



School Handbook

2024-2025

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This handbook outlines the policies and practices at SMS for a typical school year. While this information still applies to the 2024-2025 school year, please visit www.suffield.org for any updates

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MISSION STATEMENT OF DISTRICT AND SCHOOL

The Mission of the Suffield Public Schools is to prepare all students with the knowledge, skills and attributes required for success in a rapidly changing world.

In pursuit of this Mission, we believe that:

- when we address students' diverse academic, social, emotional and physical needs, all will learn;
- all students need equitable access to appropriate resources and opportunities to excel;
- multiple measures of student learning are required to drive continuous improvement;
- students and adults thrive in a safe and secure learning environment characterized by responsibility, fairness, respect, and civility;
- highly effective teachers and instructional leaders who engage students in rigorous and challenging experiences are the keys to student success;
- an excellent District staff supports success in every classroom, facility and setting;
- partnerships, collaboration and communication with families and the community are vital to our mission.

EQUITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Students deserve a respectful learning environment in which their cultural, racial, gender, religion, and ethnic diversity, and exceptionalities are valued and contributes to successful academic outcomes. The school learning and work environment is enriched and improved by the contributions, perspectives, and the very presence of diverse participants. Any questions or concerns that arise should be reported to school administration promptly.

SUFFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE

Suffield Public School Graduate

In 2022, the SPS Board of Education developed and adopted the Portrait of a Graduate. This was in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders including:

- Parents
- Families
- Community members
- Educators
- Students
- SPS leadership

The adoption of the Portrait of the Graduate acknowledges that in our rapidly changing world, education needs to evolve to fulfill our mission of supporting student success in school and in life. Portrait of a Graduate prioritizes the development of skills that will empower students to be productive citizens of a global community and successful in the workforce of the future.

Every graduate should be:

- A Clear Communicator who makes meaning and expresses thinking in a multiplicity of ways
 - To do so, the communicator demonstrates the following skills or attributes
 - Listening
 - Empathy
 - Respect
 - Clarity
 - Fluency
 - Concision
 - Command of multiple modalities
 - Speaking and writing for multiple purposes and audiences
- A Creative and Critical Thinker who generates and assesses solutions for a wide variety of problems.
 - To do so, the thinker demonstrates the following skills or attributes:
 - Curiosity
 - Questioning
 - Reflection
 - Analysis
 - Research
 - Decision Making
 - Strategic and flexible thinking
 - Persistence in exploring options, generating hypotheses and revising and refining solutions
- A Collegial Collaborator who values partnership and works effectively with others.
 - To do so, the thinker demonstrates the following skills or attributes:
 - Adaptability
 - Self-awareness
 - Facilitative leadership
 - Empathy and respect for others
 - Ability to compromise and resolve conflicts
 - Tolerance and openness to people and ideas
- A Civic-Minded Contributor who is an active participant in the life and spirit of the home, the community, the society, and the world.
 - To do so, the thinker demonstrates the following skills or attributes:
 - Trustworthiness
 - Kindness
 - Compassion
 - Openness to feedback
 - Willingness to help others
 - An ethical orientation- honesty, integrity, impartiality and fairness
- A Conscientious Learner who has cognitive processes and skills that help them to plan, monitor, implement and achieve their goals.
 - To do so, the thinker demonstrates the following skills or attributes:
 - Adaptability
 - Self-efficacy
 - Organization

- Self-advocacy
- Independence
- Self-regulation
- Self-knowledge
- Resourcefulness

PREFACE

The material covered within this student handbook is intended as a method of communicating to students and parents regarding general District information, rules and procedures and is not intended to either enlarge or diminish any Board policy, administrative regulation or negotiated agreement. Material contained herein may therefore 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.

This booklet is written for our students and their parents. It contains required and useful information. Because it cannot be as personal a communication as we would like, we address students not directly as “you” but rather as “the student,” “students,” or “children.” Likewise, the term “the student’s parent” may refer to the parent, legal guardian, or other person who has agreed to assume responsibility for the student. Both students and parents need to be familiar with the District’s Student Code of Conduct and school safety and security plans, which are intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere conducive for learning.

The Student Handbook is designed to be in harmony with Board policy. Please be aware that the handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. Changes in policy that affect portions of this Handbook will be made available to students and parents through newsletters, web pages (www.suffield.org), and other communications.

For more information on the Board policies outlined or referenced in this handbook please visit <https://www.suffield.org/district/board-of-education/policies> under the District tab. For your convenience, additional school/District information and forms can be found on the District website. Parents and students are encouraged to regularly consult the District website for the latest information and updates.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Each student is encouraged to develop and achieve individual educational goals. The District 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 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.

The following person is the District’s designated compliance officer, who will handle inquiries and coordinate compliance with the District’s nondiscrimination policies, including the

nondiscrimination requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973:

Diana Kelley
Director of Special Services
Suffield Public Schools
350 Mountain Road
Suffield, CT 06078
Telephone: 860-668-3800

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

The district schools recognize and accept the need to prepare students to live and work productively in an increasingly diverse society. This is an integral part of the school system's commitment to offer an educational program of excellence, which includes teaching student's awareness and understanding of the diverse cultures and heritages that form our society.

The school will not tolerate student behavior which insults, degrades or stereotypes any race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical or mental condition or ethnic group.

ADMISSION/PLACEMENT

A student seeking enrollment in Suffield Middle School for the first time or following attendance in another Connecticut public school District, out-of-state attendance, private school attendance or admission through a bona fide foreign exchange program should contact administration. A student who is transferring from non-public schools or schools outside the District will be placed at his/her current grade level pending evaluation and observation of the student after such assessment and consultation with the parents, administration will determine the grade placement of the child. Children residing in Suffield who meet all applicable enrollment/admission requirements as set out in Board policy and state law shall be provided free public school accommodations. Nonresidents may attend school on a tuition basis provided space is available. Nonresident students from other school districts within the state, (districts in the Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport and New London regions) who apply pursuant to Board of Education regulations, may enroll in particular programs or schools within the District on a space available basis, without payment of tuition, as part of the inter-district public school attendance program called Open Choice. The Regional Educational Service Centers will determine which school districts are close enough to make transportation feasible. The parent or person having control of a child seventeen years of age may consent to such child's withdrawal from school. The parent or person having control of a child seventeen years of age may exercise the option by personally appearing at the school District office to sign a withdrawal form. This form will include an attestation from a school counselor or a school administrator that the District has provided the parent or person with information on the educational options available in the school system and in the community.

A student who has attained the age of seventeen and who has voluntarily terminated enrollment in the District's schools and subsequently seeks admission may be denied readmission for up to ninety school days from the date of such termination unless such student seeks readmission to the

District not later than ten school days after such termination in which school accommodation will be provided not later than three school days after such student seeks readmission.

A student, nineteen years of age or older may be placed in an alternative school program or other suitable educational program if he/she cannot acquire a sufficient number of credits for graduation by age twenty-one. Students who are classified as homeless under federal law and do not have a fixed residence will be admitted pursuant to federal law.

Completion of immunization and health assessments are required prior to a child's attendance in school in order to enroll a child who resides in the District and is of appropriate age to attend school.

In order to determine a child's eligibility for ESL or bilingual programs, parents/guardians of all new students enrolling for the first term and all re-enrolling students who have not previously attended public school in Connecticut must complete a Home Language Survey. The student, after enrollment, may also take a screening exam.

Parents of students attending District schools have the option to enroll their child(ren) in a magnet school with which the District is a nonparticipating District, if the magnet school has unused student capacity. The District will pay any tuition charge (does not include tuition for a preschool magnet program). The District is not legally required to provide transportation to District students opting to attend inter-district magnet schools.

ADVANCED CLASSES/ACCELERATED MATH COURSE

Our goal is to always provide all students with the suitable instructional environment they need to facilitate their growth and success in mathematics. To that end, we offer grade-level courses for all our students that are designed to allow them to both solidify their mastery of previously learned mathematical concepts, as well as establish their conceptual understanding and procedural fluency of the mathematical content of their current grade-level work. This approach will enable all students to pursue whatever course of study or career that interests them in the future. Students who demonstrate a higher degree of proficiency in mathematics will have the opportunity to engage in our prescribed Accelerated Math courses in 7th and 8th grade.

Students that meet the established criteria will receive an invitation to the Accelerated Math course for the upcoming school year. As a practice, we allow all students to participate in this assessment process. However, we recognize that the goal of being placed in the Accelerated Math course is not shared by all of our students and/or their parents. Parents are able to opt out of the Accelerated math class for their child.

The Algebra teacher is obligated to maintain the rigor and pace of this accelerated course. The teachers will not be able to provide remedial tutoring to meet the expectations of the class. Students may be spending an average of 20-30 minutes (per night) on mathematics assignments and or studying. Mastery of the mathematics content is required. If, at any time a student is not meeting the goals of the course, the parent will be contacted. If a student does not improve his/her mastery of the advanced content, he/she may be reassigned to the grade-level math class.

ADVERTISING

The public schools maintain careful controls on the way in which students are exposed to materials and announcements, other than those directly related to school sponsored programs and activities. Caution is exercised to prevent exploitation of the system and its students.

ANTI-RACISM

The District rejects all forms of racism as destructive to the mission, vision, values and goals of this school system. All forms of racism must be eliminated from the District. Children must find school a safe and welcoming place, where they are able to achieve success, irrespective of their racial or ethnic background. Racism will not be tolerated in any form. The goal is to enable all students to thrive in a socially cohesive community within a positive, multi-cultural society.

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. The District 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.

ASSEMBLIES

There are times when classes, grades, teams or the entire school may gather for assembly programs. These programs are arranged to bring information or entertainment to the student community. A student's conduct in assemblies must meet the same standards as in the classroom.

ATTENDANCE

Connecticut state law requires parents to make sure that their children between the ages of 5 to 18 attend school regularly. 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 school work missed due to a legitimate absence.

Absence means an excused absence or an unexcused absence.

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. Students serving an in-school suspension of a half a day or more shall be considered in attendance. A student serving an out-of-school suspension or an expulsion will always be considered absent.

The parent or person having control of a child shall have the option of waiting to send the child to school until the child is six or seven years of age, upon signing an option form at the school District offices.

A child whose total number of absences at any time 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

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 are requested to contact the school between 6 A.M. and 8 A.M. on the day of the absence by telephoning the school (860-668-3820).

If it is not possible to telephone the school on the day of absence, the parent is requested to send a written excuse to the school on the date of the student’s return. The student should submit the excuse directly to the office. Parents should contact their student’s school counselor in order to take advantage of special services such as the collection of homework assignments for the student who must be out several days.

Excused Absence

A student’s absence from school shall be considered “excused” 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 appropriate documentation to school officials.
- 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 appearances 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 service members.
 8. PA 21-46 allows students up to two excused mental health wellness days per school year

A phone call with no written follow-up will be automatically coded as an unexcused absence. The responsibility for makeup of work lies with the student, not the teacher. The typical time limit for make-up work is one (1) school day for each day of absence.

Unexcused Absence

Unexcused absences are those which do not fall under any of the excused absences. Students who have unexcused absences may be denied makeup privileges. Such absences may also be reflected in the student's 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 issued quarterly. Parents are also encouraged to contact the teachers, school counselors and administrators to get help in verifying attendance and attendance records at any time during the year.

- **Vacations/Absences due to family travel/vacations**

School policy strongly encourages the scheduling of family vacations and trips during times which coincide with school vacations. Student absences for reasons of a family vacation or trip that takes place when school is in session may be considered "unexcused absences," in light of District guidelines.

Truancy

As defined by Connecticut State law: "**Sec. 10-198a. Policies and procedures concerning truants:** (a) For purposes of this section, "truant" means a child age five to eighteen, inclusive, who is enrolled in a public or private school has *four unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten unexcused absences from school in any school year*. When students accumulate more than nine absences, we will increase our efforts to partner with our families to ensure regular and punctual student attendance.

Parents have the responsibility to assist school officials in remedying and preventing truancy. If the parent fails to cooperate with the school in trying to solve the student's truancy problem the school will assist to coordinate help from outside agencies. School staff are mandated by the state to report excessive absences or patterns of concerns

Chronic Absenteeism

Under Connecticut State Statute, articulated in Suffield Board of Education Policy 5113.2, a student whose total number of absences at any time during a school year is equal to or greater than ten percent to the total number of days that such student has been enrolled at such school during a given school year is deemed "chronically absent." This 10% absence rate includes both *excused* and *unexcused* absences. As a school, we are obligated by both state statute and Suffield Board of Education policy to communicate with families about attendance criteria each month regardless of the reason for the absences, as well as to reach out to families with support and referrals to community resources.

Leaving School Grounds/Release of Students From School

Under no circumstances may a student leave the school or school grounds during school hours without permission from his/her parents or guardians and school administration. In the event it is necessary for a student to be dismissed early, a parent or guardian should send a written request to

the office. Telephone requests for early dismissal of a student shall be honored only if the caller can be positively identified as the student's parent or guardian. Students leaving school due to illness, must first be assessed by the school nurse.

Children of single-parent families will be released only upon the request of the parent whom the court holds directly responsible for the child and who is identified as such in the school records, unless prior arrangements have been made with the school. Arrangements should be made with the main office personnel and the parent or guardian to pick up the student in the school office.

If someone other than a parent/guardian picks up the student, the person appearing in the school office should bring a note of identification from the parent or guardian. No student may be released in the custody of any individual, not the parent or guardian of the student, unless the individual's name appears on the emergency contact list maintained through PowerSchool as authorized to obtain the release of students.

Rideshare and Third-Party Vehicles

The Board of Education understands that families may require the need for rideshares. If parents/guardians allow their child(ren) to be dropped off or picked up at school by a ridesharing service, it is with the express acknowledgment that the District and its employees have no responsibility for their decision to use such a service and have no responsibility of liability to such parents/guardians or their child(ren) related to the ridesharing service. If parents/guardians are requesting that their child(ren) take a rideshare, they are required to provide the school with written communication prior to arrival/dismissal.

Tardiness

Students who are not in their 1st period class by 7:30 A.M. are considered tardy and will be marked accordingly by the teacher. Students who after 7:30 AM or later after the start of class will be marked absent and must report directly to the office to sign in. A student discovered on school grounds who has not signed in at the office will also be considered absent. A student who is repeatedly tardy may be considered truant. Students may be subject to disciplinary action including suspension if administration determines that tardiness is excessive.

Students are late to school if they are not in their seats at the bell signaling the start of the first period class. If students arrive late, they must report to the office and sign in.

BACKPACKS AND BOOKBAGS

Students find it useful to carry book bags, duffel bags and knapsacks. Students are allowed to carry/use these items to and from school only. Students are not permitted to carry book bags, duffel bags and knapsacks during the entire school day. Lockers should be used. Safety and comfort of both students and adults must be considered.

BICYCLES

Students riding a bicycle to school are responsible to park and secure it properly at a designated area. For the best bicycle security, students should lock and chain the bicycle to one of the provided bicycle racks.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Board members are unpaid elected public officials with the responsibility for governance of the school District. The members of the Suffield Board of Education are:

Chairperson:	Maureen Sattan
Vice-Chairperson:	Glenn Gazdik
Secretary:	Jamie Drzyzga,
Members:	Terrance Antrum, Joe Barrows, Tracy Cloyd, Melissa Finnigan, Brian Fry, James Mol

In order to perform its duties in an open and public manner and in accordance with state law, the Suffield Board of Education holds regular business meetings which will be posted on the District's website (<https://www.suffield.org/district/board-of-education/calendar>). Parents, students and other community members are encouraged to attend.

BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY

Board of Education policies are available on the district's website at www.suffield.org. The policies are subject to modifications by the Board at any time.

BULLYING

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
- C. infringes on the rights and opportunities of an individual at 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 and 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.)*

Teen dating violence means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening that occurs between two students who are currently in or have recently been in a dating relationship.

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.

The Safe School Climate Specialist and/or designee is responsible for taking a bullying report and investigating the complaint. 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.

Student who engage in any act of bullying, or teen dating violence 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:

1. creates a hostile environment at school for the victims,
2. infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or
3. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school, are subject to appropriate school disciplinary action up to and including suspensions, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement official in accordance with the Board's policies on student discipline, suspension and expulsion, and consistent with state and federal law.

Discrimination and/or retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying is likewise prohibited.

Student and/or their parent may file a written report of conduct they consider bullying. Students may also make an informal complaint of conduct that they consider to be bullying by verbal report to any school employee, who will promptly reduce the complaint to writing and forward it to the Safe School Climate Specialist/or designee for review and action. The complaint procedure is also posted on the District’s website and the school website.

