

Tamaqua Area School District

Public Notices



Tamaqua Area School District Mission Statement: "The Tamaqua Area School District, in partnership with home and community, is committed to empowering students by providing opportunities to achieve their maximum potentials as responsible citizens and productive lifelong learners competing in an ever changing global community."

PHYSICALS

Hello student athletes and parents/guardians, as spring season is quickly approaching we want to send another reminder out about the new platform we are launching 'Student Central'. If your student athlete already participated in the 2023-24 school year in the fall and/or winter you DO NOT need to complete the same paperwork that you already have handed in, we just want you to make an account and familiarise yourself with this new site and sign off on section 7 recertification. Now, in spring 2024 is the first and only season your student athlete plays, you need to make an account AND fill out all the necessary paperwork for your student athlete to participate on this new platform. When your student athlete goes for sports physical they will only need to bring section 5 & 6 of the PIAA sports physical, fill out page 5 so the doctor can see family history and then the doctor will fill out page 6 (these papers are available in front of the schools office for pick up). Then section 6 will be the only page that you will have to upload either as a pdf file or photo. We will not accept any paper copies of any of the paperwork that needs to be completed online. PLEASE read ALL the directions for setting up student athletes/ parent accounts along with how to link the accounts together. Instructional videos are also attached if you are a visual learner. **Also, currently do not worry about the IMPACT form, the athletic trainers will handle and enter the dates the kids completed it, if your student athlete has not completed the test you will receive a message through student central.**

Reminder for the following school year 2024-2025 the physical date must be after June 1st, we will not accept section 6 if the date is before then for the following year.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e3j7COys40E> - "Student Central: How to Link Student & Parent Accounts"

<https://www.loom.com/share/2badb945939743d1b54d4c7620b23613> - How to fill out forms and upload physician clearance

CELLULAR PHONES

Students will be permitted to keep a cellular phone. In the middle and high schools, cellular phones should be secured in the student's locker, provided that the cellular phone is kept **turned off during the school day**. Technology may be used during study halls and lunches. Elementary students carrying cellular phones will keep them in their book bags and turned off. Students will not be permitted to carry cellular phones to classes for any reason. **Violation of this policy will result in the confiscation of the cellular phone and other related disciplinary action. At the middle and high schools, the consequence for a first offense violation of this policy will include a detention.**

DRESS CODE

This is a condensed version of the Tamaqua Area School District's Dress and Grooming Policy. A copy of the entire policy is available in each building office and online at www.tamaqua.k12.pa.us.

All students are required to abide by the most recently adopted Dress and Grooming policy. According to the Tamaqua Area School District's Discipline Code, subsection "Standards of Conduct," students should "dress and groom to meet fair standards of safety and health and not to cause a disruption to the educational process." Simply stated, student dress should be such that decency and safety are not compromised for comfort or social impact.

Below are some guidelines to which students should adhere:

- All students in grades K-12 shall be subject to a uniform dress code consisting of navy or tan pants, a navy or white shirt, and brown, black or burgundy shoes. Students may wear white, brown, black, tan, gray or navy sneakers.
- Shirts will be long or short sleeved, pullover, golf-style shirts with a collar. Students may opt to wear a white dress shirt, buttoned to the base of the neck and tucked in. Students may opt to wear a navy or white turtleneck or t-shirt under the regulation golf-style shirt. Undershirts/undergarments may only be white or navy in color and must be tucked into the pants or skirt.
- Pants must be a straight-legged dress or casual pants. Pants may not be of the cargo or carpenter style with pockets below the hips, loops, straps, elastic ankles, or other comparable adornments.
- Denim pants, jeans, capris pants or shorts may not be worn.
- Students may wear knee-length skirts or jumpers in tan or navy.
- Appropriate footwear must be worn at all times. Sneakers must be white, brown, black, gray, tan or navy with minimal variation. (Example: A pink Nike Swoosh on a white sneaker is acceptable.) Shoelaces must be the same color as the sneaker. No pictures, patterns or words are permitted. Laces must be solid and match the primary sneaker color. Shoes and sneakers may not light up or have wheels. Shoes must have matching laces and must be close-toed. Shoes with excessive heels, boots and sandals are prohibited. All footwear must have a back that secures the shoe to the foot. Socks may be navy, black, brown, tan or white.
- For physical education, students in the middle and high school are expected to wear a t-shirt that covers the waistline and has sleeves, knee length shorts, wind pants or jogging pants worn at the waistline, and socks and sneakers.

- All shirts must have sleeves, which cover the shoulders. Tank tops, sleeveless tops, shells, mesh tops, sheer tops, bare midriffs or any other garments that expose the upper torso will not be permitted.
- Due to the educational environment at the elementary level and requirements for physical education and other activities such as recess, students in grades k-5 will be permitted the following accommodations: tan or navy, knee-length shorts will be permitted; and boots will be permitted in inclement weather.
- Regulation shirts will not contain insignias or logos. No messages, written or symbolic will be permitted, including but not limited to drug, alcohol or tobacco messages, references to illegal substances, implications of an obscene or sexual nature, negative comments about another's culture, references to racist, hate groups, or violence.
- Jewelry, which may be inappropriate or pose a danger to the safety and welfare of the student or others students or staff or causes an interruption of the educational process, will be prohibited.
- Chains not designed as jewelry are not permitted.
- Hats, handkerchiefs or other similar headwear may not be worn in the school building during regular hours except for religious or health reasons.
- Sunglasses are not permitted indoors.
- Accessories deemed to be distracting, disruptive, or offensive in nature will not be permitted.
- Purses may not exceed 8" by 11" in size.

Students or their parents who wish to apply for an exemption from this policy or who would like to request financial assistance may pick up the appropriate forms in the building or district offices. See District web page for complete policy.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Cellular phones, radios, cameras, audio and video recorders, iPods, tablets, etc. are not permitted to be used except when permitted by a teacher or principal for class projects or special circumstances. There is no reason to have these devices in school, but if brought to school, these items should be kept in a locker.

HEALTH SERVICES

The health services of this school system are designed to examine students and make recommendations for treatment of any gross physical fault found. State mandated screenings for vision and growth are done annually. Hearing screenings are conducted in grades K, 1, 2, 3, 7, and 11 and as needed should a concern arise. Physical exams are provided in grades K, 6 and 11. Dental exams are provided in grades 1, 3, and 7.

Immunizations should be up to date at the time of kindergarten enrollment. Varicella and Hepatitis B are required in grade 7.

In the event that a student's illness or injury should prevent him from attending school, it is suggested that you seek the services of your family physician in treating such conditions. The school nurse does provide first aid and stands ready to help in an emergency.

Students who need to see the school nurse should report to class first and request a pass to the nurse's office. Only in an emergency should a student report to the nurse without first reporting to a scheduled class.

The school does not provide any medications, including pain relievers such as Tylenol. Prescriptions and over-the-counter medications brought to the school by students will be administered if they are in the original container and written parental and physician permission is provided. Any student who is required to carry and self-administer an inhaler, epinephrine injectors, or sting kit, also requires written parental and physician permission. Otherwise, students are not permitted to carry medications with them.

