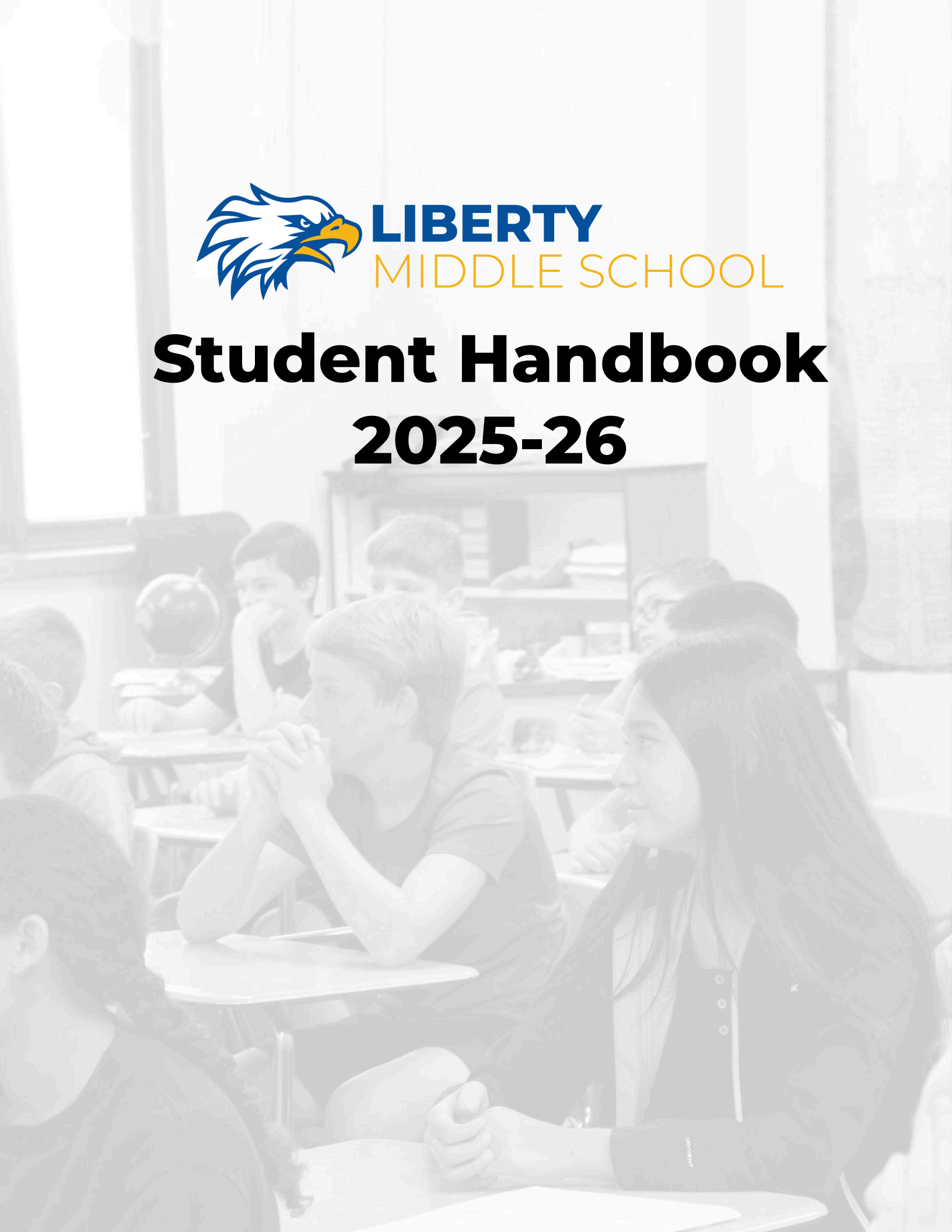




**LIBERTY**  
MIDDLE SCHOOL

# **Student Handbook**

## **2025-26**



## **NON-DISCRIMINATION**

The Papillion La Vista Community School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, age or other protected status in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

Students: Director of Student Services, 420 South Washington Street, Papillion, NE 68046 (402) 537-6200 ([studentservices@plschools.org](mailto:studentservices@plschools.org)).

