

Family Handbook



2023-2024

The Friendship School
24 Rope Ferry Road
Waterford, CT 06385
860/447-4049

Please note: Changing circumstances, such as the need for health and safety protocols, may cause the policies and guidelines in this handbook to be revised and/or superseded. Any such changes will be communicated as soon as the change is made.

PREFACE

This handbook was developed to provide parents/guardians/caregivers and students with a summary of important LEARN policies and procedures. This handbook is not intended to be all-inclusive and does not contain all of the LEARN policies. The LEARN policies are available online at www.learn.k12.ct.us. All LEARN policies are in compliance with the United States Constitution, Connecticut, federal and local policies. Material contained in this Handbook may be superseded by such Board policy, administrative regulation or negotiated agreement. Any information contained in this Handbook is subject to unilateral revision or elimination from time-to-time without notice. The 2023-2024 Guardian – Student Handbook is designed to be in harmony with Board policy. Changes in policy that affect portions of this Handbook will be made available to students and parents/ guardians through newsletters, web pages, and other communications. Please contact your school principal or the LEARN administrative office should you have any questions or would like additional information. Consult the district’s website (www.learn.k12.ct.us) or the individual school’s website for any significant changes.

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Dear Families,

We are thrilled to welcome you to The Friendship School, where learning, laughter, and exploration come together to create a truly special experience for your little ones. As the Principal and Assistant Principal, we want to extend a warm and hearty welcome to you and your child.

Excitingly, we are now a Museum Magnet School, which means we're turning our classrooms into captivating spaces where curiosity knows no bounds. Just like how a museum holds treasures waiting to be discovered, our classrooms are filled with opportunities for your child to learn, play, and grow. We can't wait for them to embark on this incredible journey of imagination and discovery with us.

At The Friendship School, we embrace the Responsive Classroom approach. What does that mean? It means that we create a caring, inclusive environment where each child feels valued and supported. We celebrate differences and encourage cooperation, helping your child develop important social skills while also enjoying every step of their educational adventure.

But wait, there's more! We believe that education is a partnership between school and home. That's why we're committed to family engagement. We want you to be an active part of your child's learning journey. From special events to workshops, there will be many opportunities for you to get involved and share in your child's progress.

Thank you for entrusting us with your child's early education. We're here to nurture their minds and hearts, and we can't wait to see them flourish at The Friendship School. Let's embark on this exciting adventure together!

In Partnership and Friendship,
Jessica Silvestro and Jenny Dowker

Welcome to The Friendship School

Why We Are Here:

We believe that every child has the right to a high-quality early childhood education. Students at TFS are creators and curators, using a museum approach to demonstrate their learning. As a museum school, our purpose is to set students on the path of life-long learning, equipping them with the academic and social competencies necessary for success in school and beyond.

Welcome!

Thank you for choosing The Friendship School for your child's first public school experience. We take this responsibility seriously and are committed to ensuring that each student has a high-quality, engaging, and meaningful learning experience during their time at TFS.

We are here to support you in being the essential partners in your child's educational experience. Please know that you can always reach out to us with any questions. Without you, we would not be here. The Family Handbook is available digitally using a QR Code. If you would like a hard copy of the handbook, please contact The Helm to request one.

This handbook is designed to help you navigate some of the intricacies that are inherent here at TFS so that you and your child have a smooth transition to school. The back of the handbook contains LEARN policies and procedures that apply to all LEARN schools PK-12.



General Information

Leadership Team:

Jessica Silvestro, Principal

860/447-4049 ext 7128

Jenny Dowker, Assistant Principal

860/447-4049 ext 7127

Address:

24 Rope Ferry Road, Waterford, CT 06385

Phone Number:

860/447-4049

Important Phone Numbers:

School Nurse: 860/447-4049 ext 7131

Kitchen: 860/447-4049 ext 9

Carelot: 860/447-4049 ext 8

Important Emails:

The Helm

thehelm@learn.k12.ct.us

Jessical Silvestro, Principal

jsilvestro@learn.k12.ct.us

Jenny Dowker, Assistant Principal

jdowker@learn.k12.ct.us

Robin Campbell, Office Manager

rcampbell@learn.k12.ct.us

Lindsay Bones, Bilingual Office Manager

lbones@learn.k12.ct.us

Amanda Emanuel, Secretary

aemanuel@learn.k12.ct.us

Office Hours:

9:00 am - 5:00 pm Monday through Friday

School Hours:

Regular School Days: 9:30 am - 3:45 pm

Early Release Days: 9:30 am - 12:30 pm

Early Pick-Ups:

In order to facilitate safe and smooth dismissal of all students we ask that you do not pick up your child at the door after 3:00 pm. If you arrive after 3:00 pm, we will ask you to join a car lane.

School Messenger:

This automated communication service is a courtesy call, email, and text that allows us to inform family of important school information, including early release dates, special events, etc. The program uses the information from Power School listed as “First Number to Call” and “First Email.” If you would like to change the contact information please contact the front office. Please update us about any changes in emails or phone numbers so that we can easily reach you.

A Museum School



Together, we will...

 Notice Deeply

 Explore Boldly

 Create Joyfully

Museum Partners:

We have three amazing local museum partners who work with us to provide engaging, hands-on, education experiences to all students. The museum exhibits, themes, and topics are integrated into our museum units, allowing students to take what they learn on museum expeditions and bring it back into the classroom for further exploration.

Additionally, TFS families may check out family museum passes to each of our partners so that they can visit the museums and extend the learning into home experiences. Please contact the main office to reserve your museum pass.

Lyman Allyn Art Museum:

A local art museum focused on local history and artists, their permanent collections include *American Perspectives* and *Louis Comfort Tiffany in New London*. Visitors can explore the history of Connecticut through many art mediums. Their rotating exhibits feature many different genres, artists, and mediums, allowing for a wide range of learning opportunities. The Lyman Allyn has a significant commitment to education and provides educational programs to schools and throughout the summer months.

Niantic Children's Museum:

The Niantic Children's Museum is an interactive, hands-on, educational place for children to try on new roles, let their imaginations soar, and feel safe while exploring the world around them. Their fully accessible space includes indoor and outdoor learning opportunities designed to encourage, engage, and challenge children from 9 months to 9 years in the arts, sciences, and world cultures.

Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center:

DPNC is dedicated to inspiring an understanding of the natural world and ourselves as a part of it, through the past, present and future. They focus on stewarding nature to

enhance habitats for wildlife and providing the opportunity for all people to access its physical, mental, and spiritual benefits. Their goal is to support a community focused on the importance of the natural world and to create connections, taking lessons from our past to support healthy interactions with nature now, and in the future.

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

CT Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS):

The CT ELDS are a set of standards that describe what children from birth to age five should know and be able to do. They are used to help adults think about how children grow and learn over time. The CT ELDS help all the adults in a child's life talk with each other using the same words and to think about experiences that will help him/her reach the next steps in development. The CT ELDS include eight domains or areas of development.

- Cognition
- Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development and Health
- Language and Literacy
- Creative Arts
- Mathematics
- Science and Social Studies

Report Cards and Assessments

- Report Cards are directly aligned to the 9 domains identified in the CT ELDS. Student progress is reported out using this format three times per year. The fall and spring report cards align with the scheduled family conferences to allow families to meet with teachers and discuss progress in person.
- DECA is the benchmark assessment for Social and Emotional Learning. Teachers complete a survey for each child identifying what they are currently demonstrating in the classroom. This survey provides ratings in four areas (attachment, self-control, regulation, and behavioral concerns) along with strategies which can be implemented both in the classroom and at home.
- The Preschool Early Literacy Indicators (PELI) is the benchmark assessment for literacy completed with each student three times per year. This assessment

measures pre-reading skills taught in our curriculum that will prepare students to become readers.

- For math we use curriculum based assessments based in our Bridges Math Program. These assessments are activities students complete during the math block, aligned to the ELDS, that are used to measure students' progress towards those standards.

Instructional Programs and Approaches:

Literacy:

- [Heggerty](#): phonological and phonemic awareness
- [Foundations](#): phonics and letter/sound identification
- Learning Without Tears: Letter formation and identification, fine motor skills
- Interactive Read Alouds
- Shared Reading

Math:

- [Bridges](#): Number Corner, Calendar, and Workstations

Social and Emotional Learning:

- [Second Step](#)
- [Responsive Classroom](#)

Units of Study

Me and My Family

- Welcome to School
- All About Me
- Families
- How We Express Ourselves
- Let's Be Healthy
- Me and the Museum

Me and My Community

- My School Community
- My Town Community
- Community Helpers
- Friendship

Me and My World

- Animal Life Cycles
- Plant Life Cycles
- Exploring My Senses
- Exploring the Seasons

Responsive Classroom

The Responsive Classroom approach to teaching is comprised of a set of well-designed practices intended to create safe, joyful and engaging classroom communities. The emphasis is on helping students develop their academic, social, and emotional skills in a learning environment that is developmentally responsive to their strengths and needs.

In order to be successful in and out of school, students need:

Social and Emotional Competencies:

cooperation, assertiveness, responsibility, empathy, and self-control

Academic Competencies:

Academic mindset, perseverance, learning strategies and academic behaviors

Responsive Classroom Guiding Principles:

1. Teaching social and emotional skills is as important as teaching content.
2. How we teach is as important as what we teach.
3. Great cognitive growth occurs through social interaction.
4. How we work together as adults creates a safe, joyful and inclusive school environment.
5. What we know and believe about students informs our expectations, reactions and attitudes.
6. Partnering with families, knowing them and valuing their contributions, is important.

Key Practices:

- Morning Meeting: Morning Meeting gives students a consistent time and place every day to explore and practice social skills and to merge social, emotional, and

academic learning. Morning Meeting also nurtures empathy by offering students an opportunity to practice taking care of others.

- Interactive Modeling: Interactive Modeling is a simple strategy that is used to teach routines, social-emotional skills, and academic skills through modeling, practice, and repetition.
- Teacher Language: The language we use in the classroom is an essential and powerful mode of communicating our expectations to children. Positive teacher language communicates to students our confidence in their ability to meet high expectations and recognizes and appreciates their efforts at behaving well.
- Logical Consequences: Logical consequences help children recognize the effects of their actions and develop internal controls. They support children in wanting to do better and building their understanding of their impact on others.
- Established Rules and Routines: School and classroom rules are established through the lens of helping students understand the purpose of rules and how the rules will help them reach their goals. By building rules and routine through this lens, students see the connection between rules and routines and their own personal success.
- Closing Circle: A closing circle brings a peaceful end to the school day. They are brief and have one or two activities. This brief class meeting has a big impact on learning, behavior, and classroom climate by building the habit of reflection, fostering students' awareness of valuable aspects of themselves, their classmates, and their school, and reinforcing a sense of community.