Immunization

All students shall be immunized against certain diseases in accordance with Pennsylvania statutes, unless specifically exempt for religious or medical reasons.

No student shall be admitted to school for the first time who has not been immunized against diseases enumerated by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, in the manner directed by the Secretary of Health.[\[2\]](#)[\[3\]](#)

Implementation of immunization requirements shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent or designee and the head nurse, who shall be subject to the sanctions of law for violation of the state statute for immunization.[\[2\]](#)

A student shall be exempt from the requirements for immunization whose parent/guardian objects in writing to such immunization on religious grounds or whose physician certifies that the child's physical condition contraindicates immunization.[\[2\]](#)

The Superintendent shall:

1. Annually review state standards for immunization and direct accordingly the responsible district personnel.
2. Inform parents/guardians prior to a student's entry to school for the first time of the requirements for immunization, the requisite proof of immunization, exemption available for religious or medical reasons, and means by which such exemptions may be claimed. [\[4\]](#)[\[5\]](#)
3. Investigate and recommend to the Board district-sponsored programs of immunization as may be warranted by circumstances and the health of the school community. Any such program is subject to Board approval and should be conducted in cooperation with local health agencies.

Health Records

The district shall require that prior to a student's admittance to school for the first time the parent/guardian shall complete a medical history report form that includes information regarding known communicable diseases. The nurse or school physician may use such reports to advise the parent of the need for further medical care.[\[6\]](#)[\[7\]](#)

The school nurse shall report the presence of suspected communicable diseases to the appropriate local health authority, as required by the Department of Health.[\[8\]](#)[\[9\]](#)

All health records shall be confidential, and their contents shall be divulged only when necessary for the health of the student or at the request of the parent/guardian to a physician.[\[10\]](#)

As part of the health record, a certificate of immunization shall be maintained for each student enrolled, as required by the Pennsylvania Department of Health.[\[4\]](#)

The district shall require parents/guardians to annually complete a medical history report form that includes information regarding known communicable diseases.

Attendance

The Board authorizes that students who have been diagnosed by a physician or who are suspected of having a disease by the school nurse shall be excluded from school for the period indicated by regulations of the Department of Health for certain specified diseases and infectious conditions.[\[11\]](#)[\[12\]](#)

Education

Instruction regarding communicable and life threatening diseases shall be provided by the schools in the educational program for all levels.[\[13\]](#)

Parents/Guardians shall be provided convenient opportunities to preview all instructional materials used in presentation of this subject.[\[14\]](#)[\[15\]](#)[\[16\]](#)

WELLNESS POLICY

Tamaqua Area School District recognizes that student wellness and proper nutrition are related to students' physical well-being, growth, development and readiness to learn. The Board is committed to providing a school environment that promotes student wellness, proper nutrition, nutrition education and promotion, and regular physical activity as part of the total learning experience. In a healthy school environment, students will learn about and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices that can improve student achievement.

Authority

The Board adopts this policy based on the recommendations of the Wellness Committee and in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations.[\[1\]](#)[\[2\]](#) To ensure the health and well-being of all students, the Board establishes that the district shall provide to students: 1. A comprehensive nutrition program consistent with federal and state requirements. 2. Access at reasonable cost to foods and beverages that meet established nutrition guidelines. 3. Physical education courses and opportunities for developmentally appropriate physical activity during the school day. 4. Curriculum and programs for grades K-12 that are designed to educate students about proper nutrition and lifelong physical activity, in accordance with State Board of Education curriculum regulations and academic standards.

FREE/REDUCED-PRICE SCHOOL MEALS AND FREE MILK

The district shall provide free and reduced-price school meals and/or free milk to students in accordance with the terms and conditions of the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program and the Special Milk Program.[\[20\]](#)[\[21\]](#)

The district shall conduct direct certification three (3) times per year using the Pennsylvania Student Eligibility System (PA-SES) to identify students who are eligible for free school meal benefits without the need for submission of a household application. Direct certification shall be conducted:[\[20\]](#)[\[21\]](#)

1. At or around the beginning of the school year.
2. Three (3) months after the initial effort.
3. Six (6) months after the initial effort.

The district may also conduct direct certification on a weekly or monthly basis.

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) -

When fiscally feasible, the district participates in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), which provides an alternative to submission of household applications to identify students who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals. Under the CEP, the district shall serve to all students free lunches and breakfasts for a defined period, in accordance with applicable provisions of law.^[22]

SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION EDUCATION

Suicide Awareness and Prevention Education for Students

Students shall receive age and developmentally-appropriate, student-centered lessons on the importance of safe and healthy choices, coping strategies focused on resiliency, how to recognize risk factors and warning signs, as well as help-seeking strategies for self or others, including how to engage school resources.

These lessons shall be integrated into the curriculum of health classes and other classes as appropriate. The lessons may be taught by health and physical education teachers, classroom teachers, student services staff, community service providers and outside agencies.

District staff shall provide resources and access to counseling staff for students participating in programming, who may struggle with the topic of suicide prevention.

Lessons shall contain information on comprehensive health and wellness, including emotional, behavioral and social skills development by:

1. Informing students about broader behavioral health issues such as depression and substance use, as well as specific risk factors, protective factors and warning signs for suicide.
2. Encouraging students to seek help for themselves or their peers, including when concerns arise via social media or other online forum, and to avoid making promises of confidence when they are concerned about the safety of a peer or other individual.
3. Adhering to safe and effective messaging guidelines, avoiding graphic testimonials and including research-based suicide prevention resources.
4. Promoting a healthy school climate where students feel connected to and can identify trusted adults in the building.
5. Providing local resources for seeking help.

SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION EDUCATION FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL

All school personnel shall receive information about the district's protocols for suicide awareness and prevention, including risk factors, warning signs, response and communication procedures, referrals and resources.

School personnel shall also receive information regarding strategies to enhance protective factors, resilience and school connectedness.

As part of the district's professional development plan, professional educators in school buildings serving students in grades six (6) through twelve (12) shall participate in a minimum of four (4) hours of youth suicide awareness and prevention training every five (5) years.^{[1][6][7][8]}

The district shall make required training and refresher training available on an ongoing basis, so that educators may fulfill training requirements throughout the required timeframe.

School safety and security training for employees may include suicide awareness.^[8]

Additional professional development in suicide risk screening and/or assessment and crisis intervention shall be provided to specialized staff and school behavioral health professionals such as school crisis response/intervention team members, threat assessment team members, designated administrators, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers and school nurses.

Resources for Parents/Guardians

The district shall provide parents/guardians with resources including, but not limited to, health promotion and suicide risk, including characteristics and warning signs, and information about local, state and national behavioral health resources.

METHODS OF PREVENTION^[1]

The district shall utilize a multifaceted approach to suicide prevention which integrates school and community-based supports.

The methods of prevention utilized by the district include, but are not limited to, education, training and awareness; early identification and support for students at risk; and delegation of responsibility for planning and coordination of suicide prevention efforts.

Information received in confidence from a student may be revealed to the student's parents/guardians, the building principal, the threat assessment team and/or crisis response/intervention team or other appropriate authority when the health, welfare or safety of the student or any other person is clearly in jeopardy, in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.[3][9][10][11][12][13][14]

INSURANCE

Student accident insurance may be purchased through the school. Every student will be given information about this program at the beginning of the school year.

