

Westport Middle School
Student/Parent/Guardian Handbook

2023-2024

400 Old County Road
Westport, MA 02790
Phone: 774-309-3022

<http://www.westportschools.org/>



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Questions Regarding the Handbook

Any questions or concerns regarding the handbook should be brought to the attention of the Principal or Assistant Principal.

Translations

Contact the Superintendent of Schools at 508-636-1140 for a translation of this or any other school notice.

Portuguese:

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

Spanish:

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

French:

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

German:

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

District's Non-Discrimination Statement

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.

Westport Middle School Handbook

The purpose of this booklet is to provide information that will aid students in adjusting to Westport Middle School. More detailed information is available in the Westport Community Schools Student Policy Handbook.

In the event of conflict between the contents of this handbook and those of the Education Policy Manual of the Westport Community Schools, the contents of the Education Policy Manual shall govern. The Policy Manual is available on the Westport Community School website under "*School Committee*."

Students and parents are requested to read this booklet carefully. Students should refer to this booklet throughout the school year.

Principal's Letter

Dear Parents/Guardians and Wildcat Students,

I hope this letter finds you in good health and high spirits as we approach the upcoming academic year. On behalf of the entire faculty and staff of Westport Middle High School, I am delighted to present to you the updated edition of our Student Handbook for the 2023-2024 academic year. The Student Handbook serves as a valuable resource that outlines our school policies, procedures, and expectations, fostering a safe and conducive learning environment for all students.

At WMHS we strive to provide an enriching and supportive educational experience that promotes academic excellence, personal growth, and character development. Our Student Handbook plays a vital role in achieving these goals by ensuring a consistent understanding of our school's values, guidelines, and procedures. It is essential for both students and parents/guardians to familiarize themselves with its contents to ensure a successful and harmonious school year.

We have made efforts to ensure that the Student Handbook is comprehensive and reflective of our school's values. However, we also understand that situations may arise where additional clarification or updates are necessary. We encourage open communication between parents/guardians, students, and school staff, and we remain committed to addressing any concerns promptly and effectively.

Please take the time to carefully review the Student Handbook with your child. It is important that both students and parents/guardians understand and support the policies and expectations outlined within. By doing so, we can work together to create an environment that fosters academic growth, personal development, and mutual respect.

We eagerly anticipate another fantastic academic year at Westport Middle High School, filled with exciting learning opportunities and remarkable achievements. With your support, we are confident that our students will thrive both academically and personally.

Thank you for your continued partnership, and we look forward to working together to provide an exceptional educational experience for every student.

Sincerely,

Laura Charette

Parent/Guardian Communication Dates

- Westport Middle School Open House: Wednesday, September 6, 2023 from 6-8 PM
- Westport Middle School Parent Teacher Conferences: Tuesday, November 14, 2023 from 6-8 PM

- Westport Middle School Parent Teacher Conferences: Tuesday, March 12, 2023 from 2:15-4:15 PM

Progress Reports

- Term 1: Tuesday, October 3, 2023
- Term 2: Monday, December 11, 2023
- Term 3: Friday, March 1, 2024
- Term 4: Friday, May 10, 2024

*Progress reports are typically posted one week after the above dates in the Community Portal.

Term Dates

- Term 1 End Date: Thursday, November 2, 2023
- Term 2/Semester 1 End Date: Monday, January 22, 2024
- Term 3 End Date: Tuesday, April 2, 2024
- Term 4/Semester 2 End Date: Wednesday, June 12, 2024

*Report cards are typically posted one week after the end date in the Community Portal.

Westport Middle School's Mission Statement

The mission of the Westport Middle School is to educate all students to become 21st century learners, to seek and value knowledge, and to emerge as productive citizens in a global community.

21st Century Learning Expectations

We believe:

- All students can learn
- Students learn best in a safe, supportive, and equitable environment
- Tolerance of individual differences and cooperative resolution of conflicts create a climate of respect
- Inquiry and collaboration help students actively engage in the curriculum
- Essential understanding is demonstrated through effective communication
- Personal responsibility for behavior and learning leads to success
- Collaboration among all stakeholders maximizes achievement

Expectations for Student Learning

Academic

All students should acquire, integrate and apply enduring understandings, knowledge and skills.

All students should read, write and communicate effectively.

All students should use higher order thinking skills to solve complex problems.

All students should use media and technology effectively.

All students should study, research and work independently and collaboratively.

Social

All students should demonstrate personal and social responsibility.

Civic

All students should demonstrate civic responsibility.

Administration Directory

Westport Community Schools School Committee

Nancy Stanton-Cross (Chair), Melissa Pacheco (Vice-Chair), Gloria Cabral, Evan Gendreau, and Antonio Viveiros

Westport Community Schools

Thomas F. Aubin
Superintendent of Schools
taubin@westportschools.org
508-636-1140

Lori Melo
Executive Secretary to Superintendent
lmelo@westportschools.org
508-636-1146 x4001

Westport Middle School

Laura Charette
Principal
lcharette@westportschools.org
774-309-3455 x1055

Jessica Boga
Executive Secretary to Principal
jboga@westportschools.org
774-309-3022 x1050

Jennifer Gargiulo
Assistant Principal
jgargiulo@westportschools.org
774-309-3022 x1013

Shelly Morris
Director of Athletics & Activities
smorris@westportschools.org
774-309-3022

Sean Persico
Assistant Principal
spersico@westportschools.org
774-309-3022 x1054

Faculty/Staff Directory

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Email*</i> <i>(@westportschools.org)</i>
Aldrich, Dianne	Special Education	daldrich
Andrade, Mary	Reading Specialist	mandrade

Arruda, Amy	SPED Clerk - Grades 5-12	aarruda
Avilla, Nicholas	Teaching Assistant	navilla
Avilla, Rebecca	Teaching Assistant	ravilla
Avila, Melissa	Technology	mavila
Beaupre, Carol	Teaching Assistant	cbeaupre
Bernard, Kristin	Teaching Assistant	kbernard
Bernier, Jon	English Language Arts	jbernier
Bernier, William	English Language Arts	bbernier
Boga, Jessica	Executive Secretary	jboga
Borelli, Jennifer	School Adjustment Counselor	jborelli
Borges, Betheny	English Language Arts	bborges
Borges, Christina	Guidance Counselor - Grades 8-10	cborges
Bramwell, Gina	Art	gbramwell
Brown, Nathaniel	Science	nbrown
Carulli, David	Technology	dcarulli
Carvalho, Elizabeth	Chorus/Music	ecarvalho
Charette, Laura	Principal	lcharette
Corey, Jackie	Guidance Clerk	jcorey
Cottrill, Andrea	Math	alcottrill
Cottrill, Andrew	Math	acottrill
Croft, Kelly	English Language Arts	kcroft
DaSilva, Derek	English Language Arts	ddasilva
Daviski, Brandi	English Language Arts	bdaviski
DeFreitas, Cynthia	Speech and Language	cdefreitas
Degagne, Annette	Teaching Assistant	adegagne
DuBois, Amy	Social Studies	adubois
Fallows, Marie	Guidance Counselor - Grades 5-7	mfallows
Davis, Scott	School Resource Officer	sro
Ferreira, Jodi	Science	jferreira
Ferreira, Linda	Special Education	lferreira
Flanagan, Thomas	Social Studies	tflanagan
Fournier, Nadine	Teaching Assistant	nfournier
Gargiulo, Jennifer	Assistant Principal	jpgargiulo
Gendron, Rebekah	STEAM	rgendron
Gesner, Barbara	Teaching Assistant	bgesner
Grosslein, Sarah	Math	sgrosslein
Guild, Jonathan	Teaching Assistant	jguild

Harrison, Michael	Teaching Assistant	mharrison
Hayes, Scotty	Teaching Assistant	shayes
Henry, Audrey	Attendance Clerk - Grades 5-12	ahenry
Jennings, Judith	Math	jjennings
Kampper, Matthew	Physical Education & Health	mkampper
Lerman, Terri	Reading Specialist	tlerman
Lucas, Melissa	Science	mlucas
Magalhaes, Branden	Business	bmagalheas
Mahoney, Katie	Special Education	kmahoney
Milton, Deborah	Technology	dmilton
Monast, Richard	Media Center Specialist	rmonast
Murphy, Jennifer	Special Education	jmurphy
Nunes, Christopher	Band/Music	cnunes
Pacheco, Elton	Science	epacheco
Paiva, Trisha	Science	tpaiva
Persico, Sean	Assistant Principal	spersico
Pierce, Kerri	Teaching Assistant	kpierce
Ponte, Michael	Social Studies	mponte
Santos, Mary-Catherine	Math	msantos
Shunney, Matthew	English Language Arts	mshunney
Silva, Natalia	Teaching Assistant	nsilva
Sirois, Nicole	Science	nsirois
Soares, Jamie	Teaching Assistant	jsoares
Struthers, Ryan	Social Studies	rstruthers
Sullivan, Patrick	Special Education	psullivan
Sullivan, Robin	Teaching Assistant	rsullivan
Teixiera, Amy	Physical Education & Health	ateixeira
Teixeira, Elizabeth	Math	eteixeira
Tetzloff, Amanda	Social Studies	atetzloff
Teves, Josie	Math	jteves
Thomas, Shawn	School Adjustment Counselor	sthomas
Tripp, Michelle	English Language Arts	mtripp
Ward, Mark	Special Education	mward

Student Rights and Responsibilities

The School Committee has the responsibility to afford students the rights that are theirs by virtue of guarantees offered under the federal and state constitutions and statutes. In connection with rights there are responsibilities that must be assumed by students.

Among these rights and responsibilities are the following Civil Rights including:

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

It is the School Committee's belief that as part of the educational process students should be made aware of their legal rights and responsibilities and of the legal authority of the School Committee, the Superintendent, and the principals regarding the orderly operation of the schools and the protection of the rights of other students and staff members.

Students have the right to know the standards of behavior that are expected of them, and the consequences of not respecting school values. The **rights** and **responsibilities** of students, including standards of conduct, will be made available to students and their parents through the publication of student/parent handbooks distributed annually and subject to the approval of the School Committee.

Chain of Command

If you have a concern with your student, always start the solution with the staff member involved in the circumstance. Please follow the chain of command below:

- Teacher/Guidance Counselor/Nurse
- Assistant Principal
- Principal
- Superintendent
- School Committee

School Safety and Security Policies

To ensure security at Westport Middle High School, exterior doors will remain locked during the school day. Cameras are on and monitored by the School Resource Officer (SRO) and/or other staff members such as building administrators. In addition, the following procedures will be adhered to

- Visitors to the building must have an appointment and are required to register with the Main Office with a driver's license, military ID, or state ID, and are subject to a background check prior to being issued a visitor's pass. Visitors must check out with the Main Office and return the visitor pass when leaving the building.
- Students are prohibited from allowing outsiders access to the school building. Any student allowing outsiders access to the building will be disciplined.
- Staff and students must notify building administration immediately if any breaches of security are observed.

The SRO has access to the school cameras and the student management system. The administration carries radios with them throughout the school day. Students are encouraged to immediately notify a teacher if they observe any breach of security.

Student visitors, as defined by a student who is not enrolled at Westport Middle School, are generally not allowed in the building. Exceptions to this rule are given on an individual basis by the Principal. Information regarding a student visitor must be provided to the Principal at least one day in advance to obtain permission.

