

STUDENT DISCIPLINE AND DUE PROCESS

It is essential for schools to maintain a safe and orderly environment, which supports student learning and achievement. All students are expected to conduct themselves with respect for others and in accordance with School Board policies, school rules, and applicable state and federal laws. Disciplinary action may be taken against students who violate policies, rules, or laws, and/or whose conduct directly interferes with the operations, discipline, or general welfare of the school.

Disciplinary consequences will range from a verbal warning for minor misconduct up to and including expulsion for the most serious offenses. The Governor Wentworth Regional School District will follow the procedures set forth by state and federal law, specifically RSA 193:13 and Ed 317, in the discipline of students. The Governor Wentworth Regional School Board does not review appeals of student disciplinary decisions unless a right to appeal is explicitly conferred by policy or by law.

Behavior that also violates the law may be referred to law enforcement authorities.

Short-Term Out-of-School Suspension

The building Principal or representative designated in writing by the Superintendent is authorized to suspend a student for a specific period of time, not to exceed **ten** (10) consecutive school days. A suspension may be imposed for:

- Behavior that is detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of pupils or school personnel;
- or
- Repeated and willful disregard of the reasonable rules of the school that is not remediated through imposition of the districts graduated sanctions.

During such suspensions, unless otherwise stipulated in writing, a suspended student is not permitted to attend school classes or activities, school sponsored events, or be on school property for the duration of the suspension.

A student who is subject to a short-term suspension (**ten** school days or fewer) is entitled to the following due process:

1. The student will meet with the building principal or assistant principal to discuss the charges and the evidence against the student. The principal or assistant principal will inform the student of the possibility of a short-term suspension.
2. The student will be given an opportunity to present their side of the story at this meeting.
3. The student and at least one of the student's parents/guardians will receive a written statement explaining any disciplinary action taken against the student.

Depending on the severity of the student's conduct, the building Principal or designee may also refer or recommend the student to the Superintendent or to the School Board for further disciplinary consequences.

Long-Term Out-of-School Suspension

The School Board, or the Superintendent, as the School Board's designee, may extend a student's suspension for up to an additional **ten** (10) consecutive school days. A long-term out-of-school suspension may be imposed for:

- An act of theft, destruction, or violence as defined in RSA 193-D;
- Bullying pursuant to school district policy JICK when the student has not responded to targeted interventions and poses an ongoing threat to the safety or welfare of another student; or
- Possession of a firearm, BB gun, or paintball gun.

During such suspensions, unless otherwise stipulated in writing, a suspended student is not permitted to attend school classes or activities, school sponsored events, or be on school property for the duration of the suspension.

A student who is subject to a long-term suspension is entitled to the following due process:

1. Upon recommendation of a long-term suspension and prior to any hearing, there shall be a written communication to the student and at least one of the student's parents or guardians, delivered in person or by mail to the student's last known address, which states the charges and an explanation of the evidence against the student.
2. A hearing that meets the requirements of Ed 317.04(f) (3) (g).
 - a. The school officials shall present evidence in support of the charges and the student (or the student's parent/guardian) shall have an opportunity to present any defense or reply.
 - b. During the hearing, the student and/or parent/guardian shall have the right to examine any witnesses presented by school officials.
 - c. The hearing shall be either public or private and the choice shall be that of the student or the parent/guardian. However if the nature of the evidence will violate the privacy of other students or the Superintendent or School Board determines that substantial harm to the pupil could result from an ill-conceived decision to hold the hearing in public, then the Board reserves the right and obligation to insist upon a private hearing.
 - d. The student may, together with a parent/guardian, waive the right to a hearing and admit to the charges.
3. The student is entitled to a written decision, which includes the legal and factual basis for the conclusion that the student should be suspended.
4. The written decision shall include notice to the student that the decision may be appealed. For a long-term suspension issued by the Superintendent, the decision must be appealed in writing to the School Board within **ten** (10) days after the issuance of the decision. The School Board will hold a hearing on the appeal but has the discretion to hear evidence or to rely upon the hearing conducted by the Superintendent.
5. For a long-term suspension issued by the School Board, the decision must be appealed to the New Hampshire State Board of Education within **twenty** (20) days after receipt of the decision.
6. The long-term suspension shall remain in effect while an appeal is pending unless the School Board stays the suspension.

Depending on the severity of the student's conduct, the Superintendent may also refer or recommend the student to the School Board for further disciplinary consequences.

Expulsion

The School Board may expel a student, which permanently denies a student's attendance at school. An expulsion may be imposed for an act that poses an ongoing threat to the safety of students or school personnel and that constitutes:

- A repeated act that would permit a long term suspension;
- Any act of physical or sexual assault that would be a felony if committed by an adult;
- Any act of violence that constitutes a "violent crime" pursuant to RSA 651:5, XIII; or
- Criminal threatening that constitutes a class B felony pursuant to RSA 631:4, II (a).

During an expulsion, unless otherwise stipulated in writing, a student is not permitted to attend school classes or activities, school sponsored events, or access school property.