Employees and Others: Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, 420 South Washington Street, Papillion, NE 68046 (402) 537-6206 ([AskHR@plschools.org](mailto:AskHR@plschools.org)).

Complaints or concerns involving discrimination or needs for accommodation or access should be addressed to the appropriate Coordinator. For further information about anti-discrimination laws and regulations, or to file a complaint of discrimination with the Office for Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Education (OCR), please contact OCR at One Petticoat Lane, 1010 Walnut Street #320, Kansas City, Missouri 64106, (816) 268-0550 (voice), or (877) 521-2172 (telecommunications device for the deaf), or [ocr.kansascity@ed.gov](mailto:ocr.kansascity@ed.gov).

## **CHILD FIND NOTICE**

The Papillion La Vista Community Schools has an ongoing goal of locating and identifying all children, birth through age 21, who have special needs. The district will provide any child or youth who has a disability an appropriate public education at no cost to the parents of the child. Children or youth with disabilities are those who have developmental delays, hearing impairments or deafness, vision impairments or blindness, emotional disturbance, health impairments, specific learning disabilities, speech and language impairments, intellectual disability, orthopedic impairments, autism, multiple impairments, or traumatic brain injuries. In addition, children and youth with any disability which substantially limits a major life activity may receive accommodations to allow them access to an appropriate education (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act).

Papillion La Vista Community Schools requests your help in locating children and youth with disabilities who are eligible to benefit from Special Education or 504 accommodations. If you know of a child or youth who is a resident of the district, who may have a disability and is not receiving needed services, please contact the Director of Special Services, 420 S. Washington Street, Papillion, NE 68046, (402) 537-6221. Also, if you know of someone who may need this notice translated to another language, given orally, or delivered in some other manner, please contact the same person.

## **FORWARD**

This handbook is intended to be used by students, parents, and staff as a guide to rules, regulations, and general information about the Papillion La Vista Community Schools.

Although the information found in this handbook is detailed, it is not intended to be all-encompassing or to cover every situation that may arise during the school day or year. The administration reserves the right to make decisions or rule revisions at any time that reflect the well-being of all students that may or may not be covered in this document or of which may be impacted by the enactment of a new state or federal law. Should a situation arise that is not specifically covered in this handbook, the administration will make a decision based on the law and the common good of the students and staff.

This handbook does not create a “contract.” Each student is responsible for becoming familiar with the handbook and knowing the information contained within. Parents are encouraged to use this handbook as a resource and to assist their child in following the rules contained in this handbook.

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# Liberty Middle School

*Purpose:* Liberty Middle School's purpose is to create a positive environment to prepare students for the successful transition into the next phase of their life.

*Direction:* Liberty Middle School's direction is to create a positive and supportive environment by having high expectations, and using a collaborative approach to authentic, life-long learning.

*We Value:*

- Communication and Engagement
- Positive Relationships and Collaboration
- Community and Acceptance
- Flexibility and Ownership

These values are supported by a foundation that includes:

- "Eagle's Nest" Learning Connections
- Flexible Team Scheduling
- Relevant Interdisciplinary Units and Critical Thinking Opportunities
- Productive Team Planning to Reach All Students
- Student Engagement, Regardless of Learning Style
- Successful Transitions of Students from Elementary to High School

## **PART I - STUDENT SERVICES**

### **GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT: STUDENT SERVICE CENTER**

The purpose of the Middle School Student Support Center is to guide students through their middle school years and encourage them to achieve at the level of their potential. The counselors support student academic progress by assisting them to develop the skills for success in later life.

#### **THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT THE STUDENT SERVICE CENTER:**

- Counselors will assist with any type of problem.
- Counseling is on a voluntary basis.
- Students do not need to be referred by a staff member.
- Anything said in a counselor's office is held in strictest confidence.
- The Student Support Center is about problem solving, not a disciplinary office.

### **HOW TO SEE YOUR COUNSELOR**

Students are encouraged to see their counselor. Counselors are on duty before and after school and throughout the school day. If at any time students cannot locate a counselor, they should leave their name with any secretary and a counselor will contact them as soon as possible. Please check in with office personnel when waiting to see a counselor. Students should report to their classes before going to the counselor's office, so they are not counted absent.