The school has insurance, which will cover any student injured while participating in an extracurricular activity. If a student is injured, he/she should come to the main office to pick up a student insurance form.

The school district shall provide notice of the children's health insurance program through the Insurance Department to the parent of guardian of each student enrolled in the district during the school year.

KINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT

All persons between the ages of five and twenty-one years of age whose legal residence is within the Tamaqua Area School District are entitled to the privilege of kindergarten, elementary, and secondary schools free of tuition.

Children who are legal residents of the Tamaqua Area School District and who will have attained the age of five years before September 1st may be admitted to kindergarten and children who have attained the age of six years before September 1st may be admitted to first grade at the beginning of such school year unless admission is postponed by the school psychologist. Parents are not required to send children to school until they are six years old. At the age of six, school attendance is compulsory. Each student must provide proof of age, such as a birth certificate, at the time of registration in the public schools.

Registration is held each spring. The exact dates and locations will be announced in the local newspaper along with age and eligibility requirements. Children who attend the Tamaqua Area kindergarten need not register for first grade. Parents must present a birth or baptismal certificate, immunization record, and proof of residence as part of a child's eligibility to enroll.

Commented [TO1]: Change in student handbook. Should be 6 years old.

STUDENT WITHDRAWALS / TRANSFERS

Students who are leaving the Tamaqua Area School District to transfer to another school or withdraw from school are required to complete a withdrawal form. This form requires return of all equipment and books to the school enrolled, a conference with the guidance counselor (for high school students withdrawing because of age), and then finishing with withdrawal process in the district office. If a guardian wishes to withdraw a child that is not their biological child, proof of guardianship may be required and should be brought to the district office.

STUDENT RECORDS

The school district will maintain educational records for all students for legitimate educational purposes. Board Policy 216 addresses the rights of parents, guardians and eligible students to inspect and review student records. This policy is available on the District website. Information regarding FERPA will be provided to students on the first day of school.

Progress toward high school graduation shall be based on the student's ability to achieve the established academic standards and pass the required subjects and electives necessary to earn the number of credits mandated by the Board for graduation.[7]

Middle school students shall be promoted when all major subjects are successfully completed; when a student fails one (1) major subject; when a student fails two (2) major subjects, but one (1) is made up in summer school; when a student fails three (3) major subjects, but two (2) are made up in summer school. A middle school student is not promoted when four (4) or more major subjects are failed. Students may not fail the same subject in consecutive years.

Eighth grade students will only be promoted upon the successful completion of Reading, Thinking, and Writing, Math, and Science during the regular school year or summer school. With administrative approval, students that do not meet the above criteria may be promoted based on a proficient or better score on the PA state standardized tests relative to the Keystone Exams.

Students will be promoted from Kindergarten through grade five by meeting reading, language arts and math content standards and demonstrating sufficient academic growth toward these prerequisite content standards for success at the next grade level. Prerequisite standards are measured by grade level assessments. Student achievement is determined on the basis of objective data using multiple assessments.

GRADUATION GUIDELINES

Accurate recording of each student's achievement of academic standards shall be maintained, as required by law and state regulations. Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, all students must meet all Act 158 requirements to attain a Tamaqua Area Diploma.[8][9][13]

All regular students are required to complete the following requirements in order to receive a Tamaqua High School diploma:

Language Arts	4.0 credits
Social Studies	3.0 credits
Math	3.0 credits
Science	3.0 credits
Physical Education/Health	1.5 credits
Arts and Humanities	1.5 credits
Computer Applications I	0.5 credits
Other Electives	5.0 credits
Y.E.S.	0.5 credits
Total	22.0 credits

Each student (except Vo-Tech) is required to schedule a minimum of 5.5 credits per year at Tamaqua Area High School. This is equivalent to physical education and 5.3 credits of academic courses. Community service does not count toward the 5.5 credits per year requirement.

Vo-Tech students are required to select 2.6 credits at Tamaqua Area High School. This is equivalent to physical education and 2.5 credits of academic courses.

Students shall be informed of graduation requirements they are required to complete.

Periodic warnings shall be issued to students in danger of not fulfilling graduation requirements.

A student who has completed the requirements for graduation shall not be denied a diploma as a disciplinary measure, but the student may be denied participation in the graduation ceremony when personal conduct so warrants.[14]

A list of all candidates for the award of a diploma shall be submitted to the Board for its approval, with the list subject to change.

Students who have not completed the requirements for graduation and have withdrawn from school shall be encouraged to qualify for a state equivalency diploma by participating in the General Educational Development Testing Program (GED).

Early Graduation

Students may wish to graduate early from high school to seek early admission to college, to plan on becoming an exchange student, to seek employment in a coordinated or career-planned experience work program, or to receive on-the-job training.

All applications for early graduation must be filed through the guidance counselor by the last school day of the student's sophomore year. Students who wish to apply for this program shall meet with the guidance counselor early in their high school career so an individually planned program of instruction can be organized and implemented.

All applications will be considered individually and must be accompanied by a letter of acceptance from an accredited institution of higher learning, a letter relative to the coordinated or career-planned experience from the employer, or a statement from the parent/guardian indicating one (1) of the above reasons is imminent.

SCHOOL PROPERTY

Integrated Pest Management Policy

Pest management strategies may include education, exclusion, sanitation, maintenance, biological and mechanical controls, and site appropriate pesticides.

An integrated pest management decision shall consist of the following five (5) steps:

1. Pest species identification.
2. Estimate pest populations and compare to established action thresholds.
3. Select the appropriate management tactics based on current on-site information.
4. Assess effectiveness of pest management.
5. Keep appropriate records.

An Integrated Pest Management Program shall include the education of staff, students, and the public about IPM policies and procedures.

When pesticide applications are scheduled in school buildings and on school grounds, the district shall provide notification in accordance with law, including:[4]

1. Posting a pest control sign in an appropriate area.
2. Providing the pest control information sheet to all individuals working in the school building.
3. Providing required notice to all parents/guardians of students or to a list of parents/guardians who have requested notification of individual applications of pesticides.

Where pests pose an immediate threat to the health and safety of students or employees, the district may authorize an emergency pesticide application and shall notify by telephone any parent/guardian who has requested such notification.[\[4\]](#)

The district shall maintain detailed records of all chemical pest control treatments for at least three (3) years. Information regarding pest management activities shall be available to the public at the district's administrative office.[\[4\]](#)

School Facilities

Approval for the use of a designated facility shall be granted by the Board only when the size of the group to be accommodated is sufficient to justify the use of that specific facility.

The Board shall permit the use of school buildings and other facilities by any organization operated for private gain, or for any purpose involving private gain, when:

1. Use is sponsored by other organizations that do not operate for private gain.
2. Use will not benefit principally the organization, which operates for private gain.
3. A worthy educational, civic, or charitable purpose will be served.
4. A substantial group in the community will benefit from the organization.
5. Alternate facilities are unavailable or available only at undue cost or inconvenience.