Sample Daily Schedule:

Time	Class or Activity
9:15 - 9:45 am	Breakfast Snack and Arrival
9:45 - 10:05 am	Morning Meeting
10:05 - 10:50 am	Literacy Block
10:50 - 11:50	Recess and Lunch
11:50 - 12:25	Math Block
12:30 - 1:05	Essentials (PE, Art, Music, Library, Creative Movement)
1:05 - 1:45	SEL and Magnet Studies
1:45 - 2:45	Rest Time (Students are not expected or required to sleep, however they are expected to stay quietly on their mat and rest their bodies)
2:45 - 3:00	Snack
3:00 - 3:30	Free Choice Centers

Arrival and Dismissal:

Car Lane Drop-Off and Pick-Up:

Car Lane Pick-Up and Drop Off is one of the most important times of day at The Friendship School. To safely and efficiently move 460 students in and out of the building each day requires patience, cooperation, and understanding. Please share this information with anyone who will be picking up or dropping off your child so they understand the process.

For the beginning of the school year we will be using photo IDs as well as School Dismissal Manager (SDM) to identify approved pick-up people. You should receive an email from SDM asking you to register your child and set their dismissal plan. Once this system is fully operational, we will be using the SDM numbers to dismiss students. Please register anyone who will pick up your child in SDM so that they will have a dismissal code.

Car Lane Assignments:

- Senior Center: Team Imagine and Team Innovate
- Miner Lane: Team Create, Team Explore, Team Wonder

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Waves:

- Last Names A - L: Drop-off from 9:15 - 9:25 am and Pick-Up from 3:30 - 3:40 pm
- Last Names M-Z: Drop-off from 9:25 - 9:35 pm and Pick-up from 3:40 - 3:50 pm

Morning Drop Off

- At your assigned pick up wave time, follow the planned route to the loading zone. Do not arrive more than 15 minutes prior to your scheduled time. Please see the maps below for information on the routes to enter the drop-off line.
- Pull your car up close to the vehicle in front of you and put the car in park. Follow the directions of staff members.
- When a staff member greets you, unload your child from the car with all belongings ready to go. Students should be ready to enter school with their hands free.
- Give your child a hug and a kiss, tell them you love them and wish them well. They will take the hand of a staff member or another student and be escorted into the building.
- Return to your car and follow the traffic pattern to exit TFS.

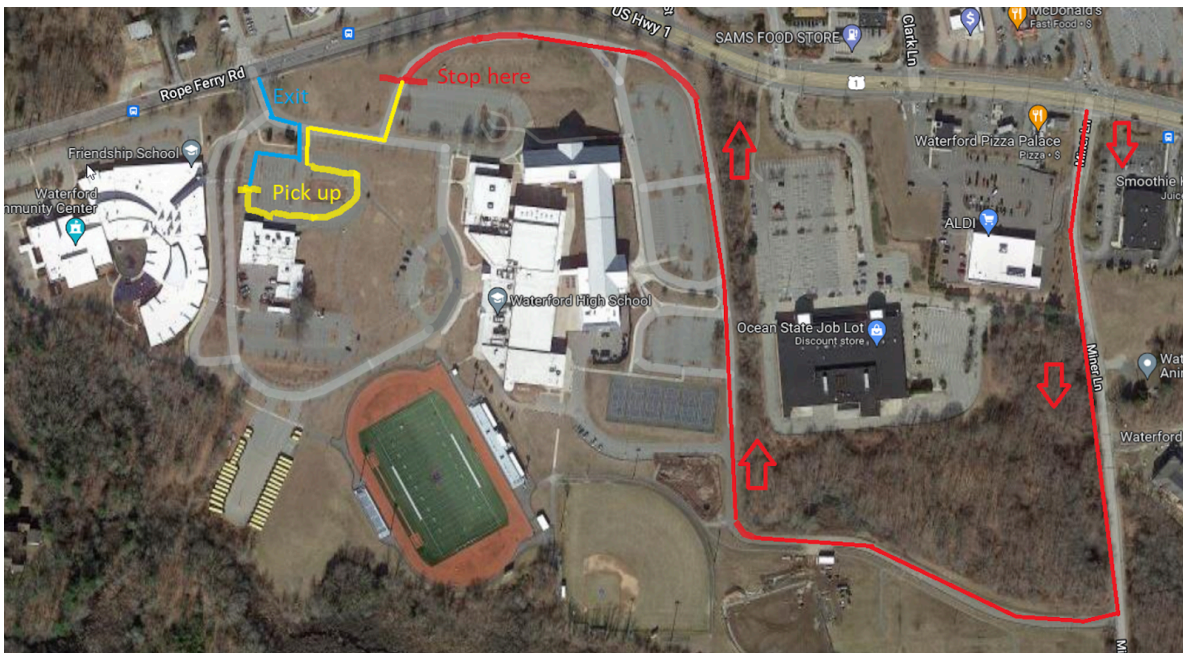
Afternoon Pick-Up

- At your assigned pick-up wave time, follow the planned route to the loading zone. Do not arrive more than 15 minutes prior to your scheduled time. Wait for a staff member to approach your car.
- The staff member will ask for your ID and/or your School Dismissal Manager number. After the staff member confirms you are approved to pick up the student you will be given a pick-up number.
- Pull your car as far forward as possible into the loading area. Put your car in park and wait patiently until your child is brought to your car.
- Your child will have a dismissal number that matches the number given to you earlier. Once the staff member matches the numbers, they will collect both numbers and hand your child to you.
- Please quickly load your child into their car seat and follow the traffic pattern to exit TFS. All students must have a car or booster seat in order to be dismissed to a vehicle.

Senior Center Car Lane Traffic Pattern:



Miner Lane Car Lane Traffic Pattern:



Bus Riders:

Students in Waterford and New London are eligible to take the bus to and from TFS each day. In order to register for the bus, you must fill out a transportation form and return it to the main office. It takes at least 48 hours to add a student to a bus run. Please make any transportation requests as soon as possible to allow time to process these changes.

In addition to the buses for Waterford and New London Residents, we offer two shuttle bus options for dismissal, one to Waterford Police Station and one to Cohanzie Fire Department. Families may register their child for the shuttle, regardless of where they live. Students will arrive at these locations on a bus at approximately 4:00 pm on a regular school day. Whoever is picking up the student must be on the approved list and be ready to show ID.

Students should be waiting for their bus at least 10 minutes before their scheduled arrival time to provide a cushion for traffic, etc. No food is allowed to be eaten on the bus as this is a choking hazard. Whoever is picking up the student at the stop must be on the approved list and have an ID. If you need to make changes to the approved pick-up list, please do so as soon as possible by contacting our main office.

If you are not at the bus stop when it arrives we will attempt to contact you and make an additional attempt to meet you at the bus stop. If no one is at the stop, the bus will return the student and you will need to pick them up from the school.

Absences and Tardiness:

Students are expected to be at school from 9:30 - 3:30 every day school is in session.

While this is the goal, we also know that everyone gets sick or must miss a day or two for personal reasons. To this end it is our professional responsibility to record accurate daily attendance for all students.

The Connecticut state law requires parents/ guardians be made aware of their legal obligation to ensure their child attends school. Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school and themselves. Start building this habit in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten so they learn right away that going to school on time, every day is important. Chronic absenteeism is an early indicator of future academic difficulty. Help us prepare your child for their bright future by getting them to school every day and on time!

Absences:

If your child is going to be absent from school, please call the school by 10:00 am and leave a message on the attendance message line

Parents/Guardians are requested to send a written excuse with the student upon return to school. The student should submit the excuse directly to the office. Parents should discuss with administration any needed plans for learning during an extended absence.

In order for a child to be considered "In Attendance" for the school day, they must be at school for more than 1/2 of the day (3 1/4 hours) Arrival after 12:45pm is considered an absence.

Tardy (arriving late):

- If your child arrives at school after 9:45, then he/she is considered tardy; you will need to ring the bell and wait to be let into the building. Bring your student to the office and sign them in with the secretary.
- If your child is tardy more than 10 times during the school year, the principal, assistant principal, or designee will meet with you in order to work together to help you get your child to school on time.

School Closings:

When Waterford Public Schools are canceled, The Friendship School is also canceled. When Waterford Public Schools are delayed, The Friendship School will also follow the delay. In the case of inclement weather, please pay careful attention to local TV stations for updates about the schedule for The Friendship School. There is a special notification for “The Friendship School.” We also post updates on our website and Facebook page, in addition to an automated call.

When there is weather related school cancellation, as decided by each child’s home district and TFS has school - an absence will not be accrued. In this case, please notify TFS of your child’s absence. The child’s absence will be considered: ‘modified attendance’.

Toileting:

It is preferred that students enrolled at The Friendship School are toilet-trained. Pull-ups are permitted to be worn by children in pre-kindergarten classrooms. Special arrangements can be made with each classroom teacher regarding toileting/diapering needs. Staff will work with families to carry out plans to help children achieve toileting. Staff will check and change pulls regularly including but not limited to when a child wakes up from a nap.

When children need to use the restroom, a staff member will escort them to the restroom, located within the classroom. As the year progresses, students will request to use the restroom and staff will either continue to escort students, or point them in the direction of the restroom, while following the student and maintaining supervision. Staff will remain with children in or immediately outside the restroom while they are toileting, and assisting with dressing if necessary (snaps, buttons, zippers, etc.). Children are expected to clean themselves independently. All children and adults will wash their hands after using the restroom. Visual and/or auditory contact is maintained for all children in the restroom, so no child is left alone.

When children do have toileting accidents, a staff person will take the child to the restroom with his/her change of clothes. The child is primarily responsible for changing and cleansing; the staff person will assist the child when necessary to prevent soiling of outerwear, floor, walls, etc. Soiled clothing will be placed in a plastic bag and set aside for the parent to take home for cleaning. Soiled pull-ups are bagged and disposed of in a contained trash can once the child is clean and returned to the classroom.

Rest Time

All classrooms have rest time from 1:45 - 2:45 each day. Lights are low and calm music is played. Students are expected to rest quietly on their mats (sitting or laying down). Students are not required to nap, although many do. Teachers encourage children to rest and calm their bodies, and if a student requests they may rub their back to help them relax. Students who do not sleep are allowed to relax on their mats while awake. This is part of the NAEYC recommendations for early childhood education.

Family Communication:

At The Friendship School, we believe that the success of our program depends on developing and fostering positive relationships with families. In order to best meet the needs of each individual child, we may ask for information from families about your background, beliefs, and customs. Children learn best when concepts presented are relevant to their own lives. Asking families to share information with us about how they define their own race, religion, home language (i.e. preferred family terminology for body parts, bodily functions or familial relationships), culture, and family structure will enable us to make classroom experiences relevant to each child. The registration forms help us gather this information, which is kept confidential in the child's file. If there is additional information you feel would be helpful for us to know but we have not specifically asked for it, please include additional comments on a separate sheet of paper and submit it to the classroom teacher.