Adult visitors or observers must also obtain permission before the planned visit, following a similar protocol as student visitors.

Individuals not adhering to this policy will be removed from the building and/or be prosecuted for trespassing as covered by law under Chapter 266, Section 120.

2023-2024 Westport Middle School Bell Schedule

Westport Middle High School Bell Schedule		
Times	Block	
7:30 - 7:35	Homeroom	
7:35 - 8:30 (55 minutes)	Block 1	
8:35 - 9:30 (55 minutes)	Block 2	
9:35 - 10:30 (55 minutes)	Block 3	
10:35 - 12:00 (55 minutes)	Block 4 (WMS)	Grades 7&8 Lunch → 10:30 - 11:00 (Lunch then Class) Grades 5&6 Lunch → 11:00 - 11:30 (Class, Lunch, Class)
10:35 - 11:30 (55 minutes)	Block 4 (WHS)	
12:05 - 1:00	Block 5 (WMS)	
11:30 - 1:00 (56 minutes)	Block 5 (WHS)	Third Lunch → 11:30 - 12:00 (Lunch then Class) Fourth Lunch → 12:00 - 12:30 (Class, Lunch, Class)
1:05 - 2:00 (55 minutes)	Block 6	

ROTATION OF SCHEDULE

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
A	B	C	D	E	F
B	C	D	E	F	A
C	D	E	F	A	B

D	E	F	A	B	C
E	F	A	B	C	D
F	A	B	C	D	E

Honor Roll Criteria

Middle School Honor Roll Eligibility:

- High Honors = all grades 90 and above
- Honors = all grades 80 and above

Note: Honor Roll status is calculated based upon the term grade.

Academic Expectations

Citizenship Expectations of Westport Middle School

Overview

It is one of the school's duties to assist parents and guardians in helping students develop responsible attitudes and behavior. This means preparing students for adult citizenship as well as preparing them for jobs and higher education.

For this reason, it is as important for the school to teach and evaluate both citizenship and academic work.

Parents and students should be as interested in citizenship "ability" as in academic, artistic, or athletic ability.

Teachers are required based on the "Citizenship Rubric" to establish written classroom expectations regarding students' expected classroom behavior. These written expectations will be provided to students at the beginning of the year or when new students transfer into the class.

Teachers are also required to discuss these standards with their students and explain their expectations at the beginning of each semester.

The Citizenship Mark

Students will receive a term citizenship mark from each of their classroom teachers. The mark will be based solely on the citizenship displayed in each teacher's classroom.

Students will receive a mark of "Outstanding", "Satisfactory", or "Unsatisfactory" based on the "Citizenship Guidelines" found below. The citizenship mark for each class will be shown on the student's report card. ***WMS students who earn four or more "unsatisfactory" marks on their rubric will also be ineligible for any school activities (including Athletics) through the next marking period.***

Appeal of Citizenship Mark

Students and parents have a right to appeal citizenship marks which they feel are in error or unjustified. If it is determined that the citizenship grade is not an error, the student and parent may request a meeting with the

Assistant Principal within two weeks after the citizenship marks are released. The Principal is the final arbiter in cases of appeals of the citizenship mark.

Citizenship marks will not be shown on the student's transcript or other permanent records.

WMS CITIZENSHIP RUBRIC

CRITERIA	OUTSTANDING (3 Points)	SATISFACTORY (2 Points)	UNSATISFACTORY (1 Point)
Attendance & punctuality	Student has near perfect attendance and punctuality.	Student attends class regularly and usually comes to class on time.	Student has irregular attendance (7 or more unexcused per semester class OR 3 or more per quarter class) and/or irregular punctuality (3 or more unexcused tardies).
Responsibility for learning	Student models preparedness and perseverance; student actively participates in class in a meaningful way.	Student comes to class prepared to learn.	Student is consistently unprepared for class.
Classroom behavior	Student serves as a positive role model and leader and demonstrates exemplary conduct.	Student shows respect for others and exercises good conduct.	Student demonstrates lack of respect for others; student conduct is disruptive to the educational process.
Etiquette	Student models respect of one's self, one's peers, and one's Chromebook and supplies.	Student shows respect of one's self, one's peers, and one's Chromebook and supplies.	Student is disrespectful of one's self, one's peers, or one's Chromebook and supplies.

10-12 Points - Overall OUTSTANDING

6-9 Points - Overall SATISFACTORY

4-8 Points - Overall UNSATISFACTORY

Attendance

Absences

Every student has a right to educational opportunities that will enable the student to develop to his or her fullest potential. There is a strong correlation between good attendance and success in school.

Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 76, § 1 states that students can have only seven excused day session absences in any period of six months. Further, the law allows the School Committee to define “legitimate” reasons for absence. The Westport Community Schools Attendance Policy defines legitimate reasons for excusing absences as:

- Student’s illness indicated by a doctor’s note;
- a death in the immediate family;
- observance of religious holidays;
- appearance in court;
- temporary relocation due to extreme emergencies such as fire, flood, or hospitalization of a parent;
- business which cannot be reasonably transacted when school is not in session;
- medical and dental appointments which cannot possibly be scheduled outside school hours
- Grade 8 student’s visit to another high school (One excused per year)

Students will be eligible to make-up work for credit for excused absences. **In general, a student shall receive two days for every one day to make-up work in a maximum of two weeks.** A written appeal requesting additional time for make-up work may be granted by the appropriate grade level Assistant Principal and/or Principal.

Excused absences related to illness cannot exceed seven days in six months without specific medical evidence of incapacitation. All absences beyond **seven** day sessions in six months without such documentation are considered unexcused. Notification to state authorities of a parent’s failure to educate their children in the case of absences of more than seven (7) days within a six (6) month period (state law) will occur.

Family vacations or non-school related sports competitions are not excused absences. Students are required to make-up any missed work for all absences, excused or unexcused.

If your child is going to be absent, please call 774-309-3022 x1051.

The Principal or designee will notify by phone a student’s parent/guardian in the event the school is not informed of the absence.

The Principal or designee shall make a reasonable effort to meet with any student, and that student’s parent/guardian, who has missed five (5) or more unexcused school days (a school day shall be equal to two (2) or more class periods in the same day) in a semester. The meeting shall be to develop action steps to improve student attendance and shall be developed jointly by the Principal or designee, the student, and the student’s parent/guardian. The parties may seek input from other relevant school staff and/or officials from relevant public safety, health and human services, housing, and nonprofit agencies.

It is the student’s and parent’s responsibility to document the cause for an absence or tardy for one of the above listed reasons. **If a student fails to present a note within two days of his/her return, the absence will be “unexcused”. Notes beyond the two day limit will not be accepted.** School personnel will not contact parents to secure notes. Telephone calls will not be accepted instead of written notes. The note should be brought to the main office.

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

Vacations During School Time

Absence from school for vacation is not an excused absence. The administration and faculty believe that absence from class instruction, for any reason, is detrimental to student learning. It is up to the discretion of the teacher to provide work **prior** to a student leaving for vacation.

Attendance Requirement for Participation in Athletics and Activities

Students must be present on the day of a game and/or activity in order to participate and must have an accepted excuse as outlined above. If the game/activity is on a weekend, students must be present on the Friday before the weekend in order to participate.

Dismissal

Full day attendance is mandatory every day including special event days, exam days, prom days, etc. Student appointments should be scheduled after school hours if at all possible. If, however, it is necessary to schedule an appointment during school hours, **a note stating the nature of the appointment should be sent in with the student and brought to the main office before the first period bell. The note should be dated and signed and include a phone number where a parent or guardian may be reached.** A note confirming that student attended said appointment needs to be submitted to Athletic Director or coach prior to participating in practice, game, or event on the same day. Students under the age of 18 will not be dismissed from school without their parent/guardian of record picking them up, and parents must come into the main office to dismiss their child. Time missed due to the dismissal will be excused if documentation of the appointment is presented to the office.

Students who are dismissed for the day before 10:40 a.m. will be considered absent for the day and cannot participate in sports/activities. Students cannot be dismissed early to go to work. If a student is dismissed from school for health/medical reasons, he/she will not be eligible to participate in sports/activities.

Tardy

Students must attend school a minimum of three hours in order to participate in interscholastic athletics and extracurricular activities whether excused or unexcused. Students who arrive after 9:00 AM will be excluded from participation in extra-curricular activity that day or which may include, but is not limited to, athletic practices/contests, clubs and dances unless they provide documentation verifying a death in the immediate family, a medical/dental appointment, or an appearance in court. Students who arrive after 10:30 AM will be considered absent for the day without proper documentation.

Chromebook Policy

Students should arrive at school with their fully-charged Chromebooks and only utilize their Chromebooks for academic work. Students should also abide by all provisions of the Westport Community Schools

Acceptable Use Policy. Students should also not mark the Chromebook with stickers, markers, etc. or intentionally damage the Chromebook. By accepting the school Chromebook, students agree to return the Chromebook and charger to WMS in the same condition it was received if students transfer or withdraw from WMS prior to graduation. **It is the responsibility of students and/or families to pay for any non-accidental damage to Chromebooks. Chromebook repair/replacement charge cost subject to change.**

- Full Chromebook replacement: \$275
- Case replacement: \$25
- Charger replacement: \$30
- Screen replacement: \$60

*Prices subject to change due to changes in market costs.

Athletics/Student Activities

Athletic Offerings

Westport Middle School offers students the opportunity to play the following sports/activities (budget permitting):

Fall:

Boys' Soccer (5-12), Girls' Soccer (5-12), Field Hockey (7-12), Volleyball (7-12), Golf (7-12)

Winter:

Boys' Basketball (5-12), Girls' Basketball (5-12), Cheerleading (5-12)

Spring:

Baseball (5-12), Softball (7-12), Boys' Tennis (7-12), Girls' Tennis (7-12)

**Waivers will be handled on a sport by sport basis with enrollment determining whether or not Grade 7 and/or Grade 8 students will play on the MS or HS team.*

Athletics User Fee

A non-refundable user fee of \$175.00 is required for student participation in each sport. Cheerleading user fee is \$125. Individual user fee cap is \$350.00 and the family fee cap is \$525.00. The fee must be paid at the time of registration and will only be refunded if a student is cut from the team by the coach or if the student quits the team during the tryout period. These cuts will be made no later than the first regular game of the season.

Waivers are available to students who demonstrate financial hardship. A separate application for the athletic fee waiver must be completed prior to the season and submitted to the athletic director. All documentation must be complete at the time of application for the Superintendent to consider the waiver.

Athletic Handbook

Each year, student-athletes will receive a copy of the Athletic Handbook which contains necessary information for students and parents/guardians regarding participation in athletics at Westport Middle School. A copy of the Handbook may also be found on the Westport Community Schools website. If you have any questions, please contact the Athletic Director.

Clubs and Other Activities

Westport Middle School is pleased to offer students the opportunity to explore the following extra-curricular activities. There may be a fee per club fee for participation in clubs or activities based on expenses for the club. The fee is used to help provide the funds necessary to offer the club or activity. Clubs and activities will be offered based on the number of participants and funding:

- Anti-Bullying Club
- Art Club
- Drama Club
- E-Sports
- Gardening Club
- International Exchange
- Makerspace
- Math Club
- Newspaper
- Pep Band
- Robotics
- Student Council
- Yearbook

Athletic & Activity Eligibility

To participate in athletics and extracurricular activities, students must be in good standing in the school, which means academically passing 67% of all classes (this means failing no more than three out of eight classes). The eligibility shall be determined by the quarter grades in November, January, and April. The final grade of the overall course will determine eligibility for the following fall season.