The Board shall permit the use of school facilities by community groups on Sundays (after 12 noon) when such use is in the interest of district residents. Additionally, use will be permitted and only when it will not interfere with religious education efforts of local institutions.

Authorized school personnel shall have free access to all facilities at all times, subject to Board approval.

Nonprofit educational agencies, as well as educational associations to which either the school system or individual staff members belong, shall be permitted by the Board to use school facilities for public or professional meetings when meetings would be of interest to the staff, of value to the school, or of benefit to schools or school personnel elsewhere.

Profit-making organizations shall not be permitted to use school facilities unless the school would benefit from the use.

The Board shall establish a schedule of fees for the use of school facilities by approved groups.[\[1\]](#)

Visitation

Upon arrival at the school, visitors must register at the office where they will sign in and sign out and receive instructions.

Staff members shall be expected to require that a visitor has registered at the school office and received authorization to be present for the purpose of conducting business.

No visitor may confer with a student in school without the approval of the principal.

Should an emergency require that a student be called to the school office to meet a visitor, the principal or designee shall be present during the meeting.

In accordance with 22 PA Code Sec. 14.108, parents of students with disabilities may request a classroom visit. The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible to establish procedures for parent visitations to special education classrooms.[\[1\]](#)

STUDENT COMPLAINT PROCESS

The student should first make the complaint known to the staff member most closely involved or, if none is identifiable, a guidance counselor; and both shall attempt to resolve the issue informally and directly.

For complaints that must move beyond the first step, the student shall prepare a written statement of his/her complaint which shall set forth:

1. Specific nature of the complaint and a brief statement of relevant facts.
2. Manner and extent to which the student believes s/he has been adversely affected.
3. Relief sought by the student.
4. Reasons why the student feels entitled to the relief sought.

The complaint may then be submitted, in turn, to the building principal, the Superintendent and the Board, with a suitable period of time allowed at each level for hearing of the complaint and preparation of a response.

At each level the student shall be afforded the opportunity to be heard personally by the school authority.

At each step the school authority hearing the complaint may call in the student's parent.

The student may seek the help of a parent/guardian at any step.

PARTICIPATION BY HOME EDUCATION STUDENTS

The following conditions shall govern participation in the district's extracurricular activities and interscholastic athletic programs by home education students, who shall:

1. Be a resident of the district.
2. Meet the required eligibility criteria.[3][4]
3. Maintain appropriate insurance coverage, consistent with the coverage requirements for district students.[4]
4. Comply with Board policies and school rules and administrative regulations regarding extracurricular activities, interscholastic athletics, and student conduct.[3][4][9][10][11][12]
5. Comply with policies, rules and regulations, or their equivalent, of the activity's governing organization.[1][2]
6. Meet attendance and reporting requirements established for all participants of the activity or program.[8]
7. Meet the requirements for physical examinations and physical fitness and any height and/or weight restrictions.[1][4]
8. Comply with all requirements and directives of the district staff, coaches, activity advisors and administrators involved with the extracurricular activity or interscholastic athletic program.

WHAT IS FERPA?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that affords parents the right to have access to their children's education records, the right to seek to have the records amended, and the right to have some control over the disclosure of personally identifiable information from the education records. When a student turns 18 years old, or enters a postsecondary institution at any age, the rights under FERPA transfer from the parents to the student ("eligible student"). The FERPA statute is found at 20 U.S.C. § 1232g and the FERPA regulations are found at 34 CFR Part 99.

More information can be found here <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/faq/what-ferpa>

The rights provided by FERPA to a parent include, but are not limited to:

• **Access to Education Records**

Under FERPA, a school or State educational agency (SEA) must provide a parent with an opportunity to inspect and review their child's education records within a reasonable period of time, but not more than 45 calendar days following receipt of a request. A school or SEA is generally not required to provide copies of the education records unless circumstances effectively prevent the parent from exercising the right to inspect and review the education records. For example, if a parent who does not live within commuting distance of their child's school requests that the school provide access to his or her child's education records, the school would be required to make other arrangements for the parent to inspect and review the requested records, or to provide a copy of the requested records.

• **Amendment of Education Records**

Under FERPA, a parent has the right to seek amendment or correction of their child's education records that the parent believes to be inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the child's rights of privacy. However, while a school is not required to amend an education record in accordance with a parent's request, a school is required to consider the request for amendment, to inform

the parent of its decision, and, if the request is denied, to advise the parent of his or her right to a hearing on the matter. If, as a result of the hearing, a school decides not to amend the education records, then the parent has the right to insert a statement in the record commenting on the contested information or stating why the parent disagrees with the decision, or both. That statement must remain with the contested part of the education record for as long as the record is maintained and be included whenever the contested part is disclosed. While a parent has the right to seek to amend non-substantive factual errors in the student's education records, the right is not unlimited, and a school is not required by FERPA to afford a parent the right to seek to change substantive decisions made by school officials, such as substantive decisions made in the context of grades given to a student based on their performance, other evaluations of the student's performance, or disciplinary decisions. These substantive decisions also include evaluations of whether a student has a disability and is eligible for special education and related services, disagreements about the content of a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), or the student's educational placement under Part B of IDEA. While under FERPA a parent may seek amendment to correct a non-substantive factual error in an IEP, a parent should utilize the Part B of IDEA dispute resolution procedures (State complaints, mediation, or due process hearing procedures) to resolve disputes with a school regarding substantive matters. Each State has resources to help parents to participate effectively in their children's education and development. State contact information is available at <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/contacts/#state>.

• Disclosure of Education Records

Under FERPA, a school generally may not disclose PII from a student's education records to a third party unless the student's parent has provided prior written consent. However, there are a number of exceptions to FERPA's general consent requirement, some of which are described below. Under these exceptions, schools are permitted to disclose PII from education records without consent, but they are not required to do so by FERPA.

School Official

FERPA allows "school officials," including teachers, within the school to obtain access to PII from education records without consent, provided that the school has determined the officials have a "legitimate educational interest" in the information. The school's annual notification of rights under FERPA must specify the criteria for determining who constitutes a "school official" and what the school considers to be a "legitimate educational interest." Typically, a school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Also, under the "school officials" exception to the consent requirement, FERPA permits a school to disclose education records to contractors (e.g., software/application vendors, lawyers), consultants (e.g., nutritional or information technology consultants), volunteers (e.g., home room parent volunteers, field trip chaperones, student volunteers), or other third parties to whom the school has outsourced institutional services or functions, provided that the outside party: 1. Performs an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use employees; 2. Is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of education records; 3. Is subject to the requirements in FERPA that PII from education records may be used only for the purposes for which the disclosure was made, and which govern the redisclosure of PII from education records; and 4. Meets the criteria specified in the school's annual notification of FERPA rights for being a school official with a legitimate educational interest in the education records. More information regarding the use of school volunteers and FERPA is available at <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/training/school-volunteers-and-ferpa>.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Board declares it to be the policy of this district to provide to all persons equal access to all categories of employment in this district, regardless of race, color, age, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, marital status, genetic information, pregnancy or handicap/disability. The district shall make reasonable accommodations for identified physical and mental impairments that constitute disabilities, consistent with the requirements of federal and state laws and regulations. [\[1\]](#)[\[2\]](#)[\[3\]](#)[\[4\]](#)[\[5\]](#)[\[6\]](#)[\[7\]](#)[\[8\]](#)[\[9\]](#)[\[10\]](#)[\[11\]](#)[\[12\]](#)

The Board also declares it to be the policy of this district to comply with federal law and regulations under Title IX prohibiting sexual harassment, which is a form of unlawful discrimination on the basis of sex. Such discrimination shall be referred to throughout this policy as Title IX sexual harassment. Inquiries regarding the application of Title IX to the district may be referred to the Title IX Coordinator, to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education, or both.