Students and parents are permitted to make anonymous reports of bullying. Parent written reports and student anonymous reports will be investigated by the Safe School Climate Specialist and/or designee but no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Students and/or parents may file verbal or written complaints concerning suspected bullying behavior, and students shall be permitted to anonymously report acts of bullying to school employees. Any report of suspected bullying behavior will be promptly reviewed. If acts of bullying are verified, prompt disciplinary action may be taken against the perpetrator, consistent with his/her rights of due process. Board policy and regulation #5131.911 set forth this prohibition

and the related procedures in detail, and are available to their parents/guardians online at <https://www.suffield.org/district/board-of-education/policies> or in writing upon request.

- **Hazing Activities**

Hazing, bullying or abuse of students or staff will not be tolerated. Any student who engages in an act that injures, degrades or disgraces another student or staff member, disrupts the educational process, or interfere with a student's opportunity to obtain an education shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Any information provided under this policy or accompanying Safe School Climate Plan shall be provided in accordance with the confidentiality restrictions imposed under the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act ("FERPA") and the District's Confidentiality and Access to Student Information policy and regulations.

For more information about bullying, including electronic access to the District's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy, Safe School Climate Plan, Bullying Reporting Form, and District Safe School Climate Improvement Plan, please visit <https://www.suffield.org/district/board-of-education/policies>.

BUS CONDUCT

School transportation privileges are extended to student's conditional upon their satisfactory behavior on the bus. Students may be suspended from transportation services for unsatisfactory conduct while waiting or receiving transportation to and from school which endangers persons or property or violates a Board policy or administrative regulation.

CAFETERIA

All eating is to be done in the cafeteria. Food is not permitted elsewhere in the building unless authorized by school administration. Rules of cleanliness are to be observed at all times.

Misconduct in the cafeteria may be cause for receiving an assigned seat or forfeiting the right to eat in that location or such other disciplinary action deemed appropriate for the misconduct.

The District participates in the School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program and offers to students nutritionally balanced meals daily. Free and reduced price lunches are available based on financial need. Information on this program can be obtained from Suffield Public Schools website. The District complies with the professional standards for school nutrition personnel who manage and operate the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs.

It is the intent of the Board of Education that schools take a proactive effort to encourage students to make nutritious food choices. Food and beverages offered for sale to students, whether in the cafeteria will meet federal and state standards and guidelines. All sodas and sports drinks will not be available for sale.

1. Meals will no longer be free for 2024-25. Families should be encouraged to apply for Free or Reduced Meals if they qualify.
2. If a student wants to purchase a second breakfast or lunch the prices are:

- a. Breakfast - \$2.10
 - b. Lunch - SMS/SHS - \$3.25 for regular lunch and \$3.50 for premium lunch
3. Questions regarding the practices and policies in the cafeteria should be referred to the Food Services Director, Tim Malley, (tmalley@suffield.org, 860-668-3810, ext. 3115) or <https://www.suffield.org/departments/food-services>.

In conformity with applicable law, necessary accommodations will be provided, where required, for students with food allergies, including emergency procedures to treat allergic reactions which may occur.

Charging lunch: All students should keep sufficient funds in their food service account to pay for meals or bring money to pay for lunch each day. However, when students do not have sufficient money in their account, they will be able to charge their lunch so that no student will go without lunch. The cashier will remind the student to ask his/her parent/guardian to replenish the account. In addition, insufficient funds notices will be sent home on a weekly basis when children have a negative balance of \$8.00 or more.

CALENDAR

The district calendar shows the beginning and ending dates of school, legal and local holidays, meeting days, number of teaching days, vacation periods and other pertinent dates. The board of education will establish a firm graduation date which is no earlier than the 180th day noted in the school calendar originally adopted by the board for the school year. ([2024-2025 District Calendar](#))

CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

If there is a question about a student's classes or work in school, it is best to first contact the person who is closest to the situation. In most cases, this is the teacher. The proper channeling of complaints regarding instruction, discipline or learning materials is (1) teacher, (2) school counselor or administration, (3) superintendent, (4) board of education.

CHEATING/PLAGIARISM (ACADEMIC DISHONESTY)

The Suffield Board of Education believes that personal integrity is basic to all solid achievement. Students are expected to pursue their school work with integrity and honesty. All forms of cheating and plagiarism, including by electronic means, are not acceptable. Cheating by students is defined as attempting to take credit or taking credit for someone else's work, using unauthorized materials, or otherwise acting to deceive the evaluator in an assignment, project, or test. Plagiarism is defined as presenting the work of another person as one's own. This includes copying of phrases or sentences word-for-word and presenting ideas without giving credit to the source. The misrepresenting by students of homework, class work, tests, reports, or other assignments as if they were entirely their own work shall be considered forms of cheating and/or plagiarism.

Consequences of cheating and/or plagiarism shall be academic in nature unless repeated incidences require disciplinary action. Consequences for cheating and/or plagiarism will take into account the grade level of the student and the severity of the misrepresentation.

As a result of recent technologies with related AI, the district will be handling violations in alignment with our cheating/plagiarism/academic dishonestly policy as outlined above.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

All 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 and neglect is a responsibility which is taken seriously. If there is any doubt about reporting suspected abuse or neglect 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.

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

CLASS PLACEMENT

Every effort will be made to place students with teachers where a positive student-teacher relationship will be established. Parents may provide information relative to their child's learning needs, learning style, and the type of learning environment within which the child can be successful. The final decision for placement rests with the school counselors and school administration.

CODE OF 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. The District 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.
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.

Hall Passes

Students are not permitted in the halls during class periods unless they are accompanied by a teacher or have a written hall pass or restroom pass from a staff member. It is the student's responsibility to obtain a pass from teachers and sign out of class or designated areas. Staff members will request to see the pass of a student in the hallway during class periods.

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

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

1. Accumulation of offenses such as school and class tardiness, class or study hall cutting, or failure to attend detention.
2. Behaving in any way that disrupts the school environment or educational process.
3. Disobeying school rules on school buses.
4. Disobeying directives from school personnel or school policies, rules, and regulations.
5. Leaving school grounds or school-sponsored events without permission.
6. Unauthorized entrance into any school facility or portion of a school facility or aiding or abetting an unauthorized entrance.
7. Engaging in academic dishonesty, including cheating, intentionally plagiarizing, wrongfully giving or receiving help during an academic examination and wrongfully obtaining test copies or scores. Cheating, plagiarizing, including by electronic means.
8. Using electronic devices during the school day, including cell phones in school buildings, without prior approval of the principal.
9. Violating the district's Internet Safety policy and/or Online Social Networking Policy including unauthorized use of any school computer, computer system, computer software, Internet connection or similar school property or system, or the use of such property or system for inappropriate purposes.
10. Damaging in a willful manner school electronic equipment and/or software.
11. Directing profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures toward other students or staff.
12. Being disrespectful or using/directing profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures toward teachers or other school employees.
13. 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.
14. Throwing objects that can cause bodily injury or damage property.

15. Damaging or vandalizing property owned by the school, other students, or school employees.
16. Committing robbery or theft.
17. Student may not sell items for the purpose of profit
18. Any act of harassment or discrimination based on an individual's sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, race, color, religion, disability, national origin or ancestry or membership in another legally protected class.
19. Name-calling, making ethnic or racial slurs or derogatory statements that may substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence.
20. Making false bomb threats or other threats to the safety of students, staff members, and/or other persons.
21. 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.
22. Engaging in inappropriate physical or sexual contact disruptive to the school environment or disturbing to other students.
23. Fighting, committing physical abuse, or threatening physical abuse.
24. Assaulting a teacher, staff member or other individual.
25. Playing with matches, fire, or committing arson.
26. Committing extortion, coercion, or blackmail; that is, forcing an individual to act through the use of force or threat of force.
27. Possessing a deadly weapon, dangerous instrument, firearm, martial arts weapon, or weapon facsimile.
28. 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.
29. Selling, giving, delivering, possessing, using, or being under the influence of drugs such as: marijuana; a controlled substance or drug; or an alcoholic beverage.
30. Smoking or using tobacco products, including electronic nicotine delivery systems (e-cigarettes) and vapor products.
31. Hazing, bullying
32. Public Displays of Affection (PDA) Students may not engage in PDA inappropriate for a public building. Students engaged in such behavior must stop when told to do so by a staff member.
33. Laser Pointers: Students are not permitted to possess or use laser pointers while on school property, while using District transportation, or while attending school-sponsored or school-related activities, whether on or off school property unless under a staff member's supervision and in the context of instruction. Laser pointers will be confiscated and students will be disciplined.

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 Board of Education 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.

Dangerous Weapons and Instruments

No guns, knives, martial arts weapons, deadly weapons or facsimiles of weapons or knives, or any other objects capable of threatening or causing injury or death may be brought onto school grounds. Any object used to cause injury will be considered a weapon under Board policy. Violators may be subject to arrest and prosecution, as well as, appropriate disciplinary action. Any student found to possess a firearm, deadly weapon, dangerous instrument, martial arts weapon or other weapon on school grounds or during a school activity will be recommended for expulsion from school.

An expelled student may apply for early readmission to school. Such readmission is at the discretion of the Board of Education (unless the Board has delegated authority for readmission decisions to the Superintendent.) The Board or Superintendent, as appropriate, may condition such readmission on specified criteria.

Dress Code

Student dress may be regulated and students are encouraged to dress in clothing appropriate to the school situation. Restrictions on freedom of expression may be applied whenever the mode of dress is unsafe, disruptive to the educational process or contrary to law. Administrators will use reasonableness and discretion when determining the appropriateness of attire. The school staff will enforce the dress code in a consistent manner that does not reinforce or increase marginalization or oppression of any group based on race, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, household income or body type/size. Enforcement of the dress code will be gender neutral.

Any school dress which impairs safety or increases the risk of injury to self or others, causes discomfort to others (e.g., uncleanliness, malodorousness, inappropriate language), causes distraction or disruption of the learning environment, advertises or advocates the use of alcohol or drugs, pornography, or is libelous or inherently contains unreasonable potential to upset and hurt others is prohibited.

The following items are not to be worn in school:

1. Blouses/shirts must have shoulder straps and be long enough to adequately cover most of the midriff.
2. Blouses/shirts that allow exposure of any portion of the chest or back are not allowed.
3. Clothing must not be see-through or transparent.
4. Undergarments and/or private body areas must not be evident or visible through clothing.
5. Any clothing that reveals undergarments
6. Hats and hoods may not be worn up in school
7. Clothing or accessories shall not display words or symbols that advocate or depict profanity, violence, drugs, alcohol, sex, hate groups, gang affiliation or illegal activity, expressed or implied; shall not contain vulgarity or overly offensive or disruptive writing or pictures, which are likely to disrupt the educational environment; or that provokes others

- to act violently or causes others to be intimidated by fear of violence.
8. Footwear must be worn at all times. Open-toe or backless shoes are permitted except when there are safety concerns such as in physical education, woodshop, or labs. Slippers may not be worn.
 9. Outdoor Garments (jackets, vests, winter gloves) should not be worn while in school

This list is not exhaustive and is intended to serve as a guide for parents and students. We would also like to note that we recognize that middle school children mature at different ages and this makes describing specific lengths of clothing difficult. For example, the commonly used “fingertip length” rule for the length of shorts is somewhat arbitrary. Thus, the staff will ultimately decide whether or not a student’s attire is safe, respectful and appropriate for our school environment. Our general advice to the students is as follows: ***“if you have any doubts about a particular item of clothing as you get dressed in the morning, don’t wear it to school.”***

Students who are observed to be out of compliance with the school’s dress code will be sent to the office. Every attempt will be made to secure appropriate clothing, including a call to parents. If appropriate clothing cannot be secured, the student may remain in the office until dismissal.

Recording of Classroom Activities

The District prohibits the covert recording of classroom activities. The recording of teachers or students in class is inherently disruptive of the educational process. Students violating this rule will be subject to discipline and confiscation of the electronic device.

Smoking

Students shall not smoke or use tobacco products or e-cigarettes or vapor product devices on 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 “CODE OF 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 disciplinary actions.

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 are considered grounds 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 educator unless, in the judgment of the educator, 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 effects of alcohol, of nicotine, of tobacco, and of drugs.”

DEFIBRILLATORS IN SCHOOLS (AED’S)

Each school will have (1) one automatic external defibrillator (AED), all school personnel are required to be trained in AED operation. All schools have a school nurse that is trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). AED trained personnel will be available during the school’s normal operational hours, at school-sponsored athletic events and practices on school grounds and at school-sponsored events not taking place during normal school operational hours. The school also has an emergency action response plan addressing the use of trained school personnel to respond to individuals experiencing sudden cardiac arrest or similar life threatening emergencies.

DISCIPLINE

A student who violates the District’s code of conduct shall be subject to disciplinary action. The Suffield Public School's 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 program, 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 an 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.

Definitions

- A. **Dangerous instrument** means any instrument, article or substance which, under the circumstances in which it is used or attempted or threatened to be used, is capable of causing death or serious physical injury, and by way of example includes, but is not limited to a "vehicle" or a dog that has been commanded to attack, any knife with a metal blade or a razor, utility knife, or box cutter.
- B. **Deadly weapon** means any weapon, whether loaded or unloaded, from which a shot may be discharged, or a switchblade knife, gravity knife, billy, blackjack, bludgeon or metal knuckles.
- C. **Electronic Defense Weapon** means a weapon which by electronic impulse or current is capable of immobilizing a person temporarily.
- D. **Emergency** means a situation in which the continued presence of the student in school poses such a danger to persons or property or such a disruption of the educational process that a hearing may be delayed until a time as soon after the exclusion of such student is possible.
- E. **Exclusion** means any denial of public school privileges to a student for disciplinary purposes.
- F. **Expulsion** means the exclusion of a student from school privileges for more than ten (10) consecutive school days. The expulsion period may not extend beyond one (1) calendar year.
- G. **Firearm** as defined in 18 U.S.C § 921 means (a) any weapon that will, is designed to, or may be readily converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive, (b) the frame or receiver of any such weapon, (c) a firearm muffler or silencer, or (d) any destructive device. The term firearm does not include an antique firearm. As used in this definition, a "destructive device" includes any explosive, incendiary, or poisonous gas device, including a bomb, a grenade, a rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, a missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, a mine, or any other similar device; or any weapon (other than a shotgun or shotgun shell particularly suited for sporting purposes) that will, or may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by explosive or other propellant, and which has a barrel with a bore of more than ½" in diameter. The term "destructive device" also includes any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device or any device from which a destructive device may be readily assembled. A "destructive device" does not include: an antique firearm; a rifle intended to be used by the owner solely for sporting, recreational, or cultural purposes; or any device which is neither designed nor redesigned for use as a weapon.
- H. **In-School Suspension** means an exclusion from regular classroom activity for no more than ten (10) consecutive school days, but not exclusion from school, provided such exclusion shall not extend beyond the end of the school year in which such in-school suspension was imposed. Such suspensions shall be served in the school attended by the student or may be served in any school building under the jurisdiction of the Board of Education.
- I. **Martial arts weapon** means a nunchaku, kama, kasari-fundo, octagon sai, tonfa or Chinese star.
- J. When considering whether conduct off school grounds is seriously disruptive of the educational process, the term "weapon" means any BB gun, any blackjack, any metal or brass knuckles, any police baton or nightstick, any dirk knife or switch knife, any knife

having an automatic spring release device by which a blade is released from the handle, having a blade of over one and one-half inches in length, any stiletto, any knife the edged portion of the blade of which is four inches and over in length, any martial arts weapon or electronic defense weapon as defined above or any other dangerous or deadly weapon or instrument, unless permitted by law under section 29-38 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

- K. Removal** is the exclusion of a student for a class period of ninety (90) minutes or less.
- L. School Days** shall mean days when school is in session for students.
- M. School-Sponsored Activity** means any activity sponsored, recognized or authorized by the Board and includes activities conducted on or off school property.
- N. Seriously Disruptive of the Educational Process** means any conduct that markedly interrupts or severely impedes the day-to-day operation of a school. In making such a determination, the administration may consider, but shall not be limited to consideration of: whether the incident occurred within close proximity of a school; whether other students from the school were involved; or whether there was any gang involvement; whether the conduct involved violence, threats of violence, or the unlawful use of a weapon, as defined in C.G. S. 29-38; and whether any injuries occurred; and whether the conduct involved the use of alcohol or drugs. This definition of "seriously disruptive of the educational process" shall apply to all portions of this Policy.
- O. Suspension** means the exclusion of a student from school and/or transportation services for not more than ten (10) consecutive school days, provided such suspension shall not extend beyond the end of the school year in which such suspension is imposed; and further provided no student shall be suspended more than ten (10) times or a total of fifty (50) days in one school year, whichever results in fewer days of exclusion, unless such student is granted a formal hearing as provided below. Suspensions shall be in-school suspensions, unless the administration determines that the pupil being suspended (1) poses such a danger to persons or property or such a disruption of the educational process that the pupil shall be excluded from school during the period of suspension, or (2) the administration determines that an out-of-school suspension is appropriate for such pupil based on evidence of previous disciplinary problems that have led to suspensions or expulsion of such pupil, and (3) efforts by the administration to address such disciplinary problems through means other than out-of-school suspension or expulsion, including positive behavioral support strategies.
- P.** Notwithstanding the foregoing, the **reassignment** of a student from one regular education classroom program in the District to another regular education classroom program in the District shall not constitute a suspension or expulsion.
- Q. Expulsion** is the exclusion from school privileges for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, and is deemed to include, but not be limited to, exclusion from the school to which the student was assigned at the time the disciplinary action was taken, provided the exclusion, does not extend beyond a period of one calendar year.
- R. 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.