Students who receive four or more unsatisfactory citizenship marks (U) will not be eligible for Athletics or Activities through the next marking period.

Any student who is ineligible at the start of a season shall remain ineligible for the duration of that season. If a student becomes ineligible DURING a season, they will be removed from participating and attending all team activities.

Extra-curricular activities are:

- A. Dances
- B. School-sponsored trips
- C. Athletics
- D. Student Council
- E. Clubs

Financial Obligations Affecting Eligibility

Students who have outstanding financial obligations or school debts will not be allowed to participate in related school events to include but are not limited to; extra-curricular activities, and athletic events. Parents will be notified of the outstanding obligation/debt.

Attendance Requirement for Participation in Athletics and Activities

Students must be present on the day of a game and/or activity in order to participate and must have an accepted excuse as outlined above. If the game/activity is on a weekend, students must be present on the Friday before the weekend in order to participate.

Suspension

Any student who is emergency removed, internally suspended, and/or externally suspended from school will not be permitted to participate in any school sponsored events, to include but not limited to, extra-curricular activities and interscholastic athletic events during the suspension. Students are also subject to the rules/by-laws of the club/sport in which they participate.

Leadership Experiences for Students *(No activity fee for participation)*

Junior National Honor Society

The purpose of the National Honor Society is to create enthusiasm for scholarship, to stimulate a desire to render service, to promote worthy leadership, and to encourage the development of character in students at Westport Middle School.

Student Council

The Student Council is an organization through which students participate in the governance of the school. The council promotes leadership, initiative, and self-discipline among its members.

Student Delegate to the School Committee

The Student Delegate to the School Committee consists of students who attend school committee meetings. It is their task to update the members of the school committee with regard to events at the Middle School. They also voice their opinions with regard to school committee issues on behalf of the entire student body.

School Council

School Councils were established to assist principals in planning for and implementing goals and practices that enhance the achievement of all students. The School Council consists of the Principal, teachers, students, parents, and community member

School Safety and Discipline

The Westport Middle School Student Handbook is annually reviewed by the School Council and approved by the School Committee. The Code of Conduct must be strictly adhered to by all students and enforced by all staff. Its intent is to provide a safe and orderly educational and social environment so that students can challenge themselves academically to be well-prepared to be life-long learners. It is also a reflection of the behavioral expectations of the entire school community for the purpose of helping students develop the necessary character, work-ethic and sense of personal responsibility that are necessary for students to be successful post-secondary students, employees, leaders, citizens and to be prepared to contribute to their family and community.

The Westport Middle School Student Handbook addresses the following 21st Century Learning Expectations

- Students will demonstrate growth of character through personal responsibility, ethical behavior, and personal health and fitness.
- Understand and exercise their rights and responsibilities as students and as citizens.

Student Appeals

Students have the right to the appeal of decisions by faculty and administration. The appropriate appeal process order is teacher, assistant principal, principal, superintendent and school committee. Students shall have the right to appeal the suspension according to Massachusetts General Laws Ch. 71 § 37 H 3/4.

Policies

Actions & Consequences

The following policies apply to any student who is on school property, including school transportation, who is in attendance at school or at a school-sponsored activity, or whose conduct at any time or in any place interferes with or obstructs the mission or operations of the school district or the safety or welfare of students, employees, or invited guests. The Administration reserves the right to assign appropriate consequences per the WMS Student Handbook and Massachusetts General Laws.

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

Book Distribution

All books should be stamped, numbered and student lease forms filled out. Textbooks are loaned to the students and each student is financially responsible for their return. If a lost book is not found, the full original price must be paid for by the student. Each student, upon receiving a textbook, will sign a form which records the name of the person, the number of the book, and the condition of the book. Therefore, when a lost book is returned, there will be no question of ownership. Lost and damaged books must be paid for.

Cafeteria Misbehavior

Including the deliberate and excessive creating a mess and the folding of the tables to cause disruption of the Cafeteria. Students are expected to clean up after themselves.

Cell phones:

Cell phones and ALL electronic devices/smart devices/smart watches are not allowed in the possession of students during the school day. Cell phones and all electronic devices/smart devices, if brought to school, must remain in the student's backpack/bag and turned off. Cell phones and electronic devices/smart devices will be confiscated if they are visible during the school day. Students who fail to comply with the confiscation policy will be sent home for the remainder of the school day. **A parent/guardian will be required to pick up the item.** If a cell phone/smart device is visible during a testing period, the phone or device will be confiscated and the student will receive a zero on the test/quiz. No make-up test/quiz will be granted for such an infraction.

Defiant behavior

Choosing to blatantly defy classroom or school rules, expectations, or teacher requests.

Disrespectful Behavior

The intentional use of inappropriate words, tone and/or body language.

Dress Code

Students are expected to dress in a manner that does not offend or distract from the learning environment. The administration will enforce reasonable standards of cleanliness, neatness, morality, and safety connected with pupil's apparel. Attire that may be injurious to any person or may damage any portion of the school building will not be allowed. Hats, hoods, and blankets are not permitted. Clothing providing indecent exposure or suggestive style is prohibited. These items would include but not limited to see through attire, "muscle" shirts, midriff-baring shirts/blouses, back-baring shirts/blouses, spaghetti straps, strapless, one shoulder shirts/blouses or halter tops. Bottom of the shirt must overlap the top of pants/bottoms. Undergarments such as bras and underwear, including boxer shorts, will be covered at all times.

Clothing that advertises drugs, alcohol or other illegal materials are not permitted. Clothing that exhibits language or designs that are explicit, violent, obscene, and sexually suggestive are not allowed.

Egregious Disrespect of Staff

Including verbal attacks of a personal nature towards, threats, and/or profanity to any member of the school community.

Food

Students are not allowed to have food or drinks (water is allowed) in the classrooms, Auditorium, or Gymnasium. Food may not be taken from the cafeteria at any time. Students who arrive at school with coffee or other drinks must dispose of them immediately upon entering the building. Students may not purchase items from the cafeteria vending machines during class time. Additionally, students should not be chewing gum while in the school building. Gum chewing, unless noted as an accommodation on an IEP or 504, is not allowed.

Gymnasium Use

Students are not allowed in the gym or weight room unless under the direct supervision of a staff member or coach.

Horseplay

The physical act includes but is not limited to including rough housing, physical joking, and creating an unsafe environment.

Inappropriate Displays of Affection

Including but not limited to excessive touching, groping, kissing and hugging.

Inciting a Fight

Instigating and/or promoting a fight between any students, through any form of communication i.e. verbal, written or electronic, will be considered inciting a fight.

Intimidation

Knowingly frighten or threaten someone in order to persuade them to do something that you want them to do.

Obscenity

Language/gestures/material; These include but are limited to topics including genitals, sexual intercourse, and death and dismemberment.

Profanity

This includes words which are similar to profanity and used in place of profanity.

Progressive Discipline

The Westport Middle School Code of Conduct provides a list of common infractions and the typical corresponding consequences for violations of school rules. Students who repeat the same offense will receive stronger penalties for each subsequent offense of a similar nature at the discretion of the school administration. For example, a student who receives a 3-day suspension for a violation of school rules will likely receive a 5-day or longer suspension for repeating the violation. **The school administration also reserves the right to impose a stronger penalty for first offenses than are provided on the list of infractions.**

Restorative Justice:

Students who are ready to accept responsibility for their actions and attempt to repair the harm that their actions had on others may be able to participate in a restorative justice process. This process may be an alternative to out of school suspension in order to replace suspension with a positive process that repairs harm, develops accountability, and meets the needs of all affected.

Weapon possession/use

Weapons including; firearms, knives, or any other weapon or ammunition on the grounds, building or any school sponsored events of Westport Middle School. For the purpose of this document, “firearm” shall mean any pistol, revolver, or pellet that can be discharged by whatever means. A weapon is considered an instrument of combat. All state and local law enforcement statutes will be enforced as applied to firearms/weapons

Actions and Consequences

Conferences

Conferences are a formal warning where the school administration will clarify the behavior expectations and outline the potential consequences for future infractions. A parent/guardian must participate in the conference or be contacted by the school administrator to review the conversation.

Restricted Pass

All students must be authorized in writing by a staff member to relocate during class, lunch or other educational activity by being in possession of a pass. Abuse or misuse of a pass may result in the school administration precluding a student from obtaining passes from classes and activities. The **No Pass List** may vary based on an individual's circumstances and may include specific times, such as intervention, or require the student to be escorted at all times.

Social Probation

Any student who is placed on probation at Westport Middle School will be allowed to attend only regularly scheduled classes. The student will not be allowed to participate in any extracurricular activities, including athletics. Students on social probation may appeal to the school administration to be able to participate in some activities while on probation. Administrative approval of this participation request is contingent upon the student making a contractual commitment to adhere to academic and/or disciplinary improvement goals. Students may also be placed on social probation for disciplinary reasons at the discretion of the school administration.

Detentions

All students are expected to be on time and attend assigned detentions and must be prepared to be silent and complete work. Students are not allowed to have or use cell phones or electronic devices. Detention begins at 2:15 and concludes at 3:15 P.M. Students are expected to arrange their own transportation.

- **Teacher Detention/Mandatory Extra-Help**
 - At their discretion teachers may require students to stay after school as a penalty for violating class or school rules or require students who have not completed work as expected to stay for extra help. Teachers will provide a minimum of a 1-day notice for teacher detention or mandatory extra help.
- **Lunch Detention**
 - Students who violate class or school rules and are referred to the office may be required to serve detention during lunchtime. Students assigned to lunch detention are expected to get their lunch and immediately report to the designated location. Cell phones are prohibited during lunch detentions.
- **Office Detention**
 - Students who violate class or school rules and are referred to the office may be required to stay after school and serve an office detention. Office Detentions are held Tuesday and Thursday 2:15 PM - 3:15 P.M.

In-School Restriction (ISR)

When a student is unable to be in a classroom setting for disciplinary or other reasons, the student may be assigned by an administrator to serve an in-school restriction for the remainder of the block. All in-school suspension expectations and rules apply during this restriction period. No cell phones or electronic devices are allowed during ISR.

In-School Suspension (ISS)

When a student is assigned in-school suspension (ISS) by an administrator, the student must report to the ISS room by 7:30 and must remain in the ISS room until 2:00. Students are expected to complete school work as well as any other disciplinary intervention material that may be assigned. Students assigned to ISS may not attend school events on the date(s) of their suspension. No cell phones or electronic devices are allowed during ISS.

Out of School Suspension (OSS)

When a student is suspended from school they are prohibited from attending school, may not attend school events and are prohibited from being on school grounds without prior permission from the Principal.

Suspended students are responsible to communicate with teachers and complete all assigned work while they are prohibited from attending school. If a student needs to meet with a teacher on a day they are suspended to get clarification on or assistance with an assignment, the student must obtain permission from the school administration, must be supervised at all times and must leave school grounds immediately following the completion of their appointment. Students who are required to take the MCAS Test when they are suspended will take the MCAS Test in ISS on the Scheduled MCAS days.