The Board directs that the foregoing statement of Board policy be included in each student and staff handbook, and that this policy and related attachments be posted to the district's website.

The Board requires a notice stating that the district does not discriminate in any manner, including Title IX sexual harassment, in any district education program or activity, to be issued to all students, parents/guardians, employment applicants, employees and all unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with the district. All discrimination notices and information shall include the title, office address, telephone number and email address of the individual(s) designated as the Compliance Officer and Title IX Coordinator.

The Board declares it to be the policy of this district to provide an equal opportunity for all students to achieve their maximum potential through the programs and activities offered in the schools without discrimination on the basis of race, color, age, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy or handicap/disability. [\[1\]](#)[\[2\]](#)[\[3\]](#)[\[4\]](#)[\[5\]](#)[\[6\]](#)[\[7\]](#)[\[8\]](#)[\[9\]](#)[\[10\]](#)[\[11\]](#)[\[12\]](#)[\[13\]](#)[\[14\]](#)[\[15\]](#)[\[16\]](#)[\[17\]](#)

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throughout this policy as Title IX sexual harassment. Inquiries regarding the application of Title IX to the district may be referred to the Title IX Coordinator, to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education, or both.

The district is committed to the maintenance of a safe, positive learning environment for all students that is free from discrimination by providing all students course offerings, counseling, assistance, services, employment, athletics and extracurricular activities without any form of discrimination, including Title IX sexual harassment. Discrimination is inconsistent with the rights of students and the educational and programmatic goals of the district and is prohibited at or, in the course of, district-sponsored programs or activities, including transportation to or from school or school-sponsored activities.

Violations of this policy, including acts of retaliation as described in this policy, or knowingly providing false information, may result in disciplinary consequences under applicable Board policy and procedures.[18][19][20][21][22][23]

The Board directs that the foregoing statement of Board policy be included in each student and staff handbook, and that this policy and related attachments be posted to the district's website.

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ATTENDANCE

ABSENCE PROCEDURES

School district policy states, "The maximum allowable days for absences will be ten (10) days, after which a doctor's note will be required for all further absences." As regards pre-approved educational trips, "the absence may not cause the student to exceed the ten (10) day limit."

Parents should call the school before 9:00 a.m. (HS and MS) and 10:00 a.m. (elementary) when a student will be absent. If a parent does not call, the school will usually attempt to contact the home to check on the absence.

All students are required to submit a written excuse from a doctor or signed by a parent or guardian, even if a phone call has been received. Receiving a written excuse from a parent does not in itself qualify the absence as excused. The absence must be for a legal reason according to the school code or school policy.

A doctor's excuse is required for admission to school any time the school authorities deem it necessary. Doctor's notes will always be required for an absence of five consecutive days or more. School authorities reserve the right to refuse doctor's notes when a student is prone to excessive absenteeism.

All excuses must be turned in within **two days of being absent (example: if you are absent Monday and return to school on Tuesday, the absence note must be handed -in no later than Wednesday)**. This includes parental or doctor's notes. Failure to turn in a written absence excuse will result in an illegal/unexcused absence and Saturday detention.

Students are expected to make up class work promptly upon returning from their absences and should make the necessary arrangements with their teachers immediately.

Teachers may determine the length of time, which a student may have in making up work missed due to absence. This may range from one to five days and generally is based upon the length of the absence.

The following system will be utilized at the middle school and high school to determine student attendance:

- Student arrives before 11:00 a.m. = AM Tardy
- Student arrives after 11:00 a.m. = 1/2 Day Absent
- Student departs 8:00 a.m.-12:45 p.m. = 1/2 Day Absent
- Student departs after 12:45 p.m. = Full Day Present

Students are generally expected to be in school by 8:30 a.m. in order to participate in an extracurricular activity or practice on that day. Exceptions can be made in accordance with school policy.

The following system will be utilized at the elementary school to determine student attendance:

- Student arrives 8:41 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. = AM Tardy
- Student arrives after 12:00 p.m. = 1/2 Day Absent
- Student departs before 1:00 p.m. = 1/2 Day Absent
- Student departs after 1:00 p.m. = Full Day Present

ATTENDANCE LAWS

Regular attendance at school is imperative to academic success. Absence sometimes is unavoidable. In those cases when illness, or other extreme emergency makes it impossible to attend school, the law requires an excuse from a parent/guardian and/or physician. The only reasons (as stated by the Pennsylvania School Code's Compulsory Attendance Laws) for being absent from school are: 1)illness, 2)family emergency, 3)prearranged doctor or dentist appointment, 4)educational trip with prior school approval, 5)religious holiday, 6)death in the family, 7)court appearance. Absences for reasons other than those mentioned above are considered illegal. See UNEXCUSED/ILLEGAL ABSENCES.

DOCTOR REQUIREMENT

School district policy states, “The maximum allowable days for absences will be ten (10) days, after which a doctor’s note will be required for all further absences.”

A student who is excessively absent may be required to submit a physician’s note for every day of absence. A warning letter will be issued once a student has accumulated ten (10) absences (see “**reasons for being absent**” above). After these ten (10) absences, the student will be required to bring a doctor’s note for every absence thereafter. **This applies even when any or all of the initial days have been excused with doctor’s notes.** In addition, due to excessive absenteeism, administration reserves the right to require a doctor’s note for absences at any time.

Once a student is required to bring a doctor’s note, every day of absence and every tardy will be considered illegal/unexcused unless a physician verifies the reason for the absence.

When a student is required to bring a doctor’s note for absences, parents should contact the principal when/if the need arises for that student to miss school for reasons other than illness. This contact should be made prior to the absence.

School authorities reserve the right to refuse doctor’s notes when a student is prone to excessive absenteeism.

EXCUSAL FOR APPOINTMENTS

As much as possible, appointments should be scheduled for after school. However, if this is not possible, the following procedures must be followed:

1. A note from the parent/guardian or appointment card stating the reason for the absence must be submitted to the office before 8:05 a.m. (m.s. and h.s.) 9:05 a.m. (elementary). A phone number indicating where the appointment can be verified should be included. If the appointment should occur before or during this time period, a phone call should be made to the office before 8:30 a.m. (m.s. and h.s.) 9:30 a.m. (elementary) notifying the school of the absence. A student returning to school from an appointment should report directly to the office and present a note or appointment card to the office secretary verifying the appointment. The student will be issued a pass to enter his/her scheduled class (m.s. and h.s.).
2. Record will be kept of the time, date, and purpose of the student’s absence (tardy or early dismissal). Faculty will be notified of the absence.
3. Failure to return to school after an appointment is considered truancy and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

EXTENDED ILLNESS ABSENCE

In the event of an extended illness where school attendance is not possible but the student is capable of doing work at home, homebound instruction will be provided by the school district at no expense to the parent/guardian. The following procedure must be adhered to:

1. If it is known that the absence will be four weeks or more in length, the principal or guidance counselor must be notified immediately. This will help to initiate the homebound instruction process.
2. A doctor’s note must be provided to satisfy the attendance laws. The note must include the nature of the illness, a request by the physician for homebound instruction, and the duration required for homebound instruction.
3. Approval must be granted by the superintendent.
4. Teachers will be appointed to provide homebound instruction, and a schedule will be set up by the teacher(s) and parent/guardian, not to exceed five hours per week. Homebound instruction is a temporary measure, not intended to replace regular school attendance.

