

Waterville Elementary School



2024-2025

Student/Parent Handbook

“...so each can learn”

This mission statement reflects the commitment of the WES teachers, staff, school board directors, and administration to life-long learning and offering the specific supports that each child needs. Every initiative, every decision we make, everything to which we commit our time and efforts will support learning not only for each individual student, but for the adults in the building and for our Waterville and Belvidere families.

SUPERINTENDENT of Lamoille North Supervisory Union

Catherine Gallagher, 851-1171

LNMUUSD SCHOOL BOARD DIRECTOR for Waterville

Bart Bezio, bbezio@gmail.com

LNMUUSD SCHOOL BOARD DIRECTOR for Belvidere

Stephanie Sweet, slbsweet802@gmail.com

PRINCIPAL

Jan Epstein, jepstein@lnsd.org

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

TBD

Table of Contents

Welcome Letter.....	4
School Hours.....	5
Faculty and Staff.....	5
School Board Meetings and Policies.....	6
Curriculum and Assessment.....	6
Volunteers and Mentors.....	7
Hot Lunch and Breakfast Program	7
School Calendar and Closings.....	7
Search & Seizure of Students by School Personnel	8
Attendance, Truancy, Tardiness, and Dismissal.....	8
WESPO: Parent Organization.....	11
Appearance and Dress Code.....	11
Animals in School.....	11
Personal Belongings and Electronic Devices.....	11
Cell Phones.....	12
Special School Events.....	12
Fire and Safety Drills.....	12
Telephone.....	12
Dispensing Medications.....	12
Health and Vision Screenings.....	14
Educational Support Team (EST).....	14
Title I Parent-School Compact.....	15
Student Behavior Policy.....	16
Bullying, Harassment, and Hazing Policies & Procedures..	20
Title IX	31
School Bus Rules and Procedures.....	41
Playground Rules.....	43
Acceptable Use of Computers & Internet.....	44
Students' Rights.....	44
Tobacco Prohibition.....	44
Communicating with School.....	45
Complaint Resolution Procedures.....	45
Reporting of Student Progress.....	46
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).....	46
ESSA Public Disclosure Requirements.....	47
Non-Student Use of Grounds.....	47
Field Trip Policy.....	47
Visitors' Procedures.....	48
Safety-Crisis Screening.....	48
School Safety Guidelines.....	49
Essential Early Education Program (EEE).....	49
Act 1 – Vermont’s Sexual Abuse Response System.....	50
Mandated Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect.	50
Head Lice Procedures.....	51
Protection of Pupil Rights Act (PPRA).....	52
WES Library Privileges.....	52
Protocols for weather closures/delay.....	52
School Calendar for 2022-22.....	Last Page

PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

August 2023

Dear Waterville and Belvidere Parents, Guardians, and Students,

The WES community welcomes you to the 2023-24 school year. It is the philosophy of the Waterville Elementary School to provide quality educational programs for all students. We place primary emphasis upon meeting the specific needs of each and every student. This handbook is being provided as a reference manual for each parent/guardian and student to help you be aware of school operating procedures and other useful information. We encourage you to become familiar with this handbook. **There are many areas of the handbook which explain rules and expectations for students, so parents, please review these with your children.** If you have any questions, please call Jan Epstein, Principal, at 521-5550.

We would like to invite parents and other community members of Waterville and Belvidere to become active participants in the education of the children at WES. We believe that the most effective education comes from a partnership between home and school, as well as between school and the local communities. We invite you to contact the school or your child's teacher to find out ways you can become involved in our school and your child's education.

All of us at Waterville Elementary School are extremely proud of our school. We are constantly striving to provide a safe and positive school climate and a meaningful and challenging education, while being sensitive to the individual needs and learning styles of each Pre-K through 6th grade student. It is vital that all our children grow up to become life-long learners and productive, contributing members of society. We invest in the development of the *whole child* through our social curriculums of Responsive Classroom, Restorative Justice and PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports), building a positive sense of community and a unified understanding of behavioral expectations. Our educational structures are based on the Vermont Agency of Education's MTSS systems (Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports) utilizing varied learning opportunities, researched based programs, and standards-based curriculum, to offer multiple layers of academic and behavioral supports based on individual needs. We track student achievement and monitor student progress through a wide variety of assessments. Our teachers have all become experts at analyzing assessment data and understanding what each child needs to move them forward in 21st Century learning skills. Call the office if you would like to receive a copy of the [WES Continuous Improvement Plan](#).

We look forward to forming a partnership with you that will enhance a positive, exciting, and successful school year.

Sincerely,

Jan Epstein, Principal, jepstein@lnsd.org

SCHOOL HOURS & Breakfast, K-6 and Preschool

The school day for students in Kindergarten through 6th grade begins at 7:45 am and ends at 2:30 pm. Students can arrive at 7:30, especially if they would like to eat breakfast at school. All students in Waterville and Belvidere who are three years old by September 1st are eligible to attend our Preschool program for 3 and 4 year olds.

The WES Breakfast Program begins at 7:30 am. A “take and go” breakfast will be available for students in the school lobby. Upon arrival at school, students in grades K-6 are expected to go to their assigned classroom for a quiet study/activity period and/or to eat their breakfast. Walkers and parent drop-offs are asked to arrive **no later than 7:45 AM and no earlier than 7:30 AM.**

FACULTY/STAFF

Principal	Jan Epstein
Administrative Asst.	
Pre-School	Robin Dion
Kindergarten	Amy Day
Grade 1 and 2	Hilary Marcelino
Grades 2 and 3	Shannon Riddle
Grade 4 and 5	Mallory Jones
Grades 5 and 6	Erin Paquette
Special Educator	Laura Miller
Intervention Teacher K-3	Cara Russin
Intervention Teacher 4-6	Julie Brink
Paraprofessional	Marie Glen
Paraprofessional	Amy Bean
Paraprofessional	Mary Slayton
Paraprofessional	Kylee Bezio
Paraprofessional	Ted Doonis
Paraprofessional	Lyric Singer
1:1 Individual Aide	Haley Decker
School Counselor	Morgan Flegar
Behavior Specialist	Jacob Lowe
Art	Kimberly Mann
Music & Band	Cassandra Heleba
Physical Education/Math	Roy Hutchins
Librarian	Audri Miller
School Nurse	Alyssa Fuller
Technology Specialist	Richard Ritter
Custodian	Dana Severance
Cook/ Hot Lunch Agent	Charlotte Hineman

SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS AND POLICIES

The LNSU/LNMUUSD Board will meet on the second Monday of each month at the Green Mountain Technology and Career Center. Board meeting agendas and minutes will be posted in accordance with Vermont State Statutes.

Any special meeting will be warned in accordance with Vermont State Statutes. The meetings are open, and you are invited and encouraged to attend. The Waterville School Policies Manual is available in the school office and at the Town Clerk's Office.

CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

As stated in the Mission Statement, our goal is to ensure that every decision made in this school is related to life-long learning for all. The vehicles that steer our standards-based curriculum are the Lamoille North Supervisory Union Math, Literacy, Social Studies and Science Learning Progressions, the Vermont State Standards, and the Common Core State Standards. Many of our WES teachers are involved in the LNMUUSD Curriculum Committees, which are working to develop and refine supervisory union-wide curricula for math, science, social studies and literacy, as well as common assessments.

State and local assessments are used to monitor progress of each student during the course of the school year. Students in grades K-6 take a variety of reading and math assessments periodically throughout the year to assess progress and provide teachers with important information to inform their instruction and develop individualized plans for remediation and enrichment. Students in grades 3-6 will be taking the state required standardized assessment in the spring assessing their skills in reading, writing, and math. Students in grade 5 will be taking the science NECAP test in the spring. Results of these standardized tests will be sent home to parents. Results of our local assessments are discussed with parents at parent/teacher conferences in the fall and spring. Preschool students are assessed and monitored by their teacher using the state's Teaching Strategies GOLD program. These results are shared with parents at conference times.

As a way of monitoring student progress more closely, our staff uses many different assessments, which provide quick screening probes in various areas of literacy and math and provides different modes of data collection, allowing teachers to differentiate their instruction based on the various needs of the students and their rates of progress. If parents wish to discuss any of these assessment results further with your child's teacher or the Principal, please call the office for an appointment.

School-wide results of the state assessments will be available on the Vermont Agency of Education website, and at the school office. When made available, individual results are mailed home to families. The results are not only reported for the whole school, but data is broken down to show differences in reading and math skills between male and female students and between our students qualifying for "Free and Reduced" lunch, and those not qualifying. Budgetary information is reported annually in the Town Report.

VOLUNTEERS & MENTORS

Volunteers are always welcome. If you would like to volunteer in your child's classroom, please contact the classroom teacher or the office for more information. Another way to volunteer might be to become a mentor for one or more of our students. After spending 30 to 60 minutes each week with a student, mentors realize the amazing potential of each child. Students benefit tremendously when they spend quality time with an adult from the community. This can also be extremely rewarding work for the adults involved. Anyone interested in mentoring should contact the school counselor, Morgan Flegar at mflegar@wesvt.net. The success of the co-curricular programs relies on the availability of parents and community members. Please consider investing time and energy in one or more of these activities. Please call the Principal or the school office if you are interested. All volunteers should be advised that for the safety of all our children, the state of Vermont now requires schools to do a criminal background check and a sex offender registry check on anyone volunteering in the school or chaperoning for field trips. Contact the school office to fill out our Volunteer/Chaperone paperwork.

We always welcome parents and community volunteers to come spend time in the classrooms, however, due to the sensitive nature of students' privacy rights and the potential for disruption to instruction, we ask that your visits to the classroom be prearranged with the teacher and principal. Please call your child's teacher or the office to plan your visit.

HOT LUNCH AND BREAKFAST PROGRAM

Waterville offers its students breakfast, snack juice or milk, and lunch. A menu will be sent home monthly.

At this point, breakfast and lunch are still free. Families only need to pay if they would like their child to have a snack milk or juice, or a milk for their lunch from home. You can purchase milk or juice for snack. You must have money on your account.

You will be sent an application for free and reduced-priced meals at the beginning of the school year. Please complete the form even though meals are free for all. The information is kept strictly confidential and your application can help your family as well as the school. Waterville Elementary will qualify to receive federal funds to supplement our educational programs. These federal dollars are based on the number of families who qualify for free and reduced lunch.

SCHOOL CALENDAR AND CLOSINGS

The LNSU/LNMUUSD Board approves the school calendar annually. The calendar indicates a 175-day school year. If it is necessary to close school because of weather or for any other reason, that day/s will need to be made up in June. The complete 2023-24 school calendar for all schools in Lamoille North Supervisory Union is also available on the district website LNSD.org.

Important Notice: School cancellations due to inclement weather will be announced on radio stations FM 93.9 WLVB, FM 93 WEZF, FM 95.3 WXXX, FM 98.9 WOKO, and AM 550 or 96.1 WDEV as early as 6:30 AM; as well as local television stations, WCAX Channel 3 and WPTZ Channel 5. Additionally, WES now uses the **School Messenger** system, a web-based

communication system that allows the school to contact families by phone, e-mail, and/or text with information regarding special school related events, school closings, and emergencies.

In order for the School Messenger system to work, it is vital that the office have parents' most recent contact information, whether by home phone, work phone, or cell phone. Please make sure that the office has accurate contact information.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE OF STUDENTS BY SCHOOL PERSONNEL

It is the policy of the LNMUUSD Board that the school retains the right to examine its property at any time. Desks, lockers, textbooks, computers, and other materials or supplies loaned by the school to students remain the property of the school, and may be opened and inspected by school employees at any time.

Search and Seizure of Student and Student Property

Searches of students' persons and personal effects may be conducted where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting at the time of initiating the search that the search will reveal evidence of a violation of law or of school rules. This includes searching the contents of a cell phone and/or backpack. The superintendent, principal, or his or her designee may consult with legal counsel when considering whether or how to conduct a search of a student's person or personal effects. The Superintendent shall develop procedures to ensure that all searches and seizures of students and student property are conducted in a manner that complies with state and federal constitutional protections against unreasonable searches and seizures of students and student property in schools.

ATTENDANCE, TRUANCY, TARDINESS, and DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

It is the policy of the LNMUUSD Board to set high expectations for consistent student school attendance in accordance with Vermont law (V.S.A. Title 16, Chapter 25) in order to facilitate and enhance student learning.

Vermont law (Title 16, Section 1121) requires children between the ages of 6 and 16 to attend a public school. In addition to the legal responsibility, regular school attendance is important for a number of other reasons. First, it is critical to the academic and social/emotional growth of all children. Second, regular and punctual attendance fosters the development of responsible and effective work/study habits. Clear expectations regarding student attendance support this shared responsibility (exceptions to this statute as per Title 16, Sections 1121 & 1123). Finally, education is a responsibility shared by individual students, families, schools and communities.

Letters will be sent home after 5, 10, 15 and beyond days of absences whether excused or unexcused. See chart below.

Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians

Vermont law states that it is the responsibility of a child's parent or guardian to cause their children to attend and participate in school on a regular basis. It is also their responsibility to provide written notification of a child's absence.

Responsibilities of School and District

Vermont law states that the Principal or designee will make reasonable effort to contact and work with parents/guardians to implement necessary supports to have children attend school on a regular basis. The Principal or designee will document all student absences and will determine

the thresholds for interventions. The Superintendent shall seek corroboration of mental or physical unfitness to attend school when appropriate.

WES Attendance Procedures

Student attendance will be recorded daily. For the purposes of communication, parents will be called when the office is notified by the teacher that a child is absent from class. This is for the safety of the child, to assure that they are in fact at home and accounted for. Any student arriving after 7:45 will be considered tardy. Below is a chart showing the possible procedures that the school will follow if a student appears to have habitual absences whether they are excused or unexcused.

5 Days Absent	10 Days Absent	15 Days Absent	Beyond 15 Days Absent (but not more than 20 days)
Notification mailed to parent/guardian	Notification mailed to parent/guardian	Notification mailed to parent/guardian	Determination Letter to parent/guardian via certified mail
	Notification includes support services offered	Notification includes support services offered	Determination Letter includes support services offered
	Notification w/potential consequences	Notification includes potential truancy consequences	Determination Letter with specific consequences
	Notification copied to LCTP (Lamoille County Truancy Project) and Superintendent	Notification copied to LCTP and Superintendent	Determination Letter copied to LCTP and Superintendent
		Notification requests a meeting between family, school, and LCTP	Determination Letter provides evidence of areas not met in Attendance Plan
		Attendance Plan is developed and implemented	Determination Letter is forwarded to Division of Child and Family Services and Vermont State Attorney Office

Excused Absences

In certain instances, a student’s absence from school cannot be avoided. At the discretion of the Principal, a student may be excused for absences related to:

- Illness – to be considered an excused absence, parents must speak to someone at the school, notifying them of the child’s absence due to illness.
- Family emergency or death in immediate family, parents should notify the school.
- Religious observance, parents should notify the school.
- Appointments with professional health care providers, including mental health providers. If a student has a medical or dental appointment, they should bring in a note from the health care office when they return to school.

- Legal activities such as court appearance, parents should notify the school.
- Pre-planned family commitments and activities which have obtained prior approval from a school administrator using the Pre-Planned Absence Form which can be obtained at the office. Note: the administration highly discourages and may not approve more than 5 consecutive days of absence for a planned family vacation when school is in session.
- Other school or educationally related activities which have been approved by the administration using the Pre-planned Absence Form. There may be times when students are present at school but absent from class because they are involved in an activity which has been approved by the school administration.

***Parents:** Please call the office in the morning and let us know if your child is staying home due to illness or a doctor's appointment. If we don't hear from you, the school will call the contact numbers in an attempt to locate the student. Be advised that the child's absence will be recorded as **"unexcused"** until someone from the school has spoken directly to a parent or guardian regarding the reason for the student's absence.

Tardiness

It is essential that students arrive in their classrooms **no later than 7:45**. The school day officially starts at 7:45 for all K-6 students, with the Classroom Morning Meeting. This community time is important for children in order to feel part of their class, feel connected to their teacher and peers, as well as receiving important information about their day. Teachers often incorporate important instructional components (literacy, shared reading and writing, math activities) into their Morning Meeting. Students who are habitually late miss this important time and often miss Literacy or Math class. We understand that occasional things come up with families and children, but if a teacher feels that a student's habitual tardiness is affecting their learning, they may bring it to the Principal's attention. The Principal may request a parent conference to try to resolve the matter. Notification of habitual tardiness may also be sent to the Lamoille County Truancy Project and Superintendent. **The actual minutes a student is tardy can be accumulated and registered as unexcused absences, counting towards truancy violations.**

Student Dismissal Procedures

When your child is dismissed from school, he/she is expected to ride the bus or be picked up as usual if they are not signed up for the Afterschool Program. If your child is going to a different destination, or someone other than the child's parent is picking him/her up, the office needs to be notified **in writing**. **It is imperative that parents or guardians send in a note of explanation or call the office when a child's after school plan has changed – we will never take a child's word for it.** If your child's after school arrangements vary from day to day, please write one note to explain the schedule and only send a note when this schedule changes.

NOTE: Adjustments in which bus the child rides can only be made if there is room on the bus to allow this to happen. Please call the school, and the administrative assistant will communicate with your bus driver. Please realize the possible dangers that exist if parents cannot locate their children and the school has no information concerning their destination.

NOTE: In order to plan ahead for **early dismissals** (usually due to bad weather or power outages) please let the office know if there needs to be an alternate drop off site for your child. Households will be notified by telephone once an early closing of school has been decided.