Methods of Communication:

- Seesaw-a parent communication application that allows the teacher to share happenings from the day, including photos. Seesaw is free and protects your child's information in accordance with Connecticut Public Act 16-189 (as do all applications we use at TFS). You can also send messages to your child's teacher through Seesaw and they will make every effort to respond within one school day.. Your child's teacher will send information home on how to get the free Seesaw app and how to connect to your child's classroom.
- Talking Points - a family communication app that allows families to communicate with school staff in over 100 different languages.
- Email - Staff checks emails regularly and makes every attempt to return email communication within one school day.

- Phone - each teacher has an extension to a voicemail box. You can call the school and ask to be connected to the voicemail. Staff makes every attempt to return phone calls within one school day.
- Blue Folder-each child will receive a blue, plastic communication folder. This folder should come back and forth to school each day. Any important notes, forms, and money (placed in an envelope and labeled with your child's name and specifying how the money is intended to be used) that you want to make sure the teacher or school gets must be placed in this folder.
- Newsletter-Every other week, you will receive "The Friendship Family Newsletter" electronically from the school principal. The Friendship Family Newsletter will keep you informed of upcoming special events, schedule changes, and more. When we receive information about community events or programs, we will include it in our newsletter along with important information related to school activities. If you have ideas or items of interest we might include in our newsletter, please speak to one of the teachers or the school leadership. We strongly urge you to keep your newsletters handy throughout the month for easy reference. The newsletters will be delivered to your email inbox; please make sure your email address is up-to-date with our office.

Questions, Concerns, or Compliments?

We want to hear from you, too; please feel free to share any information you feel might be helpful for us to know. Feel free to communicate with us in whatever way meets your needs: in person (please call to make an appointment) on the phone or via email. Your input is important to us. If you have questions or concerns about something that is or has happened in your child's classroom, first address this question or concern with your child's teacher. If you need further assistance after you've spoken with the teacher, please feel free to contact the principal or assistant principal.

Friendship Family Organization

The Friendship School Family Organization (FFO) includes all the members of our school community. Its function is to help provide understanding about the school to everyone within and outside of our school community and to offer opportunities for active involvement of all members.

Every family member (parents, grandparents, guardians, etc.) is invited and encouraged to become a member of the FFO. In addition to many of the tasks normally done by active school parent groups, there is a strong emphasis on providing growth experiences for all members through parent enrichment and special events.

We provide FREE dinner from 5:00pm-5:30pm and FREE childcare during the meeting from 5:30pm-6:30pm. New members are always welcome. Participation is highly recommended to enrich your children's and family's experience at the school.

Several fundraising activities are conducted each year in order to offer family-centered special events for The Friendship School children and their families. Income from fundraising efforts also helps to support The Friendship School teachers and staff with activities such as teacher and staff appreciation efforts. It is our goal to provide an environment where all family members, regardless of schedule, family structure, socioeconomic, racial, religious or cultural background, gender, ability or language are welcome to participate at whatever level and in whatever way they prefer.

For more information about FFO, contact the president: **Sarah Ballantyne** at sballantyne@learn.k12.ct.us

Volunteering:

TFS maintains a philosophy of partnership with families. As such, families play an important role in working with the school to provide the best possible learning and growing experiences for your child. We provide many opportunities for families to be actively involved in the school program. Some of these opportunities include:

- Signing up to join us for special activities
- Leading an activity in your child's classroom (must be coordinated with and approved by teacher and administration)
- Chaperoning field trips
- Helping with special events (i.e. Field Day, Open House, etc)

For family members who would like to participate but are unable to be in the classroom with us, we welcome donations of supplies and help with preparation of materials for activities. Please reach out to your child's teacher to see if there are specific classroom needs

As part of our museum curriculum students will participate in many expeditions (similar to field trips) to local museums and other locations. For each field trip, a permission slip will be sent home. Permission slips **must be signed by a custodial guardian** in order for the child to attend. We do not accept verbal permission.

Nutrition and Food Safety:

As a full-day public pre-kindergarten school, TFS offers Breakfast and Lunch to every student. Meals are provided by Witsons. Witsons is committed to healthy and delicious means with a focus on freshly prepared fruits and vegetables. The monthly menu can be found on our school website: www.thefriendshipschool.org

For the 23-24 school year breakfast will be free of charge for all students. Breakfast is served from 9:15 - 9:45 am. Students arriving after 9:45 am should eat at home, as the breakfast period concludes at that time. Families may send in a breakfast snack for their student if they would like.

Lunches are either free or have a cost of \$2.85 each. Please communicate with your child's teacher about when/if your child will be having school lunch. Lunch includes a hot option or a sandwich option and always includes fresh fruit and vegetables. You can set up an account to prepay for lunches through Lunch Time. You can go to <https://mealapp.lunchtimesoftware.net/> or download the app "School Payment Portal Mobile" to register for meals and load money onto your account. The app icon is purple with a white outline of a milk carton. After you complete the registration, your application will be processed and you will receive notification of your payment status. You will then be able to load money onto your account.

All families must create a meal account and complete the Application for Free and Reduced Lunch as part of documenting the free breakfast provided by the state. Please follow the instructions above to complete this task.

Serious food allergies have become much more common in recent years. We attempt to proactively restrict the potential for allergic reactions by being a nut-free school. We understand how inconvenient this can be for families, but we ask your help and cooperation in order to keep all children safe. Any food you send in your child's lunch

should be nut-free. We suggest Sunbutter in place of peanut butter (almond butter is a nut product). The food we provide is nut-free.

Please ensure that you are providing healthy food options when sending food from home for breakfast, lunch, and/or snack. Sugary treats are discouraged. We recommend whole grain foods, fruits, veggies, yogurt, cheese, and other foods with minimal sugars and sodium. Our cafeteria provides meals that meet and exceed the National School Lunch Program guidelines.

Some children may want to celebrate their birthday with a special treat. Per school policy, if this is a food item, the food must meet our Wellness Guidelines. If you would like to provide a special snack for your child's birthday, please speak with your child's teacher in advance. Any food coming from home for sharing among the children for celebrations must be whole fruits/vegetables or commercially prepared, healthy, packaged foods in factory-sealed containers

Photographs:

We will take pictures of children at work and play in our school on a regular basis. These photos serve many purposes, including communicating classroom happenings and successes with families and sharing photos on the school's website or social media. The form authorizing or restricting the use of photographs for each student was completed when registering your child. If you would like to change the permissions, please contact the main office.

If you do not grant any permission for your child to be photographed, it means we will be unable to share photos of your child with you throughout the school year. We can set different levels of access for photographs. Please speak with your child's teacher about any questions you may have so that we can honor your wishes in photographing your child.

Confidentiality:

We want to ensure that information obtained by school staff about individual children and families through registration paperwork, formal parent-teacher conferences, informal conversation or any other manner is confidential. School staff maintain complete confidentiality with regard to all information regarding children and families in our care as well as information about the classroom in general. This includes individual child screening and assessment results, regulations regarding access to child files and familial rights, and sharing of screening results and/or assessment information. Information regarding the children and their families, staff members working at the school, and any information about the school itself which has not been released to the public will not be shared outside of the school.

School staff will have access to information provided by parents/guardians about their children. This includes information gathered either verbally or in writing, formally and informally. This information will not be distributed outside of school staff. Parents (custodial and non- custodial) have a legal right to view the contents of their child's file. Unless there is a court order in place specifically restricting a parent's access to his/her child's information, we will make it available upon request to the parents. Individual student health records are maintained in a locked filing cabinet (located in the nurse's office) to prevent access to the information by unauthorized persons.

Assessment information, observations and any other information concerning an individual child will be maintained in the child's individual record in the student's classroom. This information will be shared with parents/guardians during parent-teacher conferences and as necessary or upon request. A written release will be required before any records pertaining to the child and/or family will be shared with professionals from outside the school.

Child Abuse or Neglect

All staff at TFS are considered mandated reporters by the State of Connecticut. Because of this designation we are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the DCF hotline. We do our best to work with families before making a report to ensure that we are both protecting the students and meeting our legal obligation. This information is confidential to protect everyone involved. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to your child's teacher or the school administration.

Health and Safety Regulations

- Physical Exam-The CT Department of Public Health requires that each child have written proof of a physical examination within the past year and that immunizations are up to date upon enrollment. These records must be updated and kept on file throughout the year.
- Immunizations-The CT Department of Public Health requires all children be immunized according to the 2021 Act Concerning Immunizations. The only circumstances under which a child will be admitted to the program without being adequately immunized are a medical condition (documented by a licensed health professional). If an under-immunized child (with proper documentation) is enrolled in our program AND an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease occurs in our program, the child will be promptly EXCLUDED until the outbreak has been contained.
- Flu Vaccine- Pre-kindergarten students are required to have the flu vaccine in the fall. Any enrolled Pre- Kindergarten student who does not provide documentation of the flu vaccine prior to 12/31 of the year of enrollment will be promptly EXCLUDED until such documentation is received. Religious exemptions no longer apply to this vaccine. Please provide documentation from the doctor's office or clinic showing that your child has received the vaccine.
- Illness: Children who are ill should remain home from school. This is to minimize the spread of contagious illnesses and to provide your child with an opportunity for extra rest so he/she can return to full health. Please call us at 860-447-4049 by 10:00 a.m. to let us know your child will not be in school. Please see the "Arrival, Dismissal, Attendance, and Tardiness" section of this handbook.
- Please do not send your child to school if the following symptoms have been noticed within the preceding 24 hours: vomiting, loose bowel movements, and fever.