### **BIRTH CERTIFICATE**

All students entering the Papillion La Vista Community Schools for the first time must provide a certified copy of their Birth Certificate within 30 calendar days of enrollment.

### **WITHDRAWAL AND TRANSFER**

If it becomes necessary for a student to withdraw from school prior to the end of the regular school year, the following procedure will be used:

1. Contact the principal's office for a release form, no less than 1 week before the student's last day in school. Student records will be released, upon request to any public or private school to which the student transfers.
2. Contact the guidance office for a check-out sheet on the last day in attendance. Each teacher needs to sign the sheet and the student will need to bring the sheet back to the guidance office at the end of the day.
3. All students withdrawing before the end of the year must clear all fines, fees, and other obligations to finalize withdrawal. All school property (i.e. Chromebook, library books, etc.) must be returned or reimbursed prior to being unenrolled.
4. If a student moves during the summer, please advise the school office.

### **SERVICES OFFERED**

Parents are urged to call and visit with the counselor when they feel there are concerns and information that would help the schoolwork with their child. Other services are: group guidance, individual student counseling, testing (group and individual), referral services (school and local agencies), student records, academic counseling, educational planning, career exploration and new student orientation.

## **PART II - OTHER SERVICES**

### **TELEPHONES**

School phones are for school business but may be used by students with permission from a staff member. Students will not be called to the office to accept an incoming call unless it is an emergency. Telephone messages will be delivered to a student only in the case of emergency. If a student needs to stay after school for a teacher, he/she may use the office phones.

### **MEDIA CENTER**

The Media Center is a vital component of the school's total educational system and provides materials for research and for pleasure reading.

The Media Center is open for use during the entire school day before and after school. Hours are from 7:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. Fines are charged for materials overdue. All lost or destroyed materials must be paid for in full.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

All lost and found articles will be located in the Student Services Office. Items not claimed by the end of each month will be donated. All items are to be cleared from lockers (student & gym) at the end of the school year.

### **SCHOOL INSURANCE COVERAGE**

The school does not have insurance coverage for students, nor does the school have insurance for injuries. Private accidental injury insurance is available, at parent expense, through a private insurance carrier. Contact your school Activities Director for further information.

### **BUS INFORMATION**

The following information concerns students' eligibility to ride the bus. No student is allowed to ride a bus other than the one to which he/she is assigned. The bus driver has absolute jurisdiction over all students on the bus. Students should become familiar with the following regulations, which must be observed:

1. Line up, off the roadway, while waiting for the bus.
2. Cross roadway directly in front of the bus, wait for the driver's signal before crossing.
3. Keep seated at all times while the bus is in motion.
4. Keep arms and head inside windows.
5. Unnecessary conversation with the driver is dangerous.
6. Outside of ordinary conversation with peers, classroom type conduct must be observed.
7. Students must obey the driver. The bus driver has the right to assign students to certain seats, if necessary, to maintain good conduct.
8. Smoking, drinking, or eating are prohibited on the bus.
9. Students must be on time. The bus cannot wait for those who are late. If a student is absent from school because he/she failed to wait for the bus or because he/she missed the bus, the absence will be considered unexcused.
10. Fighting on the bus will not be tolerated.

11. Destruction or vandalism of buses will result in payment of damages and/or loss of bus privileges until payment has been made.
12. Buses cannot unload or load at any place other than the designated bus stops.
13. Students are not to leave school grounds once they arrive in the morning, also are not to leave school grounds while waiting for the bus in the afternoon.
14. Students are not to throw items from the bus windows.

Any student who acts in violation of a school rule while on the bus will be disciplined as if the incident occurred on school grounds. Bus privileges may be withheld if problems occur.

## **PART III - STUDENT REGULATIONS**

The primary purpose of school is learning. To achieve this purpose, certain rules, regulations, policies, and procedures are needed. These are designed not only to achieve the purpose of school, but to protect everyone in the school setting.