WES PARENT ORGANIZATION (WESPO)

The Waterville Elementary School Parent Organization was formed in 2006. This group of dedicated parents plans free family events and fund raising activities to support materials and events for students. In the past this group has sponsored family game nights, Halloween parties, egg hunts, and parenting classes. With parent support, WESPO has been able to raise thousands of dollars to help with the building of the school's playground and support field trips. Annual fundraisers may include Meadow Farms, Rada Cutlery, or other catalog sales. Please join us to help plan future events and fundraisers. For more information or meeting times please contact the school.

APPEARANCE and DRESS CODE

Students are expected to dress in a manner which is appropriate for children and adults learning together. **Items that we would discourage include:** very short shorts and skirts, tops which do not completely cover the torso, pants with writing located in the seat area, halter tops, shoulder straps less than one inch wide, **purposely** exposed undergarments (bra straps, boxer shorts, etc). **Items that will not be allowed include:** written messages or picture images which contain profanity, inappropriate language, sexual connotations, or references to racism, drugs, tobacco, or alcohol. Students wearing clothing with these images or messages will be asked to change or turn the clothing inside-out. Parents will be notified of inappropriate attire, and determinations will be made on a case by case basis at the discretion of the principal.

Students will be asked to remove their outside boots during winter and early spring to help keep our building clean. They will need an extra pair of shoes, which can be left here at school during those months. Students are also required to have sneakers for Physical Education. During the winter months, children will be going outside for a 30 minute recess every day, unless the temperature drops below 10 degrees. When there is snow on the ground, all children are required to have snow pants, hats, gloves, a winter jacket, and winter boots. We understand that sometimes younger children lose track of all this gear, and teachers of students in K-3 may be able to offer clothing for a child to borrow. However, students in grades 4-6 are expected to show responsibility in knowing which clothing they need for the weather, and may not use a lack of appropriate clothing as an excuse to stay indoors for recess.

ANIMALS IN SCHOOL

Animals-- whether tame or from the wild-- may not be brought into the building without prior approval of the Principal. The school policy should be consulted for further information.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS & ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The school does not accept responsibility for the loss or damage of any personal belongings from home. Students are discouraged from bringing in toys, family treasures, cell phones, electronic games, or such. Individual teachers may, however, send home written requests for

special sharing activities. Or, some teachers may allow students to listen to music while doing quiet work in the classroom. Electronic devices should not be used on the bus and will not be allowed on the playground. It is really helpful to teachers and students when parents put their child's name or initials inside their winter clothing. It seems that everyone has the same black ski pants!

There is a school Lost and Found in the front lobby. Please take some time to go through it when you are in the building.

CELL PHONES

If a parent allows a child to bring a cell phone to school, please know that it must remain in their backpack at all times unless a teacher specifically says they may use it for a specified purpose in class. If any staff member sees a cell phone in use outside of a classroom, they will confiscate it and bring it to the principal, who will call the parents to come and retrieve it. Please be aware that it is the principal's legal right to search the contents of a cell phone (or any other device) if they suspect a school policy or rule may have been violated. A cell phone will never be turned over to the police unless there is a specific search warrant issued.

SPECIAL SCHOOL EVENTS

Parents and students will be notified of special school events through notices, i.e. parent newsletters, monthly calendars, the school website, or the local newspapers, and through the **School Messenger** system.

Each student must have a signed permission slip on file in the office to attend field trips or programs away from school. Each classroom teacher will inform parents through class newsletters of upcoming trips, what children need to bring, and the opportunities for parents or relatives to chaperon on the trip. If you want to chaperone a field trip, please make sure you have all the needed background check information in the office.

FIRE and SAFETY DRILLS

Fire and safety drills are held at least once a month for practice in case of possible emergency situations. When the fire alarm is sounded, students are expected to evacuate the building in an orderly fashion by routes indicated in their classroom. Once outside, students are to line up by class in a designated area until given permission to return to the building. We will also be practicing safety drills called "secure the building" and "clear the halls" which require students to clear the halls and remain in a safe place. Students will also participate in bus safety drills during the course of the year.

TELEPHONE

The school telephone number is 521-5550. Students may use the office or classroom telephone if there is an emergency determined by the teacher. The school phone is not available for making after-school plans.

DISPENSING MEDICATIONS

Any time medication is to be taken or administered at school, the following conditions must be met:

- A. All prescription medication to be given at school must be brought to school by an adult in a container appropriately labeled by the pharmacy or by the physician. **A student's first dose of any medication that they have not taken before must occur at home.**
- B. **Non-prescription medication** to be given at school must be brought to school by an adult in the originally labeled box or bottle and must be accompanied by a written request from the parent or guardian of a student bringing such medication to school (proper forms for this request are available from the school nurse). **The request must contain assurances that the student has suffered no previous ill effects from the use of the medication.** Medication must be left in the custody of the school nurse or designee. **This includes cough drops and throat lozenges.**
- C. Written instructions signed by the family physician will be required for **prescription medication** and will include:
1. Name of child
 2. Name of medication
 3. Reason for medication
 4. Dosage
 5. Specific area or application if medication is of a topical nature
 6. Time to be administered
 7. Possible side-effects, if known, and action to be taken; and
 8. Termination date for administering the medication (not to exceed the school year).
 9. A certification by the physician that the medication is necessary to the child's health and must be taken during school hours.
- D. The parents provide a signed request form, certifying that they are not available during school hours to dispense this medication (and an informed consent form where medication is to be administered by school personnel).
- E. For long-term situations, the medication certification and request to dispense expires at the end of each school year, unless terminated earlier by either the family physician or the parents. The certification and request can be renewed each year.
- F. **All medication must be brought to school by the parents, never sent in with children in their backpacks.**
- G. The parents will assume the responsibility for informing the school in writing of any change in the child's health or change in medication.
- H. The responsibility for seeing a physician on a regular basis and following the Physician's instructions rests with the parents. Failure to comply with the recommended protocol will be grounds for the school to discontinue the administration of the medication in question.
- I. Parents must sign a release form for the school nurse to communicate directly with the prescribing physician.
- J. The Waterville School retains the discretion to reject any or all requests for the administration of medication.
- K. A copy of this policy and any required forms will be provided to parents who request the administration of medication in school.

The school nurse will dispense medication when available. When the nurse is unavailable the administrative assistant or Jan Epstein will dispense medication. The following procedure will be followed:

- A. The nurse will inform the appropriate school personnel of medication and the proper procedure for administering it according to the steps outlined in the updated School Health Service Standard Practice Manual.
- B. The nurse or designee will inform parents regarding any difficulty with the medication or circumstances, which was responsible for the child not receiving the medication.
- C. Medication will be kept locked up in a place inaccessible to other students.
- D. Students will take medication with water from a paper cup in the nurse's office.
- E. The child will be observed as he/she takes the medication.
- F. A record of the administration of medication will be kept in a designated log.
- G. **Parents who wish to have their child given Tylenol or Advil during the school day must fill out a "Permission for Medication" form which is kept on file in the nurse's office.** These forms will be sent home in the fall packet.

HEALTH AND VISION SCREENINGS

In the fall of each school year, the WES school nurse will do a general health, hearing and vision screening on all Pre-K, Kindergarten, 1st, 3rd and 5th grade students (similar screenings will be done on all 7th grade students entering the Middle School). Teachers of students in 2nd, 4th and 6th grade may also request a health screening if they have specific concerns about a student. If parents or guardians have any questions about this screening, please call the school office, 521-5550.

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT TEAM (EST)

- ***What is the Educational Support Team?***

The Educational Support Team is a team in place at Waterville Elementary School, as required by Vermont Education statute called Act 230. The job of the Educational Support Team is to act as a "think tank" and help solve the puzzle of what is going on for a student and determine what he/she might need to be more successful or to be challenged further. It is also the job of an EST to review, revise and monitor the effectiveness of interventions and enrichment. The focus is on what school staff can do differently by changing strategies, adjusting the environment, accommodating the learning, altering expectations, etc. The team meets periodically (depending on the need) to develop strategies and identify resources to meet the academic, social and emotional needs of all students. These strategies are documented into a written EST plan, individualized for each child.

- ***Who is part of the Educational Support Team (EST)?***

Waterville Elementary School's team may include all or some of the following: classroom teacher, interventionist teachers, the school counselor, the principal, the special educator, the speech-language pathologist, the child psychologist, behavioral support personnel, and the school nurse. Parents, as active participants in their child's EST, are invited to meet with the team on an individual basis.

- ***How are services provided?***

As part of our educational support system, Waterville School has made the commitment to have services within our school available to all of the students on a daily basis. The special educator, Title I teacher/interventionists, behavior specialists, school counselors and classroom paraeducators work with the classroom teachers within the classrooms and in separate locations to implement strategies to provide extra support and instruction throughout the day. This practice enables the students to have more individualized instructional time and utilizes the school's resources to their fullest potential. Parents are notified of Educational Support Team decisions regarding their child if they are unable to attend meetings.

- ***My child is not doing well as he/she should be doing. What can I do?***

Contact your child's teacher as a first step. Your child's classroom teacher will be able to discuss your concerns and work directly with you to meet your child's needs.

- ***How does the EST plan benefit my son or daughter?***

Many different strategies are tried in order to understand your child and help him/her to be successful in school. Team members work together to provide the support to best meet your child's academic, social and emotional needs. Interventions and strategies are documented into an EST plan to track progress. Meeting minutes are also documented in the EST plan. If your family should ever move, the EST document goes to the new school with other student records so the new school's EST team can continue the same or similar supports.

- ***Is this Special Education?***

This team is not part of a special education process. After a variety of resources and accommodations have been attempted, special education referrals may be made. Again, parents will be fully informed of any decisions made by the Educational Support Team.

- ***How can I get more information?***

Any classroom teacher can provide parents with more information regarding Waterville Elementary School's Educational Support Team. Parents can also contact the special educator, school counselor, or the principal for more information. Our team has been evolving to better meet the needs of the children at Waterville Elementary School. Input from parents is crucial to this growth process.

TITLE I WATERVILLE ELEMENTARY PARENT-SCHOOL COMPACT

Waterville Elementary School is fortunate to be receiving Title I funds from the federal government. Title I funding is determined by the number of students eligible for free and reduced lunch. The Title I funds we receive have allowed us to hire a full-time teacher, equipment, electronic devices, assessment and intervention materials, and supplies we would not have been able to afford through our general funds. As part of the Every Student Succeeds Act and a requirement for receiving these funds, the Title I regulations require schools to create a Parent-School Compact. The spirit behind this compact is to highlight the importance of having parents, students, and teachers working together with the common goal of increasing student learning and achieving high academic standards. The compact hopes to create ongoing discussions that include teachers, families, students, the school board and other community members to commit to the following roles and responsibilities for the partners in the education of the children of Waterville and Belvidere to agree to carry out:

Staff Pledge:

The staff of Waterville Elementary School agrees to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of our abilities:

- Teach classes through interesting and challenging lessons that promote student achievement.
- Endeavor to motivate our students to learn.
- Have high expectations, and help every child to develop a love of learning.
- Communicate regularly with families about student progress.
- Provide an inviting, safe and caring learning environment.
- Provide meaningful homework assignments to reinforce and extend learning.
- Participate in professional development opportunities that improve teaching and learning and support the formation of partnerships with families and the community.
- Actively participate in collaborative decision-making and consistently work with families and colleagues to make our school an accessible and welcoming place for families and to help each student achieve the school's high academic standards.
- Respect the school, students, staff and families.

Student Pledge:

The students of the Waterville Elementary School agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of their ability:

- Come to school ready to learn and work hard.
- Bring necessary materials, completed assignments, and homework.
- Know and follow school and class agreements.
- Communicate regularly with our parents and teachers about school experiences so that they can help us to be successful in school.
- Limit watching TV and study or read every day after school.
- Respect the school, our classmates, the school's staff and families.

Family/Parent Pledge:

The parents/families of Waterville Elementary School agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of their ability:

- Provide a quiet time and place for homework, and monitor TV and computer viewing.
- Read to our children or encourage them to read independently every day.
- Ensure that our children attend school every day, get adequate sleep, regular medical attention, and proper nutrition.
- Regularly monitor our children's progress in school.
- Participate at school in activities such as parent organization meetings, volunteering, chaperoning field trips and special events, attending parent-teacher conferences and attending school board meetings.
- Communicate the importance of education and learning to our children.
- Respect the school, staff, students and families.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR POLICY

The Waterville School fully recognizes the role of the school in the development of proper social skills and values of each student. We believe that student success is a result of the efforts of

parents in partnership with the school to foster positive attitudes and values in their children. The level of cooperation developed between school personnel and parents, combined with available resources, will determine the degree of success.

It needs to be understood by all students and parents that the school agreements and disciplinary procedures as listed here pertain to the After School Program, the Summer Program, and all field trips and school supported functions.

Expectations for Student Behavior and Procedures

We believe that behavior practices at Waterville Elementary School should:

- Teach and model prosocial behaviors
- Promote student responsibility
- Promote long-term behavior change and not focus on an immediate "fix"
- Be respectful of the student's dignity.

The WES approach to discipline is based on the ideas found in the **Responsive Classroom**, **PBIS** and **Restorative Justice** philosophies, which promotes student involvement in solving their own problems, increases their sense of responsibility, and helps them develop greater self-control and independence. Through Responsive Classroom, students will learn to better express their thoughts and feelings, improve critical thinking skills and become more aware of alternative behaviors. Through Restorative Justice, students will work to repair harm done and work collaboratively with their peers.

Responsive Classroom relies on developing a community with a climate of trust and natural consequences for infractions of rules. Each class works together to develop classroom agreements for behavior that match our school-wide agreements. Every school day, each class participates in Morning Meeting, a time to learn how to meet and greet each other, share something with the group, participate in a group team-building activity and hear about news and announcements for the day. Responsive Classroom is a proactive way to deal with discipline. Restorative Practices also helps to develop community by sharing ideas and feelings in a circle and working to solve problems together.

Also, we are implementing the proactive discipline model called PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports) that relies on developing school spirit, clearly defining behavioral expectations across the school, teaching expected behaviors in all settings, rewarding students for positive behavior, and having a clear plan for students who need reminders or time to think about choices made. We also have a behavior support team which meets monthly to discuss the progress of specific behavior plans set up for individual students to maximize their potential for prosocial behaviors. This team is also available to meet with teachers or parents who have concerns about a student's pattern of behavior.

School-wide Agreements:

We are the Waterville Cougars. Cougars have **PAWS**. **PAWS** represent our school agreements:

Put your best foot forward.

Always respect yourself, others and the environment

Work together to solve problems

Safety at all times

As part of PBIS, students will receive a **PAWS** ticket randomly when caught following one of the agreements. Students can also receive “Student of the Week” awards at Friday’s Community Meeting. **NOTE:** Parents and community members are always welcome to attend our weekly Community Meetings, Fridays, 7:45 am, in the gym. Classroom teachers choose their Student of the Week based on characteristics such as perseverance, improvement, supporting peers, excellent work habits, exceptional effort in following classroom agreements, as well as for many other reasons. Once a month teachers will select 1-2 exceptional students to join the principal for our special “Principal’s Lunch” which also recognizes their hard work and positive attitude. Parents should know that the teachers and the principal ensure that every child in K-6 will receive at least one “Student of the Week” award and get to go to the Principal’s Lunch at least once during the school year.

When a student violates an agreement, the following steps are taken:

1. The teacher tries to redirect the student by gently reminding him or her how their behavior is inappropriate, and naming what the expected behavior is for that moment.
2. If a gentle reminder is not enough, the teacher will ask the student to go to “Time Away” or “Think Time”, a quiet place in the classroom away from the main activity. “Think Time” is an opportunity for a student to step back and regroup so that he/she can rejoin the class. It can also be a time for the student to think about their choice of behavior, why it was inappropriate and how they might behave next time.
3. If the behavior continues after the student returns from “Think Time” or “Time Away”, the student will be asked to go to the “Buddy Room”. Each teacher has a Buddy Teacher with whom arrangements have been made to send students who have violated class agreements and not responded to the verbal reminders and think time in their own classroom. Students sent to the “Buddy Room” are required to spend time thinking about their behavior and plan what they need to do to return to class successfully. The Buddy teacher will conference with the student about the behavior that caused the Buddy Room referral and will help the child make a plan for success before sending them back to class.
4. If the behavior in question continues after the student has returned from the “Buddy Room”, or if the behavior is unsafe or aggressive in nature (teasing, fighting, hitting, threats, bullying, harassment, extreme disrespect, or disruption to the learning environment), a referral form will be filled out by the staff member, and the student will be sent to the Reflection Room or the Principal’s office where the student will have an opportunity to reflect upon his or her behavior choice, fill out a “Reflection Room Form” and/or discuss the behavior choice with the Reflection Room Supervisor or the Principal. Parents will be notified whenever a student is sent to the Reflection Room or the Principal’s office. This notification will usually be a phone call, however, if a parent/guardian can’t be reached, notification may be sent through email. As much as possible, logical consequences will evolve from the nature of the behavior (making up missed work, writing an apology letter, fixing what’s broken, etc). Other consequences may range from repairing harm, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension or expulsion, depending on the severity of the behavior.

5. If a child's negative behavior continues for an extended period of time and becomes disruptive to the learning environment (and/or results in 2 or more office discipline referrals for the same issue within the same month), the child may be referred to our PBIS/Behavior Team. The team will brainstorm with the teacher on possible motivations for the student's behavior and may decide to offer Tier 2 interventions, which usually take the form of a "Check-In-Check-Out" behavior sheet. Parents will be notified of this step, and the process for the intervention will be explained in more detail. Parents are encouraged to join the Behavior Team in the planning stages of a Tier 2 intervention, because parental follow-through at home is critical for any behavior plan to be successful at school.