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.)*

Example of bullying include, but are not limited to:

- Physical violence and attacks
- Verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs including ethically-based or gender-based verbal put-downs
- Threats and intimidation
- Extortion or stealing of money and/or possessions
- Exclusion from peer groups within the school
- The misuse of electronic communications for the purpose of bullying, harassing, or sexually harassing other students within school or out of school (“cyberbullying”)
- 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.

Scope of the Student Discipline Policy

- A. *Conduct on School Grounds or at a School-Sponsored Activity:* Students may be disciplined for conduct on school grounds or at any school-sponsored activity that endangers persons or property, is seriously disruptive of the educational process, or that violates a publicized policy of the Board.
- B. *Conduct off School Grounds:*
 1. Students may be suspended or expelled for conduct off school grounds if such conduct is seriously disruptive of the educational process and violative of a publicized policy of the Board. In making a determination as to whether such conduct is seriously disruptive of the educational process, the Administration and the Board of Education may consider, but such consideration shall not be limited to, the following factors: (1) whether the incident occurred within close proximity of a school; (2) whether other students from the school were involved or whether there was any gang involvement; (3) whether the conduct involved violence, threats of violence, or the unlawful use of a weapon, as defined in section Conn. Gen. Stat. § 29-38, and whether any injuries occurred; and (4) whether the conduct involved the use of alcohol.
 2. In making a determination as to whether such conduct is seriously disruptive of the educational process, the Administration and/or the Board of Education may also consider whether such off-campus conduct involved the illegal use of drugs.

Discretionary and Mandatory Expulsions and Suspensions

- A. A principal may consider recommendation of expulsion of a student in grades three to twelve, inclusive, in a case where he/she has reason to believe the student has engaged in

conduct on school property or at a school-sponsored activity that endangers persons or property, is violative of a publicized policy of the Board, or is seriously disruptive of the educational process.

- B. A principal must recommend expulsion proceedings and the Board of Education must expel a student in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, for one (1) calendar year if the Board finds that the student:
1. was in possession (on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity) of a firearm as defined in 18 U.S.C. § 921, or deadly weapon, dangerous instrument, martial arts weapon, or, as defined in C.G.S. 53-3.
 2. off school grounds, possessed a firearm as defined in 18 U.S.C. § 921, in violation of Conn. Gen. Stat. § 29-35, or possessed and used a firearm as defined in 18 U.S.C. § 921, a deadly weapon, a dangerous instrument or a martial arts weapon in the commission of a crime under chapter 952 of the Connecticut General Statutes; or
 3. was engaged on or off school grounds in offering for sale or distribution a controlled substance (as defined in Conn. Gen. Stat. § 21a-240(9)), whose manufacturing, distribution, sale, prescription, dispensing, transporting, or possessing with intent to sell or dispense, offering or administering is subject to criminal penalties under Conn. Gen. Stat. §§21a-277 and 21a-278.
 4. The following definitions shall be used in this section:
 - a. "Dangerous instrument" means any instrument, article or substance which, under the circumstances in which it is used or attempted or threatened to be used, is capable of causing death or serious physical injury, and includes a "vehicle" or a dog that has been commanded to attack.
 - b. "Deadly weapon" means any weapon, whether loaded or unloaded, from which a shot may be discharged, or a switchblade knife, gravity knife, billy, blackjack, bludgeon or metal knuckles.
 - c. "Electronic defense weapon" means a weapon which by electronic impulse or current is capable of immobilizing a person temporarily.
 - d. A "firearm" as defined in 18 U.S.C § 921 means (a) any weapon that will, is designed to, or may be readily converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive, (b) the frame or receiver of any such weapon, (c) a firearm muffler or silencer, or (d) any destructive device. As used in this definition, a "destructive device" includes any explosive, incendiary, or poisonous gas device, including a bomb, a grenade, a rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, a missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, a mine, or any other similar device; or any weapon (other than a shotgun or shotgun shell particularly suited for sporting purposes) that will, or may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by explosive or other propellant, and which has a barrel with a bore of more than ½" in diameter. The term "destructive device" also includes any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device or any device from which a destructive device may be readily assembled. A "destructive device" does not include: an antique firearm; a rifle intended to be used by the owner solely for sporting, recreational, or cultural purposes; or any device which is neither designed nor redesigned for use as a weapon.

- e. "Martial arts weapon" means a nunchaku, kama, kasari-fundo, octagon sai, tonfa or Chinese star.
- f. "Seriously disruptive of the educational process" means a marked interruption or severe impediment of the day-to-day operation of the school. In making such a determination, the administrator may consider, but shall not be limited to: whether the incident occurred within close proximity of a school; whether other students from the school were involved, or whether there was any gang involvement; whether the conduct involved violence, threats of violence, or the unlawful use of a weapon, as defined in C.G.S. §29-38, and whether any injuries occurred; and whether the conduct involved the use of alcohol or drugs.
- g. When considering whether conduct off school grounds is seriously disruptive of the educational process, the term "weapon" means any BB gun, any blackjack, any metal or brass knuckles, any police baton or nightstick, any dirk knife or switch knife, any knife having an automatic spring release devise by which a blade is released from the handle, having a blade of over one and one-half inches in length, any stiletto, any knife the edged portion of the blade of which is four inches and over in length, any martial arts weapon or electronic defense weapon as defined above or any other dangerous or deadly weapon or instrument, unless permitted by law under section 29-38 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Student Discipline may include but is not limited to the following consequences:

Detention

A student may be assigned a detention outside of school hours for 1-3 hours on one or more days for violation of the code of conduct. The detention will occur once a parent has been notified and only on days where a late bus is available for transportation (unless otherwise arranged with the parent).

Removal from Class

A student may be removed from class by a teacher or administrator if he/she deliberately causes a serious disruption of the educational process. When a student is removed, the teacher must send him/her to a designated area and notify the principal or his/her designee at once.

Expulsion

Prior to an expulsion hearing, parents will be given notice of at least five (5) business days before such hearing. It will contain information about the legal rights of the student and parent and information concerning legal services that are provided free of charge or at a reduced rate that are available locally and how to access such services shall be provided to the student and his/her parent or guardian. An attorney or other advocate may represent any student subject to expulsion proceedings. The parent/guardian of the student has the right to have the expulsion hearing postponed for up to one week to allow time to obtain representation, except that if an emergency exists, such hearings shall be held as soon as possible after the expulsion as possible.

The Board of Education may expel a student in grades 3 through 12 inclusive, from school privileges if, after a full hearing, the Board finds that the conduct of the student to be both (1) a

violation of a Board policy; and (2) either seriously disruptive of the educational process or endangering persons or property. Students who have been expelled for the first time may be eligible for an alternative educational program, as defined in accordance with State Board of Education standards.

Expulsion from school will result in the loss of all extracurricular and social privileges during the period of expulsion.

For any student under 16 years' old who is expelled and students between 16 and 18 expelled for the first time and who have never been suspended, the Board of Education may shorten the length of or waive the expulsion period if the student successfully completes a Board specified program and meets any other conditions required by the Board. Such a Board-specified program does not require the student or the parent/guardian of the student to pay for participation in the program. Such students must be offered an alternative educational opportunity that complies with the State Board of Education's "Standards for Alternative Educational Opportunities."

Students in grades kindergarten through grade 12 inclusive are subject to mandatory expulsion for the possession and/or use of weapons, including martial arts weapons, or other dangerous instruments in any school building, on school grounds, in any school vehicle, or at any school sponsored activity for a calendar year. A student in grades kindergarten through grade 12 inclusive, who offers illegal drugs for sale or distribution on or off school grounds is also cause for expulsion for a calendar year. The Board may modify the expulsion period on a case-by-case basis.

Whenever a student is expelled, notice of the expulsion and the conduct for which the student was expelled will be included on the student's cumulative education record. The record will be expunged if the student graduates from high school and the expulsion was not for weapon possession and/or for the sale or distribution of illegal drugs.

If students expulsion is shortened or the expulsion period waived based upon the fact that the student was expelled for the first time, has never been suspended and successfully completed a Board specified program and/or met other conditions required by the Board, the notice of expulsion will be expunged from the cumulative educational record if the student graduates from high school or, if the Board so chooses, at the time the student completes the Board specified program and meets other Board required conditions.

Expelled students, under age 16, will be offered an individualized learning plan as part of an alternative education. Students between ages 16 and 18 who are expelled, even for conduct that endangers others, will be offered an alternative educational opportunity if it is the students first expulsion (PA 16-147). Once a student is admitted to an alternative educational placement, an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) will be developed to govern the programming for the student during the period of expulsion.

A district student who has committed an expellable offense who seeks to return to a District school after having been in a juvenile detention center, the Connecticut Juvenile Training School or any other residential placement for one year or more, in lieu expulsion from the District, shall be permitted to return to the appropriate school setting within the District. Further, the District will not expel the student from any additional time for the offense(s).

Permissive Expulsion

A principal may consider recommendation of expulsion of a student in grades three to twelve, inclusive, in a case where he/she has reason to believe the student has engaged in conduct on school property or at a school-sponsored activity that endangers persons or property, violates a publicized policy of the Board, or is seriously disruptive of the educational process.

Mandatory Expulsion

A principal must recommend expulsion proceedings in all cases against any student in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, whom the administration has reason to believe:

1. was in possession (on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity) of a deadly weapon, dangerous instrument, martial arts weapon, or firearm as defined in 18 U.S.C. § 921 as amended from time to time; or
2. off school grounds, possessed a firearm as defined in 18 U.S.C. § 921, in violation of Conn. Gen. Stat. § 29-35, or possessed and used a firearm as defined in 18 U.S.C. § 921, a deadly weapon, a dangerous instrument or a martial arts weapon in the commission of a crime under chapter 952 of the Connecticut General Statutes; or
3. was engaged on or off school grounds in offering for sale or distribution a controlled substance (as defined in Conn. Gen. Stat. § 21a-240(9)), whose manufacturing, distribution, sale, prescription, dispensing, transporting, or possessing with intent to sell or dispense, offering or administering is subject to criminal penalties under Conn. Gen. Stat. §§21a-277 and 21a-278.

Expulsion Hearing Procedures

Emergency Exception: Except in an emergency situation, the Board of Education shall, prior to expelling any student, conduct a hearing to be governed by the procedures outlined herein and consistent with the requirements of Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-233d and the applicable provisions of the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 4-176e to 4-180a, and § 4-181a. Whenever an emergency exists, the hearing provided for herein shall be held as soon as possible after the expulsion.

A. Hearing Panel:

1. Expulsion hearings conducted by the Board will be heard by any three or more Board members. A decision to expel a student must be supported by a majority of the Board members present, provided that no less than three (3) affirmative votes to expel are cast.
2. Alternatively, the Board may appoint an impartial hearing board composed of one (1) or more persons to hear and decide the expulsion matter, provided that no member of the Board may serve on such panel.

B. Hearing Notice:

1. Written notice of the expulsion hearing must be given to the student, and, if the student is a minor, to his/her parent(s) or guardian(s) at least five business days before such hearing.
2. A copy of this Board policy on student discipline shall also be given to the student, and if the student is a minor, to his/her parent(s) or guardian(s), at the time the notice is sent that an expulsion hearing will be convened.

3. The written notice of the expulsion hearing shall inform the student of the following:
 - a. The date, time, place and nature of the hearing.
 - b. The legal authority and jurisdiction under which the hearing is to be held, including a reference to the particular sections of the legal statutes involved.
 - c. A short, plain description of the conduct alleged by the administration.
 - d. A statement concerning the parent's or guardian's and the pupil's legal rights and concerning legal services provided free of charge or at a reeducated rate that are available locally or how to access such services.
 - e. The student may present as evidence relevant testimony and documents concerning the conduct alleged and the appropriate length and conditions of expulsion; and that the expulsion hearing may be the student's sole opportunity to present such evidence.
 - f. The student may cross-examine witnesses called by the Administration.
 - g. The student may be represented by any third party of his/her choice, including an advocate or an attorney, at his/her expense or at the expense of his/her parents. A statement that the parent or guardian of the pupil or a student of majority shall have the right to have the expulsion hearing postponed up to one week to allow time to obtain representation, except that if an emergency exists, such hearing shall be held as soon after the expulsion as possible.
 - h. A student is entitled to the services of a translator or interpreter, to be provided by the Board of Education, whenever the student or his/her parent(s) or guardian(s) requires the services of an interpreter because he/she/they do(es) not speak the English language or is(are) disabled.
 - i. The conditions under which the Board is not legally required to give the student an alternative educational opportunity (if applicable).

C. Hearing Procedures:

1. The hearing will be conducted by the Presiding Officer, who will call the meeting to order, introduce the parties, Board members and counsel, briefly explain the hearing procedures, and swear in any witnesses called by the Administration or the student.
2. The hearing will be conducted in executive session. A verbatim record of the hearing will be made, either by tape recording and/or by a stenographer. A record of the hearing will be maintained, including the verbatim record, all written notices and documents relating to the case and all evidence received or considered at hearing.
3. Formal rules of evidence will not be followed. The Board has the right to accept hearsay and other evidence if it deems that evidence relevant or material to its determination. The Presiding Officer will rule on testimony or evidence as to it being immaterial or irrelevant.
4. The hearing will be conducted in two (2) parts. In the first part of the hearing, the Board will receive and consider evidence regarding the conduct alleged by the Administration.
5. In the first part of the hearing, the charges will be introduced into the record by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

6. Each witness for the Administration will be called and sworn. After a witness has finished testifying, he/she will be subject to cross-examination by the opposite party or his/her legal counsel, by the Presiding Officer and by Board members.
7. After the Administration has presented its case, the student will be asked if he/she has any witnesses or evidence to present concerning the charges. If so, the witnesses will be sworn, will testify, and will be subject to cross examination and to questioning by the Presiding Officer and/or by the Board. The student may also choose to make a statement at this time. If the student chooses to make a statement, he or she will be sworn and subject to cross examination and questioning by the Presiding Officer and/or by the Board. Concluding statements will be made by the Administration and then by the student and/or his or her representative.
8. In cases where the student has denied the allegation, the Board must determine whether the student committed the offense(s) as charged by the Superintendent.
9. If the Board determines that the student has committed the conduct as alleged, then the Board shall proceed with the second portion of the hearing, during which the Board will receive and consider relevant evidence regarding the length and conditions of expulsion.
10. When considering the length and conditions of expulsion, the Board may review the student's attendance, academic and past disciplinary records. The Board may ask the Superintendent for a recommendation as to the discipline to be imposed.
11. Evidence of past disciplinary problems which have led to removal from a classroom, suspension or expulsion of a student being considered for expulsion may be considered only during the second portion of the hearing, during which the Board is considering length of expulsion and nature of alternative educational opportunity to be offered.
12. Where administrators presented the case in support of the charges against the student, such administrative staff shall not be present during the deliberations of the Board either on questions of evidence or on the final discipline to be imposed. The Superintendent may, after reviewing the incident with administrators, and reviewing the student's records, make a recommendation to the Board as to the appropriate discipline to be applied.
13. The Board shall make findings as to the truth of the charges, if the student has denied them; and, in all cases, the disciplinary action, if any, to be imposed. While the hearing itself is conducted in executive session, the vote regarding expulsion must be made in open session and in a manner that preserves the confidentiality of the student's name and other personally identifiable information.
14. Except for a student who has been expelled based on possession of a firearm or deadly weapon as described in subsection IV.B (1) and (2) above, the Board may, in its discretion, shorten or waive the expulsion period for a student who has not previously been suspended or expelled, if the student completes a Board-specified program and meets any other conditions required by the Board. The Board-specified program shall not require the student and/or the student's parents to pay for participation in the program.
15. The Board shall report its final decision in writing to the student, or if such student is a minor, also to the parent(s) or guardian(s), stating the reasons on which the decision is based, and the disciplinary action to be imposed. Said decision shall be based solely on evidence presented at the hearing.