Disciplinary Infractions, Expectations and Consequences

The following is a table of the common infractions of the School Code of Conduct. The table also includes behavioral expectations and the typical consequences for violating those expectations. However, each infraction has its own unique set of circumstances and the school administration reserves the right to deviate from these guidelines based on the specific details of the incident. *The school administration also reserves the authority to take disciplinary action for other offenses not listed below.*

**Code of Conduct
2023-2024**

Conduct Infraction	Potential Consequence:(Not Limited to Discretion of Building Administration)
Alcohol possession/use	Parent notification and hearing to determine Suspension or Expulsion and police notification
Assault or Threatening remarks to staff	Hearing to determine Suspension or Expulsion Hearing
Bullying*	Hearing to determine In/Out-of-School Suspension, No Contact Order, and possible police notification
Bus Referral	1 st Offense: Warning and written parent notification 2 nd Offense: Office detention 3 rd Offense: 5 Day Bus Suspension 4 th Offense: Permanent Term Bus Suspension
Cafeteria Misbehavior	1 st Offense: Parent notification and Lunch Detention or Restorative Justice 2 nd Offense: Parent Notification, Office Detention or Restorative Justice 3 rd Offense: Lunch restriction in ISR for the week or Restorative Justice
Cell phone/Electronic Device/Accessory Violation	Cell phone device will be turned into office. Student will be assigned two office detentions, or turn phone into the office for the next three school days.
Cheating/Plagiarism	1 st Offense: Zero on the assignment, teacher detention and parent notification 2 nd Offense: Zero on the assignment, parent notification, and office detention 3 rd Offense: Zero on the assignment, parent notification, loss of class credit *This policy is NOT per class but rather across a student's yearly schedule.
ChromeBook Misuse	1 st Offense: Office Detention and parent notification 2 nd Offense: Restorative Justice Opportunity 3 rd Offense: ISS
Chronic Tardiness	Letter sent home to parents and parent conference; Inability to participate in Athletics and Activities
Cut Class	1 st Offense: Office Detention 2 nd Offense: Two Office Detentions 3 rd Offense: Administration determines Restorative Justice consequence
Cut Office Detention	1 st Offense: Two lunch detentions and reassigned detention 2 nd Offense: ISS
Cut Teacher Detention	Office detention in lieu of teacher detention
Damaging school property/Vandalism	Hearing to determine ISS/OSS, restitution and possible police notification
Defiant Behavior	1 st Offense: Teacher Detention and parent notification 2 nd Offense: Office Detention and parent notification 3 rd Offense: Restorative Justice Opportunity 4 th Offense: ISS
Dishonesty	1 st Offense: Office Detention and parent notification 2 nd Offense: ISS
Disrespectful Behavior	1 st Offense: Teacher Detention and parent notification 2 nd Offense: Office Detention and parent notification 3 rd Offense: ISS
Disturbance of Lunch or School Assembly	1 st Offense: Parent notification and removal from assembly & Office Detention 2 nd Offense: ISS and removal from future assemblies

	3 rd Offense: Hearing to determine In/Out-of-School Suspension and removal from future assemblies.
Dress Code Violation	1 st Offense: Change of clothes & warning 2 nd Offense: Parent Notification, Office Detention, and change of clothes 3 rd Offense: Parent notification, Restorative Justice Opportunities
Drug possession/use	Hearing to determine Parent notification and Suspension or Expulsion (See MGL 37H and police notification)
Egregious Disrespect of Staff	Parent notification and hearing to determine In/Out-of-School Suspension
Excessive Absences	See Classroom Attendance Policy; Filing of a CRA (Child Requiring Assistance) with Fall River Juvenile Court
Failure to comply with Administrative requests or search as per Search Policy	Emergency Removal and Hearing to determine Suspension
Fighting	Hearing to determine Suspension
Filming an altercation	1 st Offense: ISS 2 nd Offense: Hearing to determine Out-of-School Suspension
Food or Drink violation	1 st Offense: Warning & Disposal of Food/Beverage 2 nd Offense: Teacher Detention 3 rd Offense: Office Detention
Horseplay	1 st Offense: Office Detention 2 nd Offense: ISR
Horseplay Causing Injury	Hearing to determine In/Out-of-School Suspension
Inappropriate Displays of affection	1 st Offense: Warning & Notification of both student's parents 2 nd Offense: Parent conference, office detention 3 rd Offense: Parent Conference, ISR
Inciting a fight	Hearing to determine In/Out-of-School Suspension and parent notification
Intimidation	Hearing to determine In/Out-of-School Suspension, not contact order, and possible police notification
Knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during a grievance process, including but not limited to harassment/bullying reports.	Hearing to determine the level of harassment, consequence up to and including suspension
Leaving Class without permission	1 st Offense: ISR for the remainder of the class and Office Detention 2 nd Offense: ISR for the remainder of the class and two Office Detention 3 rd Offense: Hall Restriction- No Pass List
Leaving School without permission	Parent notification and ISR for the remainder of the school day and Office Detention
Obscene Gestures	1 st Offense: Teacher detention and parent notification 2 nd Offense: Office Detention and parent notification 3 rd Offense: Restorative Justice Opportunities

Profanity	1 st Offense: Teacher or Office detention and parent notification 2 nd Offense: Office Detention and parent notification 3 rd Offense: Restorative Justice Opportunities
Profanity	1 st Offense: Teacher or Office detention and parent notification 2 nd Offense: Office Detention and parent notification 3 rd Offense: Restorative Justice Opportunities
Pushing/Shoving	Office Detention
Refusal to comply with the request of an administrator	1 st Offense: Parent notification and ISR 2 nd Offense: Parent notification and Alternative consequence
Tardy to Class	1 st Offense: Warning 2 nd Offense: Teacher Detention 3 rd Offense: Office Detention
Tardy to School	Detention for every 3 unexcused tardies. After 3rd detention, student will be placed on social probation.
Taunting, teasing, annoying other students	1 st Offense: Teacher Detention and parent notification 2 nd Offense: Office Detention and parent notification 3 rd Offense: Restorative Justice Opportunity and parent notification
Threat/Verbal Assault towards another student	Hearing to determine In/Out-of-School Suspension, no contact order, and possible police notification
Throw/propel an object	1st Offense: Teacher detention 2nd Offense: Office detention 3rd Offense: Alternative Consequence
Tobacco use/Possession	1 st Offense: Hearing to determine 2 Day Out-of-School suspension, Confiscation of paraphernalia 2 nd Offense: Hearing to determine 4 Day Out-of-School suspension, Confiscation of paraphernalia
Theft	Parent notification and hearing to determine In-School Suspension, restitution, and possible police notification.
Vaporizer possession/use	1 st Offense: Hearing to determine 2 Day Out-of-School suspension, Confiscation of Vaporizer 2 nd Offense: Hearing to determine 4 Day Out-of-School suspension, Confiscation of Vaporizer and parent notification *Additional consequences can be applied once the substance is identified. If it is determined a vape contains THC, consequence will be 5 day Out-of School suspension.
Violation of Nondiscrimination Policy (including Harassment, Racial, Ethnic, and Sexual Slurs)	Hearing to determine the level of harassment, consequence up to and including suspension, and police notification
Violation of Sexual Harassment Policy	Hearing to determine the level of harassment, consequence up to and including suspension, and police notification
Wandering	1 st Offense: Teacher detention 2 nd Offense: Office detention 3 rd Offense: Two Office Detentions
Weapon possession/use	Hearing to determine 10 days out of school suspension minimum, expulsion hearing (See MGL chapter 71, section 37H), and police notification

Wearing a hat or hood in school	1st Offense: Warning & Confiscation of Hat 2nd Offense: Teacher or Office Detention, Parent notification, Confiscation of Hat 3rd Offense: Two Office Detentions, Confiscation of Hat, & Parent notification
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Westport Public Schools District Bus Safety/Rider Privileges:

Bus rider-ship is a privilege; it can be suspended if students exhibit unsafe behavior and/or violate school rules. If the severity of the incident warrants, a student can be suspended from riding from the first incident reported to the Principal/designee.

1. Only the Principal/designee can suspend transportation privileges.
2. The bus driver or monitor shall immediately report in writing any conduct difficulties with students to the Principal/designee.
3. If the school Principal/designee, as a result of the misconduct, denies bus riding privileges, it shall be for one week. The Principal/designee shall notify the parents or guardians by telephone explaining the reason for denial. This shall be immediately followed by the written communication from the bus driver, sent by the administration.
4. If a student is denied the riding privilege for a second time within one school year, it shall be for a period of two (2) weeks. Communication to parents will be as above.
5. If a student is denied riding privileges a third time within one school year, they shall not be permitted to ride the bus again until approval has been given by the superintendent of schools.

Student behaviors, which may lead to a suspension for up to one school year:

- Unsafe boarding/departing
- Possession of an unsafe, dangerous/illegal item
- Failure to remain properly seated
- Tampering with or damaging property
- Throwing object at or from the bus
- Loud talk or yelling
- Failure to obey the bus driver
- Physical/verbal assault or intimidation of others including the driver
- Failure to ride in assigned seat
- Consuming food/drink
- Other behavior that endangers the safety and well-being of others.

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

General School Behavior

Racial, Ethnic and Sexual Slurs

A racial, ethnic or sexual slur is defined as any derogatory remark, word, phrase, act, picture or gesture referencing or directed at or to any individual or group(s) which is of a racial, ethnic or sexual nature. The

district recognizes that, regardless of intent, such slurs substantially harm both the individuals to whom slurs are addressed and the educational community as a whole.

Harassment or discriminatory behavior that denies civil rights or equal educational opportunities includes comments, name calling, physical conduct or other expressive behavior directed at an individual or group that intentionally demeans the actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex/gender, marital status, homelessness, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, family care leave status, pregnancy or any condition related to pregnancy, or military/veteran status or creates an intimidating, hostile or demeaning environment.

Students may file a complaint regarding such discrimination with the Principal or directly to the Superintendent. The district will thoroughly investigate the complaint and will protect the rights of all parties to the complaint. A district staff member must also take such complaints to his/her supervisor.

Students may be expelled from Westport Middle School for violations of Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 71, Section 37H.

Threats to School or Property

Definition of a Threat

Expression of intent to inflict harm; aggressive or hostile words or actions intended to harm others or oneself physically or emotionally and/or destroy property.

Assessment of a Threat

Students and staff should notify a building administrator without hesitation whenever they hear of a person who:

- Has a weapon at school;
- Is planning to bring one to school;
- Is planning an act of destruction; or
- Is planning a violent act at school or outside the school.

While most rumors will prove false, schools must follow up on rumors or overheard conversations. It should be stressed to students that it is their **duty** to report what they hear regarding any threat of violence. All reports must and will be taken seriously. Until investigated, comments should be taken at face value. To ensure that rumors of threatening comments are dealt with properly, trained personnel will follow up on student hearsay reports.

Procedures

When an alleged violation of this definition comes to the attention of school personnel, the building principal or, in his/her absence, the assistant principal or, in the event of his/her absence, other school administration, shall immediately notify the superintendent and assemble the members of the "Crisis Team". The team may consist of the principal, assistant principal, school resource officer, and other administrators as appropriate to the situation. The Westport Police Department will be notified if the School Resource Officer is not present or upon recommendation of the School Resource Officer and/or the superintendent.