If the absence is not of great length, but of at least three days in length, arrangements can be made to send homework home. Parents/Guardians should contact the office secretary to make these arrangements.

TAKE YOUR CHILD TO WORK DAY

Each spring, requests are received for students to participate in Take Your Child to Work Day. Students who intend to participate in this activity must receive prior approval from the principal to participate. Students who do not have prior approval will not be excused for this activity. Students who are approved to participate will be required to provide the office with an agenda and an essay on the educational benefit of the activity upon returning to school. For attendance purposes, this will be reported as an excused absence.

TARDINESS

Illness, health-related appointments, extreme family emergencies, and impassable roads due to weather conditions are the only legal excuses for tardiness.

Students arriving at school/homeroom after 7:35 a.m. (m.s. and h.s.) will be admitted as excused only with a parental note or a note from a doctor or dentist for a legal reason.

For all other reasons, a student will receive an illegal tardy. A student may accumulate three (3) illegal tardies without consequence. This allows for the occasional power outage, oversleeping, traffic, flat tire, etc., which are not legal reasons for tardiness. The fourth and all subsequent tardies will result in disciplinary action. Students with excessive tardiness (10 or more), whether excused or illegal, will be required to present a doctor’s note upon arrival to school or be marked illegally tardy and receive disciplinary consequences.

Students who come late to school illegally may be in violation of the Pennsylvania School Code which requires students to attend school and establishes regulations regarding the amount of time a student must attend school and the required subjects a student must take.

Consequences for illegal tardiness may include, but are not limited to detention, out of school suspension, arrest for truancy.

UNEXCUSED/ILLEGAL ABSENCES

For a student to receive maximum benefit from his education, it is important for that student to attend school. Although some work may be made up outside of school, one can never replace the lectures, demonstrations, and classroom discussions, which take place during the school day. Participating in this process is essential in being a good student. For this reason, attendance is a priority and attendance laws will be strictly enforced.

The school district will follow the state guidelines for illegal absences as follows:

1. First offense: A warning letter will be sent home following the first illegal absences. The building principal will issue appropriate consequences (**H.S. Saturday Detention**) as outlined in the student discipline code.
2. Second offense: A second warning letter will be sent home following the second illegal absence. The building principal will issue appropriate consequences (**H.S. Saturday Detention**) as per the student discipline code.
3. Third offense: A third warning letter will be sent home following the third illegal absence. The building principal will issue appropriate consequences (**H.S. Saturday Detention**) as outlined in the student discipline code. A Truancy Elimination Meeting will be scheduled with the parent or guardian.
4. Subsequent offenses: Subsequent offenses will result in a disciplinary action as outlined in the student handbook, a referral to the local magistrate for a truancy citation, a referral to juvenile probation and Children and Youth.

Parents should work with the school to ensure good attendance.

High School Only: Since a student who is frequently absent from class cannot gain the same educational value as the one who attends regularly, illegal/unexcused absences can result in a deduction of the numerical averages on the student's report card. This deduction will compensate for class discussion, lecture, and demonstrations missed when the absence could have been avoided.

After 3 days of illegal/unexcused absence in the school year, the student will receive a grade deduction of 3 percentage points for each day of illegal absence thereafter in each subject missed on that day. The student will still be required to make up work missed.

For example, if student A was illegally absent three times from September to January, every illegal day after that would result in a 3 point deduction for the quarter grade. If that student would be accumulate two illegal absences in February, 6 points would be deducted from the third quarter grade in each subject. If the student's quarter grade was a 90 %, he would receive an 84% (90-6).

Portions of the school day can accumulate into half and full illegal days and students will be subject to point deductions for classes missed when a portion of the school day is deemed illegal.

VACATIONS

Even though attendance is required, there are times when students may benefit from experiences they may have on vacation.

The Board directs that any parent or guardian planning to take their child on a trip, which necessitates missing regular school days, must submit a request in writing to the superintendent at least ten days before the date of the departure. An itinerary of the trip's events should be included with the request to aid in decision-making. The superintendent reserves the right to reject any request.

School district policy states, "The maximum allowable days for absences will be ten (10) days, after which a doctor's note will be required for all further absences." As regards pre-approved educational trips, "the absence may not cause the student to exceed the ten (10) day limit." Please refer to the attendance policy on the district web page for further detail and clarification regarding educational trips. Please see the above section on Unexcused/Illegal Absences.

If the vacation is not approved, the student may go, but all of the days of absence will be considered unexcused/illegal.

Upon return to school from a vacation, students must submit a one page, typed summary explaining the educational merit of the trip to the principal. Failure to do so will result in the declaration of the days missed as unexcused/illegal and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

DISCIPLINE CODE

PHILOSOPHY OF DISCIPLINE

Tamaqua schools have traditionally emphasized good student discipline. It is our belief that discipline is the positive direction of behavior toward established standards of conduct, based upon reason, good judgment, rights and responsibilities.

It is understood that educational goals cannot be achieved in an environment that is less than orderly and that discipline is necessary to ensure an environment in which each person may live and learn to his full capacity and in harmony with others.

Ideally, discipline is self-directed and self-controlled. Schools, communities, and parents share the responsibility for helping students develop self-discipline. When self-control falters and self-discipline fails, disciplinary forces outside the individual must be imposed in an effort to uphold the law, to protect the rights of others, and for the individual's benefit.

In the Tamaqua schools, as in the community at large, certain rules, procedures and standards of conduct are established to guide students through constructive growth into mature adulthood. These rules, procedures and standards are presented in this document so that all members of the school community – students, parents, teachers, and administrators – know what is required. By working together under clearly stated and consistently enforced regulations, we can continue Tamaqua's tradition of firm and fair discipline.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

- Attend school regularly and punctually.
- Be self-controlled and non-disruptive while attending school activities and while being transported to and from school and school activities.
- Dress and groom to meet fair standards of safety and health and not to cause disruption to the educational process.
- Be reasonable, modest, self-controlled, and considerate in your relationship with peers.
- Maintain relationships with those who are in a position of responsibility or authority that are mutually respectful.
- Use language and gestures that are respectful and free of profanity or obscenities.
- Respect private, public, and school property.

- Be aware of, and cooperate with, the school rules, procedures, and standards of conduct herein outlined.

STUDENT RIGHTS

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's regulations and guidelines on student rights and responsibilities are contained in Pennsylvania Code Title 22, Chapter 12 and subsequent versions thereof. Many teachers have copies and a copy is available in the Principal's office. Tamaqua school procedures, rules, and standards of conduct are based upon and are in accordance with that document.