- D. **Expulsion Notice:** The parents or guardian of any minor student who has been expelled shall be given notice of such disciplinary action within twenty-four (24) hours of the time of the institution of the period of the expulsion.
- E. **Presence on School Grounds and Participation in School-sponsored Activities During Expulsion:** During the period of expulsion, the student shall not be permitted to be on school property and shall not be permitted to attend or participate in any school-sponsored activities, except for the student's participation in any alternative educational program provided by the District in accordance with this policy, unless the Superintendent specifically authorizes the student to enter school property for a specified purpose or to participate in a particular school-sponsored activity.
- F. **Stipulated Agreements:** In lieu of the procedures used in this section, the Administration and the parents (or legal guardians) of a student facing expulsion may choose to enter into a Joint Stipulation of the Facts and a Joint Recommendation to the Board concerning the length and conditions of expulsion. Such Joint Stipulation and Recommendation shall include language indicating that the parents (or legal guardians) understand their right to have an expulsion hearing held pursuant to these procedures, and language indicating that the Board, in its discretion, has the right to accept or reject the Joint Stipulation of Facts and Recommendation. If the Board rejects either the Joint Stipulation of Facts or the Recommendation, an expulsion hearing shall be held pursuant to the procedures outlined herein. If the Student is eighteen years of age or older, the student shall have the authority to enter into a Joint Stipulation and Recommendation on his or her own behalf.

If the parties agree on the facts, but not on the disciplinary recommendation, the Administration and the parents (or legal guardians) of a student facing expulsion may also choose to enter into a Joint Stipulation of the Facts and submit only the Stipulation of the Facts to the Board in lieu of holding the first part of the hearing, as described above. Such Joint Stipulation shall include language indicating that the parents understand their right to have a hearing to determine whether the student engaged in the alleged misconduct and that the Board, in its discretion, has the right to accept or reject the Joint Stipulation of Facts. If the Board rejects the Joint Stipulation of Facts, a full expulsion hearing shall be held pursuant to the procedures outlined herein.

Alternative Educational Programs for Expelled Students

- A. *Students under sixteen (16) years of age:* Whenever the Board of Education expels a student under sixteen (16) years of age, it shall offer any such student an alternative educational program which shall be equivalent to alternative education, as defined by section 10-74j of the Connecticut General Statutes, with an individualized learning plan.
- B. *Students sixteen (16) to eighteen (18) years of age:* The Board of Education shall provide an alternative education to a sixteen (16) to eighteen (18) year old student expelled for the first time if he/she requests it and if he/she agrees to the conditions set by the Board of Education, except as follows. Such alternative educational opportunity may include, but it not limited to, the placement of a student who is at least seventeen years of age in an adult education program. A student participating in an adult education program during a period of expulsion shall not be required to withdraw from school under C.G.S. 10-184. The Board

of Education is not required to offer an alternative program to any student between the ages of sixteen (16) and eighteen (18) who is expelled for the second time.

- C. *Students eighteen (18) years of age or older*: The Board of Education is not required to offer an alternative educational program to expelled students eighteen (18) years of age or older.
- D. *Students identified as eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA")*: Notwithstanding Sections X.A. through C. above, if the Board of Education expels a student who has been identified as eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA"), it shall offer an alternative educational program to such student in accordance with the requirements of IDEA, as it may be amended from time to time.
- E. The Board may offer an alternative educational opportunity to a student for whom it is not legally required to provide an alternative education.

Notice of Student Expulsion on Cumulative Record

Notice of expulsion and the conduct for which the student was expelled shall be included on the student's cumulative educational record. Such notice, except for notice of an expulsion of a student in grades nine through twelve, inclusive, based upon possession of a firearm or deadly weapon, shall be expunged from the cumulative educational record by the Board if the student graduates from high school.

In cases where the student's period of expulsion is shortened or waived in accordance with Section D.(14), above, the Board may choose to expunge the expulsion notice from the cumulative record at the time the student completes the Board-specified program and meets any other conditions required by the Board.

Change of Residence During Expulsion Proceedings

A. Student moving into the school District:

1. If a student enrolls in school in another school district, such student shall not be excluded from school in the other district pending completion of the expulsion hearing pursuant to *Connecticut Education Law, Sec. 10-233d (Expulsion of Pupils)* unless an emergency exists, provided nothing in *Sec. 10-233d* shall limit the authority of the local or regional board of education for such district to suspend the student or to conduct its own expulsion hearing in accordance with *Sec. 10-233d*.
2. Where a student enrolls in the District during the period of expulsion from another public school district, the Board may adopt the decision of the student expulsion hearing conducted by such other school district. The student shall be excluded from school pending such hearing. The excluded student shall be offered an alternative educational opportunity in accordance with statutory requirements. The Board shall make its determination based upon a hearing held by the Board, which hearing shall be limited to a determination of whether the conduct which was the basis of the previous public school district's expulsion would also warrant expulsion by the Board.

B. Student moving out of the school district:

Where a student withdraws from school after having been notified that an expulsion hearing is pending, but before a decision has been rendered by the Board, the notice of the pending expulsion hearing shall be included on the student's cumulative record and the Board shall complete the expulsion hearing and render a decision. If the Board

subsequently renders a decision to expel the student, a notice of the expulsion shall be included on the student's cumulative record.

Procedures Governing Suspension and Expulsion of Students Identified as Eligible for Services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA")

A. Suspension of IDEA Students:

Notwithstanding the foregoing, if the Administration suspends a student identified as eligible for services under the IDEA (an "IDEA student") who has violated any rule or code of conduct of the school District that applies to all students, the following procedures shall apply:

1. The administration shall make reasonable attempts to immediately notify the parents of the student of the decision to suspend on the date on which the decision to suspend was made, and a copy of the special education procedural safeguards must either be hand-delivered or sent by mail to the parents on the date that the decision to suspend was made.
2. During the period of suspension, the District is not required to provide any educational services to the IDEA student beyond that which is provided to all students suspended by the school District.

B. Expulsion and Suspensions that Constitute Changes in Placement for IDEA students:

Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary, if the administration recommends for expulsion an IDEA student who has violated any rule or code of conduct of the school District that applies to all students, the procedures described in this section shall apply. The procedures described in this section shall also apply for students whom the administration has suspended in a manner that is considered under the IDEA, as it may be amended from time to time, to be a change in placement:

1. The parents of the student must be notified of the decision to recommend for expulsion (or to suspend if a change in placement) on the date on which the decision to suspend was made, and a copy of the special education procedural safeguards must either be hand-delivered or sent by mail to the parents on the date that the decision to recommend for expulsion (or to suspend if a change in placement) was made.
2. The school District shall immediately convene the student's planning and placement team ("PPT"), but in no case later than ten (10) school days after the recommendation for expulsion or the suspension that constitutes a change in placement was made. The student's PPT shall consider the relationship between the student's disability and the behavior that led to the recommendation for expulsion or the suspension which constitutes a change in placement, in order to determine whether the student's behavior was a manifestation of his/her disability.
3. If the student's PPT finds that the behavior was a manifestation of the student's disability, the Administration shall not proceed with the recommendation for expulsion or the suspension that constitutes a change in placement.
4. If the student's PPT finds that the behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability, the Administration may proceed with the recommended expulsion or suspension that constitutes a change in placement.
5. During any period of expulsion, or suspension of greater than ten (10) days per school year, the Administration shall provide the student with an alternative education program in accordance with the provisions of the IDEA.

6. The special education records and disciplinary records of the student must be transmitted to the individual(s) who will make the final determination regarding a recommendation for expulsion or a suspension that results in a change in placement.

C. Transfer of IDEA students for Certain Offenses:

School personnel may transfer an IDEA student to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) school days if the student:

1. Was in possession of a dangerous weapon, as defined in 18 U.S.C. 930(g)(2), as amended from time to time, on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity, or
2. Knowingly possessed or used illegal drugs or sold or solicited the sale of a controlled substance while at school or at a school-sponsored activity; or
3. Has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function.

The following definitions shall be used for this subsection

1. **Dangerous weapon** means a weapon, device, instrument, material, or substance, animate or inanimate, that is used for, or is readily capable of, causing death or serious bodily injury, except that such term does not include a pocket knife with a blade of less than 2.5 inches in length.
2. **Controlled substance** means a drug or other substance identified under schedules I, II, III, IV, or V in section 202(c) of the Controlled Substances Act, 21 U.S.C. 812(c).
3. **Illegal drug** means a controlled substance but does not include a substance that is legally possessed or used under any other authority under the Controlled Substances Act or under any other provision of federal law.
4. **Serious bodily injury** means a bodily injury which involves: (A) a substantial risk of death; (B) extreme physical pain; (C) protracted and obvious disfigurement; or (D) protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty.

Suspension

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. School administrators will determine, using state guidelines, whether the suspension will be in-school or out-of-school.

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 shall be held during the suspension.

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

The decision of the principal or designee with regard to disciplinary actions up to and including suspensions shall be final.

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 his/her parents.

Please visit <https://www.suffield.org/district/board-of-education/policies> for more information about code of conduct and student discipline.

Public Displays of Affection (PDA)

Students may not engage in PDA inappropriate for a public building. Students engaged in such behavior must stop when told to do so by a staff member, students may be subject to disciplinary action, per administration.

DISCIPLINARY GUIDELINES FOR SMS

Suffield Middle School developed and utilizes a series of disciplinary guidelines that correspond with specific offenses. A non-exhaustive list of the most common infractions, along with their most likely consequences can be found on the SMS Disciplinary Guidelines chart.

DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS AND POSTING ON WEBSITE

Printed materials may be distributed to parents by students as a means of communications. All requests from groups or individuals to have students distribute materials to the community, with the exception of school-connected organizations; will be referred to the Office of the Superintendent to determine whether the request complies with school policy.

Administration or his/her designee may approve such distribution providing:

1. The material is related to the school, community, local recreational or civic activity.
2. The material does not relate to any religious belief or activity, or promote private gain.
3. The material does not promote any outside governmental political party, candidate or position.
4. Does not promote profit making organizations.
5. Does not advocate a position regarding a referendum question.

Materials that have a religious content may be made available to students during non-instructional time. The District has the right to impose neutral time, place and manner restrictions on the dissemination of religious materials to ensure that students are aware that the materials are not endorsed or sponsored by the District.

Publications prepared by or for the school may be posted or distributed, with prior approval by administration, sponsor or teacher. Such items include school posters, brochures, school newspapers and yearbook.

Distribution of Literature

Students have a right to distribute literature on school grounds and in school buildings provided such distribution does not interfere with or disrupt the educational process. No literature may be

distributed unless a copy is submitted in advance to the Superintendent of Schools and/or the Building Administration.

Posters

Signs and posters that students wish to display must be approved by administration. Posters displayed without authorization will be removed. Any student who posts such material without authorization shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Website

Any information posted on the website will follow the same guidelines as stated in “Distribution of Materials”. In addition, we limit our posts to information relevant to the school and our students that is either sponsored by Suffield Public Schools, Parks and Recreation or another non-profit organization. Even with these parameters, the decision to post information on the website is up to the discretion of administration. Student maintaining personal web pages may be subject to disciplinary action for the content of such sites under certain conditions.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

In pursuit of the District’s mission, we believe that:

- All students can learn and inquiry, self-direction and creativity are valued in the learning process
- Everyone in our school community will be learners
- All learners will be held accountable for their performance
- All learners have individual interests, needs and talents
- All learners will be physically and emotionally safe in the learning environment
- Home, school and community will act as partners in the learning process

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING INFORMATION

In the event school is closed because of bad weather or any other emergency, phone, text, and email communications will be made using Suffield’s automated communication system. Emergency closings will also be posted on the District’s website, www.suffield.org.

ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (ENGLISH LEARNERS)

Any students with limited English proficiency will be identified, assessed and provided appropriate services.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL) / 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

EXEMPTION FROM INSTRUCTION

A student will be exempted from instruction on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), Bilingual Education, or Family Life and Sex Education upon receipt of a written request for such exemption from his/her parent or guardian. In addition, a student will be excused from participating in, or observing animal dissections as part of classroom instruction upon a written request from the student's parent or guardian. The student must complete an alternate assignment determined by the school. Please note these are the only areas of instruction in which a student may be exempt.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

We recognize that a middle school has the dual role of supporting individual student growth while at the same time preparing students for the high school experience. This can create competing forces when considering student eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities. On one hand, the staff strives to support students who struggle academically and recognizes the positive role that may be played by participating in extracurricular activities. On the other hand, the high school is often obligated to consider CIAC regulations and academic accomplishments before allowing students to participate in extracurricular activities and athletics.

Athletics

Athletics are considered an integral part of the school's educational program. Whether participation is on the intramural, interscholastic, or class level, students have an opportunity to acquire qualities of fitness, self-discipline, and cooperation.

Student athletes may not participate in any intramural or interscholastic activity unless the student athlete and his/her parent/guardian completes the concussion education plan and sign the informed consent form.

The concussion education plan may consist of written materials, online training or videos, or in person training. The consent form includes a summary of the school/district's concussion education plan and applicable school board concussion policies.

During the 2024-25 school year, parents/guardians and students must also comply with heat illness awareness education requirements, which includes prohibiting a student from participating in intramural or interscholastic athletics unless the student and the parent/guardian reads or views the training material, or attends an in-person training. The parent or guardian must sign an informed consent form that acknowledges compliance with the requirement.

Student interscholastic activities, including e-sports, are governed by the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) regulations. Eligibility for participation is determined

by ability and scholarship and is governed by state law as well as the regulations of the CIAC. ([SMS Athletic Handbook](#)).

Any student athlete who wish to participate need to be present for at least half of the school day (3.5 hours). If they are not present, they will not be permitted to practice or play that afternoon or evening. Exceptions to this rule will be considered only if the player's parent explains the unusual circumstances to the principal or designee.

Clubs and Performing Groups

Student clubs, performing groups, athletic teams and other extracurricular activities may establish rules of conduct for participants that may be stricter than those of students in general.

Please note: Sponsors of student clubs and performing groups may establish standards of behavior, including consequences for misbehavior or an academic improvement plan that are stricter than those for students in general.

Dances and Social Events

School dances may be scheduled periodically during the school year. Only legally enrolled students of this school may attend dances unless other arrangements have been made and approved by the administration. Students are expected to dress appropriately for all dances.

Standards of dress, admission costs, and other pertinent instructions for a particular dance will be announced prior to the dance. During school events and activities, students may not leave the building or venue until it is scheduled to end unless written permission is received from parents indicating that the parents will pick up the student prior to the end of the event/activity. Students without such written permission will not be allowed to leave and reenter the event/activity.

FACILITIES

Certain areas of the school will be accessible to students before and after school for specific purposes. Students are expected to remain in the area in which their activity is scheduled to take place. **After dismissal and unless involved in a teacher/staff supervised activity, students are expected to leave the campus immediately.**

All school facilities, including athletic fields, are scheduled with priority given to Suffield Public Schools above all other groups. All groups (both school-related and non-school-related) wishing to reserve part of the facility (e.g. auditorium, turf field, etc.) **MUST** complete a building use form and submit an electronic request to reserve the desired area from the community use calendar which is found on the district website. There will be a fee charged for use of some areas of the facility (e.g. Beneski field.)

FEES

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided without charge to students. A student is expected, however, to provide his or her own supplies of pencils, erasers, and notebooks. The student may be required to pay certain other fees or deposits, including:

1. Club dues.

2. Security deposits.
3. The materials for a class project that the student will keep.
4. Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.
5. Voluntary purchases of pictures, publications, yearbooks, etc.
6. Student accident insurance.
7. Insurance on school provided technology, school-owned instruments, instrument rental and uniform maintenance.
8. Parking fees and student identification cards.
9. Fees for damaged library books and school-owned equipment (including Chromebooks and other technological devices).
10. Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations and admission fees to extra-curricular activities.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips may be scheduled for educational, cultural, or extracurricular purposes. We open these various opportunities to students. *Any student whose behavior is considered detrimental to the well-being of other students may be barred from participation by the principal.* While on a trip, all students are considered to be “in” school. This means that conduct and dress standards will be appropriate for the field trip activity. The Board of Education strongly encourages all transportation of student to be on buses or other transportation vehicles which conform to the requirements of law and regulations of the State Department of Education.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Students will not be denied opportunity to participate in any class or school sponsored activity because of inability to pay for material fees, transportation costs, admission prices, or any other related expenses. Any student who needs financial assistance for school activities should contact a guidance counselor, advisor or administrator to request confidential help.

FIRE DRILLS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Fire drills are held at regular intervals as required by state law. Students must follow the exit directions posted in each classroom. A crisis response drill will be substituted for one of the required monthly school fire drills every three months. Such crisis response drill will be planned and conducted with the local law enforcement agency. Such crisis response drills will incorporate the basic protocols of lockdown, evacuation, and shelter-in-place responses.

Students are expected to follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly and in an orderly manner.

Local law enforcement and other local public safety officials will evaluate and provide feedback on fire drills and crisis response drills.

FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS

The Suffield Public Schools recognize that students have a right to bring into our schools, in a judicious manner governed by regulations, items for posting that are not considered obscene, libelous, disruptive, vulgar, and are deemed by the Administration to be consistent with community standards. Further, no expressed idea will be suppressed because it is not shared by the majority. However, expressions which involve false statements, disruptive or potentially dangerous content, the use of obscenities, and advocacy of violation of law or school regulations are unacceptable.

FOOD ALLERGIES

The school is committed to providing a safe environment for students with food allergies and to support parents regarding food allergy management. A plan based upon guidelines promulgated by the State Department of Education will be implemented for each student for the management of students with life-threatening food allergies and glycogen storage disease.

Substitutions to the regular meal provided by the school will be made for students who are unable to eat school meals because of their disabilities, when that need is certified in writing by a physician. Meal services will be provided in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of the disabled student. An Individualized Health Care Plan (IHCP) and an Emergency Care Plan (ECP) shall be developed and implemented for students identified with food allergies. Such students may also be eligible for accommodations and services under Section 504 and special education law.

The District's specific plan for managing students with life-threatening food allergies will be posted on the District website (and/or on the school's website.) A student with glycogen storage disease is permitted to have a parent/guardian or a person they so designate to provide food or dietary supplements on school grounds during the school day. A student with an allergic condition may retain possession of an EpiPen or similar device while receiving school transportation services.

FUND-RAISING

Student clubs or classes, outside organizations, and/or parent groups occasionally may be permitted to conduct fund-raising drives for approved school purposes.

Any food items sold as part of any fund-raising activity must meet the nutritional standards published by the Connecticut Department of Education. Beverage or foods not allowed for sale during regular school hours may be sold provided (1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend, (2) the sale is at the location of such event, and (3) the food or beverage are not sold from a vending machine or school store.

All online fundraising activities are subject to administrative approval prior to the posting of any such fundraising solicitation (Crowd funding).

GRADING SYSTEM

Each teacher will provide their grading system consistent with board of education policy and school expectations at or before Open House.

Report Cards

Reports of student grades and absences can be regularly accessed on the PowerSchool parent portal. It is recommended that parents and students check PowerSchool regularly and reach out to a teacher with any questions or concerns. Report cards are issued at the end of each quarter. Letter grades are used to designate a pupil's progress. The grade given at the end of the semester is a cumulative grade for that semester

Grades given to students are determined by the teacher of the course, and the determination of the student's grade by the teacher, in the absence of clerical or mechanical mistakes shall be final.

Honor Roll

A student who earns A's and B's in all classes during a marking period will receive honor roll. A student who earns A's in all classes during a marking period will receive high honor roll.

GREEN CLEANING PROGRAMS

A green cleaning program to clean and maintain the school will be implemented by July 1, 2011. The program provides for the procurement and proper use of environmentally preferable cleaning products in the school. The cleaning products used meet standards approved by the Department of Administrative Services and minimize potential harmful effects on human health and the environment. Parents/Guardians may request a written copy of the District's policy pertaining to the green cleaning program and a written statement which includes the names and types of environmentally preferable cleaning products used in the school and where in the building they are applied; the schedule for applying the products; and the names of the school administrator or designee whom the parent/guardian or student may contact for more information.

"No parent, guardian, teacher, or staff member may bring into the school facility any consumer product which is intended to clean, deodorize, sanitize or disinfect" (a required statement by law).

HARASSMENT STATEMENT

Every child has the right to feel safe, valued and comfortable in school. No one else's behavior should ever make children feel afraid or embarrassed because of their race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any disability they may have. The district prohibits harassment of any kind. Students are expected to treat other students and district employees with courtesy and respect; to avoid any behaviors known to be offensive; and to stop those behaviors when asked or told to stop.

Parents are urged to reinforce with their child(ren) that if he/she is harassed or sees harassment happening to someone else that he/she should report the behavior to a teacher or administration. To maintain a productive and positive learning environment, the District and the Board of Education will make every attempt to halt any harassment of which they become aware by calling attention to this policy or by direct disciplinary action, if necessary.

A student who believes he/she has been harassed is encouraged to report the incident to administration or school counselor. The allegations will be investigated and addressed and appropriate disciplinary action taken, where necessary. Retaliation is prohibited against anyone who cooperates with a harassment investigation.

HEALTH SERVICES

The Nurse's Office is designed to provide care to students who become ill or are injured while in school.

A cumulative health file is maintained for each student. This file includes notations of past illnesses, results of physical examinations, and other pertinent health information. Vision and hearing tests are administered to students in grades K, 1, 3, 4 and 5. Postural screening will be done in grades 5 and 7 for female students and grade 8 or 9 for male students. The results are provided to the parents. An annual written notification of when these screenings, at no cost to parents, will be provided. Parents wishing to have these screenings conducted by their private physician are required to report the screening results to the school nurse.

Parents are notified of any deviation from the normal pattern of health and suggestions are given for follow-up. It is likewise important that parents notify the school nurse in case of a student's illness. If a student is to be excused or limited for an extended period from participation in school activities, he/she is required to bring a statement signed by a physician. The school nurse is available to parents and students for conferences regarding health issues.

Administration of Medicine

Parents 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. All medication must be in original container with proper labels.

In cases in which a student is able to self-administer medication, the parents or guardians must submit a signed statement that the medication must be taken during the school day and the student is capable of administering the medication. The statement must be accompanied by a physician's, dentist's or advanced practice registered nurse's statement indicating the necessity and naming the medication, the strength, and the prescribed dosage. It must specify the schedule on which it is to be taken and the details of administration. Such statements must be renewed at the beginning of each school year.

A student with asthma or an allergic condition may carry an inhaler or an EpiPen or similar device in school at all times if he/she is under the care of a physician, physician assistant or advanced practical nurse and such practitioner certifies in writing that the child needs to keep an asthmatic inhaler or EpiPen at all times to ensure prompt treatment of the child's asthma or allergic condition and to protect the child against serious harm or death. A written authorization of the parent/guardian is required.

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 student with diabetes may test his/her own blood glucose levels if the student has written permission from his/her parent/guardian and a written order from a Connecticut licensed physician or advanced practice nurse stating the need and the capacity of the student to conduct self-testing. Such self-testing shall be done in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Commissioner of Education.

A school nurse or administration 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.

The District 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.

Communicable/Infectious Diseases

Students with any medical condition which within the school setting may expose others to disease or contagious and infectious conditions may be excluded from school and referred for medical diagnosis and treatment. Additional information concerning this may be obtained from the school nurse.

Before a child may return to school after an absence due to such condition, parents and students may be required to submit medical evidence that their child has recovered sufficiently to prevent exposing others.

Disabilities

The District will not discriminate on the basis of disability as required under ADA, IDEA and Section 504 and C.G.S. 10-76a and any similar law or provision.

Emergency Medical Treatment

Parents are asked each year to complete an emergency information form for use by the school in the event of a medical emergency.

Head Lice (Pediculosis)

The District is committed to maximizing students' academic performance and physical well-being in a healthy and safe environment. The District recognizes that head lice infestations do not pose a health hazard, are not a sign of uncleanliness, and are not responsible for the spread of any disease. Misinformation about head lice causes anxiety for parents/guardians and school staff. The goals of providing a healthy and safe environment of students with head lice are to (1) maximize academic performance; and (2) minimize absences due to unnecessary exclusion from school of students with head lice. The school nurse can be contacted for treatment guidelines.

Health Records

School nurses maintain health records using the Connecticut "Health Assessment and Record Form." These records are accessible to certified staff working with the child and to school health aides if permission is granted by the nurse or building administrator. Parents may request to inspect the health records of their child. Copies may be provided if requested. Original copies of the record are sent where a student transfers to another school in the state. If moving out-of-state, a copy will be forwarded. Health records are maintained for at least six years after the student graduates. The District will comply with the requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) to maintain the privacy of protected health information.

Homebound

Home instruction is available to students who are unable to attend school for medical and/or mental health reasons for a period of ten (10) school days or longer as diagnosed by a physician, psychiatrist or the Planning and Placement Team. Home instruction may also be provided for those students who have been excluded from regular school attendance for disciplinary reasons.

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 local liaison for homeless children is Diana Kelley. The District 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 night time 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.

Immunizations

Board of Education policies are available on the district’s website at www.suffield.org. All students must be immunized against certain diseases and must present a certificate from a physical or local health agency. If the student should not be immunized due to medical or religious reasons (per BOE policy 5141), a statement from a physician or the parent as appropriate must be provided. The required immunizations are: Diphtheria, Tetanus, Polio, Pertussis, Measles, Mumps, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Varicella (Chickenpox), Meningococcal, Pneumococcal, Rubella, Influenza and Haemophilus Influenza Type B.* Parents or guardians of any children unable to have the mandated immunizations prior to initial school entry and the boosters as required in the later grades may have the immunizations, on the recommendation of the Board of Education, be paid by the town.

In addition to the required immunizations for initial entry into school for kindergarten, regular and special education preschool programs, additional immunizations are required for entry into seventh grade and for entry into eighth grade and ninth or tenth grade. The school must enroll any homeless student even if the student is unable to produce the required medical and immunization records.

For further information regarding immunizations contact the school nurse or Board of Education policies available on the district’s website at www.suffield.org.

Physical Examinations

All students must present evidence of a physical examination upon enrollment to the district. (C.G.S. 10-204a) Health assessment shall also be required in grade 6 (or 7) and in grade 9 (or 10). All students in grades K and grades 1, 3, 4, 5 will undergo vision screening by the school nurse or school health aide. Hearing screening will be conducted for all students in grades K, 1, 3, 4, and 5. Postural screening will be conducted for all female students in grades 5 and 7 and for male students in grade 8 or 9. If a homeless student, as defined by federal statute, lacks immunization/medical records, the school will enroll the child and refer the parent/guardian to the district’s homeless liaison.

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.

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.

Homework assignments:

- Strengthen basic skills
- Apply classroom learning
- Stimulate the student's interest through further exploration
- Reinforce independent study skills
- Develop qualities of initiative, responsibility and self-direction
- Stimulate worthwhile use of leisure time

Time for homework is limited to the following:

Grade 6	30-60 minutes (per day for a minimum of 4 days per week)
Grade 7	45-120 minutes (per day)
Grade 8	45-120 minutes (per day)

INSURANCE

School insurance is made available to families through a specific program. Brochures are available in the office at the beginning of each academic year, if you are interested. The program is not mandatory, but is an opportunity to provide additional protection for your children while in school. Any such arrangement is contractual between the parent and insurance carriers and the Suffield Public Schools assume no liability from disputes arising from such contract.

LAVATORIES

Students are encouraged to use the lavatories before and after school, between class periods, and at the beginning and end of the lunch period. Everyone should work to see that lavatories are kept clean and undamaged. Any student who feels ill must report to the nurse's office.

LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER

Students are invited to use the books, magazines, newspapers, technologies and other materials located in the Media Center. Students are responsible for any material they sign out. Materials must be returned to the Library Media Specialist at the circulation desk. Students must pay for any materials they lose or damage. A loss of privileges may incur until a student's obligation is met.

The students must follow the rules to visit the LMC during Flex time and always follow the same code of conduct when working in the Media Center.

LOST AND FOUND

Any articles which are found in the school or on school grounds should be turned in to the lost in found area. Items that are valuable may be in the front office. Unclaimed articles will be donated prior to school vacations and at the end of the year. Loss or suspected theft of personal or school property should be reported to the main office. Whenever practical, items brought to school should have a name placed on them to assure return to the rightful owner. Students are reminded to not bring items to school that are not required as part of a student's educational or school sponsored extra-curricular program.

MAKE-UP WORK

A student will be permitted to make-up tests and to turn in projects due in any class missed because of absence. The responsibility for obtaining missed assignments and class work rests with the student. Students should contact their teachers to make arrangements for support with missing work if needed.

Work assignments can be obtained by:

- Consulting with the classroom teacher.
- Checking class page or through PowerSchool.

MANDATED REPORTERS/MANDATED REPORTING

The District complies with all laws and regulations regarding the reporting of actual or suspected child abuse and neglect. For additional information, refer to Page 13 of this Handbook under the heading "Child Abuse and Neglect" and to Board Policy and Regulation 5141.4.

MIGRANT STUDENTS

The District 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.

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS (NAEP)

Federal legislation requires schools selected to participate in this national testing program to notify parents of children who will be taking the test of their right to exclude their child. Parents also have the right to inspect all NAEP data, questions and assessment instruments.

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 CONFERENCES

Parents are encouraged to become partners in their child's educational successes. Conferences will be after school hours and during early release time in both the fall and spring. However, conferences with teachers may be held at any time during the school year. Parents and students, as well as teachers, counselors or administrators may initiate a conference. If parent wants to meet with teachers at a different time then the pre-selected school parent teacher conference dates, please contact your child's guidance counselor to make an appointment for a conference

PARENT INVOLVEMENT/COMMUNICATIONS

Education succeeds best when there is a strong partnership between home and school based on communications and interactions. 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 District's academic programs, including special programs. Attendance at parent-teacher conferences, participation in school/district parent organizations, attendance at board of education meetings and being a school volunteer are strongly encouraged.

Parent-Teacher Associations and Organizations

The SMS PTAC is a vital link between the school, community and the parents it serves. Thus, parents are urged to join and take an active part in the SMS PTAC.

Parent Requested Observations

The Suffield Public Schools has as its highest priority, the safety and the welfare of its students and staff. The Suffield Board of Education welcomes purposeful observations of classes by parents and other interested members of the community. The Board recognizes its responsibility to insure that students may learn in an educational environment free of unnecessary disruption and distractions and to provide a school environment that is safe for staff and students alike. In the interest of protecting the welfare of students and staff, preserving the privacy rights of students, minimizing disruptions to the learning process and maintaining order and security on its premises, the following guidelines have been established for observations:

1. All observers will be governed by visitation expectations of Policy #1250.
2. Anyone wishing to observe a class must contact the administration of the school prior to the observation and provide the name of the observer and purpose of the observation. Outside evaluators are required to provide their phone number, address and professional

credentials. Whenever possible, a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours' notice should be provided.

3. In addressing requests for classroom observation, the administration will consider its responsibility to avoid disruption to the learning environment and learning benefit of students and minimizing distractions and disruptions to the learning process.
4. Requests to observe a class shall not be unreasonably withheld; however, administration may deny or place limitations on observations to ensure the integrity and benefit of the educational process for teachers and students. If an observation is denied, alternate avenues to achieve the purpose, if available, should be suggested and/or arranged.

PESTICIDE APPLICATION

Only certified pesticide applicators shall be used in schools 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. Parents/guardians and staff who want to receive advance notice of all pesticide use will be listed on a registry and such notice will be provided as required by law (Schools without an integrated pest-management plan must send prior notice by mail.). Parents/guardians who want to be notified prior to pesticide applications inside their child(ren)'s school assignment area may contact the Director of Facilities, Larry Plano.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Suffield Public Schools uses an Integrated Pest Management system. 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 District's primary social media account.

PHOTOGRAPHS

From time-to-time during the school year, school personnel and/or media take photographs. If a parent/guardian does not want their child to be photographed for school use, school website or for media purposes, they must indicate within our Infosnap system. Photos of individual and classroom groups are taken annually, which may be purchased by parents/guardians, but they are not obligated to do so.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Students are required to take part in physical education throughout the school year. This class encompasses both physical activity and a health curriculum component. Students may not be required by school employees to engage in physical activity as a form of discipline during the school day.

PROMOTION/RETENTION/PLACEMENT

Student promotion from one grade to the next is dependent on each student's academic performance, mastery and acquisition of basic learning objectives. Normally, students will progress annually from grade to grade. Students who master objectives at an exceptional rate may

be considered for acceleration to another grade or class. Students who fail to master basic learning objectives at a normal rate will be considered for retention or summer programming. Retention, summer programming and acceleration decisions are the responsibility of the teaching staff and principal, after prior notification and discussion with parents. The final decision rests with the Principal.

Summer Learning Academy

Middle School: The primary objective of the middle school Summer Learning Academy is to strengthen student skills and provide additional learning time to demonstrate proficiency in courses failed for the academic year. Additionally, the program may provide opportunity for students to further develop academic and personal areas of interest. This will be a fee-based opportunity. The district will work with families who may not have the financial means to cover the full costs associated with attending the middle Summer Learning Academy for remedial support in literacy and mathematics;

If a student is recommended by school administration for Summer Learning Academy remediation in English Language Arts (Reading or Writing) or Mathematics, the student is mandated to attend and complete all established requirements for the provided Summer Learning Academy course in order to earn a passing grade and advance to the next grade level within the course sequence;

Board Policy and Regulation 5123.2 defines the specific conditions under which a student may achieve promotion in summer school.