Clarifications:

1. At no time will denial of lunch, bathroom privileges, or morning snack be used as a penalty with any student.
2. Discipline is to be regarded as a positive means to modify a student's behavior and not to degrade or demean a person.
3. Documentation by the teacher or staff member should be made when an improper behavior pattern emerges. Such documentation may be used for corrective action and will be necessary if extreme measures are contemplated.
4. A serious offense is: fighting with malicious intent, willful swearing, refusing to follow the directions of a teacher or supervisor, showing willful disrespect, willfully hurting others by name calling and teasing. Bullying and harassing behaviors, particularly sexual, racial, religious, or gender related, and cyber-bullying are illegal, serious, will be investigated, and must be reported to the state of Vermont.
5. Employees of a public school may use reasonable and necessary force:
 - To quell a disturbance;
 - To obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects upon the person or within control of a pupil;
 - For the purpose of self-defense
 - For the protection of persons or propertyCorporal punishment is not allowed. Corporal punishment means the intentional infliction of physical pain upon the body of a pupil as a disciplinary measure.
6. It will be the responsibility of the parents of any child who has committed malicious or negligent damage of school property to make proper restitution.
7. The school administration has the right to address matters of personal hygiene and dress as they arise.

As student behavior is a shared concern of both school and parent, it shall be the school's responsibility to:

- Inform the student of his/her improper behavior patterns
- Inform parents of improper behavior patterns on the part of the students
- Work with pupils and parents to assist in identifying the underlying causes leading to improper behavior patterns and make every effort to modify either the patterns or the causes.

Teachers and other staff with responsibilities for student conduct will deal with routine disciplinary matters as they arise in accordance with the school plan; rules are explicitly taught and posted in each classroom, as well as throughout the school building, and periodically reviewed with the students so they are clearly understood.

Use of Physical Restraint or Seclusion

The Vermont State Board of Education has developed Rule 4500, **Use of Restraint and Seclusion in Schools**, effective as of August 15, 2011. The entire rule may be viewed at the Vermont Agency of Education website, or in the principal's office. It is the intent of all WES staff members to use positive behavior strategies and supports with students and to avoid, if possible, all use of seclusion and physical restraints to address targeted student behavior. However, in certain circumstances, especially when safety is an issue, seclusion and/or physical restraint may be employed. Physical restraint will only be used as a last resort to protect persons or property, by personnel trained and certified in Handle with Care, and when it is used, the principal must be notified by the end of the school day. Parents must be notified within 24 hours so that they have the opportunity to participate in a review of the incident of restraint or seclusion. At that review, the full copy of Rule 4500 will be provided to parents, and a discussion will ensue to develop a specific behavior plan for the student.

BULLYING, HARASSMENT, AND HAZING

I. Statement of Policy

The Waterville School District (hereinafter "District") is committed to providing all of its students with a safe and supportive school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with respect.

It is the policy of the District to prohibit the unlawful harassment of students based on race, color, religion, creed, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. Harassment may also constitute a violation of Vermont's Public Accommodations Act, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and/or Title IX of the federal Education Amendments Act of 1972.

It is also the policy of the District to prohibit the unlawful hazing and bullying of students. Conduct which constitutes hazing may be subject to civil penalties.

The District shall address all complaints of harassment, hazing and bullying according to the procedures accompanying this policy, and shall take appropriate action against any person - subject to the jurisdiction of the board - who violates this policy. Nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit punishment of a student for conduct which, although it does not rise to the level of harassment, bullying, or hazing as defined herein, otherwise violates one or more of the board's disciplinary policies or the school's code of conduct.

II. Implementation

The superintendent or his/her designee shall:

1. Adopt a procedure directing staff, parents and guardians how to report violations of this policy and file complaints under this policy. (See Model Procedures on the Prevention of Harassment, Hazing and Bullying of Students)
2. Annually, select two or more designated employees to receive complaints of hazing, bullying and/or harassment at each school campus and publicize their availability in any publication of the District that sets forth the comprehensive rules, procedures, and standards of conduct for the school.

3. Designate an Equity Coordinator to oversee all aspects of the implementation of this policy as it relates to obligations imposed by federal law regarding discrimination. This role may also be assigned to one or both of the Designated Employees.
4. Respond to notifications of possible violations of this policy in order to promptly and effectively address all complaints of hazing, harassment, and/or bullying.
5. Take action on substantiated complaints. In cases where hazing, harassment and/or bullying is substantiated, the District shall take prompt and appropriate remedial action reasonably calculated to stop the hazing, harassment and/or bullying; prevent its recurrence; and to remedy the impact of the offending conduct on the victim(s), where appropriate. Such action may include a wide range of responses from education to serious discipline.
 Serious discipline may include termination for employees and, for students, expulsion or removal from school property. It may also involve penalties or sanctions for both organizations and individuals who engage in hazing. Revocation or suspension of an organization's permission to operate or exist within the District's purview may also be considered if that organization knowingly permits, authorizes or condones hazing.

III. Constitutionally Protected Speech

It is the intent of the District to apply and enforce this policy in a manner that is consistent with student rights to free expression under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The purpose of this policy is to (1) prohibit conduct or communication that is directed at a person's protected characteristics as defined below and that has the purpose or effect of substantially disrupting the educational learning process and/or access to educational resources or creates a hostile learning environment; (2) prohibit conduct intended to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate students in a manner as defined under this policy.

IV. Definitions. For the purposes of this policy and the accompanying procedures, the following definitions apply:

- A. **"Bullying"** means any overt act or combination of acts, including an act conducted by electronic means, directed against a student by another student or group of students and which:
 - a. Is repeated over time;
 - b. Is intended to ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate the student; and
 - c. (i) occurs during the school day on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity, or before or after the school day on a school bus or at a school sponsored activity; or (ii) does not occur during the school day on school property, on a school bus or at a school sponsored activity and can be shown to pose a clear and substantial interference with another student's right to access educational programs.
- B. **"Complaint"** means an oral or written report of information provided by a student or any person to an employee alleging that a student has been subjected to conduct that may rise to the level of hazing, harassment or bullying.
- C. **"Complainant"** means a student who has provided oral or written information about conduct that may rise to the level of hazing, harassment or bullying, or a student who is the target of alleged hazing, harassment or bullying.
- D. **"Designated employee"** means an employee who has been designated by the school to receive complaints of hazing, harassment and bullying pursuant to subdivision 16 V.S.A. 570a(a)(7). The designated employees for each school building are identified in Appendix A of this policy.
- E. **"Employee"** includes any person employed directly by or retained through a contract with the District, an agent of the school, a school board member, a student teacher, an intern or a school volunteer. For purposes of this policy, "agent of the school" includes supervisory union staff.
- F. **"Equity Coordinator"** is the person responsible for implementation of Title IX (regarding sex-based discrimination) and Title VI (regarding race-based discrimination) for the District and for coordinating the District's compliance with Title IX and Title VI in all areas covered by the implementing regulations. The Equity Coordinator is also responsible for overseeing implementation of the District's *Preventing and*

Responding to Harassment of Students and Harassment of Employees policies. This role may also be assigned to Designated Employees.

- G. **“Harassment”** means an incident or incidents of verbal, written, visual, or physical conduct, including any incident conducted by electronic means, based on or motivated by a student’s or a student’s family member’s actual or perceived race, creed, color, national origin, marital status disability, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity, that has the purpose or effect of objectively and substantially undermining and detracting from or interfering with a student’s educational performance or access to school resources or creating an objectively intimidating hostile, or offensive environment.

Harassment includes conduct as defined above and may also constitute one or more of the following:

- (1) Sexual harassment, which means unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, that includes sexual violence/sexual assault, sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, written, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature, and includes situations when one or both of the following occur:
 - (i) Submission to that conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a student’s education, academic status, or progress; or
 - (ii) Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a student is used as a component of the basis for decisions affecting that student.

Sexual harassment may also include student-on-student conduct or conduct of a non-employee third party that creates a hostile environment. A hostile environment exists where the harassing conduct is severe, persistent or pervasive so as to deny or limit the student’s ability to participate in or benefit from the educational program on the basis of sex.

- (2) Racial harassment, which means conduct directed at the characteristics of a student’s or a student’s family member’s actual or perceived race or color, and includes the use of epithets, stereotypes, racial slurs, comments, insults, derogatory remarks, gestures, threats, graffiti, display, or circulation of written or visual material, and taunts on manner of speech and negative references to cultural customs.
 - (3) Harassment of members of other protected categories, means conduct directed at the characteristics of a student’s or a student’s family member’s actual or perceived creed, national origin, marital status, disability, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity and includes the use of epithets, stereotypes, slurs, comments, insults, derogatory remarks, gestures, threats, graffiti, display, or circulation of written or visual material, taunts on manner of speech, and negative references to customs related to any of these protected categories.
- H. **“Hazing”** means any intentional, knowing or reckless act committed by a student, whether individually or in concert with others, against another student: In connection with pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization which is affiliated with the educational institution; and

- (1) Which is intended to have the effect of, or should reasonably be expected to have the effect of, endangering the mental or physical health of the student.

Hazing shall not include any activity or conduct that furthers legitimate curricular, extra-curricular, or military training program goals, provided that:

- (1) The goals are approved by the educational institution; and
- (2) The activity or conduct furthers the goals in a manner that is appropriate, contemplated by the educational institution, and normal and customary for similar programs at other educational institutions.

With respect to Hazing, **“Student”** means any person who:

- (A) is registered in or in attendance at an educational institution;
- (B) has been accepted for admission at the educational institution where the hazing incident occurs; or
- (C) intends to attend an educational institution during any of its regular sessions after an official academic break.

- I. **“Notice”** means a written complaint or oral information that hazing, harassment or bullying may have occurred which has been provided to a designated employee from another employee, the student allegedly subjected to the hazing, harassment or bullying, another student, a parent or guardian, or any other individual who has reasonable cause to believe the alleged conduct may have occurred. If the school learns of possible hazing, harassment or bullying through other means, for example, if information about hazing, harassment or bullying is received from a third party (such as from a witness to an incident or an anonymous letter or telephone call), different factors will affect the school’s response. These factors

include the source and nature of the information; the seriousness of the alleged incident; the specificity of the information; the objectivity and credibility of the source of the report; whether any individuals can be identified who were subjected to the alleged harassment; and whether those individuals want to pursue the matter. In addition, for purposes of violations of federal anti-discrimination laws, notice may occur when an employee of the district, including any individual who a student could reasonably believe has this authority or responsibility, knows or in the exercise of reasonable care should have known about potential unlawful harassment or bullying.

- J. **“Organization”** means a fraternity, sorority, athletic team, association, corporation, order, society, corps, cooperative, club, or other similar group, whose members primarily are students at an educational institution, and which is affiliated with the educational institution.
- K. **“Pledging”** means any action or activity related to becoming a member of an organization.
- L. **“Retaliation”** is any adverse action by any person against a person who has filed a complaint of harassment, hazing or bullying or against a person who assists or participates in an investigation, proceeding or hearing related to the harassment complaint. Such adverse action may include conduct by a school employee directed at a student in the form of intimidation or reprisal such as diminishment of grades, suspension, expulsion, change in educational conditions, loss of privileges or benefits, or other unwarranted disciplinary action. Retaliation may also include conduct by a student directed at another student in the form of further harassment, intimidation, and reprisal.
- M. **“School administrator”** means a superintendent, principal or his/her designee assistant principal//technical center director or his/her designee and/or the District’s Equity Coordinator.
- N. **“Student Conduct Form”** is a form used by students, staff, or parents, to provide, in written form, information about inappropriate student behaviors that may constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying.

APPENDIX A

Designated Employees for reporting Bullying, Harassment, and/or Hazing:

The following employees of Waterville Elementary School have been designated by the District to receive complaints of bullying and/or harassment pursuant to this policy and 16 V.S.A. § 570a(a)(7) and 16 V.S.A. §570c(7) and under federal anti discrimination laws;

Name: Jan Epstein
Title: Principal
Contact Information: 802-521-5550, jepstein@wesvt.net

Name: Roy Hutchins
Title: Reflection Room Supervisor
Contact Information: 802-521-5550, rhutchins@wesvt.net

PROCEDURES ON THE PREVENTION OF HARASSMENT, HAZING AND BULLYING OF STUDENTS

- I. **Reporting Complaints of Hazing, Harassment and/or Bullying**
 - A. **Student Reporting:** Any student who believes that s/he has been hazed, harassed and/or bullied under this policy, or who witnesses or has knowledge of conduct that s/he reasonably believes might constitute hazing, harassment and or/bullying, should promptly report the conduct to a designated employee or any other school employee.
 - B. **School employee reporting:** Any school employee who **witnesses conduct** that s/he reasonably believes might constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying shall take reasonable action to stop the conduct and to prevent its recurrence and immediately report it to a designated employee and immediately complete a Reflection Room/Office Referral Form.

Any school employee **who overhears or directly receives information** about conduct that might constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying shall immediately report the information to a designated employee and immediately complete a Reflection Room/Office Referral Form. If one of the designated employees is a person alleged to be engaged in the conduct complained of, the incident shall be immediately reported to the other designated employee or the school administrator.

- C. Other reporting: Any other person who witnesses conduct that s/he reasonably believes might constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying under this policy should promptly report the conduct to a designated employee.
- D. Documentation of the report: If the complaint is oral, the designated employee shall promptly reduce the complaint to writing in a Reflection Room/Office Referral Form, including the time, place, and nature of the alleged conduct, the identity of the complainant, alleged perpetrator, and any witnesses. Both the complainant and the alleged perpetrator will have the right to present witnesses and other evidence in support of their position.
- E. False complaint: Any person who knowingly makes a false accusation regarding hazing, harassment and/or bullying may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion with regard to students, or up to and including discharge with regard to employees. There shall be no adverse action taken against a person for reporting a complaint of hazing, harassment and/or bullying when the person has a good faith belief that hazing, harassment and/or bullying occurred or is occurring.
- F. Rights to Alternative Complaint Process: In addition to, or as an alternative to filing a harassment complaint pursuant to this policy, a person may file a harassment complaint with the Vermont Human Rights Commission or the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education at the addresses noted below:

Vermont Human Rights Commission
14-16 Baldwin Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-6301
(800) 416-2010 or (802) 828-2480 (voice)
(877) 294-9200 (tty)
(802) 828-2481 (fax)
Email: human.rights@state.vt.us

Office for Civil Rights, Boston Office
U.S. Department of Education
8th Floor
5 Post Office Square
Boston, MA 02109-3921
617-289-0111 (voice)
877-521-2172 (tdd)
617-289-0150 (fax)
Email: OCR.Boston@ed.gov

II. Responding to Notice of Possible Policy Violation(s)

- A. Upon **notice of information** that hazing, harassment and/or bullying may have occurred the designated employee shall:
 - i. Promptly reduce any oral information to writing, including the time, place, and nature of the conduct, and the identity of the participants and complainant.
 - ii. Promptly inform the school administrator(s) of the information;
 - iii. If in the judgment of the school administrator, the information alleges conduct which may constitute harassment, hazing or bullying, the school administrator shall, as soon as reasonably possible, provide a copy of the policy on hazing, harassment and bullying and

these procedures to the complainant and accused individual, or if either is a minor, cause a copy to be provided or delivered to their respective parent or guardian.

- B. Upon **initiation of an investigation**, the designated employee shall:
- i. Notify in writing both the complainant and accused individual (or if either is a minor inform their respective parent or guardian) that:
 1. an investigation has been initiated;
 2. retaliation is prohibited;
 3. all parties have certain confidentiality rights; and
 4. they will be informed in writing of the outcome of the investigation.
- C. All notifications shall be subject to state and/or federal laws protecting the confidentiality of personally identifiable student information. Pursuant to 34 CFR Part 99.30, a school administrator may seek the consent of the parent/guardian of the accused student, or the accused eligible student (if 18 or older, the accused student has the ability to consent), in order to inform the complainant of any disciplinary action taken in cases where the school determined that an act(s) of harassment, hazing, and/or bullying, or other misconduct occurred. The parent/guardian or eligible student shall provide a signed and dated written consent before an educational agency or institution discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records.

III. Investigating Hazing, Harassment and/or Bullying Complaints

- A. Initiation of Investigation - Timing. Unless special circumstances are present and documented, such as reports to the Department for Children and Families (“DCF”) or the police, the school administrator shall, no later than one school day after Notice to a designated employee, initiate or cause to be initiated, an investigation of the allegations, which the school administrator reasonably believes may constitute harassment, hazing or bullying.
- B. Investigator Assignment. The school administrator shall assign a person to conduct the investigation; nothing herein shall be construed to preclude the school administrator from assigning him/herself or a designated employee as the investigator. No person who is the subject of a complaint shall conduct such an investigation.
- C. Interim Measures. It may be appropriate for the school to take interim measures during the investigation of a complaint. For instance, if a student alleges that he or she has been sexually assaulted by another student, the school may decide to place the students immediately in separate classes and/or transportation pending the results of the school’s investigation. Similarly, if the alleged harasser is a teacher, allowing the student to transfer to a different class may be appropriate. In all cases, the school will make every effort to prevent disclosure of the names of all parties involved – the complainant, the witnesses, and the accused -- except to the extent necessary to carry out the investigation. In all cases where physical harm has resulted and/or where the targeted student is known to be expressing suicidal ideation, or experiencing serious emotional harm, a safety plan will be put in place. Safety plans must also be considered in cases where the targeted student is known to have difficulty accessing the educational programs at the school as a result of the inappropriate behavior. No contact orders, or their enforcement, may also be appropriate interim measures.
- D. Due Process. The United States Constitution guarantees due process to students and District employees who are accused of certain types of infractions, including but not limited to sexual harassment under Federal Title IX. The rights established under Title IX must be interpreted consistent with any federally guaranteed due process rights involved in a complaint proceeding, including but not limited to the ability of the complainant and the accused to present witnesses and other evidence during an investigation. The District will ensure that steps to accord due process rights do not restrict or unnecessarily delay the protections provided by Title IX to the complainant.
- E. Standard Used to Assess Conduct. In determining whether the conduct constitutes a violation of this policy, the investigator shall consider the surrounding circumstances, the nature of the behavior, past incidents or past or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationships between the parties involved and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred. The complainant and accused will be provided the opportunity to present witnesses and other evidence during an investigation. The school will also consider the impact of relevant off-campus conduct on the school environment where direct harm to the welfare of the school can be demonstrated or the conduct can be shown to pose a clear and substantial interference with another

student's equal access to educational programs. Whether a particular action constitutes a violation of this policy requires determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances.