Improving student awareness of the school's building expectations will help foster the desired positive culture. Since the school mascot is an eagle, our main goal is to help students S.O.A.R. (Safety first, **O**wn your **A**ctions, and **R**espectful to all). By explaining and modeling the expectations for students, and then monitoring and rewarding their positive choices, we create a culture in our building that promotes a welcoming and safe environment. At Liberty Middle School we expect students to be courteous and to respect the rights of others. A friendly, relaxed, respectful atmosphere will exist if students follow this and obey the reasonable requests of all faculty and staff members. Any behavior not listed specifically in the handbook, but which violates the primary purpose and principles stated, is unacceptable.

### **CARE AND USE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY**

The impressions visitors form is determined by what they see. If we consider ourselves to be an outstanding middle school, we must show it by taking care of the quality educational facilities which have been provided.

Willfully causing or attempting to cause substantial damage to private or school property, stealing or attempting to steal private or school property of substantial value, or repeated damage or theft involving private or school property of small value may result in disciplinary action, which may include long term suspension, expulsion, and/or legal prosecution. The student may be required to make restitution for any damages or loss to private and school property. Students caught stealing personal or school property in a particular class may be suspended and/or dropped from the class with a no grade (NG). These disciplinary actions apply to theft and damage done during school and non-school hours.

### **CLOSED CAMPUS REQUIREMENT**

Students are not to leave campus at any time during the school day without permission. This includes the lunch period. Closed campus applies once students get off the bus or are dropped off on school grounds.

### **SELLING MERCHANDISE ON CAMPUS**

Students are not to sell merchandise during the school day. This type of selling is restricted to before or after school and is to be done only by the members of a school sponsored organization.

### **DISPLAY OF AFFECTION**

Public displays of affection create unfavorable impressions and attitudes of the school and will not be permitted.

### **DISMISSAL FROM CLASS**

If a teacher finds it necessary to send a student from a classroom because of disruptive behavior, he or she must report to the office and check in with office personnel. To be reinstated in the class, the student must talk with the principal or designee.

### **DISRUPTIVE ACTIONS**

Any individual or group who engages in any form of disruption of the learning environment will be subject to disciplinary action. Such activity may include but not be limited to picketing, boycotting, walk outs, unauthorized meetings during school hours, or unauthorized use of school facilities.

### **INAPPROPRIATE LANGUAGE AND GESTURES**

The use of abusive, profane, or obscene language or gestures is prohibited, and offenders may be suspended or excluded from class and/or school. Abusive and profane or obscene language/gesture includes, but is not limited to, slandering or abusing the ethnic background, sex, race, religious preference, or physical appearance of any student or school employee and “fighting words”, which by their very utterance inflict injury or tend to incite an immediate breach of peace.

### **FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

The Board of Education recognizes freedom of expression as one of democracy's most valuable gifts. It encourages the freedom to be tempered with a responsibility to the schools and their citizens. The District will limit a student's freedom of expression only when the expression could be legally prohibited under the United States Constitution and Nebraska State Statutes concerning free speech, or when such expression interferes with the mission of the school district. The superintendent shall develop and administer procedures for determining any limitations placed upon the freedom students have to express their views and opinions.

### **FIRE ALARM**

Students caught pulling the fire alarm may be subject to: 1st offense -Three to five day suspension. 2nd offense - Long term suspension or expulsion and will be turned over to the proper authorities.

### **NUISANCE ITEMS AND CELL PHONES**

Those items that become a distraction to the learning environment, including but not limited to electronic games, cell phones, headphones, water guns, laser pens, etc., will be confiscated and disciplinary action may be taken. Cell phones/Smart Devices (i.e. Apple Watches, etc.) are permitted in the school during the school day (8:00am to 3:10pm) and are to be used only during passing periods or when provided permission from a staff member (i.e. not during instructional time in the classroom). Students must not use their cell phone to contact parents when they are ill. They must go to the nurse, who will then contact guardians. No person is permitted to make surreptitious recordings on school grounds unless authorized by the administration. Students generally are not permitted to record classroom instruction or members of the school community during the school day without the express consent of a staff member or as required by the student's education plan.

## **DRESS AND GROOMING REGULATIONS**

Students have the right to be treated equitably. Dress code enforcement will not create disparities, reinforce or increase marginalization of any group. Although a student's personal appearance is basically a concern of the student and his/her guardians, the administration of a school has the responsibility to ensure students are dressed appropriately for school and that clothing does not distract from the learning environment. The development of good taste in personal appearance should be a cooperative effort between the school and the home. Repeated violations of the basic guidelines may result in disciplinary action.