PROPERTY, LOCKERS, AND EQUIPMENT

It is the policy of the Board to hold students responsible for any loss of or damage to the property of the school under the jurisdiction of the Board when the loss or damage occurs through fault of the student.

Any student damaging or defacing school property will be financially liable for restoring the property regardless of the condition of the property at the time of the destructive act, in addition to any other discipline up to and including arrest or civil prosecution as deemed appropriate.

In addition, anyone who witnesses such an act and fails to report it to the proper authorities will be considered as having contributed to that action. Such charges for damaged property will be exactly those which the school must incur to repair the damage.

Each student is assigned a locker. These items are the property of the school, loaned to students for their convenience during the school year, should be kept in good order and not abused. Students are expected to keep their lockers closed and locked at all times. The school is not responsible for any valuables or other various items taken from a locker.

Searches of lockers may be conducted at any time there is reasonable cause to believe that they contain articles or materials prohibited by district policy. Parents will be notified if any prohibited items are found in the student's desk or locker.

Students should not attempt to repair school equipment but should notify the main office immediately if it isn't function properly. Any damage done will be the responsibility of the person to whom it was loaned for the current year. Students may not bring in locks from home and attach to assigned lockers. Students are warned not to bring large sums of money or valuables to school, liability for these items remains with the student.

PSYCHOTROPIC DRUG USE

School personnel are 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, the District 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.

RECORDING OF CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

The District prohibits the covert recording of classroom activities. The recording of teachers or students in class is inherently disruptive of the educational process. Students violating this rule will be subject to discipline and confiscation of the electronic device.

RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS

The school district acknowledges each individual's rights to follow or not to follow religious beliefs and practices, free from discriminatory or harassing behavior. The District strives to provide religious accommodations to students in an equitable and appropriate way in accordance with District policies and corresponding guidelines.

SAFETY/ACCIDENT PREVENTION

Student safety on campus and at school related events is a high priority of the District. Although the District has implemented safety procedures, the cooperation of students is essential to ensure school safety. A student should:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or other students at risk.
- Follow the school's code of discipline
- Remain alert to and promptly report safety hazards, such as intruders on campus.
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of staff who are over-seeing the welfare of students.

SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES

The 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 Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, Thanksgiving, President's Day, and Veteran's Day are encouraged. Suffield 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 Building Administration should be contacted.

An opportunity will be provided, at the beginning of each school day, for students to observe an appropriate period of silent meditation and to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Participation in these activities is voluntary. Nonparticipants are expected to maintain order and decorum appropriate to the school environment.

SCHOOL DISTRICT RECORDS

Interested persons may inspect “public district records” which are maintained at the office of the Superintendent of Schools, during normal hours of business. Copies of records, permitted by law to be disclosed, may also be attained. Please note that there may be a fee charged for the cost of the copying materials.

SCHOOL SECURITY AND SAFETY

Each school in the District will develop and implement a school security and safety plan based upon the standards issued by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection. Each school, as required by law, shall establish a school security and safety committee which will assist in the development and administration of the school’s security and safety plan. Each district school will conduct a security and vulnerability assessment every two years and develop a school security and safety plan based upon the standards developed by DESPP.

The District has developed, maintains, an emergency disaster preparedness and response plan for implementation as needed (“School Security and Safety Plan”). The plan is based upon the standards promulgated by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection. Development and implementation of the plan includes collaboration with local and state emergency responders, (law enforcement, fire department, emergency rescue squads and local public health administrators). The plan, representing an all hazards approach, utilizes the four recognized phases of crisis management: (1) mitigation/prevention, (2) preparedness, (3) response, (4) recovery.

Police in Schools

Schools are responsible for students during school hours which include protecting each student’s constitutional rights, assuring due process in questioning and arrest, and protecting students from any form of illegal coercion.

When police are investigating possible criminal acts which occurred, or may have occurred, on school property or while under the jurisdiction of the school district, they may question students at school when the following procedures are observed:

1. Students will be questioned as confidentially and inconspicuously as possible.
2. For students age 15 or younger, the student's parent/guardian, unless the right is waived by the parent/guardian, must be present if the conference is held in the school. If no parent/guardian is present, the principal or principal's designee must be present.
3. In cases involving students age 16 or older, an attempt will be made to notify the student's parents so that they may be present during the questioning. The school principal or his/her designee will be present.

When investigating a possible criminal violation occurring off school grounds or not part of a school program, police will be encouraged to question students in their homes; however, they may be permitted to question students in the schools when the procedures outlined in 1-3 above are observed.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

When a reasonable suspicion arises that use or possession of a student's property is illegal, illicit, disruptive, or a danger to the general welfare of students and staff, a search may be made of the student's person or personal property.

Desks and school lockers are the property of the schools. The right to inspect desks and lockers assigned to students may be exercised by school officials to safeguard students, their property and school property with reasonable care for the Fourth Amendment rights of students.

The exercise of the right to inspect also requires protection of each student's personal privacy and protection from coercion. An authorized school administrator may search a student's locker or desk under three (3) conditions:

1. There is reason to believe that the student's desk or locker contains the probable presence of contraband material.
2. The probable presence of contraband material poses a serious threat to the maintenance of discipline, order, safety and health in the school.
3. The student(s) have been informed in advance that school board policy allows desks and lockers to be inspected if the administration has reason to believe that materials injurious to the best interests of the students and the school are contained therein.

Use of drug-detection dogs and metal detectors or similar detective devices may be used only on the express authorization of the Board of Education.

District officials may seize any item which is evidence of a violation of law, Board policy, administrative regulation or school rule, or which the possession or use of is prohibited by such law, policy, regulation or rule.

Student Search

A student may be searched if there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school.

The scope of the search must be reasonably related to the objectives of the search and the nature of the infraction.

Students may be searched by law enforcement officials on school property or when the student is under the jurisdiction of the District upon the request of the law enforcement official. Such requests, ordinarily, shall be based on warrant. The school principal or designee will attempt to notify the student's parents in advance and will be present for all such searches.

Use of Dogs to Search School Property

The Suffield Board of Education supports the elimination of the possession or use of illegal substances or devices and strives to maintain a safe learning environment for all students, staff, and visitors by promoting school buildings and grounds that are free from illegal substances and contraband.

The Suffield Public Schools may request services of the Suffield Police Department K-9 Unit. The primary purpose of requesting such services is to detect the presence of illegal substances when necessary to protect the health and safety of students, employees, or property, and to detect the presence of illegal substances or contraband, including alcohol and/or drugs.

Requests for the presence of the K-9 Unit must be coordinated by the Suffield Public Schools Superintendent or his/her designee, the specific school building Administrator, the SRO, and the K-9 Unit Supervisor. The Superintendent or his/her designee will coordinate with the Police Department to ensure that appropriate Police Department staff are notified of the time and place of K-9 Unit activity at any schools.

All school buildings and grounds, including lockers, desks, storage areas, and parking lots, are the property of the School District and may be subject to search by School Administration without prior notification whenever there is reasonable grounds to believe that a search would produce evidence that a student has violated or is violating the law or school rules. Any searches will be conducted in accordance with Board Policy #5145.12 – Search and Seizure. Students should have no expectation of privacy in the use of desks, lockers, storage areas, parking lots, or other school property.

The Superintendent or his/her designee will establish a procedure to ensure that students and staff remain in classrooms or other designated areas during the presence of the K-9 Unit in a School building or on School grounds.

The Superintendent or his/her designee will ensure that only a certified detection K-9 Unit is present on School grounds. The use of a trained K-9 Unit is subject to the following:

1. The District Administration shall request and authorize the presence of the K-9 Unit and the Principal and/or the Principal's designee shall be present at all times while the K-9 Unit is present on School grounds and shall accompany the K-9 Unit.
2. Parents and students have been notified of this Policy through its inclusion in the student and parent handbook and on the District's website.
3. The K-9 Unit may be present anywhere on school grounds, including hallways, locker areas, classrooms, parking areas, and storage areas. The Superintendent or his/her designee will ensure that the K-9 Unit is not used in rooms occupied by persons except for

demonstration purposes with the handler present, and when used for demonstration purposes, the canine sniffing dog may not sniff any individual.

4. Individuals shall not be subject to a K-9 sniff.
5. Only a member of the K-9 Unit will determine what constitutes an alert by the K-9.

Upon K-9 detection of illegal or dangerous substances or materials, School Administration will be responsible for any opening or searching of any lockers, bags, containers, or vehicles identified by the K-9 Unit as containing illegal or dangerous substances or materials. In the event that there is a legitimate concern of a health or safety risk, appropriate first responders may be called upon.

If a student's locker, bag, container, vehicle, or other item is searched by the School Administration as a result of a K-9 Unit alert, the student's parent or guardian will be notified in writing by the School Administration. Parents or guardians will also be notified of any resulting disciplinary action in accordance with Board policies and school procedures.

In the event of K-9 detection of illegal or dangerous substances or materials, School Administration will address violations of the student code of conduct in accordance with school disciplinary procedures. If the School Administration believes that a criminal violation has occurred, the School Administration may refer the matter for police action.

The Superintendent or his/her designee will ensure that the Suffield Police Department is responsible for the disposal of any discovered contraband.

SECLUSION/RESTRAINT

Teachers and staff of the Suffield Public Schools comply with all State laws and Board of Education policies with respect to the use of seclusion and restraint of students in their care during the school day and during extra-curricular activities. Use of Physical Restraint/Seclusion is governed by Board policy 5144.1 and the administrative regulations associated with the policy, both of which are available on the District's website. Life-threatening physical restraint will never be used on a student at school or under the care of staff at a school-sponsored activity. In the unlikely event that seclusion or restraint is required, it will be performed only by trained staff, under constant supervision, and used only in case of emergency. If a seclusion or restraint occurs, every attempt will be made to notify the parent or guardian immediately, and no later than 24 hours following the event.

The District is required to keep detailed written records of all incidents of seclusion and restraint, and such records are available for inspection by the student's parent or guardian. A written report will be sent home promptly following any such incident. Reports concerning all incidents of seclusion and restraint are made to the State Department of Education, and de-identified data concerning the District's statistics are available to anyone upon request. State law also permits a teacher or other staff to use "reasonable physical force" if necessary to protect someone from immediate physical injury, to obtain possession of a dangerous instrument or controlled substance, to protect property from physical damage, or to restrain a child or remove the child to another area to maintain order. Briefly making physical contact with a student to comfort a child, to keep the child from being injured, to break up a fight, or escort the child to a safe area is considered neither "seclusion" nor "restraint". Such actions are rare and used only in case of exigent circumstances

as defined by law. Any questions concerning the District's policies on seclusion and restraint should be directed to the Director of Special Services.

SERVICE ANIMALS

The Board of Education, in compliance with state and federal laws, allows service animals to accompany persons with disabilities on the District campus. A service animal is usually a dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability. This does not include animals whose sole function is to provide emotional support, well-being, comfort, companionship, or therapeutic benefits, or to act as a crime deterrent.

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

The district 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. Sexual harassment, whether verbal or physical, includes, but is not limited to the following: (unwanted touching, sexual language statements) 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, Diana Kelley, Director of Pupil Services.

STAFF DIRECTORY

The staff directory can be found on the District website under the Parents & Students tab ([SMS Faculty & Staff Directory](#))

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

The District utilizes the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) process which combines systematic assessment, decision-making and a multi-tiered delivery model to improve educational and behavioral outcomes for all students. Academic and behavioral support and targeted

interventions will be provided for students who are not making academic progress at expected levels in the general curriculum.

For students in need of Special Education programs, a planning and placement team (PPT) is designed to provide communication and decision-making at the school level concerning the effective use of available resources. The team is also responsible for follow-up and periodic review of all students presently in Special Education and special services programs.

Any child identified as possibly needing special education and/or related services must be referred to a special education Planning & Placement Team for evaluation (PPT). The PPT will determine whether special education services are required. Parents must give their consent before any evaluation can be done or any services can begin. An Individualized Education Plan, based upon the diagnostic findings of the evaluation study will be developed by the PPT, with parental involvement. Parents will be informed regarding the use of scientific, research-based interventions.

American with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Notice of Parent/Student Rights

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (commonly referred to as “Section 504”) is a nondiscrimination statute enacted by the United States Congress. The purpose of Section 504 is to prohibit discrimination and to assure that disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to nondisabled students.

An eligible student under Section 504 is a student who (a) has, (b) has a record of having or (c) is regarded as having, a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits a major life activity such as learning, self-care, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, and performing manual tasks.

Many students will be eligible for educational services under both Section 504 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), but entitlement to services under the IDEA or other statutes is not required to receive services under Section 504.

The following is a description of the rights and options granted by federal law to students with disabilities under Section 504. The intent of the law is to keep you fully informed concerning decisions about your child and to inform you of your rights if you disagree with any of these decisions. You have the right:

1. To be informed of your rights under Section 504;
2. To have your child take part in and receive benefits from the Suffield School District’s education programs without discrimination based on his/her disability;
3. For your child to have equal opportunities to participate in academic, nonacademic and extracurricular activities in your school without discrimination based on his/her disability;
4. To be notified with respect to the Section 504 identification, evaluation, and educational placement of your child;
5. To have an evaluation, educational recommendation, and placement decision developed by a team of persons who are knowledgeable of your child, the assessment data, and any placement options;
6. If your child is eligible for services under Section 504, for your child to receive a free appropriate public education. This includes the right to receive reasonable

- accommodations, modifications, and related services to allow your child an equal opportunity to participate in school and school-related activities;
7. For your child to be educated with peers who do not have disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate;
 8. To have your child educated in facilities and receive services comparable to those provided to non-disabled students;
 9. To review all relevant records relating to decisions regarding your child's Section 504 identification, evaluation, and educational placement;
 10. To obtain copies of your child's educational records at a reasonable cost unless the fee would effectively deny you access to the records;
 11. To request changes in the educational program of your child;
 12. To an impartial hearing if you disagree with the District's decisions regarding your child's Section 504 identification, evaluation or educational placement. The costs for this hearing are borne by the local school district. You and the student have the right to take part in the hearing and to have an attorney represent you at your expense.
 13. To file a court action if you are dissatisfied with the impartial hearing officer's decision or to request attorney's fees related to securing your child's rights under Section 504.
 14. To file a local grievance with the designated Section 504 Coordinator to resolve complaints of discrimination other than those involving the identification, evaluation or placement of your child.
 15. To file a formal complaint with the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

The Section 504 Coordinator for this District is:

Diana Kelley
Director of Special Services
Suffield Public Schools
350 Mountain Road
Suffield, CT 06078

Telephone: 860-668-3800

For additional assistance regarding your rights under Section 504, you may contact:

Boston Regional Office
Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Education
8th Floor
5 Post Office Square, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02109-3921

Telephone: 617-289-0111

U.S. Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights
550 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20202-1100

Telephone: 800-421-3481

Connecticut State Department of Education
Bureau of Special Education
and Pupil Service Telephone: 860-713-6910
P.O. Box 2219
Hartford, CT 06145-2219

Compliance with 504 Regulations

It is the policy of the Suffield Public Schools to comply with all aspects of the Section 504 regulation of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Section 504 prevents discrimination on the basis of handicap in programs and activities operated by the school system.

Suffield Board of Education Section 504 Complaint/Grievance Procedures

Under Section 504, a person with a disability is anyone who:

1. has a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities (major life activities include activities such as learning, self-care, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working and performing manual tasks);
2. has a record of such impairment; or
3. is regarded as having such an impairment.

I. Procedures for Complaints/Grievances Alleging Discrimination on the Basis of Disability

The policy of the Board of Education is to provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints and/or grievances alleging any violation of Section 504. In order to facilitate the timely resolution of such complaints and/or grievances, 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 should contact the District's designated Section 504 Coordinator within thirty (30) days of the alleged occurrence to discuss the nature of the complaint. If the Section 504 Coordinator is the subject of the complaint and/or grievance, the complaint and/or grievance should be submitted to the Superintendent, who shall investigate or appoint a designee to do so. Timely reporting of complaints and/or grievances facilitates the investigation and resolution of such complaints and/or grievances.

Complaints and/or grievances will be investigated promptly and corrective action will be taken when allegations are verified. Confidentiality will be maintained by all persons involved in the investigation to the extent possible. Complaints and/or grievances regarding a student's rights with respect to his/her identification, evaluation, or educational placement shall be addressed in accordance with the procedures set forth below in Section II.

II. Procedures for Complaints/Grievances Regarding a Student's Identification, Evaluation, and/or Educational Placement

Complaints and/or grievances regarding a student's identification, evaluation, or educational placement shall be addressed in accordance with the procedures set forth below:

A. Informal Level

1. In order to facilitate the prompt investigation of complaints, any complaint and/or grievance regarding a student's identification, evaluation or educational placement may be forwarded to the District's Section 504 Coordinator within thirty (30) days of the alleged occurrence to discuss the nature of the complaint. Timely reporting of complaints facilitates the resolution of potential educational disputes as it assists

the District in gathering current, accurate information and enables the District to take corrective actions when necessary to ensure that a student is provided with an appropriate educational program.