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS FOR ENROLLED STUDENTS IN CONNECTICUT SCHOOLS

2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR



PRESCHOOL

Hep B:	3 doses, last one on or after 24 weeks of age
DTaP:	4 doses (by 18 months for programs with children 18 months of age)
Polio:	3 doses (by 18 months for programs with children 18 months of age)
MMR:	1 dose on or after 1 st birthday
Varicella:	1 dose on or after 1 st birthday or verification of disease
Hepatitis A:	2 doses given six calendar months apart, 1 st dose on or after 1 st birthday
Hib:	1 dose on or after 1 st birthday
Pneumococcal:	1 dose on or after 1 st birthday
Influenza:	1 dose administered each year between August 1 st -December 31 st (2 doses separated by at least 28 days required for those receiving flu for the first time)

KINDERGARTEN

Hep B:	3 doses, last dose on or after 24 weeks of age
DTaP:	At least 4 doses. The last dose must be given on or after 4 th birthday
Polio:	At least 3 doses. The last dose must be given on or after 4 th birthday
MMR:	2 doses separated by at least 28 days, 1 st dose on or after 1 st birthday
Varicella:	2 doses separated by at least 3 months-1 st dose on or after 1 st birthday; or verification of disease. 28 days between doses is acceptable if the doses have already been administered.
Hepatitis A:	2 doses given six calendar months apart, 1 st dose on or after 1 st birthday
Hib:	1 dose on or after 1 st birthday for children less than 5 years old
Pneumococcal:	1 dose on or after 1 st birthday for children less than 5 years old

- DTaP vaccine is not administered on or after the 7th birthday.
- Tdap can be given in lieu of Td vaccine for children 7 years and older unless contraindicated.
- Hib is required for all Pre-K and K students less than 5 years of age.
- Pneumococcal Conjugate is required for all Pre-K and K students less than 5 years of age.
- Hep A requirement for school year 2022-2023 applies to all Pre-K through 10th graders born 1/1/07 or later.
- Hep B requirement for school year 2022-2023 applies to all students in grades K-12.
Spacing intervals for a valid Hep B series: at least 4 weeks between doses 1 and 2; 8 weeks between doses 2 and 3; at least 16 weeks between doses 1 and 3; dose 3 must be administered at 24 weeks of age or later.
- Second MMR for school year 2022-2023 applies to all students in grades K-12.
- Meningococcal Conjugate requirement for school year 2022-23 applies to all students in grades 7-12
- Tdap requirement for school year 2022-2023 applies to all students in grades 7-12
- If two live virus vaccines (MMR, Varicella, MMRV, Intra-nasal Influenza) are not administered on the same day, they must be separated by at least 28 days (there is no 4 day grace period for live virus vaccines). If they are not separated by at least 28 days, the vaccine administered second must be repeated.
- Lab confirmation of immunity is **only** acceptable for Hep A, Hep B, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, and Varicella.
- **VERIFICATION OF VARICELLA DISEASE:** Confirmation in writing by a MD, PA, or APRN that the child has a previous history of disease, based on family or medical history.

For the full legal requirements for school entry visit:

<https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Immunizations/Immunization--Laws-and-Regulations>

If you are unsure if a child is in compliance, please call the Immunization Program at (860) 509-7929.

New Entrant Definition:

*New entrants are any students who are new to the school district, including all preschoolers and all students coming in from Connecticut private, parochial and charter schools located in the same or another community. **All pre-schoolers, as well as all students entering kindergarten**, including those repeating kindergarten, and those moving from any public or private pre-school program, even in the same school district, **are considered new entrants**. The one exception is students returning from private approved special education placements—they are not considered new entrants.

Commonly Administered Vaccines:

<u>Vaccine:</u>	<u>Brand Name:</u>	<u>Vaccine:</u>	<u>Brand Name:</u>
DTaP-IPV-Hib	Pentacel	MMRV	ProQuad
DTaP-HIB	TriHibit	PCV7	Prenar
HIB-Hep B	Comvax	PCV13	Prenar 13
DTaP-IPV-Hep B	Pediarix	DTaP-IPV	Kinrix, Quadacel
Hepatitis A	Havrix, Vaqta	Influenza	Fluzone, FluMist, Fluvirion, Fluarix, FluLaval
DTaP-IPV-Hib-Hep B	Vaxelis		Flucelvax, Afluria

Accidents at School during school hours

Who Shall Do First Aid in the School:

- First Aid shall be done by the school health aide, nurse, principal, teacher or other staff employed by LEARN, who have been trained in first aid.
- No child or children shall be permitted to give first aid to other children.
- A record of all children receiving first aid shall be kept on file in the health room for 3 years.

EMS Transport

If a child needs to be transported to the hospital via ambulance, the following procedure will be followed:

- 911 will be called
- Parent will be notified by school staff member
- A LEARN staff member will transport to the hospital with the student if a parent has not arrived to the school before EMS transport needs to take place
- A student incident report will be completed
- An Emergency/Medical form should be given to EMS personnel
- Parent will be notified by school staff member
- A LEARN staff member will transport to the hospital with the student if a parent has not arrived to the school before EMS transport needs to take place
- A student incident report will be completed
- An Emergency/Medical form should be given to EMS personnel
- Parent will be notified by school staff member
- A LEARN staff member will transport to the hospital with the student if a parent has not arrived to the school before EMS transport needs to take place

Administration of Medication

- The Friendship School nurse can administer medications as long as the following procedures have been followed:
- We must have a written order from the prescriber AND written permission from the parent (this includes prescription or non-prescription, oral, topical, inhalant and injectable medications). We can give you the form for the doctor to complete, or you can ask for it when you are at the doctor's office. The parent authorization is at the bottom of the same form.
- Medication must be provided to us in the original container with prescription label. In the case of non-prescription medications, the original container labeled clearly with the child's name is acceptable. We store medications in a locked medication box (refrigerated if necessary).
- School staff will only administer medications in accordance with the written orders (a change in dosage, time, etc. must be provided to us by the prescriber in writing). We cannot administer the first dose of any medications.
- School staff will maintain written administration of medication records that document each time the child receives a medication.
- We will return unused medications to the parent either when the order has expired or at the end of the school year. Parents will be asked to sign the Administration of Medication form indicating they have taken the remaining medication.
- If we have to administer an Epi-Pen to a child with a severe allergic reaction, we will call 911 and then the parent immediately following administration of the Epi-Pen.
- Many school staff members are trained in Diabetes Management and a specific Diabetes Management Plan is in place for children who have been diagnosed with diabetes mellitus (juvenile diabetes).
- The State has provided us with a supply of Potassium Iodide (KI) pills to be used in the event of a public health emergency related to Millstone Power Station. We

will administer the KI if directed through the emergency alert system to children for whom we have prior written consent from the parents (this form is included in the registration packet).

Weather and the Playground/Outdoor Classroom

We believe strongly in the value of outdoor play. Children need an outlet for large motor play, and they benefit greatly from exposure to fresh air. The same learning that occurs in the classroom is continued and extended outside. We provide time for outdoor play on our playground every day (weather permitting). Our playground and Outdoor Classroom provide ample areas for children to play in the sun and in the shade (the canopies and the building provide significant shade throughout the day on our playground). We ask parents to supply outdoor clothing appropriate for the season. This includes boots, snow pants, hats and mittens in snowy weather. Often in spring and fall, layers are the best option, as the temperature can vary greatly throughout the morning. We also strongly recommend that sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher) is applied prior to your student's arrival at school. Parents are also urged to apply insect repellent when public health authorities recommend use of insect repellents due to a high risk of insect-borne disease (use only repellents appropriate for children's use). We will stay inside on rainy days and on days when either extreme heat or cold advisories have been issued. Students will have access to gross motor activities inside the school building. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Emergency Evacuation Procedures:

In the event of an extended power outage or other severe weather emergency, children will be kept inside and parents called to pick up the children immediately. If the situation requires evacuation to a local area, the staff will escort the children to Waterford High School, located directly across from The Friendship School's campus/parking lot.

In the event of a fire or other medical emergency, staff will escort children to evacuate the building and go to designated, safe areas outside.

In the highly unlikely event of a radioactive or other emergency at Millstone requiring a town-wide evacuation, the Waterford Office of Emergency Management will notify us and TFS staff will notify you to come pick up your child. This is a shift in prior recommendations – it has been decided that given the timeline we have to move to safe zones, it is best for families to unite and travel to the designated safe zones together, rather than the school transporting children.

We are issued a supply of Potassium Iodide (KI) tablets for all children and staff. These are kept in a secure location in the classroom, and will be administered only as directed by state emergency management personnel.

Smoking, Prohibited Substances, and Weapons

NO SMOKING IS ALLOWED IN ANY PART OF THE FRIENDSHIP SCHOOL CAMPUS.

The indoor and outdoor environment of the program is designated as non-smoking areas. The use of tobacco in any form, alcohol, or illegal drugs is prohibited on the facility premises. Signs to this effect are kept posted around the facility.

Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited.

All child care providers and staff will maintain sobriety while providing childcare. Caregivers, staff, or other adults who are inebriated, intoxicated or otherwise under the influence of mind altering or polluting substances will be required to leave the premises immediately.

No dangerous weapon or facsimile of a firearm is permitted on the premises. The only exception to this is an officer who carries a weapon in the line of duty.

Tuition

As a public pre-kindergarten magnet school, we do charge tuition for pre-kindergarten students. This tuition is paid monthly, beginning on September 1st. There are 10 monthly payments of \$405.30, totally \$4053 for the school year.

Many families qualify for a tuition waiver, based on the size of their household and their gross annual income. To find out if you qualify for a waiver, please complete the Income Reporting Form and return it to the office along with a copy of your most recent tax return. If you have questions, please contact Lindsay Bones at lbones@learn.k12.ct.us for assistance.

If you will be paying tuition, monthly invoices will be sent via email to the primary email address you provided during registration. You can click the link in the email to make a payment online. If you prefer to make the payment in person, payments can be made in the school office by check or card. We use the Square platform to accept payments.

LEARN Policies and Procedures:

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY and NON-DISCRIMINATION

Each student is encouraged to develop and achieve individual educational goals. LEARN will provide every student with equal educational opportunities regardless of race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, religion, age, economic status, marital status, or disability. No student will be excluded on such a basis from participating in or having access to any course offerings, student athletics, counseling services, employment assistance, extracurricular activities or other school resources. Programs and activities shall be accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities as prescribed by law.

Ms. Bridgette Gordon-Hickey, Deputy Executive Director (bgickey@learn.k12.ct.us) and Dr. Ryan Donlon, Associate Executive Director (rdonlon@learn.k12.ct.us) are the designated district compliance officers, who will coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

AMERICAN WITH DISABILITIES ACT AND SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ensures support for individuals with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities are provided a free and appropriate education (FAPE) and are accommodated and employed without discrimination related to their disabilities.

It is the intent of the LEARN to provide a free and appropriate public education to each Section 504/ADA qualified and eligible student with a disability within its jurisdiction, as defined in 28 CFR, Parts 35 and 36, of the Amendments to Americans with Disabilities Act, Title II and Title III.

Section 504 prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities (both students and staff members) by school districts receiving federal assistance of any kind for any program or activity. Districts may not discriminate against any person with a disability, regardless of whether the program or activity after enrollment, may also take a screening exam.

All individuals who are disabled or “handicapped” are protected under Section 504. However, individuals who have been determined to be “handicapped” under Section 504 may not be considered disabled under IDEA. IDEA, which can be viewed as a subcategory of Section 504, provides for special programming or placement, while Section 504 protects the rights of individuals with handicaps. Under IDEA, students are qualified for services under 13 IDEA disabling conditions; specially designed individual education programs are planned for each student by Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams. Under Section 504, students with “handicaps” are entitled to special accommodations to ensure that they can participate in and benefit from public education and programs, and a 504 accommodation plan is designed for each student according to individual needs.

Section 504 is not an aspect of special education, but is, rather, a responsibility of the comprehensive general public education system. Unlike an eligibility system based on clinic categories of disabilities, Section 504 works on a more functional premise. Under 50 [29 U.S.C. & § 706(8)] a person is considered to have a disability if that person:

1. has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person’s major life activities;
2. has a record of such an impairment; or

3. is regarded as having such an impairment

While Section 504 provides a means for preventing discrimination against students with disabilities, this does not mean that 504 plans must focus on the disabling condition or on addressing the disability directly. Rather, 504 plans offer a means for focusing on students' strengths, for capitalizing on what students bring to the instruction process - not on what they lack.