Discipline

If a student is considered to be a threat to oneself or others, the following may occur:

1. Notification of the Westport Police Department;
2. Immediate emergency removal until the threat is investigated and a determination of the severity of the threat is determined;
3. Long-term suspension;

4. Possible exclusion or expulsion.
5. Student will undergo a dangerousness assessment by the district's school psychologist.

Lockers/Locker Searches

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

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

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

If a properly conducted search yields illegal or contraband materials, such findings will be turned over to the proper legal authorities for ultimate disposition.

Students may not share lockers.

Searches on School Grounds

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

If a properly conducted search yields illegal or contraband materials, such findings will be turned over to the proper legal authorities for ultimate disposition.

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

All parents must be aware of the following state laws:

- (a) Any student who is found on school premises or at a school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, as defined by statute, including but not limited to, a gun or knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter 94C of the Massachusetts General Laws, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
- (b) Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, or teacher's aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal. A principal may, in her/his discretion decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b).
- (c) When a principal determines not to issue an expulsion order for a violation of sections (a) or (b) above against possession of a dangerous weapon as defined by statute, or for possession of a controlled substance as defined by statute, the principal must, within 48 hours of the incident, notify the Superintendent in writing of the circumstances and rationale for imposing a consequence short of expulsion.
- (d) When a student is expelled under the provisions of sections (a) or (b) above, states law provides that no school or school district within the commonwealth is required to admit such student or to provide educational services to said student. If the student does apply for admission

to another school or school district, the Superintendent of the school district to which the application is made may request and shall receive from the Superintendent of the school expelling said student a written statement of the reasons for said expulsion. (e) Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of any weapon or object that might injure, threaten, or intimidate a person or destroy property, or for threatening physical harm to staff or other students may be subject to suspension or expulsion. When imposing a consequence of less than a forty-five day out-of-school long-term suspension for violation of this section, the principal must include with the Actions and Consequences report, a memorandum to the Superintendent stating the relevant circumstances and rationale for the imposed consequence.

(f) Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony or upon the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may suspend such student for a period of time determined appropriate by said principal if said principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

(g) Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony delinquency, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may expel said student if such principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. Upon expulsion of such student, no school or school district shall be required to provide educational services to the student.

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

DISCIPLINE/STUDENT CONDUCT

STUDENT CONDUCT

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with school rules and regulations to the end that a positive learning atmosphere be established. Among other things, student conduct shall reflect care and respect for all other members of the Whittier school community.

Certain breaches of conduct are so serious that the Principal may long term suspend or expel a student under the provisions of M.G.L. c. 71, §37H and 37H ½. These include:

- Possession of a dangerous weapon while on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event
- Possession of a controlled substance while on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event
- An assault on a School Administrator, teacher, teacher's aide, or other staff person.
- A felony charge or conviction

Violations of the code of conduct will subject a student to disciplinary action up to and including mediation, detention, suspension, or expulsion.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

The Principal or designee has the authority to impose consequences when a student violates the student Code of Conduct.

Mediation

Mediation is an alternative remedy to punitive discipline which allows students and staff to resolve disputes. It is a way of looking at a problem, identifying the issues, and thinking through the alternatives and consequences.

Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution is an alternative remedy to punitive discipline which allows students and staff to resolve conflict in a peaceful way.

Restorative Justice

Restorative justice is an alternative remedy to punitive discipline. Restorative justice seeks to repair harm by providing an opportunity for students who have been harmed and students who have taken responsibility for the harm to communicate, understand the harm, and address the students' needs.

Collaborative Problem Solving

Collaborative problem solving is an alternative remedy to punitive discipline. It is an approach to assist students in identifying alternative behavioral choices.

Detention

All students are expected to be on time and attend assigned detentions and must be prepared to be silent and complete work periods. Students are not allowed to have or use cell phones or electronic devices. Students are expected to range their own transportation. All detentions must be served within 5 school days. Failure to appear for detention will result in further consequences. Detentions may be: teacher detention mandatory extra help, lunch detention, office detention

In-school Restriction (ISR)

When a student is unable to be in a classroom setting for disciplinary or other reasons, the student may be assigned by an administrator to serve an in-school restriction for the remainder of the block. All in school suspension expectations and rules applied during this restriction. No cell phones or electronic devices are allowed during ISR.

Suspension

A suspension is a short term or long term removal from regular classroom activities.

Short term suspension is the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for 10 consecutive days or less.

Long term suspension means the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than 10 consecutive days, or for more than 10 days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year.

A suspended student is restricted from entering the school buildings, or coming onto school grounds; and a suspended student may not participate in any school sponsored activities or functions during the suspension period. It is also recommended that parents restrict the activities of a student during the suspension period to reinforce the importance of the disciplinary consequence and to demonstrate cooperation between the school and family.

The Principal or his/her designee has the sole responsibility for determining who is suspended. The suspended student may not be permitted to return to school until a parental conference has been held.

In-school Suspension

At the discretion of the Principal, in-school suspension may also be imposed where a student is determined to have committed a suspendable offense. In-school suspension means the student is removed from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises, for no more than 10 consecutive school days. Students will be subject to limitations on their movements and activities as determined by the Principal. In-school suspension for less than 10 days shall not be considered a short-term suspension. An in-school suspension of more than 10 days shall be deemed a long-term suspension.

For an in-school suspension, the principal shall inform the student of the disciplinary offense charged and the basis for the charge, and provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident. If the principal determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the principal shall inform the student of the length of the student's in-school suspension, which shall not exceed 10 days, cumulatively or consecutively, in a school year.

On the same day as the in-school suspension decision, the principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding that the student committed the infraction, and the length of the in-school suspension. The principal shall also invite the parent to a meeting to discuss the student's academic performance and behavior, strategies for student engagement, and possible responses to the behavior. Such meeting shall be scheduled on the day of the suspension if possible, and if not, as soon thereafter as possible. If the principal is unable to reach the parent after making and documenting at least (2) attempts to do so, such attempts shall constitute reasonable efforts for purposes of orally informing the parent of the in-school suspension.

The principal shall send written notice to the student and parent about the in-school suspension, including the reason and the length of the in-school suspension, and inviting the parent to a meeting with the principal, if such meeting has not already occurred. The principal shall deliver such notice on the day of the suspension by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or by other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent.

Removal from Extracurricular Activities and Attendance at school sponsored events

The principal may remove a student from privileges, such as extracurricular activities and attendance at school-sponsored events, based on the student's misconduct. Such a removal is not subject to the procedures in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H¾ or 603 CMR 53.00.

Opportunity for Academic Progress During Suspension/Expulsion

Any student receiving in-school suspension, short-term suspension, or long-term suspension shall have the opportunity to make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal from the classroom or school.

Any student who is expelled or suspended from school for more than 10 consecutive days shall have an opportunity to receive educational services that will enable the student to make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements through the school-wide educational services plan.

Student due process rights

In administering discipline, school officials will be careful to observe the right to due process under the law for each student. The nature of the violation determines the due process that school officials follow.

1. DUE PROCESS RIGHTS FOR STUDENTS CHARGED WITH POSSESSION OF A DANGEROUS WEAPON, POSSESSION OF A CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE, ASSAULT ON SCHOOL STAFF AND/OR STUDENTS WHO HAVE BEEN CHARGED WITH OR CONVICTED OF A FELONY (M.G.L. c. 71, §37H and M.G.L. c. 71, §37H ½).

Short Term Disciplinary Sanctions: Prior to the imposition of any disciplinary sanction that might result in a student's suspension from school for ten (10) consecutive school days or less, the student will be given oral notice of the offense with which he/she is charged and an opportunity to

respond. In the event that the Principal or designee determines that the student will be suspended from school, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified by telephone and in writing.

Long Term Disciplinary Sanctions: Prior to the imposition of any disciplinary sanction that might result in the student's suspension from school for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or expulsion, the parents/guardians will be given written notice of a hearing at which they may be represented by an attorney at their expense and may examine and present witnesses and documentary evidence. Following this hearing, a written decision will be issued. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will have the right to appeal any decision imposing a long term suspension or expulsion from school to the Superintendent. Where the student is excluded in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, §37H, the student shall have ten (10) days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the Superintendent of Schools. For exclusions imposed pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, §37H ½, the student shall have five (5) days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the Superintendent. For exclusions imposed by the School Committee in accordance with M.G.L. c. 76, §17, the student shall have the right to file a written request for reconsideration by the committee within ten (10) days of the effective date of the exclusion. Pending the outcome of any such appeal, the disciplinary sanction imposed shall remain in effect. M.G.L. c. 76, §17, M.G.L. c. 71, §37H and M.G.L. c. 71, §37H ½.

2. DUE PROCESS RIGHTS FOR STUDENTS CHARGED WITH OTHER VIOLATIONS (M.G.L. c. 71, §37H ¾)

Notice and principal's meeting:

For any suspension under this section, the principal or a designee shall provide notice of the charges and the reason for the suspension or expulsion to the parent(s)/guardian(s) in English and the primary language spoken in the student's home. The student shall receive written notice of the charges and the opportunity to meet with the principal or designee to discuss charges and reasons for the suspension and/or exclusion prior to suspension/exclusion taking effect.

The principal or designee shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. The meeting may take place without the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) so long as the principal has sent written notice and has documented at least two (2) attempts to contact the parent in the manner specified by the parent for emergency notification.

The purpose of the principal's hearing is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequences for the infraction.

The principal shall determine the extent of the rights to be afforded the student at a disciplinary hearing based on the anticipated consequences for the disciplinary offense.

a. Short-term Suspension

The principal shall discuss the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student also shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the principal should consider in determining whether other remedies and consequences may be appropriate. The

principal shall provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.

Based on the available information, including mitigating circumstances, the principal shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, what alternative remedy or consequence will be imposed.

When deciding the consequences for the student, the principal, headmaster, superintendent or person acting as a decision-maker shall consider ways to re-engage the student in the learning process; and shall not suspend or expel a student until alternative remedies have been employed and their use and results documented, following and in direct response to a specific incident or incidents, unless specific reasons are documented as to why such alternative remedies are unsuitable or counter-productive, and in cases where the student's continued presence in school would pose a specific, documentable concern about the infliction of serious bodily injury or other serious harm upon another person while in school. Alternative remedies may include, but shall not be limited to: (i) mediation; (ii) conflict resolution; (iii) restorative justice; and (iv) collaborative problem solving.

The principal shall notify the student and parent of the determination and the reasons for it, and, if the student is suspended, the type and duration of suspension and the opportunity to make up assignments and such other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal. The determination shall be in writing and may be in the form of an update to the original written notice.

b. Long Term Suspension

In addition to the rights afforded a student in a short-term suspension hearing, the student shall also have the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not; the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's/parent's expense; the right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so; the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district; the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the principal, and to receive a copy of the audio recording upon request. If the student or parent requests an audio recording, the principal shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made and a copy will be provided to the student and parent upon request.

If present, the Parent shall have an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.

Based on the evidence, the principal shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension, what alternative remedy or consequence will be imposed, in place of or in addition to a long-term suspension.