2. The Coordinator shall maintain a written record containing the following:
 - a. Full name and address of complainant;
 - b. Specific areas of disagreement relating to the child's identification, evaluation, and/or educational placement; and
 - c. Remedy requested.
 3. At the time the complaint is filed, the Coordinator should direct the complainant to the appropriate administrator who will investigate the complaint and send a written report to the Coordinator. The Coordinator shall then meet informally with the complainant and other relevant individual(s), shall provide confidential counseling where advisable and shall finally seek an informal agreement between the parties concerned. Every attempt shall be made to seek a solution and resolve the Section 504 complaint at this level when possible.
 4. This process shall take no longer than ten (10) working days from the time the complaint was received.
 5. The informal process offered in this section is optional. Complainants may elect to file a formal complaint and/or grievance by contacting the District's Section 504 Coordinator.
- B. Formal Level/Impartial Hearing**
1. If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution offered in the initial informal procedures, he/she may initiate more formal procedures to further explore and resolve a Section 504 complaint/grievance regarding a student's identification, evaluation, or educational placement.
 2. The complainant shall present the written complaint to the Superintendent within fifteen (15) days after the conclusion of the informal resolution process. The Superintendent may resolve the complaint alone or with the appropriate administrator.
 3. If the complaint is not resolved, the Superintendent shall hear and fully review the case within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the complaint/grievance regarding a student's identification, evaluation, or educational placement.
 - a. The Coordinator shall inform all parties of the date, time and place of the grievance hearing and of their right to present witnesses or representatives, if desired. The Coordinator shall provide assistance to the complainant in understanding the grievance procedure process.
 - b. A written record of the time, place, date and participants in the hearing shall be kept.
 - c. A written decision shall be sent to the complainant within ten (10) working days after the conclusion of the hearing.
 4. If the complainant is not satisfied with the Superintendent's decision, he/she may, within fifteen (15) days of the Superintendent's decision, request that the Superintendent submit the matter to an impartial hearing officer or to a mediator. Mediation shall only occur by mutual agreement of the parties.
 - a. Mediation procedures:
 - i. The mediator must be someone who is knowledgeable about Section 504 and the differences between Section 504 and the regulations and

- requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- ii. The mediator shall inform all parties involved of the date, time and place of the mediation and of the right to have legal counsel or other representation at the complainant's own expense, if desired.
 - iii. The mediator shall meet with the parties jointly, or separately, as determined by the mediator, and shall facilitate a voluntary settlement of the dispute between the parties, if possible.
 - iv. If the parties are not able to reach a voluntary settlement of the dispute, the complainant may request an impartial hearing, as described below.
- b. Impartial hearing procedures:
- i. The impartial hearing officer must be someone who is knowledgeable about Section 504 and the differences between Section 504 and the regulations and requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
 - ii. The impartial hearing officer shall inform all parties involved of the date, time and place of the hearing and of the right to present witness(es) and to have legal counsel or other representation at the complainant's own expense, if desired.
 - iii. The impartial hearing officer shall hear all aspects of the complainant's appeal and shall reach a decision within forty-five (45) days of receipt of the written appeal. The decision shall be presented in writing to the complainant.
 - iv. A Section 504 impartial hearing officer does not have jurisdiction to hear claims alleging discrimination, harassment or retaliation based on an individual's disability unless such a claim is directly related to a claim regarding the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a student under Section 504.
5. The time limits noted throughout Section II may be extended if more time is needed to permit thorough review and opportunity for resolution.

School Counseling

Social services and counseling are rendered by professionally qualified members of the school staff. The responsibilities of the social worker and school counselors include helping the student function more successfully within the school environment. The District's comprehensive counseling program strives to assist students in acquiring critical skills in the academic, career, and personal/social aspects of development.

The SMS School Counseling Department consists of two School Counselors, one School Psychologists, one Social Worker, and one School Counseling Secretary. During the school year, the School Counseling Office is staffed from 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Counseling is an opportunity to talk with someone about things that are important to students. These opportunities to talk may be personal, social, educational or vocational. Counselors will listen and be open and honest with students. School Counselors are encouraged to issue appointment request forms to students. Appointments can also be arranged by filling out a

Guidance Appointment request form in the office or by stopping by the guidance office before school, between classes or after school.

STUDENT DATA PRIVACY

Connecticut legislation, PA 16-189, (C.G.S. 10-234bb (a)) An Act Concerning Student Data Privacy, as amended by PA 17-200 and PA 18-125, restricts how student information may be used by (1) entities that contract to provide educational software and electronic storage of student records (“contractors”) and (2) operators of websites, online services or mobile applications (i.e., apps). Not later than five (5) business days after executing a contract with such contractors, the contract will be posted on the District’s website. The notice will include a brief description of the content and the purpose of the contract and will state what student information, student records or student-generated content may be collected as a result of the contract. Student information will be deleted by operators of websites, online services, or mobile apps upon student, parent, guardian or board of education request. Such operators may not create student profiles for use in targeted advertising and for purposes unrelated to school. Parents and students will be notified of data breaches. Students and parents/guardians will be notified not later than two business days upon notice of a breach of security by a contractor to the Board of Education.

STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Students have the right to express their views in speech, writing, or through any other medium or form, limited solely by those restrictions imposed on all citizens generally and those specifically applicable to children and youths in a school setting.

The school encourages student publications not only because they offer an educational activity through which students gain experience in reporting, writing, editing, and understanding responsible journalism, but also because they provide an opportunity for students to express their views and a means of communicating both within and beyond the school community.

All student publications must comply with the rules for responsible journalism. Libelous statements, unfounded charges and accusations, obscenity, also statements, materials advocating racial or religious prejudice, hatred, violence, the breaking of laws and school policies and/or regulations, or materials designed to disrupt the educational process will not be permitted.

Expressions of personal opinion must be clearly identified as such and must bear the name of the author. Opportunity for the expression of opinions differing from those of the student publishers must be provided.

In addition, student newspapers and/or publications which are paid for by the school district and/or produced under the direction of a teacher as part of the school curriculum are not considered a public forum. In such cases, the Board of Education reserves the right to edit or delete such student speech which is feeling is inconsistent with the district’s basic educational

Any student publication either written or filmed provides an instructional device in the teaching of writing and other journalistic skills. It also provides a forum for the opinion of students, school

staff and members of the community, as well as to serve the entire school by reporting school activities.

All student publications must comply with the rules for responsible journalism. Libelous statements, unfounded charges and accusations, obscenity, also statements, materials advocating racial or religious prejudice, hatred, violence, the breaking of laws and school policies and/or regulations, or materials designed to disrupt the educational process will not be permitted.

The advisor of such publications shall have the primary responsibility of reviewing each piece prior to its publication. The school administration or his/her designated representative other than the teacher advisor may also review copy prior to its publication. However, such copy must be returned to the student editors within 72 hours after it is submitted for review. No copy may be censored except for reasons listed in board policy.

In addition, student newspapers and/or publications which are paid for by the school District and/or produced under the direction of a teacher as part of the school curriculum are not considered a public forum. In such cases, the Board of Education reserves the right to edit or delete such student speech which is feeling is inconsistent with the District's basic educational mission.

STUDENT RECORDS

The Suffield Board of Education will comply with applicable regulations regarding confidentiality and access to all student records. The Board shall implement procedures that ensure strict confidentiality of student records while providing proper parental and/or student access to records. The Assistant Superintendent is considered as the custodian of records and will insure that student's records are kept confidential. 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.

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.

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 requestor has the right to a hearing. If the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the requestor 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 administration's or superintendent's office.

Please note that there may be a fee charged for the cost of the copying materials. 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 administration 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 students' 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.

The District will release to the Parent Teacher Association the names, addresses, telephone number and grade levels of students (unless the District 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 for its own school activities or school business.

The District, when a student moves to a new school system or charter school, will send the student's records to the new District or charter school 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 the District to comply with the Requirements of FERPA. Complaints may be addressed to: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20202-4605.

The District's FERPA Privacy Officer is the Director of Special Services for Suffield Public Schools.

Definitions

- A. Access is defined as the right to inspect or review a student's education records or any part thereof. Access may include the right to receive copies of records under limited circumstances.
- B. Authorized Representative means any entity or individual designated by the Board, a State educational authority, or an agency headed by an official listed in 34 C.F.R. § 99.31(a)(3), to conduct -- with respect to Federal- or State-supported education programs-- any audit or evaluation, or any compliance or enforcement activity in connection with Federal legal requirements that relate to these programs.
- C. Biometric Record, as used in the definition of personally identifiable information, means a record of one or more measurable biological or behavioral characteristics that can be used for automated recognition of an individual, such as fingerprints, retina and iris patterns, voiceprints, DNA sequence, facial characteristics and handwriting.
- D. De-identified Education Records means education records or information from education records from which all personally identifiable information has been removed, and for which the District has made a reasonable determination that a student's identity is not personally identifiable, whether through single or multiple releases, taking into account other reasonably available information.
- E. Directory Information includes information contained in an education record of a student that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. It includes, but is not limited to, the parent's name, address and/or e-mail address, the student's name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, photographic, computer and/or video images, date and place of birth, major field(s) of study, grade level, enrollment status (full-time; part-time), participation in school-sponsored activities or athletics, weight and

height (if the student is a member of an athletic team), dates of attendance, degrees, honors and awards received, the most recent previous school(s) attended, and student identification numbers for the limited purposes of displaying a student identification card. The student identification number, however, will not be the only identifier used when obtaining access to educational records or data. Directory information does not include a student's social security number, student identification number or other unique personal identifier used by the student for purposes of accessing or communicating in electronic systems unless the identifier cannot be used to gain access to education records except when used in conjunction with one or more factors that authenticate the user's identity, such as a PIN or password.

- F. Disciplinary Action or Proceeding means the investigation, adjudication or imposition of sanctions by an educational agency or institution with respect to an infraction or violation of internal rules of conduct applicable to students.
- G. Disclosure means to permit access to or to release, transfer, or other communication of personally identifiable information as contained in education records by any means, including oral, written or electronic means, to any party except the party identified as the party that provided or created the record.
- H. Education Records
 - 1. Education Records means any information directly related to a student that is recorded in any manner (e.g., handwriting, print, computer media, video or audio tape, film, microfilm, and microfiche) and that is maintained by the school system or persons acting for the school system.
 - 2. Education Records do not include:
 - a. private, personal, or working notes in the sole possession of the maker thereof, and which are not accessible or revealed to any other individual except a "substitute";
 - b. records maintained by a law enforcement unit of the school district that were created by that unit for the purpose of law enforcement;
 - c. employment records used only in relation to the student's employment by the District that are 1) made and maintained in the normal course of business, 2) relate exclusively the student's capacity as an employee, and 3) are not made available for any other purpose;
 - d. records on an eligible student (i.e. over 18 or attending a postsecondary educational institution) that are considered "treatment records" as they meet the following criteria: 1) the records are maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional acting in his or her professional capacity or assisting in a paraprofessional capacity, 2) the records are made in connection with the treatment of the student and 3) the records are disclosed only to individuals providing such treatment (treatment does not include remedial educational activities or activities that are part of the program or instruction of the District); however, the District must, upon request, permit an eligible student to have a physician or other appropriate professional of the student's choice review his/her treatment records;
 - e. records created or received by the District after an individual is no longer a student in attendance and that are not directly related to the individual's attendance as a student; and

- f. grades on peer-graded papers before they are collected and recorded by a teacher.
- I. Eligible Student is a student or former student who has reached 18 years of age or is attending an institution of post-secondary education or is an emancipated minor.
 - J. Law Enforcement Unit is an individual, office, department, division, or other component of an educational agency or institution, that is officially authorized or designated by that agency or institution to 1) enforce laws or refer matters of law enforcement to appropriate authorities or 2) maintain the physical security and safety of the agency or institution.
 - K. Legitimate Educational Interest means the need for a school official to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibilities.
 - L. Parent is defined as a parent or parents of a student, including a natural parent, a guardian, or surrogate parent, or an individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or guardian. The rights of a parent shall transfer to an eligible student; however, a parent of a student who claims that student as a dependent under Section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 is entitled to access to the student's education records without the eligible student's consent.
 - M. Personally Identifiable Information includes, but is not limited to, the student's name; the name of the student's parent or other family members; the address of the student or his/her family; a personal identifier, such as the student's social security number, student number or biometric record; other indirect identifiers, such as the student's date of birth, place of birth, and mother's maiden name; other information that, alone or in combination, is linked or linkable to a specific student that would allow a reasonable person in the school community, who does not have personal knowledge of the relevant circumstances, to identify the student with reasonable certainty; or information requested by a person who the District reasonably believes knows the identity of the student to whom the education record relates.
 - N. School Official is a person employed by the District as an administrator, supervisor, instructor or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the Board of Education; a person or company with whom the District has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, consultant, therapist, or school resource officer); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.
 - O. Signed and Dated Written Consent to disclose personally identifiable student information from a student's education records must specify the records to be disclosed, the purpose of disclosure and the party to whom such records should be provided. Consent may include a record and signature in electronic form provided that the consent identifies and authenticates a particular person as the source of electronic consent.

A. Category "A" Records

1. Category A includes official administrative records that constitute the minimum personal data necessary for the operation of the educational system.
2. Category A records shall be maintained for at least fifty (50) years after the student leaves the District or graduates.
3. Notice of a student's suspension or expulsion shall be expunged from the student's cumulative education record if the student graduates from high school, except for notice of an expulsion based upon possession of a firearm or deadly weapon.

4. *In cases where a student is suspended or expelled for the first time, and the Administration or the Board, respectively, has shortened or waived the period of suspension or expulsion in accordance with the Board's disciplinary policy relating to first time offenses, the Administration or the Board, respectively, may choose to expunge such notice of suspension or expulsion from the student's cumulative record at the time
5. The student completes the specified program and any other conditions imposed by the Administration/Board, rather than upon graduation. Should the notice be expunged in accordance with this provision, a record of the fact that the student had been suspended or expelled shall be maintained apart from the student's cumulative record, for the limited purpose of determining whether any subsequent offenses by the student would constitute the student's first suspension or expulsion.
6. Category A records shall include, at a minimum, the following:

RECORD	LOCATION
a. Basic biographical information	Cumulative/Health File
b. Academic achievement (grades/transcripts)	Cumulative File
c. Date of high school graduation or equivalent	Cumulative File
d. Records of immunizations	Cumulative/Health/Pupil Personnel File
e. Attendance records (days absent/present/tardy)	Cumulative File
f. *Notice of Expulsion for Firearm or Deadly Weapon (C.G.S. 10-233c(e), 10-233d(f))	Cumulative File

B. Category "B" Records

1. This includes verified information for the formulation of education programs for all students, but not absolutely necessary over an indefinite period of time.
2. Data in Category B must be accurate, clearly understood, and verified before becoming part of any continuing record. There should be no anonymous entries in a student's education record.
3. Category B records must be maintained for at least six (6) years after the student leaves the District or graduates from high school.
4. Notice of a student's suspension or expulsion shall be expunged from the student's cumulative education record if the student graduates from high school, except for notice of an expulsion based upon possession of a firearm or deadly weapon.
5. *In cases where a student is suspended or expelled for the first time, and the Administration or the Board, respectively, has shortened or waived the period of suspension or expulsion in accordance with the Board's disciplinary policy relating to first time offenses, the Administration or the Board, respectively, may choose to expunge such notice of suspension or expulsion from the student's cumulative record at the time the student completes the specified program and any other conditions imposed by the Administration/Board, rather than upon graduation. Should the notice be expunged in accordance with this provision, a record of the fact that the student had been suspended or expelled shall be maintained apart from the student's cumulative record, for the limited purpose of determining whether any subsequent offenses by the student would constitute the student's first suspension or expulsion.