Regarding student rights to free speech and free expression, these freedoms may be limited in the schools when such speech or actions infringe upon the rights of others or cause a disruption of the educational process.

FORMAL HEARING PROCEDURE

Education is a fundamental right and students are afforded all appropriate elements of due process if they are to be excluded from school. In a case involving a possible expulsion, the student is entitled to a formal hearing, which is a fundamental element of due process.

A formal hearing may be held before the board of school directors or a duly authorized committee of the board, preferably composed of no fewer than three members of the school board. The hearing committee's decision is advisory to the school board where expulsion is recommended. A majority vote of the entire school board is required to expel a student.

At the formal hearing, the following due process requirements are to be observed.

- Notification of the charges in writing, sent to the parents or guardian by certified mail, and to the student.
- Sufficient notice of the time and place of the hearing.
- The right to an impartial tribunal.
- The right to be represented by counsel.
- The right to be presented with the names of witnesses against the student, and copies of the statements and affidavits of those witnesses.
- The right to demand that any such witnesses appear in person and answer questions or be cross-examined.
- The student's right to testify and produce witnesses on his own behalf.
- A record must be kept of the hearing, either by a stenographer or tape recorder. The student is entitled, at the student's expense, to a copy of the transcript.
- The proceeding must be held with all reasonable speed.

If requested by the student or the student's parent, the hearing shall be held in public.

Where the student is dissatisfied with the result of the hearing, recourse can be had to the appropriate state court. If it is alleged that a constitutional issue is involved, the student may file a claim for relief in the appropriate federal district court.

DUE PROCESS REQUIREMENTS FOR SUSPENSIONS

For out-of-school suspensions exceeding three days or in-school suspensions exceeding ten days, the minimum procedural requirements are:

- The student is informed orally of the reason for the suspension and is given a chance to respond.
- The parents or guardians, the student, and the superintendent or the secretary of the board of school directors are notified immediately in writing of the reasons for the suspension.
- Sufficient notice of the time and place of the informal hearing must be given.
- There is a right to question any witnesses present at the hearing.
- There is a right of the student to speak and to produce witnesses on his own behalf.
- The district must offer to hold the informal hearing within the first five days of the suspension.

The informal hearing is meant to encourage the student's parents or guardian to meet with the principal to discuss the circumstances surrounding the events for which the student is being suspended or to show why the student should not be suspended. Another purpose of this hearing is to discuss ways by which future offenses can be avoided.

In all suspension cases, the student has the responsibility to make up exams and work missed and must be permitted the right to complete the assignments under the guidelines set by the district. Also, students on in-school suspension must receive some type of instruction.

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

Acts of bullying or harassment directed toward a student by another student or group of students will not be tolerated. Such acts may be physical, verbal, emotional, racist, or sexual. Examples of bullying may include, but are not limited to, name-calling, using racial slurs, saying or writing malicious things about another individual, making threatening remarks, making another feel uncomfortable or scared, taking or damaging personal possessions, hitting, tripping, kicking, shoving, persistent staring, or making someone do something he or she does not want to do. All acts of bullying and/or harassment will be taken seriously and will be subject to the school's discipline code. Persistent acts of bullying and/or harassment will be prosecuted to the fullest extent and may lead to expulsion. A sexual harassment policy is provided to all students on the first day of school. This policy is found in section 200 Pupils code 249 on the district website.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Corporal punishment is prohibited by law. However, even as corporal punishment is prohibited, reasonable force may be used by a teacher or school authority to quell a disturbance, to obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects, for the purpose of self defense, or for the protection of persons and property. Under no circumstance should reasonable force be used in such a manner as to cause bodily injury. When such measures are necessary, school authorities will notify parents.

DETENTION/ACADEMIC DETENTION

The principal assigns detentions for violations of the student discipline code. Detentions may last 30 minutes to 90 minutes, depending on the nature of the infraction. Students will be expected to report to the detention room immediately after school on the day of the assigned detention. Saturday detentions may be assigned for three hours, from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Parents will have 24 hours notice prior to a detention and are responsible for providing transportation. When serving a detention, students will follow these rules:

1. Arrive promptly to detention.
2. Work the entire period on homework.
3. Leave the building immediately at the conclusion of detention. Students will be permitted to visit lockers to retrieve items if necessary, but must then exit immediately and may not roam the halls.
4. Failure to attend a detention without previous consultation with the school principal will result in further disciplinary action.
5. **A missed detention will automatically be rescheduled for the next available detention time.**

Teachers may assign their own after-school detentions in their classrooms. Academic detentions generally occur when a student fails to complete homework assignments or is falling behind in a subject. These ½ hour to hour long sessions allow the teacher to work with the student in a tutoring session or for the student to complete missing assignments. Students will receive 24 hours notice of an academic detention.

SEARCH PROCEDURES

School authorities have the right to inspect lockers and their contents and a student's personal belongings at appropriate intervals throughout the school year.

School authorities may search a student's locker, its contents, and a student's personal belongings and seize any illegal materials. Such materials may be used as evidence against the student in disciplinary proceedings. Prior to a locker search, students shall be notified and given an opportunity to be present. However, where authorities have a reasonable suspicion that the locker contains materials, which pose a threat to the health, welfare, and safety of students in the school, student lockers may be searched without prior warning and without the student's presence.

A search of student's lockers using a dog can be requested by the principal or the police. If the police are invited into the school by school officials to search lockers using a dog, the school officials maintain authority. Search procedures listed above will be followed.

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE

As part of the Tamaqua Area School District's Safe Schools Initiative, all buildings in the district are equipped with video cameras and recording devices for added security. All visitors who enter the elementary, middle or high schools acknowledge that they are subject to video surveillance upon entering the building. Video/audio surveillance can also be on school transportation as outlined in board policy 700 Property code 713.

Commented [TO2]: Policy needs to be listed in handbook

WEAPONS

A student is forbidden to possess, handle, or transfer in school, or on school property, any object, which can reasonably be considered a weapon.

Such objects include, but are not limited to: knives, cutting instruments, martial arts devices, firearms, air rifles and pistols, slingshot devices, explosive devices, and any other tools, instruments, or implements capable of inflicting bodily injury. Also included are "look-alikes" of those items mentioned above.

If a student is found to have a weapon in school, the following procedures will be followed:

- If the principal or school officials suspect that the offense is a violation of criminal law, the appropriate law enforcement agencies will be notified.
- The building principal or school official will immediately notify the Superintendent of the incident.
- The parents/guardians will be notified.
- The student will be removed from the premises as soon as possible.
- The student will be subject to a Level IV disciplinary action.
- If the weapon is a firearm, the prevailing state and federal regulations will be followed.

The Federal Gun-Free School Act of 1994 mandates a policy requiring the expulsion from school for a period of not less than one year for any student who brings a firearm to school.

A detailed description of the Tamaqua Area School District Weapons Policy will be distributed to all students on the first day of school.