When deciding the consequences for the student, the principal, headmaster, superintendent or person acting as a decision-maker shall consider ways to re-engage the student in the learning process; and shall not suspend or expel a student until

alternative remedies have been employed and their use and results documented, following and in direct response to a specific incident or incidents, unless specific reasons are documented as to why such alternative remedies are unsuitable or counter-productive, and in cases where the student's continued presence in school would pose a specific, documentable concern about the infliction of serious bodily injury or other serious harm upon another person while in school. Alternative remedies may include, but shall not be limited to: (i) mediation; (ii) conflict resolution; (iii) restorative justice; and (iv) collaborative problem solving.

The principal shall send the written determination to the student and parent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent.

If the student is suspended for more than 10 days for a single infraction or for more than 10 days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year, the notice will include written notification of the right to appeal to the Superintendent and the process for appealing in English and the primary language spoken in the student's home. No student will be suspended for greater than 90 days, beginning on the first day the student is removed from the building.

Emergency Removal:

The principal may remove a student from school temporarily when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption. The principal shall immediately notify the superintendent in writing of the removal and the reason for it, and describe the danger presented by the student. The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days following the day of the emergency removal.

In the event of an emergency removal, the principal shall make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student's parent of the emergency removal, the reason for the need for emergency removal. The principal shall provide written notice to the student and parent as provided above, and provide the student an opportunity for a hearing with the principal as provided above, and the parent an opportunity to attend the hearing, before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for hearing is otherwise agreed to by the principal, student, and parent.

The principal shall render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day, which meets the requirements as described above.

In the event of an emergency removal from school, the principal will not release the student until adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation.

Superintendent's hearing:

The parent(s)/guardian(s) shall have 5 calendar days following the effective date of the suspension or expulsion to submit a written request for an appeal to the Superintendent but may be granted an extension of time of up to 7 calendar days. If the appeal is not timely filed, the superintendent may deny the appeal, or may allow the appeal in his or her discretion, for good cause.

The Superintendent will hold a hearing with the student and the parent(s)/guardian(s) within 3 school days or the student's request for an appeal. The time may be extended up to 7 calendar days if requested by the parent(s)/guardian(s). The Superintendent's hearing may proceed without the parent(s)/guardian(s) if a good faith effort was made to include parent(s)/guardian(s). The superintendent shall be presumed to have made a good faith effort if he or she has made efforts to find a day and time for the hearing that would allow the parent and superintendent to participate.

The superintendent shall send written notice to the parent of the date, time, and location of the hearing.

At the hearing, the superintendent shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense of which the student is accused, and if so, what the consequence shall be. Students shall have all of the rights afforded to students at the principal's hearing for long-term suspension. The Superintendent will issue a written decision within 5 calendar days of the hearing. If the superintendent determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than the principal, but shall not impose a suspension greater than that imposed by the principal's decision. The Superintendent's decision is the final decision of the district.

Discipline and Students with Disabilities

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in this handbook. In addition to those due process protections afforded to all students, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and related regulations require that additional provisions be made for students who have been found eligible for special education services or who the school district knows or has reason to know might be eligible for such services. Students who have been found to have a disability that impacts upon a major life activity, as defined under §504 of the Rehabilitation Act, are, generally, also entitled to increased procedural protections prior to imposing discipline that will result in the student's removal for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or where there is a pattern of short term removals exceeding ten (10) school days in a given year. The following additional requirements apply to the discipline of students with disabilities:

1. The IEP for every student eligible for special education or related services shall indicate whether the student can be expected to meet the regular discipline code of the school or whether the code should be modified to address the student's individual needs.
2. Students with disabilities may be excluded from their programs for up to ten (10) school days to the extent that such sanctions would be applied to all students. Before a student with a disability can be excluded from his/her program for more than ten (10) consecutive school days in a given school year or ten (10) cumulative school days in a given school year, building administrators, the parents/guardians and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 team will meet to determine the relationship between the student's disability and behavior (Manifestation Determination). During disciplinary exclusions exceeding ten (10) school days in a single school year, the student shall have the right to receive services identified as necessary to provide him/her with a free appropriate public education during the period of exclusion.
3. If building administrators, the parents/guardians and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team determine that the student's conduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, the school may discipline the student in accordance with the procedures and penalties applicable to all students but will continue to provide a free appropriate public education to those students with IEPs. The student's IEP team or 504 Team will identify the services necessary to provide a free appropriate public education during the period of exclusion, review any existing behavior intervention plan or where appropriate, conduct a functional behavioral assessment.
4. If building administrators, the parents/guardians, and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team determine that the conduct giving rise to disciplinary action was a manifestation of the student's disability, the student will not be subjected to further removal or exclusion from the student's current educational program based on that conduct (except for conduct involving weapons, drugs or resulting in serious bodily injury to others) until the IEP or 504 Team develops, and the parent/guardians consent to, a new placement, or unless the District obtains an order from a court or from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA)

authorizing a change in the student's placement. The Student's Team shall also review the student's IEP, and modify as appropriate, any existing behavioral intervention plan or arrange for a functional behavioral assessment.

5. If a student with a disability possesses or uses illegal drugs, sells or solicits a controlled substance, possesses a weapon, or causes serious bodily injury to another on school grounds or at a school function, the District may place the student in an interim alternative educational placement (IAES) for up to forty-five (45) school days. A court or BSEA hearing officer may also order the placement of a student who presents a substantial likelihood of injury to self or others in an appropriate interim setting for up to forty-five (45) school days.

Media Center

The Media Center provides faculty, staff, and students of Westport Middle School with access to a variety of information sources and assistance in learning to use these sources effectively. An open and flexible schedule allows for resources to be available whenever the student or staff member needs information.

Hours of Operation

The Media Center is open Monday through Friday from 7:15 A.M. to 2:15 P.M.

Circulation

Student IDs serve as library cards in the media center. Students are responsible for all materials checked out in his/her name. Materials are loaned for the following periods of time:

General collection	2 weeks
Reserve materials	1 class period or overnight
Reference collection	Media Center use only
Periodicals	Current issues do not circulate

Research Specialist

By appointment, the Media Center specialist can be utilized for special projects/research assignments etc. to aid in the gathering, acquisition, and implementation of relevant materials.

Z-Space Computers

Students are not allowed to use the Z- space computers located in the Media Center without approved supervision. Any student who uses computers without permission will face disciplinary action determined by administration.

Overdue Material

Materials not returned on time are considered overdue. Overdue notices will be posted on a regular basis. Students are required to pay the current cost of materials that are lost or damaged beyond repair.

Media Center Website

The Westport Middle School Media Center web page provides links to Internet search engines, subscription data-bases, reference tools, and curriculum related web sites. Students may access these resources at <https://www.westportschools.org/westport-junior-senior-high-school/media-center/>.

Student Protocol

Students are here to work

- Students must present a valid pass and complete the Media Center sign-in procedure or be accompanied by their teacher.
- Students on a pass must report back to their classes before the period ends.
- Students must not play games.
- Students may only use the Internet for educational purposes.
- Students are to allow others to work
- Students must speak quietly.
- Students on a pass and students accompanied by their teacher will sit in separate areas.
- Students are respectful of Media Center property
- Water containers are not allowed in the lab areas or on a table with a laptop computer.
- Students must ask before printing anything in color.
- Students must not change computer settings.
- Students must use chairs and tables properly.
- Students must clean up after themselves.

Consequences

- 1st offense: Student will be told to comply with the rules.
- 2nd offense: Student is again asked to comply, with the additional warning that the student will be asked to leave if behavior continues.
- 3rd offense: Teacher Detention assigned to the student and return to appropriate class. If behavior is disrespectful, the student will be directed to the appropriate grade level administrator.

Massachusetts General Laws

Section 37H: Policies relative to conduct of teachers or students; student handbooks

Section 37H. The superintendent of every school district shall publish the district's policies pertaining to the conduct of teachers and students. Said policies shall prohibit the use of any tobacco products within the school buildings, the school facilities or on the school grounds or on school buses by any individual, including school personnel. Said policies shall further restrict operators of school buses and personal motor vehicles, including students, faculty, staff and visitors, from idling such vehicles on school grounds, consistent with section 16B of chapter 90 and regulations adopted pursuant thereto and by the department. The policies shall also prohibit bullying as defined in section 37O and shall include the student-related sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan required by said section 37O. Copies of these policies shall be provided to any person upon request and without cost by the principal of every school within the district.

Each school district's policies pertaining to the conduct of students shall include the following: disciplinary proceedings, including procedures assuring due process; standards and procedures for suspension and expulsion of students; procedures pertaining to discipline of students with special needs; standards and procedures to assure school building security and safety of students and school personnel; and the disciplinary measures to be taken in cases involving the possession or use of illegal substances or weapons, the use of force, vandalism, or violation of a student's civil rights. Codes of discipline, as well as procedures used to develop such codes shall be filed with the department of education for informational purposes only.

In each school building containing the grades nine to twelve, inclusive, the principal, in consultation with the school council, shall prepare and distribute to each student a student handbook setting forth the rules pertaining to the conduct of students. The student handbook shall include an age-appropriate summary of the student-related sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan required by section 37O. The school council shall review the student handbook each spring to consider changes in disciplinary policy to take effect in September of the following school year, but may consider policy changes at any time. The annual review shall cover all areas of student conduct, including but not limited to those outlined in this section.

Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, all student handbooks shall contain the following provisions:

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

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

(c) Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal.

After said hearing, a principal may, in his discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b).

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

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

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

(g) Under the regulations promulgated by the department, for each school that suspends or expels a significant number of students for more than 10 cumulative days in a school year, the commissioner shall investigate and, as appropriate, shall recommend models that incorporate intermediary steps prior to the use of suspension or expulsion. The results of the analysis shall be publicly reported at the school district level.

Section 37H1/2: Felony complaint or conviction of student; suspension; expulsion; right to appeal

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

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

(2) Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony delinquency, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may expel said student if such principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and reasons for such expulsion prior to such expulsion taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such expulsion; provided, however, that the expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

The student shall have the right to appeal the expulsion to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent, in writing, of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The

superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the expulsion.

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

Section 37H3/4: Suspension or expulsion on grounds other than those set forth in Secs. 37H or 37H1/2

Section 37H3/4. (a) This section shall govern the suspension and expulsion of students enrolled in a public school in the commonwealth who are not charged with a violation of subsections (a) or (b) of section 37H or with a felony under section 37H.5.

(b) Any principal, headmaster, superintendent or other person acting as a decision-maker at a student meeting or hearing, when deciding the consequences for the student, shall exercise discretion; consider ways to re-engage the student in the learning process; and avoid using expulsion as a consequence until other remedies and consequences have been employed.

(c) For any suspension or expulsion under this section, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled, or a designee, shall provide, to the student and to the parent or guardian of the student, notice of the charges and the reason for the suspension or expulsion in English and in the primary language spoken in the home of the student. The student shall receive the written notification and shall have the opportunity to meet with the principal or headmaster, or a designee, to discuss the charges and reasons for the suspension or expulsion prior to the suspension or expulsion taking effect. The principal or headmaster, or a designee, shall ensure that the parent or guardian of the student is included in the meeting, provided that such meeting may take place without the parent or guardian only if the principal or headmaster, or a designee, can document reasonable efforts to include the parent or guardian in that meeting. The department shall promulgate rules and regulations that address a principal's duties under this subsection and procedures for including parents in student exclusion meetings, hearings or interviews under this subsection.