Students with disabilities, pursuant to Section 504 and/or ADA will be provided a free appropriate public education which may include, but is not limited to, providing a structured learning environment; repeating and simplifying instructions about in-class and homework assignments; supplemented verbal instructions with visual instructions; adjusting class schedules, modifying test delivery; computer-assisted instructions; using modified textbooks and tailoring homework assignments.

Should you have any questions regarding Section 504, please call either your child's school principal or the Civil Rights Coordinator, Bridgette Gordon-Hickey, Deputy Executive Director for LEARN School District at 860-434-4800.

Any eligible person, including any student, parent/guardian, staff member or other employee who feels that he/she has been discriminated against on the basis of disability may submit a written complaint to the district's designated Section 504 Coordinator (Bridgette Gordon-Hickey) bghickey@learn.k12.ct.us within 30 days of the alleged occurrence.

504 Plans are collaboratively created and implemented in partnership with the student's home district.

ASBESTOS

Legislation requires all school buildings to be reevaluated to determine if asbestos is present and if it poses a significant health hazard to the building's occupants. LEARN has on file plans showing the location of asbestos in each building and measures

undertaken to comply with regulations to maintain a safe school environment. Request to review these plans may be made in the school office.

ATTENDANCE

Connecticut state law requires parents to make sure that their children between the ages of 5 to 18 attend school regularly during the hours and terms the school is in session. Daily attendance is a key factor in student success, thus any absence from school is an educational loss to the student. These rules are designed to minimize student absenteeism while providing students the opportunity to make up schoolwork missed due to a legitimate absence. Students are required to attend school on a regular basis both in-person and virtually (when determined appropriate or necessary). Additional specific information regarding attendance procedures can be found on the LEARN website: www.learn.k12.ct.us

Absences are any days during which a student is not considered “in attendance.”

Absences can be “excused” or “unexcused”

A student is considered to be “in attendance” if present at his/her assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school, such as a field trip, for at least half of the regular school day. A student serving an out-of-school suspension or an expulsion will always be considered a “disciplinary absence.”

A child whose total number of absences at anytime during a school year is equal to or greater than 10 percent of the total number of days that the student has been enrolled at the school during the school year is considered a “chronically absent child.” The child will be subject to review by the district and/or the school attendance team.

All children attending district schools must obtain the required immunizations unless they have medical contraindications or religious objections. This obligation may be waived for homeless students.

A student must remain in school until age 18, unless he/she graduates or gets written consent from a parent/guardian on a district provided form to leave school at age 17.

Absence:

Every attempt should be made to confine necessary appointments to after school, weekends and vacation periods. When a parent determines that an absence is necessary, parents/guardians are requested to contact the school between 9:00 am and 10:00 am. on the day of the absence by telephoning the school.

Parents/Guardians are requested to send a written excuse with the student upon return to school. The student should submit the excuse directly to the office. Parents should discuss with administration any needed plans for learning during an extended absence.

Excused Absence

A student's absence from school shall be considered "excused" only if a written documentation of the reason for such absence has been submitted within ten (10) school days of the student's return to school and meets the following criteria:

- A. For absences one through nine, a student's absences from school are considered "excused" when the student's parent/guardian approves such absence and submits a signed note to the office.
- B. Students receive an excused absence for the tenth absences and all absences thereafter, when they are absent from school for the following reasons:
 - 1. Student illness, verified by a licensed medical professional, regardless of the length of the absence.
 - 2. Students observance of a religious holiday.
 - 3. Death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family.

4. Court appearance which are mandated. (Documentation required)
5. The lack of transportation that is normally provided by the district other than the one the student attends.
6. Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by District administration and in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidelines.
7. Additional 10 days for children of military service members.

The responsibility for makeup of work lies with the student, not the teacher. All makeup privileges must be completed within a reasonable amount of time after the student returns to school.

Unexcused Absence

Unexcused absences are those which do not fall under any of the excused absences. Students who have unexcused absences miss critical learning opportunities; as such, absences may also impact a students' final grade.

Absences which are the result of school or district disciplinary action are excluded from the definitions.

Although the school will maintain records and keep parents informed within the limit of its capability, parents and students are expected to keep accurate attendance records and compare them to report cards when issued. Parents are also encouraged to contact the teachers, guidance counselors and administrators to get help in verifying attendance and attendance records at any time during the year.

Chronic Absenteeism

A student whose total number of absences at any time during a school year is equal to or greater than then percent of the total number of days that such student has been enrolled at such school during the school year is considered to be a "chronically absent child," Such a student will be subject to review by the attendance review team and the

chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan developed by the State Department of Education. LEARN will also collect and analyze data on student attendance, truancy, and chronic absenteeism for students with disabilities.

Tardiness

Students who are not in their homeroom/classroom by 9:45 am. are considered tardy and must report directly to the office. A student who is repeatedly tardy may be considered truant. Students may be subject to disciplinary action if administration determines that tardiness is excessive.

Truancy

Truancy is defined by statute as absence(s) from school without the knowledge or approval of parents/guardians and/or school officials. A student age five to eighteen inclusive with 4 (four) unexcused absences in one month or 10 (ten) unexcused absences in a school year will be considered a truant. Truant students are subject to progressive discipline. Academic work missed in class that day will be recorded as a failing grade.

Parents/guardians have the responsibility to assist school officials in remedying and preventing truancy. School staff are mandated by the state to report excessive absences or patterns of concern.

Information about truancy will also be posted in the annual district report cards required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY

Board of Education policies are available on the district's website at www.learn.k12.ct.us. The policies are subject to modifications by the LEARN Board at any time.

BULLYING

LEARN is dedicated to promoting and maintaining a positive learning environment where all students are welcomed, supported, and feel socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically safe in school.

Bullying of a student by another student is prohibited. Such behavior is defined as an act that is direct or indirect and severe, persistent, or pervasive which:

- A. causes physical or emotional harm to an individual,
- B. places an individual in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm, or his or her property,
- C. infringes on the rights and opportunities of an individual at school.
- D. creates a hostile environment at school for such students; or
- E. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but need not be limited to, a written, oral, or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics. (The student against whom the activity is directed must be attending school in the same district as the students engaged in the activity.)

Other definitions include but are not limited to:

- A. “Cyberbullying” means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

B. “Electronic communication” means 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;

C. “Hostile environment” means a situation in which bullying among students is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the school climate:

D. “Mobile electronic device” means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted;

E. “Prevention and intervention strategy” may include, but is not limited to, (1) implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and supports process or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying identified by the Department of Education, (2) school rules prohibiting bullying, harassment and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts, (3) adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, lunchroom and other specific areas where bullying is likely to occur, (4) inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying education and prevention curricula in kindergarten through high school, (5) individual interventions with the bully, parents and school employees, and interventions with the bullied child, parents and school employees, (6) school-wide training related to safe school climate, (7) student peer training, education and support, and (8) promotion of parent involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions.

Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to:

1. Physical violence and attacks
2. Verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs including ethically based or gender-based verbal put-downs

3. Threats and intimidation
4. Extortion or stealing of money and/or possessions
5. Exclusion from peer groups within the school
6. The misuse of electronic communications for the purpose of bullying, harassing, or sexually harassing other students within school or out of school (“cyberbullying”)
7. Targeting of a student based on the student’s actual or perceived “differentiating” characteristics such as race; color; religion; ancestry; national origin; gender; sexual orientation; gender identity or expression; socioeconomic or academic status; physical appearance; or mental physical, developmental, or sensory disability.

Student who engage in any act of bullying, on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, and outside of the school setting if such bullying:

- creates a hostile environment at school for the victims,
- infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or
- substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school, are subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including suspensions, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement official.

Each LEARN school has a school climate plan that addresses bullying. These comprehensive plans:

1. Permit anonymous reports of bullying by students to teachers and administrators and written reports of suspected bullying by parents or guardians; Requires teachers and other school staff to notify school administrators in writing of bullying acts they witness and students’ reports they receive;

2. Require school administrators to investigate parents' written reports and review students' anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report;
3. Require each school to maintain a publicly available a list of the number of verified bullying acts that occurred there, and within available appropriations, report such number to the Department of Education annually and in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education;
4. Requires each school to have prevention and intervention strategy, as defined by statute, for school staff to deal with bullying, including language about bullying in student codes of conduct and in all student handbooks;
5. Require each school to notify parents or guardians of all students involved in a verified act of bullying and invite them to attend at least one meeting. The notice shall be simultaneously mailed to the parent/guardian if requested. The notice must describe the school's response and any consequences that may result from further acts of bullying;
6. Require the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing reported incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetuated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline;
7. Require students to be notified annually of the process by which they may make reports of bullying;
8. Require the identification of appropriate school personnel, which may include, but shall not be limited to, pupil services personnel, responsible for taking a bullying report and investigating the complaint;
9. Are included in the LEARN staff development program for all school staff;

10. Require each school to notify parents or guardians of students who commit verified acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of students against whom such acts were directed not later than forty-eight hours after the completion of the investigation;
11. Require each school to invite the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such acts were directed to a meeting to communicate to such parents or guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student against whom such act was directed and to prevent further acts of bullying;
12. Prohibit discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying;
13. Require the principal of a school, or the principal's designee to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such principal, or the principal's designee, believes that any acts of bullying constitute criminal conduct.

LEARN expects prompt and reasonable investigation of alleged acts of bullying. The principal of each school or his/her designee is responsible for handling all complaints of alleged bullying. This policy shall not be interpreted to prohibit a reasonable and civil exchange of opinions, or debate that is protected by state or federal law.

Parents/guardians of the alleged perpetrator of the bullying act and the parents/guardians of the student against whom such alleged act was directed will receive prompt notification that such investigation has begun. The results of the investigation will be provided not later than 48 hours after its completion, verbally and by electronic mail. Parents of students involved in a verified act of bullying will be invited to attend at least one meeting at school. Safe School Climate Specialists are required to receive mental health first aid training.

Annual Bullying Notice

Students and/or parents may file verbal or written complaints concerning suspected bullying behavior or teen dating violence behavior, and students shall be permitted to anonymously report acts of bullying or teen dating violence to school employees. Any report of suspected bullying behavior or teen dating violence will be promptly reviewed. If acts of bullying and/or teen dating violence are verified, prompt disciplinary action may be taken against the perpetrator, consistent with his/her rights of due process. Board policy and regulation #5007 set forth this prohibition and the related procedures in detail and are available to students and their parents/guardians on the LEARN website and by school personnel per request.