- F. Completion of Investigation – Timing. No later than five school days from the filing of the complaint with the designated employee, unless special circumstances are present and documented, the investigator shall submit a written initial determination to the school administrator.
- G. Investigation Report. The investigator shall prepare a written report to include a statement of the findings of the investigator as to whether the allegations have been substantiated, and as to whether the alleged conduct constitutes hazing, harassment and/or bullying. The report, when referencing student conduct, is a student record and therefore confidential. It will be made available to investigators in the context of a review conducted by either Vermont AOE, or investigations of harassment conducted by the Vermont Human Rights Commission or U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights.
- H. Notice to Students/Parents/Guardians. Within five school days of the conclusion of the investigation, the designated employee shall:
 - i. Notify in writing both the complainant and accused individual (or if either is a minor inform their respective parent or guardian) that:
 - 1. the investigation has been completed;
 - 2. whether or not the investigation concluded that a policy violation occurred (and which policy term was violated, i.e. harassment, hazing and/or bullying);
 - 3. that federal privacy law prevents disclosure of any discipline imposed as a result of the investigation unless the parent/guardian of the accused student and/or the accused eligible student consents to such disclosure, pursuant to 34 CFR Part 99.30, as set forth in Section II, Part C, above.
 - ii. Notify the Complainant Student - or if a minor, their parent(s) or guardian - in writing of their rights to:
 - 1. an internal review by the school of its initial determination as a result of its investigation as to whether harassment occurred;
 - 2. request an Independent Review of the school's "final" determination as to whether harassment occurred within thirty (30) days of the final determination or although a "final" determination was made that harassment indeed occurred the school's response to that harassment was inadequate to correct the problem; and that the review will be conducted by an investigator to be selected by the superintendent from a list developed by the Agency of Education;
 - 3. file complaints of harassment with either the Vermont Human Rights Commission and/or the federal Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights.
 - iii. Notify the Accused Student – or if a minor, their parent(s) or guardian - in writing of their right to appeal as set forth in Section V of these procedures.
- I. Violations of Other Policies. In cases where the investigation has identified other conduct that may constitute a violation of other school disciplinary policies or codes of conduct, the designated employee shall report such conduct to the school administrator for action in accordance with relevant school policies or codes of conduct.

IV. Responding to Substantiated Claims

- A. Scope of Response. After a final determination that an act(s) of hazing, harassment and/or bullying has been committed, the school shall take prompt and appropriate disciplinary and/or remedial action reasonably calculated to stop the hazing, harassment and/or bullying and prevent any recurrence of harassment, hazing and/or bullying, and remedy its effects on the victim(s). In so doing, the following should be considered:
 - (i) Potential Remedial Actions. Remedial action may include but not be limited to an age appropriate warning, reprimand, education, training and counseling, transfer, suspension, and/or expulsion of a student, and warning, reprimand, education, training and counseling, transfer, suspension and/or termination of an employee. A series of escalating consequences may be necessary if the initial steps are ineffective in stopping the hazing, harassment and/or bullying. To prevent recurrences, counseling for the offender may be appropriate to ensure that he or she

understands what constitutes hazing/harassment and/or bullying and the effects it can have. Depending on how widespread the hazing/harassment/bullying was and whether there have been any prior incidents, the school may need to provide training for the larger school community to ensure that students, parents and teachers can recognize hazing/harassment/bullying if it recurs and know how to respond.

(ii) School Access/Environment Considerations. The District will also take efforts to support victims' access to the District's programs, services and activities and consider and implement school-wide remedies, where appropriate. Accordingly, steps will be taken to eliminate any hostile and/or threatening environment that has been created. For example, if a female student has been subjected to harassment/bullying by a group of other students in a class, the school may need to deliver special training or other interventions for that class to repair the educational environment. If the school offers the student the option of withdrawing from a class in which a hostile environment/bullying occurred, the District will assist the student in making program or schedule changes and ensure that none of the changes adversely affect the student's academic record. Other measures may include, if appropriate, directing a bully/harasser to apologize to the affected student. If a hostile environment has affected the entire school or campus, an effective response may need to include dissemination of information, the issuance of new policy statements or other steps that are designed to clearly communicate the message that the school does not tolerate harassment and/or bullying and will be responsive to any student who reports that conduct.

(iii) Hazing Case Considerations. Appropriate penalties or sanctions or both for organizations that or individuals who engage in hazing and revocation or suspension of an organization's permission to operate or exist within the institution's purview if that organization knowingly permits, authorizes, or condones hazing.

(iv) Other Remedies: Other remedies may include providing counseling to the victim(s) and/or the perpetrator(s), and additional safety planning measures for the victim(s).

- B. Retaliation Prevention. It is unlawful for any person to retaliate against a person who has filed a complaint of harassment or against a person who assists or participates in an investigation, proceeding or hearing related to the harassment complaint. A person may violate this anti-retaliation provision regardless of whether the underlying complaint of harassment is substantiated. The District will take reasonable steps to prevent any retaliation against the student who made the complaint (or was the subject of the harassment), against the person who filed a complaint on behalf of a student, or against those who provided information as witnesses. At a minimum, this includes making sure that the students and their parents, and those witnesses involved in the school's investigation, know how to report any subsequent problems and making follow-up inquiries to see if there have been any new incidents or any retaliation.
- C. Alternative Dispute Resolution. At all stages of the investigation and determination process, school officials are encouraged to make available to complainants the alternative dispute resolution methods, such as mediation, for resolving complaints. Certain considerations should be made before pursuing alternative dispute resolution methods, including, but not limited to:
- (1) the nature of the accusations (for example, face-to-face mediation is not appropriate for sexual violence cases),
 - (2) the age of the complainant and the accused individual,
 - (3) the agreement of the complainant, and
 - (4) other relevant factors such as any disability of the target or accused individual, safety issues, the relationship and relative power differential between the target and accused individual, or any history of repeated misconduct/harassment by the accused individual.

V. Post Investigative Reviews

Rights of Complainants

A. Internal Review of Initial Harassment Determinations by Complainant.

A complainant or parent of a complainant may request internal review by the District of a designee's initial determination (following investigation) that harassment has not occurred via written request submitted to the District superintendent. All levels of internal review of the investigator's initial determination, and the issuance of a final decision, shall, unless special circumstances are present and documented by the District, be completed within 30 calendar days after review is requested.

B. Independent Reviews of Final Harassment Determinations by Complainant.

A complainant may request an independent review within thirty (30) days of a final determination if s/he: (1) is dissatisfied with the final determination as to whether harassment occurred, or (2) believes that although a final determination was made that harassment occurred, the school's response was inadequate to correct the problem.

The complainant shall make such a request in writing to the superintendent of schools within thirty (30) days of a final determination. Upon such request, the superintendent shall promptly initiate an independent review by a neutral person as described under 16 V.S.A. § 570a.(b)(1) and shall cooperate with the independent reviewer so that s/he may proceed expeditiously. The review shall consist of an interview of the complainant and relevant school officials and a review of the written materials from the school's investigation.

Upon completion of the independent review, the reviewer shall advise the complainant and school officials in writing: (1) as to the sufficiency of the school's investigation, its determination, and/or the steps taken by the school to correct any harassment found to have occurred, and (2) of recommendations of any steps the school might take to prevent further harassment from occurring. A copy of the independent review report shall be sent to the Secretary of Education.

The reviewer shall advise the student of other remedies that may be available if the student remains dissatisfied and, if appropriate, may recommend mediation or other alternative dispute resolution. The independent reviewer shall be considered an agent of the school for the purpose of being able to review confidential student records. The costs of the independent review shall be borne by the District. The District may request an independent review at any stage of the process.

- C. Rights to Alternative Harassment Complaint Process. In addition to, or as an alternative to filing a harassment complaint pursuant to this policy, a person may file a harassment complaint with the Vermont Human Rights Commission or the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education at the addresses noted below:

Vermont Human Rights Commission
14-16 Baldwin Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-6301
(800) 416-2010 or (802) 828-2480 (voice)
(877) 294-9200 (tty)
(802) 828-2481 (fax)
Email: human.rights@state.vt.us

Office for Civil Rights, Boston Office
U.S. Department of Education
8th Floor
5 Post Office Square
Boston, MA 02109-3921
617-289-0111 (voice)
877-521-2172 (tdd)
617-289-0150 (fax)
Email: OCR.Boston@ed.gov

Rights of Accused Students

A. Appeal. Any person determined to have engaged in an act(s) of hazing, harassment and/or bullying may appeal the determination and/or any related disciplinary action(s) taken directly to the school board of the school district. The school board shall conduct a review on the record. The standard of review by the school board shall be whether the finding that an act(s) of hazing, harassment, and/or bullying has been committed constitutes an abuse of discretion by the school level fact finder. Appeals should be made to the school board within ten (10) calendar days of receiving the determination that an act(s) of hazing, harassment and/or bullying has occurred and/or any announced discipline. The school board shall set the matter for a review hearing at the next scheduled school board meeting to the extent practicable, but not later than 30 days from receipt of the appeal filing.

B. Accused Student/Appellant Access to Investigative Reports/Findings. The school district shall make available upon request of the Accused Student/Appellant, any relevant information, documents, materials, etc. related to the investigation and related finding on appeal that can be redacted and de-identified in compliance with the requirements set forth at 34 CFR Part 99. For those documents that cannot be provided due to the requirements set forth at 34 CFR Part 99, when an Accused Student/Appellant seeks a review on the record before the school board of the school district, a school administrator may seek the consent of the parent/guardian of the targeted student, or the accused eligible targeted student (if 18 or older, the targeted student has the ability to consent), in order to inform the accused student of the findings which gave rise to the school's determination that an act(s) of harassment, hazing, and/or bullying occurred. The parent/guardian or eligible student shall provide a signed and dated written consent before an educational agency or institution discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records.

VI. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

- A. Privacy Concerns. The privacy of the complainant, the accused individual, and the witnesses shall be maintained consistent with the District's obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to comply with laws governing the disclosure of student records or other applicable discovery or disclosure obligations.
- i. Concerns Related to Harassment Complaints. The scope of appropriate response to a harassment complaint may depend upon whether a student or parent of a minor student reporting the harassment asks that the student's name not be disclosed to the harasser or that nothing be done about the alleged harassment. In all cases, school officials will discuss confidentiality standards and concerns with the complainant initially. The school will inform the student that a confidentiality request may limit the school's ability to respond. The school will remind the student that both federal Title IX and Vermont Title 9 prevent retaliation and that if he or she is afraid of reprisals from the alleged harasser, the school will take steps to prevent retaliation and will take strong action if retaliation occurs. If the student continues to ask that his or her name not be revealed, the school should take all reasonable steps to investigate and respond to the complaint consistent with the student's request as long as doing so does not prevent the school from responding effectively to the harassment and preventing harassment of other students.

The school will evaluate the confidentiality request in the context of its responsibility to provide a safe and nondiscriminatory environment for all students. The factors the school might consider in this regard include the seriousness of the alleged harassment, the age of the student harassed, whether there have been other complaints or reports of harassment against the alleged harasser, and the rights of the accused individual to receive information about the accuser and the allegations if a formal proceeding with sanctions may result. If information about the incident is contained in an "education record" of the student alleging the harassment, as defined by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. 1232g, the school will consider whether FERPA prohibits it from disclosing information without the student's consent.

- B. Document Maintenance. The Superintendent or school administrator shall assure that a record of any complaint, its investigation and disposition, as well as any disciplinary or remedial action taken following the completion of the investigation, is maintained by the District in a confidential file accessible only to authorized persons. All investigation records created in conformance with this model policy and model procedures, including but not limited to, the complaint form, interview notes, additional evidence, and the investigative report, shall be kept by the Equity Coordinator, Designated Employees and District/Supervisory Union Central Office for at least six years after the investigation is completed.

VII. Reporting to Other Agencies

- A. Reports to Department of Children and Families. When a complaint made pursuant to this policy includes allegations of child abuse, any person responsible for reporting suspected child abuse under 33 V.S.A. § 4911, et seq. must report the allegation to the Commissioner of DCF. If the victim is over

the age of 18 and a report of abuse is warranted, the report shall be made to Adult Protective Services in accordance with 33 V.S.A. § 6901 et seq.

B. Reports to Vermont Agency of Education. If a harassment complaint is made in a public school about conduct by a licensed educator that might be grounds under Vermont law for licensing action, the principal shall report the alleged conduct to the Superintendent and the Superintendent shall report the alleged conduct to the Commissioner. If a harassment complaint is made in an independent school about conduct by a licensed educator that might be grounds under Vermont law for licensing action, the head of school is encouraged to report the alleged conduct to the Secretary of Education.

C. Reporting Incidents to Police

a. FERPA Rights. Information obtained and documented by school administration regarding the school's response to notice of student conduct that may constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying may constitute an "educational record" regarding the student or student(s) involved as defined by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act. Accordingly, such information may not be disclosed without prior parent approval to local law enforcement except in response to a lawfully issued subpoena, or in connection with an emergency if disclosure is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.

b. First Hand Reports. Nothing in this policy shall preclude persons from reporting incidents and/or conduct witnessed first-hand that may be considered to be a criminal act to law enforcement officials.

c. Hazing Incidents. It is unlawful to (1) engage in hazing; (2) solicit direct, aid, or attempt to aid, or abet another person engaged in hazing; or (3) knowingly fail to take reasonable measures within the scope of the person's authority to prevent hazing. It is not a defense in an action under this section that the person against whom the hazing was directed consented to or acquiesced in the hazing activity. Hazing incidents will be reported to the police in a manner consistent with the confidentiality rights set forth above in this section.

D. Continuing Obligation to Investigate. Reports made to either DCF or law enforcement shall not be considered to absolve the school administrators of their obligations under this policy to pursue and complete an investigation upon receipt of notice of conduct which may constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying.

VIII. Disseminating Information, Training, and Data Reporting

A. Disseminating Information. Annually, prior to the commencement of curricular and co-curricular activities, the District shall provide notice of this policy and procedures to students, custodial parents or guardians of students, and staff members, including references to the consequences of misbehavior contained in the plan required by 16 V.S.A. 1161a. Notice to students shall be in age-appropriate language and include examples of hazing, harassment and bullying. At a minimum, this notice shall appear in any publication of the District that sets forth the comprehensive rules, procedures and standards of conduct for the District.

B. Student Training. The school administrator shall use his/her discretion in developing age-appropriate methods of discussing the meaning and substance of this policy with students to help prevent hazing, harassment and bullying.

C. Staff Training. The board or its designee shall ensure that teachers and other staff receive training in preventing, recognizing and responding to hazing, harassment and bullying.

D. Data Gathering. Public school districts shall provide the Vermont Agency of Education with data requested by the Secretary of Education.

Prevention of Sexual Harassment As Prohibited by Title IX

I. Statement of Policy.

A. Prohibiting Title IX Sexual Harassment. Per Title IX of the Education

Amendments Act of 1972 ("Title IX") the District does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs and activities, including employment and admissions. All forms of sex-based discrimination, including sexual harassment, are prohibited in the District. A District with actual knowledge of sexual harassment in an educational program or activity of the District against a person in the United States must respond promptly in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent. A District is deliberately indifferent only if its response to sexual harassment is clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances. A District may be deemed to have been deliberately indifferent based on its restriction of rights protected under the U.S. Constitution, including the First, Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments.

B. Retaliation. Retaliation as defined by this Policy is expressly prohibited. Complaints alleging retaliation may be filed according to the Title IX Grievance Procedures set forth in Section IV.

C. Concurrent Statutory Obligations. While all forms of sex-based discrimination are prohibited in the District, the purpose of this policy is to address, and only address, sexual harassment as defined in Title IX and Section 11.M. below. For conduct which satisfies that definition, a school's response is governed by this policy, and in those cases for which they have received a filing of a formal complaint of same, as set forth under the Title IX Grievance Process set forth in Section IV below. For other forms of inappropriate conduct, or conduct which may satisfy the definition of harassment on the basis of sex under Vermont law, including student misconduct and employment based statutes prohibiting unlawful harassment and other forms of misconduct, the District may have the separate obligation to address those behaviors as required by other school policies and applicable laws.

C. Covered Parties. This Policy shall apply to all students, employees and any third party who contracts with the District to provide services to District students or employees, upon District property or during any school program or activity. A third party under supervision and control of the school system will be subject to termination of contracts/agreements, restricted from access to school property, and/or subject to other consequences, as appropriate.