6. Records containing information pertaining to child abuse/neglect referrals or reports; or containing confidential HIV- related information should be kept separate from the student's cumulative folder, in confidential files.
7. Confidential HIV- related information contained in the confidential file should only be disclosed pursuant to District policy.
8. Information contained in documents related to any Department of Children and Families ("DCF") child abuse and/or neglect investigation, or any such investigation conducted by local law enforcement officials, shall be kept confidential, in a central location. Such records shall only be disclosed in accordance with the Board's policy regarding Confidentiality and Access to Education Records.
9. Category B records shall include the following (if applicable):

RECORD	LOCATION
a. Child-Study Team Records / Student Assistance Team Records	Cumulative/Pupil Personnel File
b. Standardized group test scores (CAPT, CMT etc.)and/or personality testing program results	Cumulative/Pupil Personnel File
c. Diagnostic reading/math test results (not special education)	Cumulative File
d. Educational and/or vocational interest	Cumulative File
e. Speech/language and hearing evaluations (not special education)	Cumulative/Health File
f. Comprehensive health records	Cumulative/Health/Pupil Personnel File
g. Correspondence relating to the student	Cumulative/Health/Pupil Personnel File
h. Suspensions/expulsions	Cumulative File*
i. Parent/legible student's signed release forms	Cumulative/Health/Pupil Personnel File
j. Truancy Records (including record of parent conferences and referrals)	Cumulative File
k. Child Abuse/Neglect Forms	CONFIDENTIAL FILE IN CENTRAL LOCATION
l. Reports Containing Confidential HIV-Related Information	CONFIDENTIAL FILE
m. Awards	Cumulative File
n. Diagnostic test results (non-special education)	Cumulative File/Pupil Personnel File
o. Extracurricular Activities	Cumulative File
p. Letters of Recommendation	Cumulative File
q. Parent's/Eligible Student's signed release forms (permitting disclosure of records)	Cumulative File/Health/Pupil Personnel File
r. Diploma (if not picked up by student)	Cumulative File
s. Accident Reports	Cumulative File
t. Basic school entrance health histories	Cumulative/Health File
u. Cumulative Health Record (CHR-1, original or copy)	Health File (*copy remains with District/original follows student)

v. Individualized Health Care Plans/Emergency Care Plans	Cumulative/Health/Pupil Personnel File
w. Health Assessment Records (HAR-3)	Health File
x. Incident Reports	Cumulative File
y. Medication administration records(*6 yrs OR until superseded by yearly summary on CHR-1)	Health File
z. Parent authorization for medications/treatments	Health File
aa. Physician’s orders for medications treatments	Health File
bb. Referral forms for services based on results of mandated screenings	Health/Pupil Personnel File
cc. Sports histories and physical-examination reports	Health File
dd. Nursing Records (Health assessment data; Nursing process notes; 3rd party health records)	Health File

C. Category “C” Records – Special Education

1. Category C includes verified information necessary for the formulation of prescriptive educational plans designed to meet the unique needs of selected students.
2. Category C information should be kept separate from the student's cumulative folder, in the Pupil Personnel File.
3. Category C records must be maintained for at least six (6) years after the student leaves the District or graduates from high school.
4. Prior to the destruction of Category C information, notification to parents and/or eligible students via media will be made and opportunity provided to copy said records.
5. Category C shall include (where applicable):

RECORD	LOCATIONS
a. PPT referral forms	Pupil Personnel File
b. School counselor case records	Cumulative/Pupil Personnel File
c. School psychologists case records	Cumulative/Pupil Personnel File
d. School social-work case records	Cumulative/Pupil Personnel File
e. School speech/language pathology case records	Cumulative/Pupil Personnel File
f. Section 504 Records	Cumulative/Pupil Personnel File
g. Special Education assessment/evaluation reports	Pupil Personnel File
h. Due process records (including complaints, mediations, and hearings)	Pupil Personnel File
i. Individual Transition Plan	Pupil Personnel File
j. Individualized Education Program (“IEP”) Records	Pupil Personnel File
k. Planning and Placement Team (“PPT”) records (including notices, meetings, consent forms)	Pupil Personnel File
l. Individualized Family Service Plans (“IFSPs”)	Pupil Personnel File

D. Category “D” Records

1. Category D records must be maintained for minimum retention period specified below.
2. Category “D” shall include (where applicable):

RECORD	MINIMUM RETENTION REQUIRED	LOCATION
a. Sports Contract/Student Contract (including signature sheet for student handbook)	End of school year in which signed	Cumulative File
b. Permission slips/waivers	3 years	Cumulative File
c. Free/reduced meal application and documentation	3 years	Cumulative File
d. Annual Notification to Parents (Student behavior and Discipline, Bus Conduct, Electronic Communications Systems, and the National School Lunch Program)	1 year	Cumulative File
e. Adult Education Registration Records	3 years or until audited, whichever comes first	Cumulative File
f. After school program registration records	1 year	Cumulative File
g. School registration records including residency documentation	3 years or until audited, whichever comes later	Cumulative File
h. Student portfolio work (student produced work for grading assessment)	End of year in which student received grade	May be Maintained by Individual Teachers
i. Tardy slips from parents/guardians	End of school year	Cumulative File
j. Physician's Standing orders	Permanent; revise as required. Keep old copy separately.	Health File
k. Student's emergency information card	Until superseded or student leaves school District	Cumulative/Health File
l. Test Protocols	Discretion of District	Cumulative/Pupil Personnel File
m. Surveillance videotapes made on school bus (*if maintained by District)	2 weeks	N/A
n. Log of access to education records	Maintained for same retention period as required for the record	Cumulative/Health/Pupil Personnel

E. Duration of Education Records

1. Records shall be destroyed in accordance with District policy and the Records Retention Schedule of the Public Records Administrator.
2. Records may be maintained for longer periods of time whenever valid cause for the retention of records is shown to the custodian of records.
3. Notwithstanding the applicable retention schedule, the District shall not destroy any education record if a parent or eligible student has an outstanding request to inspect and review the education record.

F. Responsibility for Maintenance of Education Records

1. The **Assistant Superintendent** is the Custodian of Records.
2. In addition, the following personnel are designated as the guardians of records for each of the schools:
 - a. Categories A, B & D: Principal at each school.
 - b. Category C: Case Manager at each school.
 - c. With respect to confidential HIV-related information, if the Principal is a recipient of an HIV-related disclosure, the Principal shall be the guardian of records. If not, whoever was the recipient of the HIV-related disclosure shall be the guardian of the records.
 - d. With respect to child abuse and neglect investigation material, the superintendent of schools or designee shall be the guardian of the records.
3. The chief custodian of records will annually list for public inspection the names and positions of the custodians of records in each of the schools.
4. Each of the custodians of records shall supply parents, on request, a list of the types and locations of education records collected, maintained, or used within the Suffield Public Schools.
5. The custodians of records are responsible for ensuring compliance with the confidentiality and access provisions of this Board policy and these administrative regulations.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

The District maintains procedural guidelines for suicide prevention and intervention in response to at risk behaviors by students, (i.e. Suicidal ideation, commentary or self-injurious behavior). The school faculty receives information and in-service on suicide prevention annually. Please refer to Board policy and regulation 5141.5 for additional information.

SURVEY/STUDENT PRIVACY

Your child will not be required to participate without parental consent in any survey, analysis, or evaluation that concerns:

1. political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent;
2. mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
3. sex attitudes or behaviors;
4. illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior;
5. critical appraisals of other individual with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians and ministers;
7. income; or
8. religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student's parents.

In addition, parents have the right to inspect, upon request, a survey that is to be administered by a school to a student, prior to its use. Parents will be notified at least two weeks in advance of any survey that will be given to their children.

Parents will be notified of any non-emergency, invasive physical examination that is required as a condition of attendance administered by the school and which is not necessary to protect the

immediate health and safety of students. Parents will be given an opportunity to opt their child out of the exam. Hearing, vision and scoliosis screening are not subject to prior notifications.

The District will not collect, disclose or use personal information gathered from students for the purpose of marketing or selling that information or providing it to others for that purpose.

TEACHER AND PARAEDUCATOR QUALIFICATIONS

Parents 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 will also be advised, if requested as to whether the child is provided service by paraprofessionals and their qualifications.

TECHNOLOGY

Computer Resources

Suffield Middle School is a 1:1 environment in which every student must have access to a school issued Chromebook only. Use of these resources is restricted to students working under a teacher's supervision and for approved purposes only. Students and parents will be asked to sign a user agreement regarding appropriate use of these resources. Violations of this agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

Students and parents should be aware that e-mail communications using District computers are not private and may be monitored by staff. Students may not access social media sites using District equipment, while on District property, or at a District sponsored activity unless the posting is approved by a teacher. The District will not be liable for information posted by students on social media websites, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, YouTube, etc., when the student is not engaged in District activities and not using District equipment.

The District reserves the right to monitor, inspect, copy, review and store at any time and without prior notice any and all usage of the computer network and Internet access and any and all information transmitted or received in connection with such usage. All such information files shall be and remain the property of the School District and no user shall have any expectation of privacy regarding such material.

Federal law requires the District to place filtering devices on school computers to block entry to visual depictions that are obscene, pornographic, harmful or inappropriate for students as defined in the Children's Internet Protection Act and as determined by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

The Board of Education is committed to aiding students and staff in creating a 21st Century learning environment. Therefore, students (plus staff) will be permitted to access the District's wireless network with their personal devices during the school day. With teacher approval, students may use their own devices to access the Internet and collaborate with other students.

Students and parents/guardians participating in the 1:1 program at Suffield Middle School must also note that the Chromebook's are District property and must be treated as such. These expectations along with the terms of our insurance program are outlined on the District website and were include in the documentation received prior to school beginning.

Electronic Devices and Games

- Students, with permission of their parent(s)/guardian(s) may be in possession of personal electronic devices such as smartphones or cellular telephones. When student bring these devices to school they must secure them in their lockers or book bags and shall be off or silenced. The devices are not permissible for use during the school day and therefore, shall not be used in a manner that disrupts the educational process, including, but not limited to, posing a threat to academic integrity or violating confidentiality or privacy rights of another individual.
- Students are Responsible for keeping personal technology secure. If personal technology is stolen, lost, or damaged, it will be handled through the administrative office similar to how other stolen, lost, or damaged personal artifacts are handled. Students and families should be aware that the District is not liable for any personal technology that is stolen, lost, or damaged. Students should not share their personal technology with other students at any time.
- A student's personal technology (smartphones or cellular telephones) brought to school may be searched by District personnel if there are "reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school."

The sending, sharing, viewing or possessing pictures, emails or other material of a sexual nature in electronic or any other form on cellphones or other electronic devices is prohibited in the school setting.

Responsible Use Policy (RUP)

The computer technology is present to support the educational mission of the District to promote educational excellence in District by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication. Use of this equipment provides great opportunity, but places a responsibility on all students. All students have the responsibility to use the equipment in a considerate, ethical and lawful manner. The right to use this equipment may be revoked at any time by the administration if deemed necessary.

Students must accept the Responsible Use Procedure (RUP) form before the student is allowed to use the required school computers. The use of the Internet must be in support of education, research, and school sanctioned projects. We expect students to afford each other the same respect on the Internet that they do while interacting in person and to respect Suffield Public Schools and its property. The school reserves the right to examine any files on the school computers. **Students should not trade or try to thwart passwords or represent themselves as anyone else in any form of electronic communication.** Students may not participate in chat sessions of any kind. Students are provided with Suffield Public Schools accounts.

NO PERSONAL ACCOUNTS (including but not limited to AOL, Hotmail, MSN, Yahoo, Gmail, etc.) are to be accessed on school computers. Students and parents should be aware that e-mail communications, using District computers, are not private and may be monitored by staff.

Federal law requires the District to place filtering devices on school computers to block entry to visual depictions that are obscene, pornographic, harmful or inappropriate for students as defined in the Children's Internet Protection Act and as determined by the Superintendent or his/her designee. The failure of any student to follow the terms of the authorization form, or our RUP, will result in the loss of privileges, disciplinary action, and/or appropriate legal action.

We expect students to respect copyright laws and academic honesty. The RUP will further clarify these guidelines. **It should be noted that technology is continually changing and the policy in this handbook reflects Board of Education Policy at the time of printing. Please refer to the District website for the most current information.**

TESTING

All students in grades three (3) to eight (8), inclusive, and grade eleven (11) shall annually take a mastery examination in reading, language arts, and mathematics (SBAC). Student in grades five (5), eight (8) and ten (10), in March or April, shall take a state-wide mastery examination in science. Beginning with the July 1, 2018, school year and each school year thereafter, students in grades five (5), eight (8), and eleven (11) shall annually take a state-wide mastery examination in science. Students with special needs or a 504 accommodation plan may take an alternative or modified test if it is decided upon in their Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting or Section 504 accommodation team meeting and noted on their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 accommodation plan.

We often receive inquiries about whether students and parents can “opt out” of mandatory State testing. As these are mandatory tests, there is no “opt out” provision under State law. Each student must be tested in accordance with state mandates. Each student appearing at school on the test day will be required to report to the testing room to which they have been assigned and will be presented with the test to be completed. In the event that a student is absent on test day, make-up sessions are available on separate designated make-up dates. Students with special needs may be accommodated through their Planning and Placement Team (PPT) or Section 504 Accommodation Team, and in rare cases, alternative assessments are available for the students with the most significant disabilities. The information gathered from the tests is used for a variety of purposes, most significantly, assessing and adjusting instruction needed for students to be successful in school.

TEXTBOOK/DEVICE CARE AND OBLIGATIONS

Students are responsible for the care of books, supplies and technological devices entrusted to their use. Textbooks, technological devices and other materials will be assessed for damages upon their return at the conclusion of the school year. In accordance with state law, the school reserves the right to withhold report cards, determine a loss of privileges, or refrain from reissuing school materials or devices until the student pays for or returns the textbooks, library book, device or other educational materials.

TITLE I COMPARABILITY OF SERVICES

All District 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 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

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

TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT

It is the policy of the Suffield Board of Education that any form of sex discrimination or sexual harassment is prohibited, whether by students, District employees, board members, parents, vendors, contracted individuals, volunteers, or the public. The aforementioned parties are expected to adhere to a standard of conduct that is respectful of the rights of students. Those who engage in conduct prohibited by this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall develop Administrative Regulations implementing this Policy.

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal or physical, including, but not limited to:

1. insulting or degrading sexual remarks or conduct;
2. threats or suggestions that a student's submission to, or rejection of, unwelcome conduct will in any way influence a decision regarding that student;
3. conduct of a sexual nature which substantially interferes with the student's learning or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning environment — such as the display in the educational setting of sexually suggestive objects or pictures;
4. sexual assault or rape.
5. Distribution of a sexually explicit images and/or videos

It is the express policy of the Board of Education to encourage victims of sex discrimination or sexual harassment to report such claims. Students are encouraged to promptly report complaints of sex discrimination or sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator.

The Title IX Coordinator for the District is:

Diana Kelley, Director of Pupil Services
Suffield Public Schools
350 Mountain Road
Suffield, CT 06078
Telephone: 860-668-3800

The District, along with the school's Title IX coordinator, will investigate such complaints promptly and will take corrective action where appropriate. The District will maintain confidentiality to the extent appropriate. The District will not tolerate any reprisals or retaliation that occur as a result of the good faith reporting of charges of sexual harassment or sex discrimination. Any such reprisals or retaliation will result in disciplinary action against the retaliator.

The District shall provide staff development for District administrators and annually distribute this policy and the implementing Administrative Regulations to staff and students in an effort to maintain an environment free of sexual harassment and sex discrimination.

TRANSFERS AND WITHDRAWALS

Students withdrawing from school must notify the guidance office one week in advance of their last day. At that time, they will be given forms for their parents to complete. Included will be a formal written statement of withdrawal and release of records form.

On their last day of attendance, students will be given a form that must be signed by each of their teachers. This form will indicate their grade at the time of withdrawal and that all materials have been returned. Records cannot be forwarded until all materials have been returned.

TRANSPORTATION

Students must ride the bus to which they are assigned.

School transportation privileges are extended to students conditioned upon their satisfactory behavior on the bus. Unsatisfactory student behavior on the bus may result in suspension of transportation services or such other disciplinary action that is appropriate for misconduct.

Students will be notified of their bus stop and times for pick-up and drop-off prior to the start of school. Students and parents are asked to wait safely at their bus stop.

Parents 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.

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COMPLAINTS/PROCEDURES

All complaints concerning school transportation safety are to be made to the District Business Manager. A written record of all complaints will be maintained and an investigation of the allegations will take place.

TUTORING

A list of District-approved tutors is available upon request.

VIDEO RECORDERS ON SCHOOL BUSES/SCHOOL CAMPUS

The District has installed video recording equipment on both school buses and in common areas of the school building to monitor safety. Tapes will be viewed by the administration when necessary. Students violating bus or school conduct rules will be notified and disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the school's discipline policy. Videotapes may be treated as protected student records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

VISITORS

Parents and other visitors are welcome to visit Suffield schools. Upon arrival visitors are expected to check in at the main office. If they choose to enter the building beyond that they must provide their license to obtain a visitor pass. Visitors will be escorted to their destination inside the building.

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. School principals are authorized to take appropriate action to prevent such persons from entering the building or from loitering on the grounds. Such persons will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

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

WELLNESS

Student wellness, including good nutrition and physical activity, is promoted through the District's educational program, school activities, and meal programs. Federal and state standards will be met pertaining to all foods and beverages available for sale to students. A sequential program of physical education is provided, in addition to time in the elementary school day for supervised recess. Please see the District's Wellness Policy at <https://www.suffield.org/district/board-of-education/policies>.