(d) If a decision is made to suspend or expel the student after the meeting, the principal or headmaster, or a designee, shall update the notification for the suspension or expulsion to reflect the meeting with the student. If a student has been suspended or expelled for more than 10 school days for a single infraction or for more than 10 school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year, the student and the parent or guardian of the student shall also receive, at the time of the suspension or expulsion decision, written notification of a right to appeal and the process for appealing the suspension or expulsion in English and in the primary language spoken in the home of the student; provided, however, that the suspension or expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing. The principal or headmaster or a designee shall notify the superintendent in writing, including, but not limited to, by electronic means, of any out-of-school suspension imposed on a student enrolled in kindergarten through grade 3 prior to such suspension taking effect. That notification shall describe the student's alleged misconduct and the reasons for suspending the student out-of-school. For the purposes of this section, the term "out-of-school suspension" shall mean a disciplinary action imposed by school officials to remove a student from participation in school activities for 1 day or more.

(e) A student who has been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 school days for a single infraction or for more than 10 school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year shall have the right to appeal the suspension or expulsion to the superintendent. The student or a parent or guardian of the student shall notify the superintendent in writing of a request for an appeal not later than 5 calendar days following the effective date of the suspension or expulsion; provided, that a student and a

parent or guardian of the student may request, and if so requested, shall be granted an extension of up to 7 calendar days. The superintendent or a designee shall hold a hearing with the student and the parent or guardian of the student within 3 school days of the student's request for an appeal; provided that a student or a parent or guardian of the student may request and, if so requested, shall be granted an extension of up to 7 calendar days; provided further, that the superintendent, or a designee, may proceed with a hearing without a parent or guardian of the student if the superintendent, or a designee, makes a good faith effort to include the parent or guardian. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony, cross-examine witnesses and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal in writing within 5 calendar days of the hearing. That decision shall be the final decision of the school district with regard to the suspension or expulsion.

(f) No student shall be suspended or expelled from a school or school district for a time period that exceeds 90 school days, beginning the first day the student is removed from an assigned school building.

Appendix

Westport Community Schools Policies

Equal Educational Opportunities

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

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

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

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

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

Military

Section 9528 of the [2001 No Child Left Behind Act](#), requires Middle School administrations to release student contact information to military recruiters. Students and parents may “Opt-Out” of the information release by completing the “Option Out” form included in the beginning of the year packet and submitting to the Principal’s Office.

Prohibition of Hazing

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The term "hazing" as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to be contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

CH. 269, S.18. Duty to Report Hazing

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

CH. 269, S.19. Hazing Statutes to be provided; Statement of Compliance and Discipline Policy Required

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

Each secondary school and each public or private school or college shall file, at least annually, a report with the regents of higher education and in the case of secondary schools, the Board of Education, certifying that such institution has complied with the provisions of this section and also certifying that said

school has adopted a disciplinary policy with regards to the organizers and participants of hazing. The Board of Regents and, in the case of secondary schools, the Board of Education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution which fails to make such a report.

Sexual Harassment

All persons associated with Westport Community Schools including, but not necessarily limited to, the Committee, the administration, staff, and students, are expected to conduct themselves at all times so as to provide an atmosphere free from sexual harassment. Any person who engages in sexual harassment while acting, as a member of the school community, will be in violation of this policy. Further, any retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual harassment or retaliation against individuals for cooperating in an investigation of a sexual harassment complaint is similarly unlawful and will not be tolerated.

Because the Westport School Committee takes allegations of sexual harassment seriously, we will respond promptly to complaints of sexual harassment and where it is determined that such inappropriate conduct has occurred, we will act promptly to eliminate the conduct and impose such corrective action as is necessary, including disciplinary action where appropriate.

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

Definition of Sexual Harassment: Unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature may constitute sexual harassment where:

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

The Grievance Officer:

Ms. Wendy Miranda - Special Education Director

17 Main Road, Westport, MA 02790

508-636-1140 x4012

The Superintendent will appoint a sexual harassment grievance officer who shall be vested with the authority and responsibility of processing all sexual harassment complaints in accordance with the procedure set out below:

Complaint Procedure:

1. Any member of the school community who believes that he/she has been subjected to sexual harassment will report the incident (s) to the grievance officer. All complaints shall be investigated promptly and resolved as soon as possible.

2. The grievance officer will attempt to resolve the problem in an informal manner through the following
 - a. The grievance officer will confer with the charging party in order to obtain a clear understanding of that party's statement of the facts, and may interview any witnesses.
 - b. The grievance officer will then attempt to meet with the charged party in order to obtain his/her response to the complaint.
 - c. The grievance officer will hold as many meetings with the parties as is necessary to establish the facts.
 - d. On the basis of the grievance officer's perception of the situation he/she may:
 - Attempt to resolve the matter informally through reconciliation.
 - Report the incident and transfer the record to the Superintendent or his/her designee, and so notify the parties by certified mail.
3. After reviewing the record made by the grievance officer, the Superintendent may attempt to gather any more evidence necessary to decide the case, and thereafter impose any sanctions deemed appropriate, including a recommendation to the committee for termination or expulsion. At this stage of the proceedings the parties may present witnesses and other evidence, and may also be represented. The parties, to the extent permissible by law, shall be informed of the disposition of the complaint. All matters involving sexual harassment complaints will remain confidential to the extent possible. If it is determined that inappropriate conduct has occurred, we will act promptly to eliminate the offending conduct.
4. The grievance officer, upon request, will provide the charging party with government agencies that handle sexual harassment matters.

Student Records: Regulations

Inspection of Record

A parent, or a student who has entered the ninth grade or is at least 14 years old, has the right to inspect all portions of the student record upon request. The record must be made available to the parent or student no later than two days after the request, unless the parent or student consents to a delay. The parent and student have the right to receive copies of any part of the record, although a reasonable fee may be charged for the cost of duplicating the materials. Finally, the parent and student may request to have parts of the record interpreted by a qualified professional of the school, or may invite anyone else of their choosing to inspect or interpret the record with them.

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 34H specifies detailed procedures that govern access to student records by parents who do not have physical custody of their children. For more information, please contact the school principal.

Confidentiality of Record

No individuals or organizations but the parent, student, and the school personnel working directly with the student are allowed to have access to information in the student record without the written consent of the parent or the student.

Amendment of Record

The parent and student have the right to add relevant comments, information, or other written materials to the student record. In addition, the parent and student have a right to request that information in the record be amended or deleted. The parent and student have a right to a conference, and the Principal must render a decision in writing. If the parent and student are not satisfied with the decision, the regulations contain provisions under which decision may be appealed to the Superintendent.

Destruction of Records

A student's temporary record is destroyed within five years after the student transfers, graduates, or withdraws from the school system. School authorities are also allowed to destroy misleading, outdated or irrelevant information in the record from time to time while the student is enrolled in the school system.

In either case, the school must first notify the parent and eligible student and give them the opportunity to receive a copy of any of the information before it is destroyed.

Wellness Policy on Physical Activity & Nutrition – Policy ADF

The School Committee recognizes the relationship between student well-being and student achievement as well as the importance of a comprehensive district wellness program. Therefore, the school district will provide developmentally appropriate and sequential nutrition and physical education as well as opportunities for physical activity. The wellness program will be implemented in a multidisciplinary fashion and will be evidence based.

Wellness Committee

The school district will establish a wellness committee that consists of at least one (1): parent, student, nurse, school food service representative, School Committee member, school administrator, member of the public, and other community members as appropriate. If available, a qualified, credentialed nutrition professional will be a member of the wellness committee. The school committee designates the following individual(s) as wellness program coordinator(s): Nurse Leader or Superintendent designee. Only employees of the district who are members of the wellness committee may serve as wellness program coordinators. Wellness coordinators, in consultation with the wellness committee, will be in charge of implementation and evaluation of this policy.

Nutrition Guidelines

It is the policy of the school district that all foods and beverages made available on campus during the school day are consistent with School Lunch Program nutrition guidelines. Guidelines for reimbursable school meals will not be less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture pursuant to

law. The district will create procedures that address all foods available to students throughout the school day in the following areas:

- guidelines for maximizing nutritional value by decreasing fat and added sugars, increasing nutrition density and moderating portion size of each individual food or beverage sold within the school environment;
- separate guidelines for foods and beverages in the following categories:
 1. foods and beverages included in a la carte sales in the food service program on school campuses;
 2. foods and beverages sold in vending machines, snack bars, school stores, and concession stands;
 3. foods and beverages sold as part of school-sponsored fundraising activities; and
 4. refreshments served at parties, celebrations, and meetings during the school day; and
 5. specify that its guidelines will be based on nutrition goals, not profit motives.

Please see the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* at <https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/>

Nutrition and Physical Education

The school district will provide nutrition education aligned with standards established by the USDA's National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program in all grades. The school district will provide physical education training aligned with the standards established by the Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education. The wellness program coordinators, in consultation with the wellness committee, will develop procedures that address nutrition and physical education.

Nutrition Education

- Students receive nutrition education that teaches the skills they need to adopt and maintain healthy eating behaviors.
- Nutrition education is offered in the school cafeteria as well as in the classroom, with coordination between the foodservice staff and other school personnel, including teachers.
- Students receive consistent nutrition messages from all aspects of the school program.
- Division health education curriculum standards and guidelines address both nutrition and physical education.
- Nutrition is integrated into the health education or core curricula (e.g., math, science, language arts).
- Schools link nutrition education activities with the coordinated school health program.
- Staff who provide nutrition education have appropriate training.
- The level of student participation in the school breakfast and school lunch programs is appropriate.

Physical Education Activities

- Students are given opportunities for physical activity during the school day through physical education (PE) classes and the integration of physical activity into the academic curriculum where appropriate.
- Students are given opportunities for physical activity through a range of before- and/or after-school programs including, but not limited to, intramurals, interscholastic athletics, and physical activity clubs.
- Schools work with the community to create ways for students to walk, bike, rollerblade or skateboard safely to and from school.
- Schools encourage parents and guardians to support their children's participation in physical activity, to be physically active role models, and to include physical activity in family events.
- Schools provide training to enable staff to promote enjoyable, lifelong physical activity among students.

Other School-Based Activities

The wellness program coordinators, in consultation with the wellness committee, are charged with developing procedures addressing other school-based activities to promote wellness.

- An adequate amount of time is allowed for students to eat meals in adequate lunchroom facilities.
- All children who participate in subsidized food programs are able to obtain food in a non-stigmatizing manner.
- Environmentally-friendly practices such as the use of locally grown and seasonal foods, school gardens, and non-disposable tableware have been considered and implemented where appropriate.
- Physical activities and/or nutrition services or programs designed to benefit staff health have been considered and, to the extent practical, implemented.

Evaluation

The wellness committee will assess all education curricula and materials pertaining to wellness for accuracy, completeness, balance and consistency with the state and district's educational goals and standards. Wellness program coordinators shall be responsible for devising a plan for implementation and evaluation of the district wellness policy and are charged with operational responsibility for ensuring that schools meet the goals of the district wellness policy. Wellness program coordinators will report to the School Committee annually.