With the majority of the community favoring a basic guideline and the administration's realization of continual changes in standards of dress and grooming, the following guidelines will be followed:

1. Student appearance should positively contribute to the learning environment. Dress and appearance that is disruptive to the educational process in the judgment of the administration will not be allowed.
2. Students must accept the fact that appropriate dress for some activities and learning situations are not necessarily appropriate for others. The health and safety of the individual will not be jeopardized in favor of his/her personal preference as to appearance and attire.
3. Shoes will be worn at all times.
4. Printed wording or pictures on clothing that advertises or promotes drugs, alcohol, tobacco, is vulgar, or could be interpreted as hate speech will not be permitted to be worn.
5. Any type of prohibited headwear shall be removed upon entry into the school building and remain off at all times while inside the building.
6. Shorts/Skirts - Students wearing shorts and skirts that are deemed inappropriate by the school administration will be offered a change of clothes or parents will be contacted to bring a change of clothes to the student.
7. Students will not be allowed to wear shorts/pants that are pulled down below the waistline.
8. Tops that are too low-cut, halter-tops, and/or see-through clothing will not be permitted. Violation of this policy will result in the student being offered a change of clothes or parents will be contacted to bring a change of clothes to the student.

The existence of some basic limitations and standards are a necessity. If, after a conference with the student, the problem still exists, a conference with the parents and administration may be necessary to resolve the matter.

## **GANG RELATED ACTIVITY**

For the safety and welfare of students and the continued maintenance of a positive and secure learning environment the following rules relative to youth gang behaviors apply to all students on school grounds or at school activities. Any behavior that would identify a person as a gang member is not allowed. Examples may be, but not limited to: writing gang graffiti, possessing

items containing gang graffiti, displaying gang hand signs, and wearing gang related clothing. Violations will result in disciplinary action, which may result in suspension or expulsion.

### **CHEATING**

Students should refrain from using other students' work, or AI, in the completion of their own assignments. Cheating on exams or assignments will be dealt with by the individual teachers following the expectations stated in the district portion of this handbook and may result in consequences from an administrator.

## PART IV - OTHER INFORMATION

### **GRADING SYSTEM**

The following grades will appear on your report card. In addition, on-line grading access will be available.

<b>LMS Scale (%)</b>	<b>LMS Scale (descriptive)</b>	<b>District Rubric (equivalent)</b>	<b>Description of an Individual Student's Achievement (aligned w/ standards)</b>
<b>97-100 93-96 90-92</b>	A+ A A-	<b>Advanced (Adv)</b>	Superior performance, in-depth understanding, application of knowledge and skills to develop new understanding and solutions
<b>87-89 83-86 80-82</b>	B+ B B-	<b>Proficient (Prof)</b>	Solid academic performance, demonstrates competency of subject matter knowledge
<b>77-79 73-76 70-72</b>	C+ C C-	<b>Progressing (Prog)</b>	Partial mastery of essential knowledge and skills; partial success in tasks using this knowledge or skill
<b>67-69 63-66 60-62</b>	D+ D D-	<b>Beginning (Beg)</b>	Limited mastery of essential knowledge and skills; may require assistance or extended time in applying knowledge and skills
<b>50-59</b>	F	<b>Progress Unacceptable (Punacc)</b>	Student has no understanding of task or concept, or student achievement cannot be determined because work was not sufficiently completed

### **ONLINE GRADING ACCESS**

Parents have access to their student's daily attendance, grade book information, progress reports, and student schedule. Each family has an account with a username and password to access their student's information. To access the information, go to the Liberty Middle School website: <https://libertymiddle.plcschools.org>. The link to online grades appears on the menu section of the homepage. Click the link titled "Online Grades". First time users will be receiving username and password information by mail before the end of the first quarter. You will then select the name of the student from the list presented and begin to navigate the data as you see fit.

If you have trouble accessing the site, contact the Technology Center at the district office at 402-537-6299. In the event you misplace your username and password, you may request this information to be set via the mail from the Technology Center as well. Passwords will NOT be given out over the phone.