II. Definitions

As used in this Policy and during the Title IX Grievance Process, the terms below shall have the meaning ascribed.

A. "Actual Knowledge" means "notice" of "sexual harassment" or allegations of "sexual harassment" to either (a) a recipient's Title IX Coordinator; or (b) any official of the recipient who has the authority to institute corrective measures on behalf of the recipient; or (c) to any employee of an elementary and secondary school.

a. For purposes of this paragraph "sexual harassment" refers to the definition as contained within this policy. For other forms of inappropriate conduct, or conduct which may satisfy the definition of harassment on the basis of sex as recognized under Vermont law, schools retain the option and in some cases the obligation to address those behaviors as required by policy and law.

b. Actual knowledge shall not be deemed to exist when the only official of the recipient with actual knowledge is the respondent.

c. "Notice" as used in this paragraph includes, but is not limited to, a Report of Sexual Harassment to the Title IX Coordinator as described Section IV.B.

d. Notice sufficient to trigger an obligation under this policy only shall exist where any employee has sufficient personal knowledge of alleged facts to be aware that if such facts were found to be true it would constitute a violation of this policy.

e. Imputation of knowledge based solely on vicarious liability OR constructive notice shall be insufficient to establish or constitute actual knowledge.

B. "Complainant" is an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute "sexual harassment" under this Policy. In order for an individual to be considered to be a Complainant they need not file Report of Sexual Harassment, nor a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment. Where the Title IX Coordinator signs a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment, the Title IX Coordinator is not considered a "Complainant."

C. "Days" shall mean calendar days, but shall exclude non-weekend days on which the District office is closed (e.g. holidays, office-wide vacations), or any weekday during the school year on which school is closed (e.g. snow days).

D. "Decision-Maker" means persons tasked with either the responsibility of making determinations of responsibility (referred to as "Initial Decision Maker"); or the responsibility to decide any appeal (referred to as "Appellate Decision-Maker") with respect to Formal Complaints of Sexual Harassment in accordance with the Title IX Grievance Process.

E. "Determination of Responsibility" is the formal finding by the decision maker on each allegation of Sexual Harassment contained in a Formal

complaint that the Respondent did or did not engage in conduct constituting Sexual Harassment under Title IX.

F. "Disciplinary sanctions" are consequences imposed on a Respondent when s/he is determined responsible for sexual harassment prohibited under this Policy.

F. "Emergency Removal" for purposes of this Policy shall mean removing a respondent from the District's education program or activity on an emergency basis, provided that the District undertakes an individualized safety and risk analysis, determines that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual arising from the allegations of sexual harassment justifies removal, and provides the respondent with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal. Emergency Removals as permitted by this Policy shall not be construed to modify any rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or the Americans with Disabilities Act.

G. "Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment" means a document filed by either (a) a complainant (or complainant's parent/guardian); or (b) the Title IX Coordinator, alleging sexual harassment

against a respondent AND requesting that the District investigate the allegation of sexual harassment. The issuance or receipt of a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment formally triggers the Title IX Grievance Process set forth in Section IV. of this Policy.

H. "Investigation of Title IX Sexual Harassment" Before the District can conduct an Investigation of Sexual Harassment under this Policy against a Respondent, a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment that contains an allegation of sexual harassment and a request that the District investigate the allegations is required. Such investigation is a part of the Title IX Grievance Process, as set forth in Section IV.E.

I. "Remedial actions" are actions intended to restore or preserve a complainant's equal access to the educational programs and activities of the District.

J. "Report of Sexual Harassment" is any report which provides the District with actual knowledge of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment. Such a report may or may not be accompanied by a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment. Without such a Complaint, the Title IX Grievance Process is not triggered. See Section IV.A and IV.B. regarding the process for initiating that process.

K. "Respondent" means an individual who has been reported to be the individual accused (i.e. perpetrator) of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment as defined under this policy.

L. "Retaliation" means intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination by either the District or any other person against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX and/or this Policy, or because the individual has made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing in connection with this Policy. Intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination, including charges against an individual for code of conduct violations that do not involve sex discrimination or sexual harassment, but arise out of the same facts or circumstances as a report or complaint of sexual discrimination, or a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment, for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX or this policy, constitutes retaliation.
Limitation in Scope.

- i. Material False Statements. Actions taken in response to materially false statements made in bad faith, or to submitting materially false information in bad faith, as part of a report or during the Title IX Grievance Process do not constitute retaliation. A determination of responsibility alone is insufficient to conclude that a person made a materially false statement in bad faith.
- ii. 1st Amendment Protections. The exercise of rights protected under the First Amendment does not constitute retaliation prohibited by this Policy.

M. "Sexual harassment" prohibited under Title IX and by this Policy is conduct on the basis of sex, occurring in an education program or activity of the District, against a person in the United States, that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. A school district employee conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the District on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct; OR
2. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, AND objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the District's education program or activity; OR
3. Or any conduct which would satisfy one or more of the following definitions:
 - a. Sexual assault: Any sexual act(s) directed at another person without consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is unable to lawfully give consent because of age or cognitive ability. Consent to a sexual act exists where words, actions or other non-verbal conduct objectively communicates a desire to participate in the sexual act(s). Consent to some sexual act(s) does not indicate consent to all sexual acts. Consent may be withdrawn at any time by objectively

communicating through words, actions or other non-verbal conduct AND/OR

- b. Dating Violence: Violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or an intimate nature with the victim. The existence of the relationship shall be considered with reference to the length of the relationship, the type of relationship and the frequency of the interactions between the persons involved in the relationship. AND/OR
- c. Domestic violence: Felony or misdemeanor crimes of violence committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim, by a person with whom the victim shares a child, by a person who is cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner or any other persons protected under 15 V.S.A. section 1101 from domestic abuse. AND/OR
- d. Stalking: A course of conduct by a person directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear for their safety or the safety of others or suffer substantial emotional distress.

Limitation in Scope. For purposes of this policy conduct shall not be deemed to satisfy Title IX's definition of "sexual harassment" if the conduct occurred either (1) outside of the United States and/or (2) includes locations, events or circumstances over which the District did not exercise substantial control over both the respondent and the context in which the harassment occurred.

N. "Supportive Measures" are non-disciplinary, non-punitive, individualized services, offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the complainant or the respondent before or after the filing of a formal complaint or where no formal complaint has been filed. Such measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to the District's education program or activity without unreasonably burdening the other party including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or the District's educational environment, or deter sexual harassment. These measures may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. counseling;
2. extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments;
3. modifications of work or class schedules;
4. campus escort services;
5. mutual restrictions on contact between the parties;
6. changes in work or housing locations;
7. leaves of absence;
8. increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the district campus;
9. and other similar measures.

III. Duties

A. Reports of Sexual Harassment

1. Any Person May Make a 'Report of Sexual Harassment'. Any person may report sexual harassment whether relating to her/himself or another person. A Report of Sexual Harassment may be made at any time, in person, by mail, by telephone, electronic mail, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person's verbal or written report.
 - a. Any Staff Member May Receive Reports. Additionally, while the District strongly encourages Reports of Sexual Harassment to be made directly to the Title IX Coordinator, the report may be made to any District staff member, including, for instance, a counselor, teacher or principal.
 - b. In Cases where Title IX Coordinator is Alleged Respondent. If the Title IX Coordinator is the alleged respondent, in such cases either the Report of Sexual Harassment or Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment may be made directly to the Superintendent, who shall thereafter fulfill the functions of the Title IX Coordinator regarding that Report/Complaint, or delegate the function to another person.

B. District Response to Report of Sexual Harassment.

1. Duty to respond. The District will promptly respond when there is Actual Knowledge of sexual harassment, even if a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment has not been filed.
 - a. District Response Must Be Equitable. In its response the District shall treat Complainants and Respondents equitably by providing supportive measures to the Complainant and by following the Title IX Grievance Process prior to imposing any disciplinary sanctions or other actions that are not supportive measures against a Respondent.
 - b. Reports of Harassment Received by District Employees Shall Be Referred to Title IX Coordinator. Where any District employee - other than the employee harasser, or the Title IX Coordinator - receives information of conduct which may constitute sexual harassment under this Policy, s/he shall, without delay, inform the Title IX Coordinator of the alleged sexual harassment. Failure to report will subject the employee to discipline up to and including dismissal.
 - c. Complainant Contact. As soon as reasonably possible after receiving a Report of Sexual Harassment from another District employee or after receiving a report directly through any means, the Title IX Coordinator shall contact the Complainant (and parent/guardian in cases where the complainant is a student under the age of 18) to:
 - i. discuss the availability of and offer supportive measures;
 - ii. consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures;
 - iii. inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a formal complaint; and
 - iv. explain to the complainant the process for filing a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment.
2. Formal Investigation of Sexual Harassment. Before the District may conduct a formal investigation of sexual harassment or take any action (other than supportive measures) against a Respondent, a Formal Complaint that contains an allegation of sexual harassment and a request that the District investigate the allegations is required and must be filed by either the Complainant, the Complainant's Parent/Guardian, or the Title IX Coordinator, as set forth under Section IV.B. below.
3. Initiating the Title IX Grievance Process. A Report of Sexual Harassment alone does not initiate a Title IX Grievance Process. Before the District may initiate that process, a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment must be filed under the procedures set out in IV.A. ("Title IX Grievance Process").

C. Formal Complaints of Sexual Harassment.

1. Process for Filing a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment. The process for filing a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment is set forth in Section IV.A. ("Title IX Grievance Process").
2. District Response to Receipt of Formal Complaint.
 - a. Investigation of Sexual Harassment. The District must investigate the allegations of a Formal Complaint unless both parties voluntarily consent to engage in Informal Resolution, or Dismissal otherwise occurs under Section IV. G. below.
2. District Written Notification to Parties in Response to Receipt of Formal Complaint. Upon receipt of a Formal Complaint, the District must provide written notice as set forth in Section IV.C. below of the Title IX Grievance Process. In response to a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment, the District must follow the Title IX Grievance Process set forth in Section IV.

D. District Duty to Respond When Determination of Responsibility For Sexual Harassment Has Been Made Against a Respondent. The District must provide remedies to a Complainant where a determination of responsibility for sexual harassment has been made against a Respondent designed to restore or preserve equal access to the District's education program or activity. Such remedies may include "supportive measures" but also need not be non disciplinary or non-punitive and need not avoid burdening the Respondent.

E. Reporting to Other Agencies.

1. Reports to Department of Children and Families. When a report made pursuant to this policy includes allegations of child abuse, any person responsible for reporting suspected child abuse under 33 V.S.A. § 4491, et seq. must report the allegation to the Commission or DCF. If the victim is over the age of 18 and a report of abuse is warranted, the report shall be made to Adult Protective Services in accordance with 33 V.S.A. § 6901 et seq.
2. Reports to Vermont Agency of Education. If a report of sexual harassment is made to the District about conduct by a licensed educator that might be grounds under Vermont law for licensing action, the principal shall report the

alleged conduct to the Superintendent and the Superintendent shall report the alleged conduct to the Secretary. If a report of sexual harassment is made in an independent school about conduct by a licensed educator that might be grounds under Vermont law for licensing action, the head of school is encouraged to report the alleged conduct to the Secretary of Education.]

3. Reporting Incidents to Police.

- a. FERPA Rights. Information obtained and documented by school administration regarding the school's response to notice of student conduct that may constitute sexual harassment may constitute an "educational record" regarding the student or student(s) involved as defined by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act. Accordingly, such information may not be disclosed without prior parent approval to local law enforcement except in response to a lawfully issued subpoena, or in connection with an emergency if disclosure is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.
- b. First Hand Reports. Nothing in this policy shall preclude persons from reporting incidents and/or conduct witnessed first-hand that may be considered to be a criminal act to law enforcement officials.

4. Continuing Obligation to Investigate. Reports made to DCF, AOE or law enforcement shall not be considered to absolve the school administrators of their obligations under this policy or other school policies where appropriate, to respond, and when appropriate to investigate and follow the Title IX Grievance Process.

F. Disseminating Information and Notice.

1. Notice of Title IX Policy. The District will make this Policy publicly available on the District's website (OR if the District does not maintain a website, available upon request for inspection by members of the public).
2. Notice of Title IX Obligations and Coordinator Information. The District shall include in all student and employee handbooks, and shall make publicly available on the district's website (OR if the District does not maintain a website, available for inspection to members of the public upon request) the following information:
 - a. The District's policy of non-discrimination on the basis of sex, that it is required by Title IX not to discriminate in such a manner, and that such requirement not to discriminate in the education program or activity of the District extends to admission and employment (all to be prominently displayed on both the website and in publications);
 - b. The title, name, office address, email address, and telephone number of the District's Title IX Coordinator (all to be prominently displayed on both the website and in publications);
 - c. A statement that Title IX inquiries may be referred to either the District's Title IX Coordinator or to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights.The same information shall be otherwise provided to students, employees, unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with the District, and all persons seeking employment with the District, or seeking to enroll or participate in the District's educational programs or activities. Those persons shall also be informed of the grievance procedures and process provided for under Section IV, of this Policy, including how to file either a Report of Sexual Harassment or Formal Complaint of Harassment, and the response the District will take in response to such filings.
3. Training Materials. Additionally, the District will make any materials used to train personnel as required under Sec. V.F. publicly available on the District's website (OR if the District does not maintain a website, available upon request for inspection by members of the public).

G. Record Keeping

The District shall maintain for a period of seven years records of

1. Sexual Harassment Investigations. The District shall maintain records of any:
 - a) determination regarding responsibility;
 - b) any disciplinary sanctions imposed on the respondent;
 - c) any remedies provided to the complainant designed to restore or preserve equal access to the recipient's education program or activity; and
 - d) any appeal and result therefrom.
2. Any informal resolution and the result therefrom.
3. All materials used to train Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process.
4. For each response required of the District by this Policy to Actual Knowledge of Sexual Harassment, the District must create and maintain for a period of seven years the following:
 - A) Records of any actions, including any supportive measures, taken in response to a Report of Sexual Harassment or Formal Complaint of Harassment. In each instance the District must document the basis for its conclusion that its response was not deliberately indifferent, and document that it has taken measures designed to restore or preserve equal access to the District's educational program or activity. Where a District does not provide a Complainant with supportive measures, then the District must document the reasons why such a response was not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances. The documentation of certain bases or measures does not limit the District in the future from providing additional explanations or detailing additional measures taken.

H. Confidentiality

1. Duty to Maintain Confidentiality.

The District must keep confidential the identity of any individual who has made a Report of Sexual Harassment or Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment under this Policy, any Complainant, Respondent, and any witness, except either:

1. As may be permitted by the FERPA statute, 20 U.S.C. 1232g, or FERPA regulations, 34 C.F.R. part 99;
2. or as required by law, such as reports to DCF, law enforcement or the Agency of Education as set forth in Section 111.E above;
3. or to carry out the purposes of 34 C.F.R. part 106, including the conduct of any investigation, hearing or judicial proceeding arising thereunder, as set forth in this policy (Section IV.C.2, IV.E.7.8, and 10, IV.F.5, IV.G.3., and IV.H.7.);
4. where maintaining confidentiality with respect to supportive measures offered to the Complainant or Respondent would impair the ability of the school district to provide the supportive measures;

IV. TITLE IX GRIEVANCE PROCESS.

A. General Provisions.

1. Triggers for Implementation. The Title IX Grievance Process is used only upon the filing of a Formal Complaint of sexual harassment as described below. This process must be followed before any discipline of a Respondent to allegations of Sexual Harassment may be imposed by the District.
2. Protections for Equitable Treatment in The Handling of Formal Complaints by District. The District response to a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment shall treat Complainant and Respondents equitably. In particular, this Title IX Grievance Process shall require:
 - a) "Presumption of Non Responsibility" presumption that the Respondent is not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the Title IX Grievance Process;
 - b) "Objectivity" an objective evaluation of all relevant evidence - including both inculpatory and exculpatory evidence - and provide that credibility determinations may not be based on a person's status as a Complainant, Respondent, or Witness;
 - c) "Conflict and Bias Free Personnel" that individuals designated by the District to act as Title IX Coordinator, investigator, decision-makers, or to facilitate an informal resolution process, shall have no conflict of interest nor bias for or against a Complainant or Respondent individually, or complainants or respondents generally;

d) "No Interference with Legal Privileges" such that at no point in the grievance process will the Title IX Coordinator, the investigator, any decision maker, or any other person participating on behalf of the District, require, allow, rely upon, or otherwise use questions or evidence that constitutes, or seeks disclosure of, information protected under a legally recognized privilege (e.g., doctor/patient, attorney/client, clergy, etc.), unless the person holding such privilege (parent/guardian for minor student) has waived the privilege in writing to use the information with respect to the Title IX Grievance Process;

e) "Proof of Responsibility for Sexual Harassment by a Preponderance of the Evidence," which is only met when the party with the burden convinces the fact finder (the Initial Decision-Maker) that there is a

greater than 50% chance that the claim is true (i.e., more likely than not). This standard shall be applied to all Formal Complaints of Sexual Harassment, whether they involve students or faculty; and

f) "Reasonably Prompt Time Frames for Conclusion of the Title IX Grievance Process." The District shall make a good faith effort to conduct a fair, impartial grievance process in a reasonably prompt manner designed to provide all parties with a prompt and equitable resolution. It is expected that in most cases, the grievance process will be concluded - through at least the determination of responsibility decision - within 80 days after filing the Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment. However, more complex cases or other case specific circumstances, may require additional time beyond that timeframe. In such cases, good cause must be shown and written notice provided.