Informal/Verbal complaints of Bullying by Students

Students may make complaints of conduct that they consider to be bullying by verbally reporting to a teacher, administrator, or other professional employee such as a guidance counselor, school psychologist, nurse, social worker or school therapist. Student complaints of bullying should specify the actions giving rise to the suspicion of bullying, including the time and place of the conduct alleged, the number of such incidents, the target of suspected bullying, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. A teacher, or other professional employee, or administrator who receives a student complaint shall promptly reduce the complaint to writing, including the information provided by the student. The written report by the teacher, other professional employee and/or administrator shall be promptly forwarded to the building principal (or other responsible program administrator) for review and action.

Formal/Written Complaints of Bullying

Students and/or their parents or guardians may also file formal written complaints of conduct that they consider to be bullying. Such written reports should specify the actions giving rise to the suspicion of bullying, including time and place of the conduct alleged, the number of such incidents, the target of such suspected bullying, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any

teacher or administrator, and they shall be promptly forwarded to the building principal for review and action.

The complaint procedure is also posted on the LEARN website and the school website.

Anonymous Complaints of Bullying

Students who make complaints of bullying to a teacher and/or administrator may request that their name be maintained in confidence by the teacher(s) or administrator(s) who receives the complaint. Should anonymity be requested, the principal or his/her designee shall meet with the student to review the request for anonymity and the impact that maintaining anonymity of the complaint may have on the investigation of the complaint and/or possible remedial action. At such meeting, the student shall be given the choice as to whether to maintain the anonymity of the complaint. Anonymous complaints shall be reviewed and reasonable action will be taken to address the situation, to the extent such action may be taken that (1) does not disclose the source of the complaint, and (2) is consistent with the due process rights of the student(s) alleged to have committed acts of bullying. No disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

CHILD ABUSE, NEGLECT AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

All LEARN school employees, including teachers, superintendents, administrators, coaches of intramural or interscholastic athletics, paraprofessionals and other professional school staff including guidance counselors, school counselors, paraprofessionals, social workers, psychologists, licensed nurses, physicians, licensed behavior analysts, and substitute teachers are obligated by law (C.G.S. 17a-101) to report suspected child abuse, neglect, or if a child is placed in imminent danger of serious harm or sexual assault by a school employee to the Connecticut State Department of Children and Families Services. Specific procedures governing the reporting of abuse and neglect are in effect, and staff receives training in their use, as required by state law.

Reporting of child abuse, neglect and sexual assault by a school employee is a responsibility which is taken seriously. If there is any doubt about reporting suspected abuse, neglect or a sexual assault a report will be made. The school will work with the parents and appropriate social agencies in all cases.

Child abuse is defined as any physical injury inflicted by other than accidental means or injuries which are not in keeping with the explanation given for their cause. Improper treatment such as malnutrition, sexual molestation, deprivation of necessities, emotional abuse, cruel punishment or neglect are also considered child abuse.

LEARN will post in each school the telephone number of the Department of Children and Families' child abuse hotline, Careline, and the Internet web address that provides information about the Careline in a conspicuous location frequented by students. Such posting shall be in various languages appropriate for the students enrolled in the school.

CONDUCT

Students are responsible for conducting themselves properly in a responsible manner appropriate to their age and level of maturity. They must accept responsibility for misbehavior and engage with school staff to identify how a different choice of action could result in a better outcome. LEARN has authority over students during the regular school day and while going to and from school on district transportation. This jurisdiction includes any school-related activity, regardless of time or location, and any off campus school-related misconduct, regardless of time or location.

Student responsibilities for achieving a positive learning environment in school or school related activities include:

1. Attending all classes, regularly and on time.
2. Being prepared for each class with appropriate materials and assignments.
3. Being dressed appropriately.*

4. Showing respect toward others, engaging in civil discourse.
5. Behaving in a responsible manner.
6. Paying required fees and fines.
7. Abiding by the code of conduct.
8. Obeying all school rules, including safety rules, and rules pertaining to Internet safety.
9. Seeking change in school policies and regulations in an orderly and responsible manner, through appropriate channels.
10. Cooperating with staff investigations of disciplinary cases and volunteering information relating to a serious offense.

Students who violate these rules will be subject to disciplinary action and shall be referred when appropriate to legal authorities for violation of the law.

Students at school or school-related activities are prohibited from:

1. Engaging in academic dishonesty, including cheating, intentionally plagiarizing, wrongfully giving or receiving help during an academic examination and wrongfully obtaining test copies or scores.
2. Throwing objects that can cause bodily injury or damage property.
3. Leaving school grounds or school-sponsored events without permission.
4. Directing profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures toward other students or staff.
5. Disobeying directives from school personnel or school policies, rules, and regulations.
6. Being disrespectful or directing profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures toward teachers or other school employees.

7. Playing with matches, fire, or committing arson.
8. Committing robbery or theft.
9. Damaging or vandalizing property owned by the school, other students, or school employees.
10. Disobeying school rules on school buses.
11. Fighting, committing physical abuse, or threatening physical abuse.
12. Committing extortion, coercion, or blackmail; that is, forcing an individual to act through the use of force or threat of force.
13. Name-calling, making ethnic or racial slurs or derogatory statements that may substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence.
14. Engaging in inappropriate physical or sexual contact disruptive to the school environment or disturbing to other students.
15. Assaulting a teacher, staff member or other individual.
16. Selling, giving, delivering, possessing, using, or being under the influence of drugs such as: marijuana; a controlled substance or drug; or an alcoholic beverage.
17. Possessing a deadly weapon, dangerous instrument, firearm, martial arts weapon, or weapon facsimile.
18. Possessing prescription drugs which are given to a person other than to whom the drug is prescribed.
19. Smoking or using tobacco products, including electronic nicotine delivery systems (e-cigarettes) and vapor products.
20. Hazing, bullying

21. Behaving in any way that disrupts the school environment or educational process.
22. Using electronic devices during the school day in school buildings, without prior approval of the principal.
23. Violating the district's Internet Safety policy and/or Online Social Networking Policy.
24. Cheating, plagiarizing, including by electronic means.
25. Threatening in any manner, including orally, in writing, or via electronic communication, a member of the school including any teacher, a member of the school administration or another employee, or a fellow student.
26. Taking, storing, disseminating, transferring, viewing or sharing of obscene, pornographic, lewd or otherwise illegal images or photographs, whether by electronic data transfer or other means, including but not limited to texting and emailing.
27. Violating any state or federal law which would indicate that the student presents a danger to any person in the school or to school property.
28. Damaging in a willful manner school electronic equipment and/or software.

Students are urged to participate in efforts to build a positive school climate as well as alternatives to exclusionary discipline such as restorative circles or peer monitoring.

Students are subject to disciplinary action, including suspension and expulsion, for misconduct which is seriously disruptive of the educational process and is a violation of publicized LEARN policy, even if such conduct occurs off-school property and during non-school time. In determining whether conduct is "seriously disruptive of the education process" for purposes of suspension and expulsion, the administration in cases of suspension, and the Board of Education or impartial hearing board, in matters of expulsion may consider, but consideration is not limited to (1) whether the incident occurred within close proximity of a school, (2) whether other students were involved,

or whether there was gang involvement, (3) whether the conduct involved violence, threats of violence, or the unlawful use of a weapon and whether any injuries occurred, and (4) whether the conduct involved the use of alcohol.

Smoking

Student shall not possess nor smoke or use tobacco products or e-cigarettes or vapor product devices on all school property both inside and outside, or at any school-related or school-sanctioned activity, on or off school property as provided by state and federal law.

Substance Abuse

As stated in the CONDUCT section of this handbook, the school prohibits the manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of alcohol or controlled substances on school grounds or during school activities. Any student in violation of this will be subject to progressive disciplinary action.

In addition to the prohibition pertaining to alcohol, drugs, tobacco and inhalants, the Board of Education prohibits the use of performance-enhancing drugs, including anabolic steroids and food supplements, including Creatine, by students involved in school-related athletics or any co-curricular or extracurricular school activity or program, other than use for a valid medical purpose as documented by a physician.

Substance abuse or distribution of drugs and/or drug paraphernalia including alcohol may indicate serious, underlying problems. Every effort will be made to offer student assistance, including early identification, referral for treatment to private or community agencies and aftercare support.

Students are prohibited from possessing, using, selling, delivering, manufacturing, or being under the influence of any substance containing cannabidiol (CBD) or tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), regardless of whether it constitutes a controlled substance under federal laws.

Disciplinary procedures will be administered with the best interests of the student, school population and community in mind and with due consideration of the rights of students. However, consideration must be given to the fact that substance abuse is illegal and subject to criminal prosecution. Unauthorized possession, distribution, sale or consumption of dangerous drugs, narcotics or alcoholic beverages may result in a recommendation for expulsion.

Students are encouraged to consult with teachers, administrators and other professional staff on substance abuse problems. A staff member who is contacted by a student regarding a drug or alcohol problem may elect to keep that information confidential and not disclose it to any other person in accordance with state law. However, the student will be encouraged at the earliest appropriate time to seek help from parents or guardians.

In such cases, the decision to involve the parents/guardians will be arrived jointly by the student and educational team unless, in the judgment of the team, the mental or physical health of the student is immediately and dangerously threatened by drug/alcohol use. If such danger is imminent, the parents/guardians and health officials will be notified so that appropriate action can be taken.

As required by statute, instruction will be provided regarding the “knowledge, skills and attitudes required to understand and avoid the affects of alcohol, of nicotine, of tobacco, and of drugs.”

DISCIPLINE

A student who violates the district’s code of conduct shall be subject to disciplinary action. LEARN disciplinary actions may include using one or more discipline management techniques, such as a restorative justice model, detention, removal from class, removal to an alternative education setting, in school suspension, out of school suspension, and expulsion. Disciplinary measures will be appropriate for the offense. In addition, when a student violates the law that student may be referred to legal

authorities for prosecution. Students are subject to discipline, up to and including suspension and expulsion for misconduct, which is seriously disruptive of the educational process and violates publicized board of education policy even if such conduct occurs off-school property and during non-school time. The school district believes that exclusionary discipline practices (suspension, expulsion) limit students' access to classroom instruction and fail to improve student outcomes and school climate. These practices will be used as a last resort.

Suspension

Actions Leading to Suspension or Expulsion

Students may be suspended or expelled for conduct that endangers persons or property, or whose conduct, on or off school grounds, is seriously disruptive of the educational process or violates a publicized policy of the LEARN Board.

A teacher may remove a student from a class when the student deliberately causes serious disruption of the teaching and learning process within the classroom. School administrators will determine, using state guidelines, whether the suspension will be in-school or out-of-school.

The administration may suspend a student for infraction of school rules. Suspension is defined as an exclusion from school privileges for not more than ten (10) consecutive days, provided such exclusion shall not extend beyond the end of the school year in which suspension was imposed.

Students in preschool through grade 2, inclusive, may only receive in-school suspensions, unless, after an informal hearing, the administration determines that an out-of-school suspension is appropriate based on evidence that the student's conduct on school grounds is of a violent or sexual nature that endangers persons.

