being held. Such individuals are not to enter other building areas.

Employees authorized to enter schools after hours and restricted areas will be limited to persons who have obvious need to enter, such as principals, maintenance personnel, and custodians. Employees must seek the building administrator's permission to be on premises when school is not otherwise in session.

**Vandalism**

The school district's buildings and grounds are built and maintained with community tax dollars. Therefore, the School Committee urges everyone to cooperate in reporting any incidents of vandalism to community property as well as the name of the person(s) believes to be responsible. Each employee of the district will report to the principal of the school every incident of vandalism known to her/him and, if known, the names of those responsible.

The Superintendent, the principal, or their designee is authorized to sign a criminal complaint against persons suspected of vandalism against school property.

Those who willfully or maliciously destroy school property through vandalism or arson, or who create a hazard to the safety of other people on school property may be suspended, expelled, dismissed, or referred to law enforcement authorities.

It is the intent of the School Committee to seek damages as permitted by law from students (and/or their parents or guardians) who vandalize school property. Furthermore, the School Committee reserves the right to assign other appropriate forms of restitution to any student who has vandalized school property.

## **Food Services**

The Food Services Program will not be open to the general public. School employees and authorized visitors may participate in the Food Services Program at adult prices of \$4.00 (tax included)

### **Use of Kitchen:**

School kitchens and kitchen equipment will not be used by non-school personnel unless a Food Services employee is on duty in the kitchen. Organizations or groups requesting the use of the Food Services staff will be charged for the employee(s) salaries. Outside groups must have pre-approval to use Food Services facilities.

### **Rules and Regulations:**

All rules and regulations and policies of the district will be complied with by all groups or persons granted permission for use of Food Services facilities.

### **Storage of Food:**

Food and/or ingredients intended for personal use by employees will not be stored or processed in Food Services facilities. Food Services facilities are not available for personal use by employees. If outside groups need to use the facilities, pre-approved arrangements must be made in advance.

## **Telephone Service**

Office telephones may be used by staff members for making calls regarding students and other school business. They are not to be used for personal business calls except in cases of emergency.

## **Cell Phone Use**

School staff may use cell phones on prep or break times. Otherwise, cell phones should be off and stored safely and securely during the work day. Calls to a school employee should be made only through the school office or department head's office. The school district will not be responsible for lost or stolen cell phones and related equipment.

**SCHOOL FACULTY  
AND ADMINISTRATION**

## **Employment Practices**

All teachers and assistant principals who are assigned to one location (school) will be appointed only upon approval of the Superintendent. Should a person nominated by the principal be rejected by the Superintendent, it will be the principal's duty to make another nomination. All nurses, coaches, and teachers assigned to more than one school site will be appointed by the Superintendent.

The Superintendent will ensure that all persons recommended for employment are certified or certifiable as per Department of Education requirements, as well as the qualifications established for the position by the Committee. All candidates will be considered on the basis of their merits, qualifications, and the needs of the district. It is the policy of the Westport Community Schools to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from harassment, violence or discrimination based on 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.

### **Certification and Credentials:**

All instructional personnel will have an official application form, teaching certificates, transcripts or professional preparation, and records of experience recorded with the Superintendent of Schools. These records will attest to their qualification for the position to which they are appointed.

All teachers and other instructional professional personnel will be required to hold or be qualified to hold a certificate of Professional Teaching Status in compliance with the provision of the law or in accordance with the regulations of the Massachusetts Department of Education.

Obtaining and maintaining certificate status and maintaining a valid record thereof in the personnel office are the responsibilities of the applicant or employee, not of the school system or of any of its employees.

Failure to obtain or maintain a valid certificate and highly qualified status under NCLB will be cause for termination of employment.

### **Coaching Staff:**

All coaches of interscholastic and competitive/extracurricular sports must possess an "Interscholastic Coaching" certificate, or have successfully completed a college or university course on health and safety of participants (3 hours) and a cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) course either prior to or during their initial year of employment.