1. Grievance Process Timeline.

a. Investigation 20 +/- days (as the complexity of the case demands);

b. 10 days for reviewing information prior to conclusion of investigation;

c. 10 days after receiving investigative report - by either- party to respond;

d. 10 days for decision maker to allow initial questions;

e. 10 days for responses to questions;

f. 10 days for questions and responses to follow-up questions;

g. 10 days for determination of responsibility decision;

h. 10 days for appeal (6 additional days for administrative steps);

i. 10 days for decision on appeal.

2. Delays and Extensions of Time. At any stage of the grievance process, the District (through the Superintendent, or if the Superintendent is the respondent, the Title IX Coordinator or designee) may for good cause allow for temporary delays or extensions of time upon request of either party, or on his/her own initiative. Examples of good cause may include such things as availability of parties, party advisors, witnesses, school or school administrative office holidays or vacations, referral back to an earlier stage of the grievance process, concurrent law enforcement or other agency activity, or need to obtain language interpreters or accommodation of disabilities. For any such delay or extension of time, the Superintendent or the Title IX Coordinator will provide simultaneous written notice to the parties of the delay/extension and the reason(s).

3. Delivery of Copies and Notices. Except as specifically stated elsewhere in this Policy, for any document, information or material required to be delivered to a party or to a person assigned with responsibility under the Title IX Grievance Process, the manner of transmittal may be by electronic mail, regular mail or such other manner reasonably calculated to assure prompt delivery with evidence thereof (such as a commercial carrier or other receipted delivery).

Hand delivery will only be permitted: if made to the District official charged with the specific function under this Policy (e.g., Title IX Coordinator, Superintendent, investigator, decision maker(s), etc.). Any document required to be delivered to a minor or other non-eligible student, must also be delivered to the minor's parent/guardian. Copies should also be sent to a party's advisor if the information for the advisor has been previously communicated to the sending party. Under federal regulations, copies of the investigative evidence, as well as the investigative report, must be forwarded to a party's advisor.

4. Notice of Range of Disciplinary Sanctions and Remedial Actions Upon Final Determination of Responsibility.

a. Employee Respondents. "Disciplinary sanctions" against an employee respondent may include any available sanction available for the discipline of employees, up to and including dismissal or non-renewal for any other violation of Board policy, applicable individual or collective bargaining contract, or state or federal laws or regulations.

b. Student Respondents. "Disciplinary sanctions" against a student may include any available discipline or sanction, up to and including expulsion, permitted by District policies, and any other District rules and procedures or student code of conduct.

c. Remedial Actions. Remedial actions as to a Respondent after a Title IX Sexual Harassment Final Decision, whether employee or student, may include the imposition upon a responsible respondent of any additional non-disciplinary measures appropriate to effecting a remedy for sexual harassment, and may include such measures as no-contact requirements, scheduling adjustments, removal or exclusion from extracurricular activities, class reassignments, limits on future class registrations, restrictions on access to various spaces in the school buildings, reassignment of attendance, and similar measures fine-tuned to respond appropriately to the circumstances surrounding a successful complainant's right to access the district's program and activity. Additional remedial actions may include recommendations that a school-wide or system-wide response is needed in order to respond to the sexual harassment in a way that is not clearly unreasonable under the circumstances. In such cases, the Superintendent shall provide additional staff training, harassment prevention programs, or such other measures as determined appropriate to protect the safety of the educational environment and/or to deter sexual harassment.

5. Emergency Removal. Nothing in this Policy, or Title IX Grievance Process, precludes a District from removing a Respondent from the District's education program or activity on an emergency basis, provided that the District undertakes an individualized safety and risk analysis, determines that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual arising from the allegations of

sexual harassment justifies removal, and provides the Respondent with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal. This provision may not be construed to modify any rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or the Americans with Disabilities Act. Such removal shall not be disciplinary.

6. Administrative Leave. Nothing in this Policy precludes a recipient from placing a non-student employee respondent on administrative leave during the pendency of the Title IX Grievance Process. This provision may not be construed to modify any rights under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or the Americans with Disabilities Act.

B. Formal Complaints of Sexual Harassment. The Title IX Grievance Process is initiated by way of a Formal Complaint ("complaint" or "formal complaint") filed by the Complainant, the Complainant's parent/guardian, or the Title IX Coordinator.

1. Complainant Options. In cases of Actual Knowledge (and/OR) Reports of Sexual Harassment, the Complainant retains the option to either file a Complaint of Sexual Harassment or choose not to and instead simply receive the supportive measures, except as set forth below.

a. Filings by Title IX Coordinator. In cases where the Complainant does not file a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment, the Title IX Coordinator may nevertheless choose to sign and thus initiate a Formal Complaint of Harassment, but only if:

i. initiating the grievance process against the respondent is not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances;

ii. in other cases where, in the exercise of good judgment and in consultation with the District's attorney as appropriate, the Title IX Coordinator determines that a grievance process is necessary to comply with the obligation not to be deliberately indifferent to Actual Knowledge of sexual harassment.

iii. If the Complaint is filed by the Title IX Coordinator, he/she is not a party to the action, and the District must comply with all of the provisions of the Title IX Grievance Process relative to respondents and complainants.

b. Supportive Measures. The Title IX Coordinator will contact the Complainant to discuss and offer supportive measures.

2. Respondent Rights. In cases where no Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment is either filed by the Complainant or the Title IX Coordinator no disciplinary action may be taken against the Respondent based upon conduct that would constitute sexual harassment under this policy. Nevertheless, the Title IX Coordinator may contact the respondent to discuss, and or impose, non-disciplinary supportive measures.

3. Timeliness of Formal Complaints of Sexual Harassment. Although the District will initiate the Title IX Grievance Process regardless of when the Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment is submitted, delays in reporting may

significantly impair the ability of school officials to investigate and respond to the allegations.

4. Jurisdiction Over Parties. Although there is no time limit per se to filing a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment, Complaints may be dismissed if either the Complainant or Respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by the District.

5. Manner of Filing and Content of Formal Complaints of Sexual Harassment. Formal Complaints of Sexual Harassment may be filed with the Title IX coordinator in person, by mail, or by email and must be in writing. While forms may be obtained from the Title IX Coordinator or on the District or school website, at a minimum, a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment must:

a. contain the name and address of the Complainant and the student's parent or guardian if the complainant is a minor student;

b. describe the alleged sexual harassment;

c. request an investigation of the matter;

d. when filed by the Complainant be signed by the Complainant or otherwise indicate that the complainant is the person filing the complaint, or if not filed by the Complainant be signed by the Title IX Coordinator.

6. Consolidation of Complaints. The District may consolidate formal complaints of allegations of sexual harassment where the allegations of sexual harassment arise out of the same facts or circumstances and the formal complaints are against more than one respondent; or by more than one complainant against one or more respondents; or by one party against the other party. When the District has consolidated formal complaints so that the grievance process involves more than one complainant or more than one respondent, references to the singular "party", "complainant", or "respondent" include the plural, as applicable.

C. Notification of Formal Complaint to Parties ("Notification"). Upon receipt of a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment, the District must provide the following written notice to the parties who are known:

1. Notice of the District's Title IX Grievance Process (Section IV), including any informal resolution process.

2. Notice of the allegations potentially constituting sexual harassment as defined by Section 11.M., including sufficient details known at the time and with sufficient time to prepare a response before any initial interview. Sufficient details include the identities of the parties involved in the incident, if known, the conduct allegedly constituting sexual harassment as defined by Section 11.M., and the date and location of the alleged conduct, if known.

a. Supplemental Notice Required Upon Change in Investigative Scope. If, in the course of an investigation the District decides to investigate allegations about the Complainant or Respondent that are not included in the original Notification, the District must provide simultaneous notice of the additional allegations to the parties whose identities are known.

3. The written notice must include a statement that the Respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct and that a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the Title IX Grievance Process set forth in Section IV. of the Policy.

4. The written notice must inform the parties that they may have an advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney (who may be present during any Grievance proceeding, including any related meeting or proceeding). The District may establish restrictions regarding the extent to which the advisor may participate in the proceedings, as long as the restrictions apply equally to both parties.

5. The written notice must inform the parties of any provision in the District's code of conduct that prohibits knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during the grievance process.

D. Informal Resolution. At any time prior to reaching a determination regarding responsibility (but only after the filing of a formal complaint), the District may offer an optional informal resolution process (e.g., mediation, arbitration), provided that the District:

1. May not require as a condition of enrollment or continuing enrollment, or employment or continuing employment, or enjoyment of any other right, waiver of the right to a Sexual Harassment Investigation of a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment, such as may occur through Informal Resolution;
2. May not offer an informal resolution process unless a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment is filed;
3. Provides written notice to the parties disclosing:
 - a) The allegations of the Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment;
 - b) The requirements of the information resolution process including the circumstances under which it precludes the parties from resuming a formal complaint arising from the same allegations, provided, however, that at any time prior to agreeing to an informal final resolution, any party has the right to withdraw from the informal resolution process and resume the grievance process with respect to the formal complaint; and
 - c) Any consequences resulting from participating in the informal resolution process, including the records that will be maintained or could be shared.
4. Obtains the parties' voluntary written consent to the informal resolution process; and
5. Does not offer or facilitate an informal resolution process to resolve allegations that an employee sexually harassed a student.

E. Sexual Harassment Investigation.

The Title IX Coordinator shall designate a qualified, trained, person to investigate. The investigation must:

1. Include objective evaluation of all relevant evidence, including inculpatory and exculpatory evidence. (Evidence about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant, unless such evidence

about the complainant's prior sexual behavior is offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the conduct alleged by the complainant, or if the evidence concerns specific incidents of the complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the respondent and is offered to prove consent.)

2. Ensure that the burden of proof and the burden of gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination regarding responsibility rests on the District and not on either of the parties;
3. Provide an equal opportunity for the parties to present witnesses, including fact and expert witnesses, and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence;
4. Not restrict the ability of either party to discuss the allegations under investigation or to gather and present relevant evidence;
5. Provide the parties with the same opportunities to have others present during any interview or other part of the investigation, including the opportunity to be accompanied to any related meeting or proceeding by the advisor of their choice. The District may establish restrictions regarding the extent to which the advisor may participate in the proceedings, as long as the restrictions apply equally to both parties;
6. Provide, to a party (e.g., Respondent or Complainant - and parent/guardian as appropriate) whose participation is invited or expected, written notice of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of all investigative interviews, or other meetings, with sufficient time for the party to prepare to participate;
7. Provide both parties an equal opportunity to inspect and review any evidence obtained as part of the investigation that is directly related to the allegations raised in a formal complaint, including the evidence upon which the recipient does not intend to rely in reaching a determination regarding responsibility and inculpatory or exculpatory evidence whether obtained from a party or other source, so that each party can meaningfully respond to the evidence prior to the conclusion of the investigation;
8. PRIOR to completion of the Sexual Harassment Investigative Report, the District, through the Title IX Coordinator, must send to each party and party's advisor, if any, the evidence subject to inspection and review in an electronic format or a hard copy, and the parties must have at least 10 days to submit a written response, which the investigator will consider prior to completion of the investigative report;
9. Prepare a written Sexual Harassment Investigative Report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence, including, without limitation, witness credibility, discrepancies, inculpatory and exculpatory information, and relevant District policies, rules and regulations, and the manner in which the same were made known to the pertinent school populations or specific parties. The investigative report shall include a description of the procedural steps taken, starting with the receipt of the formal complaint, and continuing through the preparation of the investigative report, including any notifications to the parties, interview with parties and witnesses, site visit, and methods used to gather evidence.

10. The investigator shall provide the Investigative Report in hard copy or electronic format to the Title IX Coordinator, to each party, and each party's advisor, if any. Each party will have 10 days from receipt to provide the Title IX Coordinator a written response to the Investigative Report.

F. Initial Determination of Responsibility. The initial determination of responsibility of the respondent shall be made by the Initial Decision-Maker.

1. Initial Decision-Maker. The Initial Decision-Maker cannot be the same person(s) as the IX Coordinator or the Investigator(s).
2. Opportunity for Relevant Party Questions. After the Investigator Report has been sent to the parties pursuant to Section IV, E.10 (above), and PRIOR to making a determination of responsibility, the Initial Decision-Maker will afford each party 10 days to submit written, relevant questions to the Initial Decision-Maker that the party wants asked of any party or witness. Only relevant questions may be posed. The Initial Decision-Maker shall explain to the party proposing the questions any decision to exclude a question as deemed "not relevant."
 - a. Irrelevant Questions and Evidence. Questions and evidence about the Complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant, unless such questions and evidence about the Complainant's prior sexual behavior are offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the conduct alleged by the Complainant, or if the question and evidence concern specific incidents of the Complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the respondent and are offered to prove consent.
 - b. Written Responses to Questions. The Initial Decision-Maker will provide the questions to the party/witness, with copies to each party, and provide no less than 10 days for written responses, likewise to be provided to each party.
 - c. Opportunity for Limited Supplemental Questions. The Initial Decision Maker will provide 5 days each for supplementary, limited follow-up questions and 5 days for answers, and may provide for additional rounds of follow-up questions, as long as the provision is extended to both parties equally.
3. Prohibition on Negative Inferences. The Initial Decision-Maker may not make any credibility determinations based on the person's status as a complainant, respondent or witness.

4. Presumption of Non-Responsibility. The Respondent must be deemed to be not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the Title IX Grievance Process.
 5. Written Initial Determination Regarding Responsibility. Within 10 days following the close of the period set for responses to the last round of follow-up questions, the Initial Decision-Maker must issue a Written Initial Determination to the Title IX Coordinator, the Superintendent and the parties simultaneously, which, while applying the preponderance of the evidence standard, must include:
 - a. Identification of the allegations potentially constituting Sexual Harassment as defined in this Policy, section 11.M.;
 - b. A description of the procedural steps taken from the receipt of the formal complaint through the Initial Determination Regarding Responsibility, including any notifications to the parties, interviews with parties and witnesses, site visits, methods used to gather evidence, and hearings held;
 - c. Findings of fact supporting the Written Initial Determination Regarding Responsibility;
 - d. Conclusions regarding the application of the District's applicable codes of conduct, policies, administrative regulations or rules to the facts;
 - e. A statement of, and rationale for, the result as to each allegation, including a determination regarding responsibility (i.e., whether or not the respondent is responsible for sexual harassment), any disciplinary sanctions the District imposes on the Respondent, and whether remedies designed to restore or preserve equal access to the District's education program or activity will be provided by the District to the Complainant; and
 - f. The District's procedures and permissible bases for the Complainant and Respondent to appeal (as set forth in Section IV.H, below).
 6. Finality of Decision. The Initial Determination Regarding Responsibility becomes final, and identified as the Title IX Sexual Harassment Final Decision either:
 - a. On the date that District provides the parties with Written Determination of the Appeal, if an appeal is taken as set forth in Section IV.H, (below); OR
 - b. Where no appeal is taken, the date on which an appeal would no longer be considered timely.
 7. Duty to Effectuate Title IX Sexual Harassment Final Decision.
 - a. District Response to Sexual Harassment. Once a Title IX Sexual Harassment Final Decision is issued, the District may implement remedies as set forth in Section 11.D, above, and action as necessary to respond in a manner not deliberately indifferent in light of the known circumstances in cases of a Determination of Title IX Sexual Harassment Final Decision concluding responsibility for Sexual Harassment. The issue of responsibility for the conduct at issue shall not be subject to further review or appeal within the District (except as provided by District policy or collective bargaining agreement or applicable law). Appeals of disciplinary sanctions may be made pursuant to the District's ordinary review process for discipline, or to the extent applicable through any statutory or other processes provided under collective bargaining agreements or individual contracts.
 - b. Responsibility for Response. The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for effective implementation of remedies.
 - c. Other Actions Pursuant to Applicable Code of Conduct, Policies, Agreements, Contracts. The District may also proceed against the Respondent or Complainant pursuant to the District's applicable code of conduct or other Board policies, collective bargaining agreement, individual contract or administrative rules/regulations/procedures.
- G. Dismissal of a Formal Complaint.
1. The District must dismiss a formal complaint with regard to Title IX sexual harassment if the alleged conduct:
 - a. Would not constitute sexual harassment, even if proved;
 - b. Did not occur in the District's education program or activity; or
 - c. Did not occur against a person in the United States.
 2. The District may dismiss a formal complaint with regard to Title IX sexual harassment if at any time during the investigation or determination of responsibility stage(s):
 - a. A complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing that the complainant would like to withdraw the formal complaint or any allegations therein;
 - b. The respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by the District; or
 - c. Specific circumstances prevent the recipient from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination as to the formal complaint or allegations therein.
 3. Upon dismissal of a formal complaint, the District must promptly send written notice of the dismissal and the reason(s) therefore simultaneously to the parties.
 4. The dismissal of a formal complaint under Title IX does not preclude the District from continuing any investigation or taking action under other District policies, code of conduct or administrative rules/regulations. In some cases, the District may have an obligation to continue an investigation and proceed under a different policy or mandated process.
- H. Appeals. The District must offer both parties an appeal from a Initial Determination Regarding Responsibility, and from a Dismissal of a Formal Complaint, or any allegations therein.
1. Method of Filing. Either party may appeal the Initial Determination of Responsibility or the dismissal of a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment (or any allegations therein) by notifying the Superintendent in writing ("written appeal"), with a copy to the Title IX Coordinator. If there are multiple determinations of responsibility, the written appeal shall specify which ones are included in the appeal.
 2. Deadline for Notice of Appeal. The Notice of Appeal must be in writing and received by the Superintendent, with a copy to the Title IX Coordinator, within 10 days of either the Initial Determination of Responsibility or the written Notice of Dismissal being communicated to the parties, as appropriate.
 3. Grounds For Appeal. Either party may only appeal the Initial Determination of Responsibility or the Dismissal of a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment (or any allegations therein) based upon one or more of the following grounds, which must be stated specifically in the party's written appeal:
 - a. Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
 - b. New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal was made, that could affect the outcome of the matter; or
 - c. The Title IX Coordinator, investigator(s), or decision-maker(s) had a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or the individual complainant or respondent that affected the outcome of the matter.
 4. Appellate Decision-Maker. The Appellate Decision-Maker shall not be the same person as the Initial Decision-Maker that reached the determination regarding responsibility or the Dismissal of a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment, the Investigator(s) or the Title IX Coordinator. The Appellate Decision-Maker shall not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent. The Appellate Decision-Maker shall be trained as set forth in section V.F.2, and 3.