However, no student shall be suspended without an informal hearing before the building principal or his/her designee at which time the student shall be informed of the

reasons for the disciplinary action and given an opportunity to explain the situation, unless circumstances surrounding the incident require immediate removal. In such instance the informal hearing will be held during the suspension.

Suspension from school will result in loss of extracurricular and social privileges during the period of suspension.

For any student suspended for the first time and who has never been expelled, the administration may shorten the length of or waive the suspension period if the student successfully completes an administration-specified program and meets any other administration-required conditions, which shall not incur an expense to the student or the student's parents. Students/guardians requesting such a waiver of the suspension should contact the school administration in writing.

Health Services - Administration of Medication

Parents/guardians of students requiring medication during school should contact the (school nurse). Special forms are required to permit the administration of medicine in school. They are available from the (school nurse). If it is necessary that a medication be given during school hours, the following procedures must be followed:

- All prescription and over the counter medication administered at school requires a medication authorization form signed by a health provider and the parent/guardian.
- Medications must be in the original container picked up at the pharmacy each time the medication is refilled. The appropriate pharmacy or medication label must be intact. The school nurse will send home a notice and/or call a few days prior to needing a refill.
- All medications are to be kept in the nurse's office, unless there is an approved medication authorization that allows the student to self-carry and self-administer his/her own medication.

- When a parent/guardian and health care provider authorize a student to self-carry and self-administer a medication, they are responsible for confirming that the student understands the condition which the medication is used, and can safely store, correctly administer, and know when and how to use the medication, and when to ask for help.
- If a student does have the proper authorization to self-carry and self-administer a medication, the student needs to review the plan for taking that medication with the school nurse at the beginning of each school year or at the onset of that medication authorization.
- No student is allowed to share any type of medication with anyone else during school hours and events.
- All prescription controlled substance medications (i.e. for ADHD) must be delivered to the nurse by an adult. Parents/ guardians are responsible for ensuring that all means of delivering medication to the school nurse is safe and appropriate.
- Medications authorizations for the following chronic health conditions require emergency or action plans for the use of those medications:
 - Asthma – Asthma Action Plan
 - Epilepsy – Seizure Action Plan
 - Potential anaphylactic allergies – Emergency Allergy Plan
 - Diabetes – Diabetes Medication and Management Plan

A school nurse, or in the absence of the nurse, a “qualified school employee” may administer epinephrine in a cartridge injector for the purpose of emergency first aid to students who experience allergic reactions but were not previously known to have serious allergies and therefore do not have prior written authorization of a parent/guardian or qualified medical professional for the administration of epinephrine. Parents/guardians may submit in writing to the school nurse and school medical advisor that epinephrine shall not be administered to his/her child.

A school nurse, or in the absence of the nurse, a “qualified/school employee” may administer anti-epileptic medication to a specific student with a medically diagnosed epileptic condition that requires prompt treatment in accordance with the student’s individual seizure action plan. Written parental permission and written order from a physician is required.

A school nurse or the principal will select a qualified school employee to, under certain conditions, give a glycogen injection to a student with diabetes who may require prompt treatment to protect him/her from serious harm or death. Written parental permission and written order from a physician are required.

School bus drivers are trained to administer epinephrine in a life-threatening anaphylactic reaction to a student who is in need of emergency care due to a medically diagnosed allergic reaction.

LEARN does not allow the ingestion of marijuana for palliative (medical) use in any school, on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities, on or off school grounds.

Homeless Students

Homeless students, as defined by federal and state legislation, will have all programs, services, and transportation that other students enjoy and may continue to attend the school of origin. The LEARN liaisons for homeless children Dr. Ryan Donlon, Associate Executive Director and Ms. Bridgette Gordon-Hickey, Deputy Executive Director. The school social worker serves as the school liaison as well. LEARN has reviewed its existing policies and regulations to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth. Homeless children and youths are defined as “individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence”. Homeless children have the right to attend the school of origin “to the extent feasible,” unless doing so is contrary to the request of such student’s parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth.

Any homeless child or youth denied school accommodations shall continue in attendance or will be immediately enrolled in the school selected by the child in the school district. A written explanation of the reasons for denial of school accommodations in a manner and form understandable to such homeless child or youth, or parent/guardian, will be provided. Information will also be provided regarding the right to appeal the decision of the denial of accommodations. The homeless child or youth is entitled to continue in attendance during all available appeals.

A homeless student who is not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian, shall have full access to his/her educational and medical records in the Board's possession.

HOMEWORK

The purpose of homework is to help students become self-directed, independent learners and is related to the educational progress of the student. It serves to help all students reach their instructional goals.

Specific homework assignments may strengthen basic skills; extend classroom learning; stimulate and further interests; reinforce independent study skills; develop initiative, responsibility, and self-direction; stimulate worthwhile use of leisure time; and acquaint parents with the student's work in school. Further:

- be related to classroom instruction
- be age and developmentally appropriate
- be appropriate to the needs and ability of the child
- provide reinforcement and enrichment of classroom instruction and should not be used for disciplinary purposes;
- emphasize critical thinking, problem-solving and written expression;
- emphasize quality over quantity
- be reviewed/assessed once submitted.

In order for homework to be an effective support for learning, the homework policy requires a partnership among the school system represented by the teacher, the student

and their parents. Without this partnership in support of learning, students will not achieve their full potential.

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT (LEP) STUDENTS (ENGLISH LEARNERS)

Parents of Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students/English Learners participating in a language instructional program will be notified within 30 days of their child's placement in the program. The notification will include an explanation of why, a description of the program, and the parent's rights to remove their child from the English Learners program. In addition, the notification will explain how the program will help the child to develop academically, learn English and achieve the standards necessary for promotion.

Students not meeting the English mastery standard or demonstrating limited progress will be provided with additional language support services which may include, but are not limited to, English as a Second Language program, sheltered English programs, English Immersion programs, summer school, after-school assistance, homework assistance and tutoring. Students after 30 months in a bilingual program will not be offered additional bilingual education.

MAGNET SCHOOLS

It is recognized that some students may benefit from attendance at a magnet school not limited by school district boundaries. District students may enroll directly into a magnet school, with which the Students' District does not have a participation agreement, on a space available basis. The Students' District will be responsible for any tuition for such enrollment, but not for transportation, unless the magnet school is within the boundaries of the school district. Tuition will not be paid by the district for student placed by their parents/guardians in a pre-school (PK) magnet program.

Parents/Guardians are required, not later than two weeks following an enrollment lottery for an inter-district magnet school, to notify the district of their child's enrollment or placement on a waiting list for enrollment in the coming school year.

MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS AVAILABLE IN STUDENT BATHROOMS

LEARN will provide free menstrual products in women's restrooms, all-gender restrooms, and at least one men's restroom. Such restrooms will be accessible to students in grades three through twelve, in each school under the jurisdiction of LEARN. The provision of these products will be done in a manner that does not stigmatize any student seeking menstrual products, pursuant to guidelines that need to be established by the Commissioner of Public Health and posted on the DPH's website. LEARN may accept donations of menstrual products and grants from any source for the purpose of purchasing such products and may partner with a nonprofit or community-based organization.

MIGRANT STUDENTS

LEARN has a program to address the needs of migrant students. A full range of services will be provided to migrant students, including applicable Title I programs, special education, gifted education, vocational education, language programs, counseling programs and elective classes. Parents/guardians of migrant students will be involved in and regularly consulted about the development, implementation, operation and evaluation of the migrant program.

ON-CAMPUS RECRUITMENT

Students at the middle and high school level will be informed of the availability of (1) vocational, technical and technological education and training of technical high schools and (2) agricultural sciences and technology education at regional agricultural science and technology education centers. Full access for the recruitment of students by technical high schools, regional agricultural science and technology education center, magnet schools, charter schools will be provided. Military recruiters and institutions of higher learning shall have access to secondary school students' names, addresses and

telephone listings unless the student's parent/guardians submits a written request that such information not be released without their prior written consent.

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONFERENCES

Parents/guardians are encouraged to become partners in their child's educational successes. Conferences with teachers are typically held during the school year. Parents a

A parent or student may arrange a conference with an individual member of the school staff or a group conference with school staff members. Conferences are typically held during school hours but every effort will be made to accommodate parent schedules.

PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT/COMMUNICATIONS

LEARN recognizes that a student's education is a responsibility shared by the school, the family, and the sending school district during the entire time the student spends in the school. Education succeeds best when there is a strong partnership between home and school based on communications, interactions and engagement. Parents/guardians are urged to encourage their children to put a high priority on education and to make the most of their educational opportunities available. Parents/guardians should become familiar with all of the child's school activities and with the LEARN academic programs, including special programs. Attendance at parent-teacher conferences, participation in campus parent organizations, and being a school volunteer are strongly encouraged.

PESTICIDE APPLICATION

LEARN has implemented an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Plan to comply with the recommendations from the Connecticut Environmental Protection Agency. Only certified pesticide applicators are used in school for any non-emergency pesticide use in school buildings or on school grounds. Pesticide applications are limited to non-school hours and when activities are not taking place. Areas to receive pesticide application will

be posted and a written record of all pesticide applications will be maintained for five years. Notice will be provided at least 24 hours in advance of the application of a pesticide either on the school's homepage or on the school or di

PHYSICAL EXERCISE

All students in elementary school shall have in the regular school day, time devoted to physical exercise, of not less than twenty minutes in total, unless altered for a student by a Planning and Placement Team for a child requiring special education. Such physical exercise can be a combination of planned physical education classes, recess, and/or teacher-directed classroom activities. The period of physical activity will not be taken away from an elementary student as a form of punishment. In addition, students in all grades, K-12, cannot be assigned physical activity as a form of punishment.

School employees may not prevent a student in elementary school from participating in recess or in other sustained opportunities for physical activity during classroom learning as a form of discipline.

PROMOTION, RETENTION AND PLACEMENT

Promotion, acceleration, and retention of a student to a particular grade shall always be made in the best interest of the student. Teachers shall recommend promotion or non-promotion of pupils. When necessary, Administrators shall review a recommendation and after consultation with the parent, make a decision on placement for the child. In the case of a special education student, decisions would be based on PPT recommendations. Promotion, acceleration, and retention from grade in the elementary school shall be based on the following: 1. The achievement of the student in the present grade. 2. The ability of the child to do work in the succeeding grade. 3. Recommendations and information provided by the professional staff. 4. The expressed desires of the parent/guardian. 5. Other data relevant to the decision. In addition to the above, successful completion of the published number of credits for promotion shall be considered for the promotion, acceleration, and retention of high school students.

PSYCHOTROPIC DRUG USE

School personnel is prohibited from recommending the use of psychotropic drugs for any student enrolled within the school system. School nurses, nurse practitioners, district medical advisor, school psychologists, school social workers and school counselors, may recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner. Further, LEARN is prohibited from requiring a child to get a prescription before he/she may attend school, be evaluated to determine eligibility for special education or receive special education.

SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES

The school district recognizes the value of certain ceremonies and observances in promoting patriotism and good citizenship among the students. Therefore, activities in schools commemorating national holidays such as, but not limited to, Martin Luther King Day, Veterans Day, Memorial Day, Thanksgiving and Presidents Day are encouraged. LEARN reminds students, faculty and administration of the variety of religious beliefs, and all are urged to be conscious of and respect the sensitivities of others.

Activities related to a religious holiday or theme will be planned to ensure that the activity is not devotional, and that students of all faiths can join without feeling that they are betraying their own beliefs. Therefore,

1. school and class plays shall not be overly religious, and church-like scenery will be avoided;
2. religious music shall not entirely dominate the selection of music; and
3. program notes and illustrations shall not be religious or sectarian.

Students shall be given the option to be excused from participating in those parts of a program or curriculum involving a religious theme which conflicts with their own

religious beliefs. If a parent or student has any questions regarding the use of religious music, artwork and/or symbols in a particular course/activity, the school administration should be contacted.

Participation in any opportunities for students to observe an appropriate period of silent meditation and to recite the Pledge of Allegiance is voluntary. Nonparticipants are expected to maintain order and decorum appropriate to the school environment.

SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION AND EDUCATION PROGRAM

Students in grades K-12 will be involved in a prevention-oriented child sexual abuse program which teaches students age-appropriate techniques to recognize child sexual abuse and how to report it. Parents/guardians may permit their child to opt out of the awareness program or any part of it by notifying the school in writing of such a request.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

LEARN wants all students to learn in an environment free from all forms of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is against state and federal laws. It is unwelcome sexual attention from peers, teachers, staff or anyone with whom the victim may interact. Any student who believes that he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment should report the alleged misconduct immediately to the Title IX Coordinator, Nondiscrimination Coordinator, his/her teacher, social worker, guidance counselor, administrator, school nurse, or any responsible individual with whom the student feels comfortable, either informally or through the filing of a formal complaint. The administration will take action to investigate the allegations.

The district will notify the parents of all students involved in sexual harassment by student(s) and will notify parents of any incident of sexual harassment or sexual abuse by an employee.

A complaint alleging sexual harassment by a student or staff member may be presented by a student and/or parent in a conference with the principal or designee or with the

Title IX Coordinator, Ms. Bridgette Gordon-Hickey, Deputy Executive Director or Dr. Ryan Donlon, Associate Executive Director.

Additional information regarding procedures for reporting, investigating, and responding to sexual harassment complaints can be found on the LEARN website (www.learn.k12.ct.us).

STUDENT RECORDS

A student's school records are confidential and are protected by federal and state law from unauthorized inspection or use. A cumulative record is maintained for each student from the time the student enters the district until the student withdraws or graduates. This record moves with the student from school to school.

By law, both parents, whether married, separated, or divorced, have access to the records of a student who is under 18 or a dependent for tax purposes. A parent whose rights have been legally terminated will be denied access to the records if the school is given a copy of the court order terminating these rights.

The principal is custodian of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned school. The Deputy Executive Director, Bridgette Gordon-Hickey, is the custodian of all records for students who have withdrawn or graduated. Records may be reviewed during regular school hours upon completion of the written request form. The record's custodian or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records.

Parents of a minor or of a student who is a dependent for tax purposes, the student (if 18 or older), and school officials with legitimate educational interests are the only persons who have general access to a student's records. "School officials with legitimate educational interests" include any employee such as an administrator, teacher, support staff, Board of Education member, attorney, agents, or facilities with which the district contracts for the placement of students with disabilities, as well as their attorneys and consultants, who are:

1. Working with the student;
2. Considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for a student with disabilities under IDEA or an individually designed program for a student with disabilities under Section 504;
3. Compiling statistical data; or
4. Investigating or evaluating programs.

Certain other officials from various governmental agencies may have limited access to the records. Parental consent is required to release the records to anyone else. When the student reaches 18 years of age, only the student has the right to consent to release of records.

The parent's or student's right of access to, and copies of, student records does not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records, such as teachers' personal notes on a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher and records pertaining to former students after they are no longer students in the district, do not have to be made available to the parents or student.

A student over 18 and parents of minor students may inspect the student's records and request a correction if the records are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. If the district refuses the request to amend the records, the requester has the right to a hearing. If the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the requester has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information in the student's record. Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, parents and the student are not allowed to contest a student's grade in a course through this process. Parents or the student have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education if they believe the district is not in compliance with the law regarding student records. The district's policy regarding student records is available from the principal's or superintendent's office.

Copies of student records are available. Parents may be denied copies of a student's records (1) after the student reaches age 18 and is no longer a dependent for tax purposes; (2) when the student is attending an institution of post-secondary education; (3) if the parent fails to follow proper procedures and pay the copying charge; or (4) when the district is given a copy of a court order terminating the parental rights. If the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals and the parents are unable to view the records during regular school hours, upon written request of the parent, one copy of the record will be provided at no charge.

Certain information about district students is considered directory information and will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it, unless the parent objects to the release of any or all directory information about the child. This objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days after the issuance of this handbook. Directory information includes a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major field of study, grade levels, photograph, e-mail address, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, awards received in school, and most recent previous school attended.

Military recruiters or institutions of higher learning shall have access to secondary school student's names, addresses and telephone listings, unless a parent/guardian or secondary student aged 18 or over requests in writing that such information not be released.

LEARN will release to a school's Parent Teacher Association / Organization the names, addresses, telephone number and grade levels of students (unless LEARN is informed by September 15 of the school year that designation of such directory information has been refused as to a particular student) provided such information is to be used by the PTA/PTO for its own school activities or school business.

When a student moves to a new school system or charter/magnet school, LEARN will send the student's records to the new district within ten business days of receiving written notice of the move from the new district. Unless the parents/guardians of the

student authorize the record transfer in writing, the sending District is required to send a notice when the records are sent to the new district.

Parents and eligible students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by LEARN to comply with the Requirements of FERPA. Complaints may be addressed to: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 5400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20202-4605.

SUICIDE PREVENTION AND YOUTH SUICIDE ATTEMPTS

LEARN is aware that suicide and other self-destructive behaviors have become critical problems for children and youth, families, school personnel and the community.

LEARN is also aware that students experiencing stress or depression are less available for learning. Students engaging in self-destructive behaviors are jeopardizing their health and well-being as well as their academic achievement.

LEARN recognizes its responsibility to develop policy and procedures for dealing with youth suicide prevention and youth suicide attempts. In response to this concern it shall be the policy of LEARN to establish programs and procedures regarding youth

suicide prevention and intervention for teachers, administrators, staff and students. All school personnel will be required to act in accordance with LEARN policy and procedures and timelines whenever there is any suspicion that a student may be at risk for suicide.

TEACHER AND PARAPROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Parents/guardians have the right to request information about the professional qualifications of their child's teacher(s). The response will indicate whether the teacher is certified for the subject matter and grade taught; the teacher's undergraduate major and any graduate degrees or certifications a teacher may have. Parents/guardians will also be advised, if requested as to whether the child is provided service by paraprofessionals and their qualifications.

TITLE I COMPARABILITY OF SERVICES

All LEARN schools, regardless of whether they receive Federal Title I funds, provide services that, taken as a whole, are substantially comparable. Staff, curriculum materials and instructional supplies are provided in a manner to ensure equivalency among district schools.

TITLE I PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Parents/guardians of a child in a Title 1 funded program will receive a copy of the district's parental and family engagement involvement policy, including provisions of an annual meeting and involvement of parents/guardians in the planning, review and implementation of Title 1 programs and opportunities for parents/guardians and family members to participate in the education of their children.

TRANSPORTATION

Relative to LEARN magnet schools, partnership districts often (in some cases exclusively) transport their district students to the magnet schools. The bus drivers who drive for the partner towns must report in writing any student who interferes with the safe operation of the bus to the principal. A student with special needs who attends a LEARN school must abide by the same rules as applied to all students attending LEARN schools. A behavioral plan will be developed to address such behavior concerns on the bus.

Parents/guardians will be notified of infractions, which may result in a warning of indefinite suspension from the bus, dependent on the severity and frequency of occurrence. School transportation privileges are extended to students conditional upon their satisfactory behavior on the bus. Students may be suspended from transportation services for unsatisfactory conduct while awaiting or receiving transportation to and from school which endangers persons or property or violates a partner district Board policy or administrative regulation. Complaints concerning school transportation safety

are to be made to the Director of Transportation of the sending district and the school Principal. A written record of all complaints will be maintained and an investigation of the allegations will take place.

Parent/Guardian Transportation

Parents/Guardians should park in the designated area at each school. Cars should not be parked in undesignated areas which include on the grass, in fire lanes, on the curb, etc. at any time.

Parents who choose to drive their children to school and drop them off should drive into the designated drop off area with their vehicles, remain in the vehicle, and drop off their child.

Disciplinary sanctions and changes in transportation for a student with a disability shall be made in accordance with the provisions of the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) and the student's sending district.

All vehicles coming into or leaving the school grounds are subject to the regulations of the school. A student may drive to school, provided the student abides by the traffic rules, has parental permission, and completes appropriate school requirements for registering student drivers.

Students are not allowed to go to their cars during school hours. In case of emergency, they will be given a pass to do so by the administration. Any violation of proper automobile use may result in the suspension of parking privileges or any such discipline which is appropriate for the circumstances.

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COMPLAINTS/PROCEDURES

All complaints concerning school transportation safety are to be made to the Transportation Coordinator/District Business Manager/Finance Director. A written

record of all complaints will be maintained and an investigation of the allegations will take place.

VISITORS

Parents/guardians and other visitors are welcome to visit LEARN schools.

Upon entering a LEARN building, visitors will be asked to present identification such as a Driver's License, which can either be scanned or manually entered into the system. If a parent or guardian for any reason does not have a US government-issued ID, the school staff member may use an alternate form of identification and manually enter the person's name into the Raptor system. The Raptor system will check to ensure that registered sexual offenders are not entering LEARN school campuses without LEARN's knowledge. The Raptor system checks the visitor's name and date of birth for comparison with a national database of registered sex offenders. The registered sex offender database is the only official database checked by the Raptor system. No other data from the identification is gathered or recorded and the information is not shared with any outside

agency. Once entry is approved, Raptor will issue a badge that identifies the visitor, the date, and the purpose of his/her visit. A visitor's badge will not be necessary for those who visit LEARN schools simply to drop off an item in the office or pick up paperwork.

Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time shall be permitted only with the approval of administration, and such visits shall not be permitted if it interferes with the delivery of instruction or disrupts the normal school environment.

All doors that open to the outside of any school must remain locked in order to preserve the safety and security of students and staff. Unauthorized persons shall not be permitted in school buildings or on school grounds.

All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct. Disruptive behavior or uncivil discourse will not be permitted. Visits cannot interfere with the educational program of the school nor interrupt teaching activities.