A student who is subject to expulsion is entitled to the following due process:

1. Upon recommendation of an expulsion and prior to any hearing, there shall be a written notice to the student and at least one of the student's parents or guardians, delivered in person or by mail to the student's last known address, which states the date, time, and place for a hearing before the School Board. The notice shall be delivered to the student and at least one of the student's parents/guardians at least **five** (5) calendar days prior to the hearing.
2. The School Board shall conduct the hearing in accordance with New Hampshire Administrative Rule Ed 317.04(f) (3) (g).
 - a. The school officials shall present evidence in support of the charges and the student (or the student's parent/guardian) shall have an opportunity to present any defense or reply.
 - b. During the hearing, the student or the parent/guardian shall have the right to examine any witnesses presented by school officials.
 - c. The hearing shall be either public or private, and the choice shall be that of the student or the parent/guardian. However, if the nature of the evidence will violate the privacy of other students, or if the Board determines that substantial harm to the pupil could result from an ill-conceived decision to hold the hearing in public, then the Board reserves the right and obligation to insist upon a private hearing.
 - d. The student may, together with a parent/guardian, waive the right to a hearing and admit to the charges.
3. Before expelling a pupil under this section, the local school board or chartered public school board of trustees shall consider each of the following factors:
 - a. The student's age;
 - b. The student's disciplinary history;
 - c. Whether the student has a disability;
 - d. The seriousness of the violation or behavior committed by the student;

- e. Whether the school district has implemented positive behavioral interventions;
 - f. Whether a lesser intervention would properly address the violation or behavior committed by the student.
4. The School Board shall issue a written decision stating whether the student is expelled and, if so, the length of the expulsion. If the decision is to expel, the decision must include the legal and factual basis for the decision including the specific statutory reference prohibiting the act for which the student is expelled.
 5. The expulsion shall run until the School Board reviews it and restores the student's permission to attend school. The written decision shall state any action that the student may take to be restored by the School Board. The decision shall also state that the student has the right to appeal the decision to the New Hampshire State Board of Education at any time while the expulsion remains in effect.

Any expulsion shall be subject to review by the School Board, if requested, prior to the start of each school year. A student seeking restoration of permission to attend school shall file a written request with the Superintendent prior to the start of each school year which details the basis for the request.

Possession of a Firearm

Pursuant to RSA 193:13, IV, any student who brings or possesses a firearm (as defined in 18 U.S.C. § 921) in a safe school zone, as defined in RSA 193-D:1 without written authorization from the Superintendent or designee shall be expelled from school by the Governor Wentworth Regional School Board for a period of not less than **twelve** (12) months.

Pursuant to RSA 193:13, VI, a student who is expelled from school in another state under the provisions of the Gun Free School Zones Act of 1994 shall not be eligible to enroll in the Governor Wentworth Regional School District during such expulsion. If the out of state expulsion is for an indefinite period of time, the student may petition the School Board for enrollment upon establishing residency.

As provided in RSA 193:13, VII, both of the above expulsions may be modified by the Superintendent upon review of the specific case in accordance with other applicable law. The expelled student must submit a written application to the Superintendent requesting modification of the expulsion, and the student will be required to submit sufficient evidence in the form of letters, work history, or other documents that it is in the school's best interest and the student's best interest to allow a modification.

Superintendent Authority

The School Board authorizes the Superintendent to reinstate a suspended or expelled pupil on a case by case basis.

Educational Assignments

The student's school will make all educational assignments available to the suspended student during the student's suspension.

The school district will provide alternative educational services to a student whenever the student is suspended in excess of **twenty** (20) cumulative days within any school

year. Such alternative educational services will be determined by the school Principal or Assistant Principal and shall be designed to enable the student to advance from grade to grade.

No student shall be penalized academically solely by virtue of missing class due to suspension.

The School Board, in its discretion, may authorize educational services to be provided to an expelled student in an alternative setting on a case by case basis.

Behavior Intervention Plans

The student's school will develop an intervention plan for any student who has been suspended more than **ten** (10) cumulative school days in any school year. The intervention plan will be designed to proactively address the student's problematic behaviors.

Students with Disabilities

Discipline of students with identified or suspected disabilities will be in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004, New Hampshire State Law on Special Education (RSA 186-C), New Hampshire Standards for the Education of Children with Disabilities (Ed 1100), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Code of Conduct

The School Board authorizes the Superintendent to establish a Code of Conduct, which will contain a system of supports and consequences designed to correct student misconduct and promote behavior within acceptable norms. The Code of Conduct will include a graduated set of age appropriate responses to misconduct and will set forth standards for short term suspensions up to **five** (5) school days, short term suspensions up to **ten** (10) school days, long term suspensions up to **twenty** (20) school days, and expulsion. Such standards will make reference to the nature and degree of disruption caused to the school environment, the threat to the health and safety of pupils and school personnel, and the isolated or repeated nature of incidents forming the basis of disciplinary action.

Notice

This policy and school rules which inform the student body of the content of RSA 193:13 shall be included in the student handbook and made available on the District's website to students, parents, and guardians. The Principal or designated building administrator shall also inform the student body concerning this policy and school rules which address the content of RSA 193:13 through appropriate means, which may include posting and/or announcements.

The principal of each school shall make certain that the pupil has received notice of the requirements of RSA 193:13 and RSA 193-D:1 through announced, posted, or printed school rules at the beginning of each school year. The statutory text shall be printed in the school handbook to be distributed to each student at the beginning of the school year, and shall be announced, posted, and printed at other appropriate locations and

times in the middle school and high school. Nothing herein shall prevent a school principal from printing, posting, and/or announcing other rules applicable to the school.

Legal References:

18 U.S.C. § 921, Definition of Firearm

RSA 189:15, Regulations

RSA 193:13, Suspension & Expulsion of Pupils

RSA 651:5, XIII, Annulment of Criminal Records - Violent Crimes

RSA 631:4, II(a), Criminal Threatening

RSA Chapter 193-D, Safe School Zones

RSA Chapter 193-F, Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.04(a), Policy Development

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.04(f), Student Discipline

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed317, Standards and Procedures for Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils Including Procedures Assuring Due Process

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