5. District Notification of Appeal and Duty to Equitable Treatment of Parties During Appeal. The District must notify the both parties in writing when an appeal is filed and implement appeal procedures equally for both parties.

6. Opportunity to Brief Appellate Decision-Maker.

a. Deadline In Cases Other than Newly Available Evidence. Except in cases of newly available evidence, each party shall have 10 days "reasonable and equal opportunity" from the date of the Notification of Appeal under section H.5. above, to submit to the Appellate Decision-Maker a written statement in support of, or challenging, the Initial Determination Regarding Responsibility.

b. Deadline in Cases of Newly Available Evidence. In cases where the basis of the appeal is newly available evidence affecting the outcome, the party relying upon such evidence shall submit to the Appellate Decision-Maker such evidence or a summary of such evidence along with the party's appeal statement first and within 7 days from the date of the Notification of the Appeal. In such instances the Appellate Decision-Maker shall then forward such documentation on to the opposing party, whereupon the opposing party shall thereafter have 7 days to review and submit their Brief to the Appellate Decision-Maker.

7. Written Determination of the Appeal

a. The Appellate Decision-Maker shall provide a Written Determination of the Appeal after considering the record and the parties' appeal statements, describing the result of the appeal and the rationale of the result. The appeals decision maker will only overturn the Initial Determination of Responsibility upon a conclusion that it was clearly erroneous (i.e., either made on unreasonable grounds, or without any proper consideration of the circumstances). If the basis or one of the bases for the appeal was new evidence, the appeals decision maker may either make a determination of responsibility regarding that evidence or refer it back to the appropriate stage of the Title IX Grievance Process. The Appellate Decision shall be provided simultaneously to both parties, with a copy to the Title IX Coordinator and the Superintendent of Schools.

b. Upon issuance of the Written Determination of the Appeal, it becomes a Title IX Sexual Harassment Final Decision, as set forth in Section

IV.F.6. with commensurate Title IX obligations for the District to act as set forth in Section IV.E.7.

V. Responsible Personnel.

A. Bias or Conflicts of Interest.

No person designated as a Title IX Coordinator, investigator, decision-maker, nor any person designated by the District to facilitate an informal resolution process, may have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent.

B. Title IX Coordinator.

The District must designate and authorize at least one employee to coordinate its efforts to comply with its responsibilities under this Policy, which employee must be referred to as the "Title IX Coordinator." Any individual designated by the District as a Title IX Coordinator shall be free of conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent.

1. Notice of Title IX Coordinator Contact Information. The name or title, office address, electronic mail address, and telephone number of the employee(s) designated as the Title IX Coordinator shall be provided to the following:

- a. all applicants for admission and employment;
- b. parents or legal guardians of elementary and secondary school students;
- c. employees; and
- d. all unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with the recipient.

2. Duties of Title IX Coordinator. In addition to coordinating the District's efforts to comply with its responsibilities under this Policy, and any other duties assigned, the Title IX Coordinator shall be responsible for:

a. Receipt of Reports of Sexual Harassment. Any person may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment (whether or not the person reporting is the person alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sex discrimination or sexual harassment), in person, by mail, by telephone, or by electronic mail, using contact information listed for the Title IX Coordinator, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person's verbal or written report. Such a report may be made at any time (including during non-business hours) by using the telephone number or electronic mail address, or by mail to the office address, listed for the Title IX Coordinator.

i. Responding to general reports and formal complaints of sexual harassment.

(a) The Title IX Coordinator shall promptly contact the Complainant (or where Complainant is a minor their parent/guardian) (regardless to whether a formal complaint has been received) to discuss:

i. Supportive Measures: the availability of supportive measures (as defined in section 11.N. above); to consider Complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures; to inform of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment;

ii. Formal Complaint and explain the process for filing a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment.

ii. Signing and/or receiving Formal Complaints of Sexual Harassment and in such cases commencing the Title IX Grievance Process set out in Section IV. above;

iii. Coordinating the effective implementation of supportive measures; and

iv. Coordinating the District's efforts to comply with its responsibilities related to the Title IX Grievance Process set forth in Section IV of this policy, including any other specific duties as assigned by the Superintendent to fulfill the District's obligations under this policy.

3. Conflict of Interest or Bias/Unavailability. In cases where the Title IX Coordinator is unavailable, including unavailability due to a conflict of interest or other disqualifying reason, the Superintendent shall assure that another person with the appropriate training and qualifications is appointed as acting Title IX Coordinator for that case, in such instances "Title IX Coordinator" shall include the acting Title IX Coordinators.

C. Investigators.

1. Conflict of Interest or Bias. Any individual assigned to investigate a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment shall not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent.

2. Responsibilities. Investigators shall be responsible for conducting Sexual Harassment Investigations as set forth in Section IV.E. above.

D. Decision-Makers.

1. Conflict of Interest or Bias. Any individual assigned as a Decision-Maker in the case of a Sexual Harassment under this Policy shall not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent.
2. Responsibilities.
 - a. Initial Decision-Makers shall be responsible for issuing an Initial Determination Regarding Responsibility following a Sexual Harassment Investigation and other duties set forth in Section IV.F. above.
 - b. Appellate Decision-Makers shall be responsible for issuing a Written Determination of the Appeal, and other duties set forth in Section IV.H. above.

E. Informal Resolution Process Facilitators ("Facilitators").

1. Conflict of Interest or Bias. Any individual assigned to facilitate an informal resolution process shall not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent.
2. Responsibilities. Facilitators shall be responsible for facilitating a process of informal resolution as permitted in section IV.D. above.

F. Training. The District shall ensure that training of the following personnel occur:

1. All District Employees. Training of District Employees shall occur relative to mandatory reporting obligations, and any other responsibilities they may have relative to this Policy.
2. Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process. These individuals must be trained on the following topics:
 - a. the definition of sexual harassment as contained within this Policy;
 - b. the scope of the recipient's education program or activity;
 - c. how to conduct an investigation, appeals, and informal resolution process;
 - d. how to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudgment of the facts at issue; and
 - e. conflicts of interest and bias.
3. Decision-makers. In addition to the topics set forth in 11.D.2. above, decision makers shall be trained on the following topics:
 - a. issues of relevance of questions and evidence, including when questions and evidence about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant as set forth in Section IV.E.1. and IV.E.2.a.
4. Investigators. In addition to the topics set forth in 11.D.2. above, investigators shall be trained on issues of relevance to create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence, as set forth in Section IV.E.9 a above.
5. Training Materials. Any materials used for trainings of Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process, must:
 - a. Not rely on sex stereotypes; and
 - b. Promote impartial investigations and adjudications of formal complaints of sexual harassment.
 - c. Be made available to the public either on its website, or if the District does not maintain a website, must make those materials available upon request for inspection by members of the public.

Legal References:

1. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C 1681, et seq 20 U.S.C. §1232g, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
2. 34 CFR, Part 99, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Regulations
3. 34 CFR 106.8, Designation of responsible employee and adoption of grievance procedures.
4. 34 CFR 106.30, Definitions
5. 34 CFR 106.44, Recipient's response to sexual harassment
6. 34 CFR 106.4, Grievance process for formal complaints of sexual harassment
7. 34 CFR 106.71, Retaliation

Legal References Disclaimer: These references are not intended to be considered part of this policy, nor should they be taken as a comprehensive statement of the legal basis for the Board to enact this policy, nor as a complete recitation of related legal authority. Instead, they are provided as additional resources for those interested in the subject matter of the policy.

Warded: 9/14/20
Adopted: 10/12/20

SCHOOL BUS RULES AND PROCEDURES

All students, Kindergarten through Grade 6, are transported to and from school. State law requires that all vehicles stop for buses loading and unloading. It is unlawful to pass the school bus when it is dropping off children in front of the school in the morning. Please help us load and unload our school buses safely.

If your child does not need to ride the bus, please notify the office, and advise the office of routine destinations (i.e. Daycare drop-offs or pick-ups).

Students must have written parental permission in order to ride bicycles to and from school, and they must be wearing a safety helmet. We feel that this will help ensure your child's safety.

The LNSU/LNMUUSD School Board and teachers strongly support proper and safe conduct of students on the school bus. **Transportation is a privilege** granted to pupils as long as they cooperate with the bus driver and respect the rights and safety of others. Inappropriate behavior, as determined by the bus driver and the principal, may result in loss of this privilege. Bus safety is of the utmost importance. All decisions regarding bus transportation are made ultimately to ensure the safety of your child and the other children on the bus.

Some of our back roads are not wide enough to accommodate two-way traffic if one of the vehicles is a school bus. Some roads are too steep and some do not have a safe way to turn the bus around. We also have a few blind curves where the bus cannot safely stop on Route 109. Bus routes and pick up/drop off points are designated by carefully weighing safety, time, and convenience. Unfortunately, there are many families in Belvidere and Waterville who cannot get bus service directly to their front door. In these cases, a safe bus stop is designated as close to the child's home as possible. Please adhere to the designated routes as well as the bus schedule. Please have your child at the bus stop at the time indicated on your schedule.

SCHOOL BUS RULES while in transit

1. Stay seated
2. No food or drink
3. Keep the aisle clear
4. Nothing goes out the window
5. Quiet voices
6. Respect personal space
7. Stay in assigned seat
8. Wear mask at all times

Procedures- Drivers

1. The bus driver is responsible for discipline on the bus and shall refer to the Principal any continual and/or serious violators of bus conduct rules. While transporting pupils, the bus driver has the right to discipline them. All disciplinary action shall be reported to the Principal. Any questions or complaints from the parents shall be brought to the attention of the Principal.

2. To prevent misunderstandings between home and school, bus drivers should always be on time insofar as weather and route conditions permit; also because a time schedule must be met, bus drivers **shall not be expected to wait** for any pupil who makes a habit of delaying the bus.
3. It must be understood that, in case of bad weather, poor roads, etc., the bus driver must make the decision whether to omit all, or part of the bus route. If part of a bus route has to be omitted, the school will be contacted immediately via the bus radio, and every effort will be made to contact the affected families.
4. It is important that the bus be brought to a complete stop before the doors are opened to allow children to get in and out. A bus will not move until everyone is seated.
5. A bus driver shall not operate a bus when any child is causing a disturbance, standing up or using foul language.
6. It is recommended that school buses only pick up children from the side of the street on which the school bus door opens. In other words, if possible, children should not cross the road in order to catch their bus.

School Bus Rules for Students

Parents: We need your help and support so that our buses operate safely for all our children. Please review these rules with your child(ren).

1. Students must be at their pick-up points on time. Students may not wait inside their homes for the bus to arrive. If the driver does not see the child at their stop, they may drive past and not stop.
2. The driver is in complete charge of the bus at all times.
3. Students are to take their seats as soon as they enter the bus and to remain seated during the entire ride to and from school. They may leave their seats after the bus has stopped when the bus reaches their stop. No student may be out of his or her seat while the bus is in motion.
4. Bus windows may only be opened and closed with the driver's permission.
5. Nothing goes out of the windows.
6. Loud talk, foul language, throwing objects or horseplay will not be permitted on the school bus at any time.
7. Smoking is not allowed on school buses.
8. Parents of students who vandalize buses will be financially responsible for these acts.
9. Any item deemed unsafe by the driver will not be allowed on the bus.
- 10. Riding a school bus is a privilege and not a right and, as such, can be taken away for inappropriate conduct.**
11. When an individual ignores the rules, the driver may discipline them. If the student continues to misbehave, the driver shall report the student to the Principal, who will meet with the student to discuss the incident. The principal will notify the parents of the inappropriate conduct by telephone and/or written warning, **a third violation of regulations may result in the student being suspended from the buses for one to three days.**
12. Students who continually violate the rules are jeopardizing the safety of all the bus riders and may be suspended from the bus for a longer period of time as deemed appropriate by the principal in conjunction with the superintendent and/or LNSU Board. Any time that riding

privileges are revoked; it is the responsibility of the parents to transport their children to school. Any decision may be appealed to the Superintendent and then to the School Board.

Playground Agreements

At WES we use our PAWS on the playground.

It looks like:

- **Playing in the designated playground boundaries and in sight of the playground supervisors at all times.**
 - Remaining outside until the end of recess unless the playground supervisors give permission to reenter the building.
- **Swinging one person at a time, in a seated position. Slowing down to a stop before getting off and keeping the chains straight at all times.**
- **Walking up the stairs on the slides and slide feet first with your body inside the slide structures. Waiting for the people to be cleared away from the bottom before going down the slide. Keeping feet first on sleds in the winter as well.**
- **Only two people on the teeter-totters at a time.**
- **Staying off the chain link fence.**
- **Using the horizontal ladder hanging by your hands while moving across.**
- **Tag games take place outside of the playground structures.**
 - When using pool noodles for tag, contact is below the knees
- **Climbing up and back down the rockwall.**
- **Swinging on the tire swings with your feet in the middle, seated upright.**
- **Those tall enough to reach the zip line can use the equipment. Those not tall enough will need to play somewhere else.**
- **Safe play that includes respectful touching**
- **Using approved equipment from the equipment bin, including soft balls.**
 - The equipment bin is only used for storage.
 - Equipment is returned at the end of play
 - Bikes are stored in a bike rack and used after school hours with adult supervision.
- **Playing as a community**
 - A list of games can be found on the back doors. If students would like to create/play a new game they should clear the activity by the principal.

It sounds like:

- Kids laughing
- Using kind and inclusive language
- Taking turns
- Offering help
- Good Sportsmanship
 - Cheering on others
 - Helping others who don't know how to play
 - Telling others it was a good game

It feels like:

- Safe play
- WES students belong
- A community
- Fair

ACCEPTABLE USE PROCEDURE FOR COMPUTERS & INTERNET ACCESS

We are pleased to offer the students of Waterville Elementary School (WES) access to our computer network and the Internet. We believe that these technologies offer educational value. The WES network allows each student to become familiar with using computer networks by accessing programs on the server and by saving files to the server so that they can be used at any computer on the network. The Internet allows students to reach educational resources far beyond the bounds of WES.

With access to the Internet comes the availability of material that may not be considered to be of educational value in the context of the school setting. Security software allows WES to stop computer viruses, block access to most inappropriate Internet content, prevent unwanted spyware from being installed, and allows us to remove tracking software installed by Internet advertisers. Even though our security software is updated regularly, on a global network it is impossible to control all materials. That is why this notification, with accompanying permission forms, is being sent to each student's home. **Please be sure to read, sign, and return to school the “Student Acceptable Use of Electronic Media Procedures Agreement”** sent to each home in the fall packet of school forms.

The smooth operation of a network relies on the proper conduct of the users, **who must follow certain guidelines** listed in the agreement. For security and administrative purposes, the Technology Coordinator may review any and all system use and file content for compliance with WES network and Internet use guidelines.

STUDENTS' RIGHTS

The constitutional rights of individuals assure the protections of due process of law. Therefore, when a student, parent or guardian feels his/her rights are violated, the student, parent or guardian may request a meeting with the Principal. This meeting shall concern itself with the facts that led to the disciplinary action and an assessment of the sanctions imposed. The following procedural guidelines will govern the meetings:

- A. Written notice of charges against a student shall be supplied to students and his/her parent(s) or guardian(s).
- B. Parent(s) or guardian(s) of the student shall be present at the hearing with legal counsel, if necessary.
- C. Testimony shall be given as to facts and their implications. He/she may bring witnesses.
- D. A record shall be kept of the hearing.
- E. Appeal of decisions may be made to the Superintendent, then to the School Board.
- F. All decisions should be reduced to writing and sent to the student and his/her parent(s) or guardian(s).

TOBACCO PROHIBITION

It is the policy of LNSU to prohibit the use of tobacco and all tobacco products on all school grounds in accordance with state law. This ban extends to any student, employee or visitor to the school, and applies at all times, whether or not school is in session. Students are, furthermore, prohibited by law from possessing tobacco products at all times while under the supervision of

school staff or at school sponsored activities, including while waiting for the school bus. The Superintendent or his or her designee shall develop procedures, rules and regulations that are in his or her judgment necessary to implement this policy and, at a minimum, will include provisions ensuring that tobacco products are confiscated when found in the possession of students and that referrals to law enforcement agencies are made when appropriate. **Please be advised that all tobacco prohibitions now include all “e-cigarette” or vapor producing products as well.**

COMMUNICATING WITH SCHOOL

If during the course of the school year you have any concerns regarding your child, his/her teacher, or any aspects of the school, you are requested to follow the procedure in sequential order as listed below. We hope this method of handling problems expedites matters.