WCS Education Policy After Hours

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

Now, therefore, The Westport School Committee does hereby establish the following policy on “Use of School Buildings After School:”

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

Internet Acceptable Use Policy

The Internet is a vast electronic network linking computers at universities, Middle Schools, science labs, and other sites throughout the world. Use of the Internet provides the opportunity for students and staff to research and support educational and curriculum initiatives by enabling users to explore thousands of libraries, databases, museums, and other repositories of information and to exchange communications with other Internet users around the world. Because of its enormous size, the Internet's potential is boundless. However, with such great potential for education also comes some potential for abuse. It is the purpose of the Acceptable Use Policy as well as the associated Contract for Internet Use, to ensure that all who use the Internet through the Westport Community Schools use this valuable resource in an appropriate manner.

The Westport Community Schools offer students and staff access to the Internet through their classrooms, libraries and school computer labs. To gain access, all Internet users must agree to abide by the guidelines set forth in the Acceptable Use Policy. Students will be required to have parental permission for Internet access. Should a parent prefer that a student not have Internet access, she/he will have use of the computer for traditional educational purposes.

To use the Internet through the Westport Community Schools, the user agrees to take full responsibility for his or her own actions. The Westport Community Schools, along with the other organizations sponsoring this Internet link-up, will not be held liable for the actions of anyone connecting to the Internet through this hook-up. Therefore, all users shall assume full liability, legal, financial, or otherwise, for their actions.

Due to the manner in which information can readily be placed on the Internet, the school system will not be held responsible for the accuracy or the quality of the information obtained by the user through the Internet. System and building facilitators will make reasonable efforts to maintain reliable service and user privacy, but they cannot absolutely guarantee that the system will always be available, that files will always be saved, and that privacy will be completely guaranteed.

The Westport Community Schools' Internet connection is provided to further the educational goals of the school system and those of the students and staff using the service. In keeping with the educational purposes intended with its use, the Internet connection is not to be used for any non-educational purposes such as commercial solicitations, product advertisement, political lobbying, etc. No attempt will be made to obtain computer software illegally, known as pirating, through the provided Internet connection.

The user of the Internet connection becomes an extension of the Westport Community Schools throughout the Internet. Westport Community Schools Internet users are expected to abide by the rules of the Student or Staff Handbook where applicable, and follow accepted network etiquette. Inappropriate behavior will not be condoned. The use of vulgar, profane or obscene language is not to be used. Threatening or sexually harassing language is unacceptable and against school rules as well as the law.

The safety of the Internet user as well as the system itself is of utmost concern. Personal safety of the user means never giving out personal information such as home addresses or telephone numbers for yourself or others. A user must never agree to meet with someone contacted through the Internet. The safety of the system is also a concern of the Westport Community Schools. Users will not give out their passwords or anyone else's nor attempt to gain access to any files for which the user is not authorized. Users will not download software (Freeware, Shareware), files or documents which may compromise the system by means of a virus, tying up the Internet connection for extended periods of time or some other activity which places the server system at risk.

With all the information available to the Internet user, the temptation to use obtained or uncredited information is great. The user agrees not to plagiarize the works, ideas or thoughts of others, and abide by the Copyright Infringement Laws.

The manner in which information is placed on or accessed through the Internet allows for the possibility of the user to encounter inappropriate material. The user agrees not to access material that is obscene, advocates illegal acts of violence or discriminates toward other people. Should a user encounter an unacceptable or inappropriate Web Site, the user will immediately close the connection to the site and refrain from downloading any material. The user will not identify or share the Web Site address with anyone and will report the access of the site to the person in charge of the Internet hook-up site where the violation took

place. The Westport Community Schools reserve the right to periodically review the Web Sites accessed by individual users. These reviews will help to assure that the educational purposes for which the Internet connection is provided are being followed.

Violations of the Acceptable Use Policy carry serious consequences and will result in the immediate suspension of the users' Internet privileges. Further disciplinary actions may be taken by the Administration of the Westport Community Schools and/or Town, State, or Federal authorities. Any questions or allegations concerning adherence to the Acceptable Use Policy should be brought to the attention of the Education Technology Coordinator, Principal or a faculty member immediately.

Health Services/Nurse's Office

Students who need the services of the nurse's office must go to their classroom first and procure a pass from their classroom teacher. Students may go to the nurse after school without a pass. Students must have a pass at all other times in order to visit the nurse's office. Students who are obviously ill will be sent out of class to the nurse's office by their classroom teacher. This time out of class will be considered an absence for that class.

The nurse's office will be closed daily for lunch from 12:10 p.m. to 12:40 P.M. Students will not be seen during this time unless it is an emergency.

Vision / Hearing Testing

Testing is completed during the school year. Parents will be notified if a student fails to pass either test.

Immunizations

Students who receive the required school immunizations by a hospital or private physician must notify the school nurse so that records can be kept up-to-date.

Medications

1. All medications prescribed by physicians must be delivered to the school by a parent or guardian.
2. All medications must be in properly marked containers with the following information:
 - A. Student Name
 - B. Name of Medication
 - C. Physician's Name
 - D. Amount and Time to be Dispensed
3. All medication will be administered by the school nurse according to prescription regulations. No medicines, including over the counter, will be administered without a doctor's note and parent signature.

Emergency Forms

It is the parents'/students' responsibility to ensure that the school's emergency form is returned to the school nurse immediately at the beginning of the school year. The information provided on the form is necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of our students.

Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

PPRA affords parents/guardians and students who are 18 or emancipated minors (eligible students) certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams.

These include the right to: Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED) –

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent/guardian;
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
- Sex behavior or attitudes;
- Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
- Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
- Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
- Religious practices affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parent/guardians; or
- Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility. Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
- Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others. Inspect, upon request and before administration or use
- Protected information surveys of students;
- Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
- Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

Parent/guardians/eligible students who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue,
SW Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

Homelessness

In compliance with the McKinney Vento Act and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Westport Community Schools acknowledges the following definition of homeless children and youth:

- Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence or have a primary nighttime residence in a supervised (publicly or privately) operated shelter for temporary accommodations including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill.
- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters.
- Abandoned in hospitals.
- Awaiting foster care placement.
- Unaccompanied youth (a homeless youth who is not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian, and not in the custody of a state agency).

Students who are considered homeless will be able to attend his/her school of origin (the school where the child/youth attended when permanently housed or last enrolled), and fully participate in all school activities and services including preschool programs, Title 1, Special Education, English Language Learner Program, School Nutrition Programs and all other programs available to resident students.

If you have any questions about McKinney Vento, please contact the school principal. All information is kept confidential.

Notification of Rights Under FERPA

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

These rights are:

- The right to inspect and review the student's educational records within 45 days of the day the School 38 receives a request for access. Parent/guardians or eligible students should submit to the School principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent/guardian or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
- The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent/guardian or eligible student believes are inaccurate. Parents/guardians or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate. They should write the School principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent/guardian or eligible student, the School will notify the parent/guardian or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent/guardian or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
- The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
- One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the School has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent/guardian or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

- A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.
- Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

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

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue,
SW Washington, DC 20202-4605

Non-Custodial Parent Guardian Rights

As required by G.L.Ch. 71, § 34H, a non-custodial parent/guardian may have access to the student record in accordance with law and Department of Education Regulations. The school district will follow the law and the attachments recommended by the Massachusetts Department of Education to standardize the process by which public schools provide student records to parents/guardians who do not have physical custody of their children (“non-custodial parent/guardians”). The implementation of this policy will hopefully encourage parents/guardians to be involved in and informed about the education of their children, while protecting the rights and safety of all parties.

Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Physical Challenge

The School Committee has designated the Student Services Supervisor as the responsible employee to coordinate school district compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and its administrative regulations. The Student Services Supervisor, as the district's Section 504 compliance officer, shall be responsible for continuing compliance with Section 504 and its administrative regulations. Any student has a ready means of resolving any claim of discrimination on the basis of physical challenge in the educational programs or activities of the district. In the event a student believes that there has been a violation of Section 504, s/he shall deliver to the Student Services Supervisor a written statement setting out the alleged violations, describing the incident or activity involved, the individuals involved and the dates, times and locations involved. The Student Services Supervisor shall provide the individual filing the written statement an 15 opportunity to discuss the matter personally, if requested. The Student Services Supervisor shall make such investigation as is necessary to determine the complete facts involved. The Superintendent shall then take action as appropriate to bring the district in compliance with all federal and state regulations or refer the matter to the School Committee for action as appropriate. If the student submitting the written statement of an alleged violation is not satisfied with the handling of the matter by the district, s/he may present the matter directly to the School Committee by contacting the Committee Chairperson.

Admission to Classes and Course of Study

Each and every course of study offered by a public school shall be open and available to students regardless of actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex/gender, marital status, homelessness, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, family care leave status, pregnancy or any condition related to pregnancy, or military/veteran status of the access to, admission, or treatment of students in its programs and activities, or in employment and application for employment. Furthermore, School Committee policy includes prohibitions of harassment of students and employees, i.e., racial harassment, sexual harassment, and retaliation for filing complaints of discrimination. This does not prohibit the use of prerequisite requirements that have been demonstrated to be essential to success in a given program. However, if participation in a course or program is dependent upon completion of a prerequisite which was previously limited to students of one gender, or if scrutiny reveals that administrative arrangements have limited the opportunities of any class of students to participate in such prerequisites, then all members of the previously excluded group shall be given the opportunity to acquire the prerequisites or be allowed to enter the program without such prerequisites. If it

cannot be shown that a prerequisite is essential for success in a given program, the prerequisite shall be abolished. The determination of what courses or units of study are to be required of any student shall also be made without regard to the actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex/gender, marital status, homelessness, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, family care leave status, pregnancy or any condition related to pregnancy, or military/veteran status of the access to, admission, or treatment of students in its programs and activities, or in employment and application for employment. Furthermore, School Committee policy includes prohibitions of harassment of students and employees, i.e., racial harassment, sexual harassment, and retaliation for filing complaints of discrimination. This policy shall not be construed to prevent particular segments of a program of instruction from being offered separately to each gender when necessary in order to respect personal privacy.

Bullying Prevention*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bullying is prohibited:

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

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

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

Prevention and Intervention Plan

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

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

Reporting

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

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

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

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

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

Investigation Procedures

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

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

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

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

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

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

Disciplinary actions for students who have committed an act of bullying or retaliation shall be in accordance with district disciplinary policies.

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

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

Retaliation

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

Target Assistance

The school district shall provide counseling or referral to appropriate services, including guidance, academic intervention, and protection to students, both targets and perpetrators, affected by bullying, as necessary.

Training and Assessment

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

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

Publication and Notice

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

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

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

The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be posted on the school district website.

Westport Middle School

Thomas Aubin - Superintendent
Laura Charette - Principal
Jennifer Gargiulo- Assistant Principal
Sean Persico - Assistant Principal

ELECTRONIC COPY RECEIPT OF PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK 2023-2024 FROM THE
WEBSITE WILL BE DONE THROUGH THE COMMUNITY PORTAL.:

I acknowledge, with my signature below, the receipt of the required annual notification of parent/student rights on behalf of my son/daughter. We have reviewed the information together and understand the expectations of Westport Middle School.

Please PRINT the name, grade, and birth date of your child.

STUDENT NAME: _____ Grade: _____ DOB : _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

Signature of Student: _____

Please provide us with an updated phone number and email you prefer we use for our primary methods of communication. We will be sending emails and phone calls to keep families updated each week on any school news and information.

EMAIL: _____

PHONE: _____

CELL PHONE: _____