DISCIPLINE CODE

This section describes various offenses of the school's discipline policy and the actions which will take place when they occur. No code or policy can hope to cover every variation of circumstances. However it is expected that a consistent administration of this policy will be a fair and reasonable deterrent to misconduct.

Misconduct is divided into four (4) levels. The levels progress from minor teacher-corrected misbehaviors to the intervention of school administrators or local law enforcement officers (police) for more serious offenses. Each level is of greater severity than the previous level or reflects the habitual repetition of a lower level offense.

When students continually violate portions of the discipline code, the penalty will escalate. A minor infraction may result in a detention. For the habitual repetition of the same offense, the consequence may escalate to an in-school suspension, an out-of-school suspension, and even an expulsion.

LEVEL I

DESCRIPTION: Misbehavior on the part of the student, which impedes orderly classroom procedures or interferes with the orderly operation of the school.

PROCEDURE: Immediate and consistent intervention by the teacher who is supervising the student or observes the misbehavior will include an anecdotal record of the offense(s) and immediate disciplinary action. The teacher may wish to relate/refer the incident to the school principal, guidance counselor, other school personnel or parent/guardian.

EXAMPLES OF LEVEL I INFRACTIONS:

- Eating or drinking in unauthorized areas
- Horseplay or scuffling
- Dress Code violation
- Loud boisterous noise
- Minor defacing of school property
- Possession/use of non-instructional item (portable or personal stereo, games, playing card, squirt gun, cellular phones, pagers, laser pointers, etc.)
- Public display of affection
- Running in the classroom, halls, cafeteria, locker rooms, etc.
- Tardiness to school, class, study hall, P.E., lunch, etc.
- Sleeping in class or study hall
- Violation of classroom procedures established by teacher

LEVEL II

DESCRIPTION: Misbehaviors on the part of the student, which result from the continuation of Level I misbehaviors and require the intervention of the school administration to correct the misbehavior, and/or misbehaviors which tend to disrupt the orderly climate and conduct of the school, serious enough to require corrective action on the part of school administration.

PROCEDURE: Immediate referral to the school principal for disciplinary action. Teachers and parents/guardians will be informed of the consequence of the action(s). A record will be kept in the middle school office of the offense(s) and the disciplinary action(s) taken.

EXAMPLES OF LEVEL II INFRACTIONS:

- Continuation of unmodified Level I behaviors
- Cutting an assigned area
- Leaving school grounds without administrative permission
- Unexcused/illegal absence
- Excessive/illegal tardiness
- Bus disturbance
- Cafeteria disturbance
- Dressing in such a manner as to cause a disruption in the educational process
- Pushing and shoving
- Disrespect/defiance toward faculty, staff, or administration
- Insubordination
- Cutting detention
- Unsuccessful in-school suspension
- Cheating or lying
- Gambling
- Throwing objects (pencils, books, snowballs, etc.)
- Loitering around or in other school buildings
- Falsification of records, passes, excuses, schedules, etc.
- Bullying/harassment
- Violation of the Internet Access Policy
- Possession of obscene materials or use of obscene language or gestures
- Use of inappropriate references to drug/alcohol use/possession
- Misbehavior at a school-sponsored activity/event
- Smoking or possession/use of tobacco products and/or paraphernalia

LEVEL III

DESCRIPTION: Misbehaviors on the part of the student, which result from the continuation of Level I and Level II misbehaviors and require the intervention of the school administration to correct the misbehavior, and/or misbehaviors, which tend to disrupt the orderly climate and conduct of the school, serious enough to require corrective action on the part of school administration. Such behaviors also include acts against persons and property, as well as those, which might endanger the health or safety of others in the school. These acts might be considered criminal but most frequently can be handled by the disciplinary mechanism in the school. Corrective measures which the school should undertake; however, depend on the extent of the school's resources for correcting the situation in the best interest of all students and personnel.

PROCEDURE: Upon receiving a report of a Level III violation, the school administrator immediately initiates disciplinary action by conducting an investigation and, if necessary, conferring with the teacher who made the report or other witnesses. Following the investigation, the school administrator will contact the parents/guardians of the student to make a report of the findings and consequences should they be necessary. A record will be kept in the middle school office of the offense(s) and the disciplinary action(s) taken.

EXAMPLES OF LEVEL III INFRACTIONS:

- Continuation of unmodified Level I and/or Level II behaviors
- Attempting to or actually breaking into another student's locker
- Assault and/or battery of another student or school personnel
- Fighting
- Sexual harassment
- Indecent exposure
- Extortion
- Theft/possession/sale of another's property
- Intimidation or threatening behavior toward a student and/or school personnel
- Hazing
- Leading or participating in a walkout
- Vandalism

LEVEL IV

DESCRIPTION: Misbehaviors on the part of the student, which result from the continuation of Levels I, II, or III misbehaviors and which require the intervention of the school administration to correct the misbehavior. Such behaviors also include acts, which result in violence to another person(s) or property and which pose a direct threat to the safety of others in the school. These acts are clearly criminal in nature and are so serious that they always require administrative action resulting in the immediate removal of the student from school. The intervention of law enforcement authorities and/or action by the School Board may also be required.

PROCEDURE: Upon verification of the offense, the school administrator will meet with the student. The student will be immediately suspended after due process requirements are met. (See section "Due Process Requirements for Suspension") Parents will be notified and law enforcement officials may also be contacted. Investigations and punishment by these officials is independent of the school's enforcement of its discipline code and does not constitute a double jeopardy. A complete and accurate report is submitted to the superintendent for possible action by the Board of Directors. A report will be kept on file in the middle school office.

EXAMPLES OF LEVEL IV INFRACTIONS:

- Continuation of Levels I, II, III misbehaviors
- Assault and/or battery
- Arson
- Being under the influence of a controlled substance
- Bomb threat
- Engaging in any other conduct contrary to the criminal code or ordinances, the school code, or which create a clear and present danger to the health and welfare of the school community
- Harassment of school personnel
- Leading or participating in a riot
- Possession/use/furnishing/selling of a controlled prescription or over-the-counter substances (alcohol or drugs)
- Possession/use/transfer of dangerous weapons or explosives
- Setting off incendiary devices (firecrackers, smoke bombs, etc.)
- Unwarranted pulling of a fire alarm
- Vandalism of school property or personal property belonging to school personnel

DISCIPLINARY OPTIONS/RESPONSES

Violations of the school discipline code may result in one or more of the following disciplinary options/responses at the discretion of the building level administrator.

- A. Conference with school administrator
- B. Verbal reprimand
- C. Written warning
- D. Withdrawal of Privilege
- E. Detention
- F. Parental Contact
- G. Guidance Referral
- H. Lunch detention
- I. In-school suspension

- J. Out-of-school suspension (1-10 days)
- K. School board policy
- L. Restitution
- M. Police Referral
- N. Referral to outside agency
- O. Temporary removal from class
- P. Charges under the criminal code
- Q. Referral to appropriate law enforcement agencies
- R. 10-day full suspension with an informal hearing
- S. Referral for psychological services
- T. Drug and alcohol policy
- U. BOCA Basic Fire Prevention Code
- V. Formal hearing with a committee of the school board
- W. Expulsion

NOTE: Level I, II, III and IV examples and disciplinary options are not limited to those provided.