1. CONTACT THE TEACHER - email or telephone and discuss your concern with the teacher. It is sometimes helpful to have the child present for purposes of clarification.
2. CONTACT THE PRINCIPAL - if the situation has not been solved to your satisfaction by a discussion with the teacher, email or call the principal.
3. CONTACT THE SUPERINTENDENT - if you still feel the need for further discussion about the problem, an appointment can be scheduled to speak with the superintendent.
4. CONTACT THE SCHOOL BOARD - if the problem is not resolved at other levels.

COMPLAINT RESOLUTION PROCEDURES

This complaint resolution procedure applies to all programs administered by the U.S. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). For purposes of this policy, a complaint is a formal allegation that a specific federal or state law or regulation pertaining to such programs has been violated, misapplied, or misinterpreted by school district personnel or by Vermont Department of Education personnel.

Any complaint must:

- Be in writing and signed
- Provide specific details of the situation, and
- Indicate the law or regulation that is allegedly being violated, misapplied, or misinterpreted.
- The written, signed complaint must first be submitted to the Principal. Please send written complaints to Jan Epstein, Waterville Elementary School, 3414 Vermont Route 109, Waterville, VT 05492.
- If the party submitting the complaint is not satisfied with the Principal's response, then the complaint may be referred to the Superintendent by mailing it to Catherine Gallagher, 95 Cricket Hill Road, Hyde Park, VT 05655.
- If the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved by the Superintendent, it may be referred to the LNMUUSD School Board by mailing the complaint to David Whitcomb, Board Chair, 95 Cricket Hill Road, Hyde Park, VT 05655.
- If still not satisfied, then the complainant may file a complaint with the Vermont Agency of Education. If there is no evidence that the parties have attempted in good faith to resolve the complaint at the local level, the Department may require the parties to do so and may provide technical assistance to facilitate such resolution.

Any persons directly affected by the actions of the Agency of Education may file a similarly written complaint if they believe state or federal laws or regulations have been violated, misapplied, or misinterpreted by the Agency itself.

Anyone wishing more information about this policy or complaint procedure may contact the Principal, Superintendent, or Vermont Agency of Education. Inquiries to the latter may be directed to: Secretary of Education, Vermont Agency of Education, 120 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05620.

REPORTING OF STUDENT PROGRESS

The reporting of your child's progress will be done through the following methods:

1. Student report cards will be issued three times a year: December, March and the last school day in June.
2. Parent-Teacher Conferences will be held in the fall and the spring.
3. Informal conferences may occur at any time as called by parent or teacher.
4. Teachers will notify parents between report cards when necessary to inform them of special accomplishments or areas in which their child may be experiencing unusual difficulty.

Parents are welcome to visit the classroom or make an after school conference to discuss any concerns about their child's records or progress. Since the teachers' schedules vary from day to day, it would be appreciated if parents would call the Principal or teacher to make an appointment in advance whenever possible.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

In compliance with FERPA, parents and guardians are notified that if they do not want all, or any part, of their child's **directory information** (student's name, address and telephone number) made public, they must contact the school, either in writing or by telephone, by September 15th. In addition, parents and guardians may inspect and review your child's records. If you believe the records to be inaccurate, you may seek to amend them.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) allows school officials and school employees with a legitimate educational interest and who are involved in the evaluation of federal or state programs, to have access to student assessment information. The FERPA Office defines legitimate educational interest as, "could not carry out their duties without the information". School boards are able to carry out their duties by having access to student information in disaggregated groups and individual specific student identifiable information is not necessary. Information disaggregated by group will be discussed in executive session so that confidentiality is in place for the discussion if the group size is smaller than 10. This is consistent with State reporting practices.

Any parent or guardian wishing to exercise their FERPA rights of inspecting, reviewing, or amending their child's educational records should contact the school principal.

ESSA PUBLIC DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS FOR TITLE I SCHOOLS

This is an annual reminder of our ESSA obligation to inform parents of the following two specified rights to public information that you have. Parents have the right to request information from the school regarding the professional qualifications of teachers and para-educators, including:

- 1) whether a teacher is licensed and endorsed for the grade level and subjects s/he is teaching,
- 2) whether a teacher is teaching under an emergency or provisional license,
- 3) a teacher's undergraduate college degree and major and information on any graduate level credentials, including field of study,
- 4) and finally, if a child is provided services by a para-educator, that person's qualifications.

If you wish to request any of this information, contact the principal, Jan Epstein.

NON-STUDENT USE OF GROUNDS

The Waterville School welcomes community members to visit the school and use the school facilities. Visitors are expected to follow all school rules and to be respectful of teachers, staff and children. Student visitors not following the school rules will progressively:

1. Receive a verbal warning.
2. Receive a written warning mailed to the student and his/her parent(s) or guardian(s). This second warning will also include a two-week removal from school grounds. For this two-week period, the student will be barred from school grounds for the entire period (days, nights and weekends). If a student refuses to leave the grounds or returns before their removal period expires, then the constable will be called for legal removal.
3. Third offenses by students enrolled in grades 7-12 may result in disciplinary action administered in conjunction with the Principal of Lamoille Union Middle and High School.

FIELD TRIP POLICY

The School Board adopted a Field Trip Policy in March of 2007 which states that field trips should be extensions of classroom experiences that contribute to meeting the objectives of the instructional program. To this end, the policy further states the following guidelines:

1. Teachers must submit a written request to the Principal, which delineates learning outcomes and costs two weeks prior to the trip.
2. Teachers must submit a report evaluating the extent to which the objectives of the trip were met.
3. Teachers will be responsible for organizing all aspects of the trip.
4. Alternative arrangements must be available for students who do not participate in the trip.

Any trip that takes place when school is in session must adhere to this policy.

Chaperones: Parents, grandparents, other relatives or guardians who wish to chaperone on a school field trip will need to fill out the appropriate paperwork in the office. New laws require schools to do a criminal background check and sex offender registry check on any volunteers, including chaperones.

VISITORS' PROCEDURES

The LNMUUSD Board encourages parents and community members to visit the school. It is the intent of the board to balance the need of the public and media to be informed about school programs and activities with the privacy interests of students and the responsibility of the school to operate with a minimum of disruption. Accordingly, the principal or his or her designee may regulate visits to the school by parents, community members, or news media subject to the following guidelines:

1. Parental visits. In the absence of court order denying visitation rights to a parent, both custodial and noncustodial parents may schedule visits to their children's classes. Arrangements for classroom visits shall be made by contacting the principal or designee. The principal will consult with the teacher involved, and may grant the request or suggest a more convenient time for a visit. Requests by parents to visit classes may be denied by the principal when the visit would result in disruption to the learning process in the classroom.
2. Visits by community members. Persons who are not parents of school children may obtain permission to visit the school while it is in session from the principal or his or her designee. Requests to visit specific classrooms will be granted or denied after consultation with the teacher or teachers involved, and will be based on a consideration of the informational needs of the person making the request and the potential for disruption or invasion of the privacy of students.
3. Visits by news media. Visits to the school by representatives of the news media or other persons seeking to interview, photograph, record, videotape or film students, staff members or other school activities must be arranged after consultation with the principal or his or her designee. Affected teachers will be consulted before permission will be obtained before the release, photographing or recording of any student record.

All visitors to the school will be required to check in at the office and sign in when they enter the school building.

SAFETY-CRISIS SCREENING

While schools cannot always anticipate or prevent danger, schools have an obligation to make reasonable efforts to provide a safe environment for students. To ensure a safe environment, schools must obtain a mental health screening for any student who expresses, orally or in writing, an intent to harm themselves or others.

The following procedures will be followed when the Administration determines that a crisis screening is necessary:

- Notify parents or guardians of the student's expressed intent to cause harm

- Notify and seek advice and assistance from appropriate medical, mental health and/or law enforcement personnel
- Assign personnel to supervise/monitor the student until such time as appropriate medical, mental health or law enforcement personnel are available to assist the student and maintain safety
- Provide restraint only when the student's behavior is out of control and presents an immediate danger to the student, school personnel, school property, or members of the student body.

Parents: please be sure to give the office your signed release form giving the school permission for your child to be seen by a Lamoille County Mental Health screener, should it be necessary.

SCHOOL SAFETY GUIDELINES

Members of the school community have met periodically to create a school safety plan. The committee has completed a vulnerability analysis, identified the most likely crisis situations and has compiled a manual to help move us through a crisis in a logical safe manner. Procedures are updated annually in consultation with local law enforcement officials and have been distributed to the faculty and staff. A variety of safety drills other than fire drills will be practiced. These drills will include the use of three universal safety commands: "Clear the Halls", "Secure the Building/Shelter in Place" and "Evacuate the Building".

In order to keep the students and the school community safe, it is necessary for the following procedures to be implemented:

1. All outside doors to the school will remain closed and locked during the school day. The only door that will remain unlocked will be the front door.
2. Upon entering the front door, visitors must ring the bell in the lobby and wait for someone to "buzz" them in. This ensures that someone on staff knows who is entering our building at all times.
3. All Visitors must report to the receptionist area and sign in. All staff members must also sign in at the receptionist's area. In the event of an emergency, we will need to know exactly who is in the building.

ESSENTIAL EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAM

What is Essential Early Education?

Essential Early Education (EEE) is a special education program, provided free of charge, to children who have a disability caused by a developmental delay or a medical condition which may result in significant delays for the child as they enter kindergarten.

How is EEE provided in towns within the Lamoille North Supervisory Union?

The elementary schools within the Lamoille North Supervisory Union have established a strong commitment to the education of children with disabilities ages 3 years to 5 years 11 months through their Essential Early Education (EEE) Program. Each elementary school works with families and interagency partners to screen young children and find students eligible for special education services. Below is a summary of the programs available in each elementary school.

Cambridge, Eden, Johnson, Belvidere and Waterville Elementary Schools have preschool programs for 3 and 4 year-olds. Hyde Park has a preschool program for 4 year-olds. Students between the ages of three years and five years eleven months, who are eligible for special education services, are served through the preschool program where appropriate. Those students who may need an individualized program outside of the preschool program environment may have their service needs met in a reasonable and appropriate program that meets the individual needs of the child as defined in the Individual Education Program (IEP). If a parent has questions about the EEE program in their community or feels their child should be evaluated, they should contact the school building principal.

ACT 1 – VERMONT’S SEXUAL ABUSE RESPONSE SYSTEM

In response to Vermont’s new legislation, Act 1, all LNSU schools have increased their efforts to ensure that students, staff, and parents help keep our schools safe from sexual abuse and violence. Three primary requirements of school districts are: (1) provide instruction to students on how to recognize and prevent sexual abuse and sexual violence; (2) ensure adults employed in schools receive training on prevention, identification, and reporting of child sexual abuse and sexual violence; and (3) provide parents, guardians, and other interested persons the opportunity to receive information regarding the identification and reporting information on sexual abuse and sexual violence.

To that end, should you wish to receive additional information on sexual abuse and violence, please contact the principal or the school counselor.

Morgan Flegar, our school counselor, will send letters home periodically explaining in detail the lessons she will be teaching in each class to meet the requirement: “provide instruction to students on how to recognize and prevent sexual abuse and sexual violence”. Age appropriate materials and storybooks are from the *Care for Kids* curriculum and can be viewed by concerned parents at any time.

MANDATED REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

WES Policy

It is the policy of the Waterville Elementary School District to ensure that all School District employees report suspected child abuse and/or neglect as outlined in 33 V.S.A. §4911 et seq. The full policy, including definitions, is available in the school office.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect children whose health and welfare may be jeopardized by abuse or neglect. It is further the purpose of this policy to make clear to School District employees that it is not their role to be investigator, judge and jury in cases of suspected abuse or neglect. Rather, it is the role of School District employees to be faithful and timely reporters of suspected abuse or neglect so that allegations can be brought to the attention of objective, trained and experienced investigators.

Implementation

“Mandated Reporters” (which includes any employee, substitute, bus driver, or volunteer of the school who works 5 hours a week or more) **are required by law** to make reports of suspected child abuse or neglect directly to the DCF intake number: **1-800-649-5285**. These reports shall be made **within 24 hours** of the mandated reporter becoming aware of the suspected abuse or neglect. Any School District employee, regardless of whether he or she is a “mandated reporter”, under Vermont law (33 V.S.A. §4913), **shall** report suspected child abuse or neglect to the building Principal or his or her designee as soon as possible, however they do not need to wait until speaking to the principal or designee before calling in the report to DCF. If the building Principal or designee is the person suspected of child abuse, the report shall be made to the Superintendent of Schools. Persons who are not mandated reporters (parents, community members, etc.) may also make reports to the same intake number. It should also be noted that a person **may not refuse** to make a report on the grounds that the report would violate a privilege or disclose a confidential communication (which includes parents and/or a child’s communications with school counselors, administrators, etc.). A Mandated Reporter who may have suspicion of abuse or neglect, but knows someone has already reported this specific incident, does not need to make a duplicate report to DCF if they have written documentation that the report has already been made.

Training

All staff shall receive training once each school year in the reporting of child abuse and neglect. Such training shall include assistance in recognizing the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect.

Legal Reference(s): 33 V.S.A. §4911, et seq. (Reporting abuse of children)

HEAD LICE PROCEDURES

Head lice infestations can create psychological, social and economic problems. WES supports practices aimed at limiting the amount of time lost from school and limiting the economic impact on parents.

Prevention:

1. We encourage parents to notify the school, child care provider and other close contacts if they find lice on their child.
2. Children should be warned against sharing hats, combs, or brushes with each other.

Management:

1. A staff member who suspects head lice will report it to the nurse or principal. A child identified as having live head lice or untreated nits is removed from class and the parents will be notified to bring them home for treatment.
2. Verbal and written instructions for treatment will go home with the family of each identified student.
3. The nurse or other trained person may examine all children from the affected classroom privately in the nurse’s office.
4. Students need to be accompanied by a responsible adult when returning to school. The nurse

or other trained person will examine the child's head. The student will be allowed to return to the classroom only if no live lice or viable nits are found. Viable nits are defined as being a distance of less than one inch from the scalp.

5. Siblings and close personal contacts should also be examined, and as a courtesy, the nurse may offer to examine the parents and siblings not in this school.

6. Dress-up and other activities that involve close contact should temporarily be removed from the classroom till they can be properly cleaned.

7. Parents are encouraged to notify the child care provider and other close contacts that they have found head lice on their child and they should be checked as well.

8. The nurse or other trained person may recheck the infected student and classmates individually in 7-10 days to ensure the lice have been eliminated.

PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS ACT (PPRA)

As part of this law, parents have the right to inspect any instructional materials used as part of the educational curriculum. If you would like to do this, please contact the Principal.

WES LIBRARY PRIVILEGES

Reading is a window to the world. Students have several opportunities to select reading materials from the library each week: during library class, before and after school, during recess, and by request. Encouraging interest-based choices while taking responsible risks, students self-select their reading materials for a period of one week. Books may be renewed simply by bringing the book in to be scanned. Notices will be sent home routinely for the primary grades and periodically for the upper grades. Payment is expected for any items lost or damaged. Future borrowing may be limited until patron accounts are settled. Where payment is a hardship, a flexible plan will be considered.

A few helpful reminders: Tuesday and Thursday are Library class days. Find a handy place to keep your child's library book at home. Read and share your child's book choice together often. Give your child an opportunity to share their book with you, and talk about what they are reading. Talk to them about what you are reading. "Loved" books are less likely to be misplaced! Please help young children remember to pack their library book in time for library day.

PROTOCOLS FOR WEATHER CLOSURES/DELAY

Protocols Regarding Weather Closures/Delays to the Start of the School Day

Lamoille North towns span approximately 251 square miles and weather conditions can often be quite different from one end to the other and in between. In addition, we all know that our Vermont weather can be very unpredictable and can change drastically in a short period of time. Safety is the most important factor.

Our transportation system is centralized and all buses travel from each of our towns to the campus. If one town experiences freezing rain, and the roads are considered potentially unsafe by our road crews in that town, we will close school even if the weather conditions and roads in

every other town are safe for travel. Decisions must be made based on the safety of all of our students and staff in all of our towns.

We give consideration to our students who are new drivers on winter roads and to whether the faculty, at large, commuting from all over the state, will be able to arrive safely, and if we will adequately be able to staff the school for the day. We will usually not have a delayed opening unless our road crews make that suggestion. Sometimes a little extra time to treat the roads is needed, especially if a storm hits after the roads have been sanded, but that is the crews' decision alone to make. A majority of the time, the crews are able to manage weather and road conditions to ensure that the roads designated as bus routes are ready in time for a regular opening of the school day.

We rely most heavily on the expertise of our road crews when it comes to evaluating the weather conditions because they are already out on the roads and have the best “real time” knowledge. We have our cell phones set up for alert text messages from the State of Vermont. Also, we regularly monitor the following sources for forecasts and predictions: The Weather Channel, WCAX, NOAA, Roger Hill from Weathering Heights, and the Vermont Agency of Transportation.

We will make every attempt to make school closure decisions by 5:30 am, after talking with road crews from each town. A message will be sent to all families and staff using contact information we have for you in PowerSchool. Please make sure that your contact information is accurate and communicate any changes to your school registrars so that you receive up-to-date information.

We try to send all notifications out between 5:30-5:45 am so that we can prevent staff from getting on the roads and give families enough time to make alternative plans.

If at any time, a parent/caregiver feels that conditions are such at home that the roads feel unsafe to drive to school, the parent/caregiver can choose to keep a student(s) home even if we open.

Thank you for reading this handbook and reviewing the relevant sections with your child. If you have questions, feedback, or suggestions, please contact the principal at school; 521-5550.