Each succeeding year, all coaches must attend an approved three (3) hour sports-related first aid training program.

## **Reappointment of Teachers**

As defined by M.G.L. 71: 41-42, teachers with fewer than three consecutive years of employment are not entitled to professional teacher status unless specifically recommended by the principal and approved by the Superintendent.

Additionally,

*"A teacher without professional teacher status shall be notified in writing prior to June 15 whenever such person is not to be employed for the following school year." (Chapter 71, Section 41)*

The reappointment of teachers without professional teacher status is contingent in successful performance. Dismissal of teachers is subject to current state law:

*"A teacher who has been teaching in a school system for at least ninety calendar days shall not be dismissed unless s/he has been furnished with written notice of intent to dismiss and with an explanation of the grounds for dismissal in sufficient detail to permit the teacher to respond and documents relating to the grounds for dismissal, and, if s/he so requests, has been given a reasonable opportunity within ten school days after receiving such written notice to review the decision with the principal or the superintendent, as the case may be, and to present information pertaining to the basis for the decision and to the teacher's status. The teacher receiving such notice may be represented by an attorney or other representative at such a meeting with the principal or superintendent. Teachers without professional teacher status shall otherwise be deemed employees at will." (Chapter 71, Section 42)*

On satisfactory completion of three consecutive years of employment, the principal may recommend to the Superintendent that a teacher be granted the status of "professional teacher" as defined by MGL Chapter 71, Sections 41-42. This recommendation must also be submitted prior to May 15 of the third consecutive year of employment.

Therefore, the principal of any school must submit a recommendation in writing to the Superintendent requesting that teachers with three consecutive year of satisfactory employment be awarded the status of professional teacher.

## **Staff Schedules**

The working year for the teaching staff will be set forth on the school calendar adopted by the School Committee. The number of teaching days will conform with minimum state requirements for the number of instructional days. Additional staff days for meetings, training, and teaming will be scheduled in accordance with any relevant contract language.

Although staff members are expected to be on official duty only for the teacher-employment year, the School Committee anticipates that they will work such additional days as are necessary before or after the school or during school recess periods to carry out the professional responsibilities of their salaried positions.

The yearly schedule of all administrative personnel employed on a 12-month basis includes all weekdays of the year with the exception of legal holidays and individual vacation or leave periods. Although the student day shall not exceed six and one half (6 1/2) hours, and the work day for the teaching staff will begin fifteen (15) minutes before the scheduled starting time for pupils and will end fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled dismissal time for pupils, administrators, teachers and supervisory personnel are expected to observe a daily schedule consistent with the hours that the school and/or offices are open. Professional behavior suggests extending this by the time required to properly discharge the responsibilities of their positions.

The yearly schedule of all administrative personnel employed on a 205-215 day basis includes all licensed staff required days with the exception of legal holidays and individual vacation or leave periods. Additional work days beyond the current 185 days teacher calendar year will be determined by the administrator's/supervisor's immediate supervisor. On rare occasions a 205-215 employee may ask to substitute days outside the 185 teacher calendar day for days when students are in school. Such a request must be made to the immediate supervisor no less than two (2) weeks prior to the substitution and it must be approved by the Superintendent five (5) working days prior to such leave.

## **School Day**

Teacher and student daily schedules are as follows:

### **Macomber Primary School Grade –PreK-K**

Teachers 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Students 8:45 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

### **Westport Elementary School Grades 1-4**

Teachers 8:15 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.

Students 8:30 a.m. – 2:50 p.m.

### **Westport Middle- High School Grades 5-12**

Teachers 7:15 a.m. - 2:15 p.m.

Students 7:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

## **Reporting Absences from Work**

Any absence from work, whatever the excuse, disrupts some aspect of the Westport Community Schools' educational and support programs; therefore, an employee who must be absent from work for any reason should report her/his absence *as soon as possible after learning that the absence will occur*. Use the AESOP system for arranging for a substitute. You can log on to: [www.FrontlineK12.com/Aesop](http://www.FrontlineK12.com/Aesop) or call 1-800-942-3767 to record your absence. Lesson plans should be e-mailed to the Principal and Executive Secretary.

It is your responsibility to make sure the following information is available to the substitute upon his/her arrival at school:



Your class schedule (including extra duties)  
Directions for homeroom and class routines  
Lesson plans for all classes  
Seating charts  
Any information that your substitute needs to know including medical needs/alerts and educational plan needs of your students.

**Notes: If you are going to be out, but do not need a substitute, you still need to follow the AESOP procedure to report your absence.**

**Timely notice is needed in order to allow the AESOP system to secure a substitute. You must post your absence by 7:15 AM at the primary and elementary school(s) and by 6:20 AM at the junior and senior high school(s).**

### **Substitute and Temporary Employment**

#### **Substitute Teachers:**

The School Committee believes that the role of the substitute teacher is highly important for maintaining continuity in teaching and learning. An effective program for selecting and assigning all substitute teachers and evaluating their performance will be established by the professional staff under the direction of the Superintendent. Persons wishing to substitute teach in the district will make application through the Superintendent's office.

Whenever possible, a substitute teacher will be a person who is employed in the absence of the regular teacher and who possesses knowledge in the area of assignment and demonstrated successes in teaching.

The substitute teacher lists will be prepared in the office of the Superintendent by the Human Resources Assistant who will maintain a complete file on all substitute teachers.

Only employees who have retired from our system, resigned without prejudice, or who have received notice of a reduction in force may substitute in our school district.

#### **Part-time Employees:**

Personnel employed less than half-time will not be entitled to any personnel benefits other than Workers' Compensation, liability coverage, or other statutory benefits. Personnel employed half-time or more will be allocated all personnel leave benefits, pro-rated to correspond with the percentage of employment assignment.

#### **Temporary Personnel:**

Persons who are not otherwise an employee of the district may be employed temporarily for the purpose of service as a coach, advisor, consultant, or other temporary assignment. Such temporary personnel will be subject to any and all applicable policies, rules, and regulations of the school district. The employment of temporary personnel will be terminated at the end of the specific activity season for which employed.

**Temporary Support Staff:**

The Superintendent will develop, maintain, and publish a list of all substitute support staff personnel who are available for temporary employment. The School Committee will maintain a substitute support staff salary schedule. In recruiting substitute support staff, the Superintendent will seek quality individuals, will maintain an application and application review process, and will have oversight for the fair and equitable assignment of all substitute support staff personnel.

Substitute support staff personnel may be evaluated by appropriate supervisors. Individuals who are hired as temporary substitute staff are required to abide by all School Committee standards, policies, and regulation relative to regular staff. The Superintendent may revoke the authorization of any individual to serve as substitute support staff for violation of any such standards, policies, or regulations.

**Termination of Employment**

Termination of employment will be governed by state statutes and applicable language in the current collective bargaining agreement or individual contract.

**Retirement**

All full-time non-instructional personnel are required to participate in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Retirement System. Periodically, the superintendent will present to the committee the names of support staff members who have indicated their intentions to retire.

**Suspension and Dismissal**

Support staff employees employed by the school district may be terminated by the principal of the building in which they serve with the approval of the Superintendent. However, employees may request the Superintendent to review the circumstances of their termination.

Support staff employees will generally be given notice of their dismissal two weeks prior to the effective date.

The Superintendent, or the principal, with the approval of the Superintendent, may also suspend employees from their assignments.

## 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).

# WESTPORT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

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I have reviewed and understand the 2022-2023 staff handbook. I know who to access should I have questions or need any clarification of information contained in this document.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
School / District

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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

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

Please return this portion to your direct supervisor.