### **REPORT CARDS AND ACADEMIC PROGRESS**

Student grades and report cards can be accessed on-line. Paper copies will only be mailed to parents that do not have an email address on file. Report cards are available on-line at the end of each quarter. Only semester grades are part of the permanent record. Parents may also contact individual teachers regarding your students' academic progress.

### **HONOR ROLL**

Gold Honor Roll students must earn a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 4.0, A-minimum. This represents an A average or that of demonstrating an overall advanced level in a semester's course work. Silver Honor Roll students must earn a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.5, B- minimum. This represents a B average or that of demonstrating an overall proficient level in a semester's course work. The Honor Roll is published at the end of each semester. Finally, students that earned a NG (no grade) or F (fail) on their semester report card do not qualify for Honor Roll status.

### **JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY: QUALIFICATION CONSIDERATIONS**

Students with a GPA of 3.50 or higher (Scholarship) may consider applying for National Junior Honor Society membership. An application will need to be filled out during the second semester and turned in prior to the posted deadline. This application will require participation in a combination of 3 school/community service activities (Service, Citizenship). Students' integrity, behavior, cooperation, and ethics (Character, Leadership) will also be evaluated by a faculty council. Students meeting the criteria will be inducted into the National Junior Honor Society organization in early spring. Furthermore, students must be enrolled in five core classes in 7<sup>th</sup> Grade and four core classes in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade to be eligible for Honor Society status.

### **HOMEROOM: EAGLE'S NEST**

Each student is assigned a homeroom (Eagle's Nest). The homeroom period is scheduled each day and attendance is required. The homeroom period will be used to make announcements and to facilitate school improvement initiatives. All notices of club meetings, athletic and social events, general information for the day, and special instructions will be mentioned in the daily bulletin. Students responsible for putting notices in this daily bulletin must have their notices approved by the principal and filed with the Student Service Office before 2:00 p.m. the day preceding the bulletin. Special notices are posted on the bulletin boards throughout the school. All posters must advertise school sponsored events and must be approved and initialed by an administrator.

### **HOMEWORK - HOMEWORK HOTLINE**

Parents or students may obtain the next day's homework assignments by accessing the Liberty Middle School web page at <https://libertymiddle.plcschools.org/student-life/homework-hotline>. Students should always seek extra help from their teachers if they do not understand an assignment, if the work is difficult, or if they have been absent and have missed assignments and class discussions. They should arrange a convenient time to meet with their teacher.

Students wishing to see a particular teacher before school should get a pass from that teacher or bring a parent note. Students will not be allowed in the halls before school unless they have permission.

### **MAKE-UP WORK**

Make-up work for each class is the responsibility of the student. This work is typically accessible to the student via Google Classroom. Each team at Liberty Middle School will communicate homework information to students and families throughout the course of the school year. Make-up work can also be obtained by accessing the Liberty Middle School Homework

Hotline or through access to the Papillion La Vista Community School App available for download.

Students are encouraged to make up their work in advance when they know they will be absent. If after 2 days of absence it is necessary to pick up worksheets or other printed material, parents may call the school office before 9:00 a.m. to have homework picked up by 3:00 p.m. the same day. If any calls are received after 9:00 a.m., homework may be picked up the following day.

### **PROCEDURE FOR INCLEMENT WEATHER**

There are times during the course of the school year when there is an emergency and students are either dismissed early or not allowed to enter the building prior to the start of the school day. We recommend that all families find a residence within walking distance of school for your child to go in case of emergency. If inclement weather occurs, we will use the following procedures for canceling school:

1. The decision to call off school will be made by the Administration Office prior to 6:00am when possible. Radio and TV stations will be notified. Closings will also be updated on District and schools web pages.
2. Automatic phone calls to homes via BLACKBOARD will begin at approximately 6:00am.

If Papillion La Vista Community Schools are not listed for closing/late starting time, school will be in session on schedule. **PLEASE DO NOT CALL SCHOOL OFFICES FOR CLOSING INFORMATION.**

### **EMERGENCY PLANS**

Emergency Plans (tornado, fire, lockdown, etc.) are an important safety precaution and are required to be conducted at regular intervals. It is essential that when the signal is given, everyone obeys orders promptly and quickly moves to an area of safety. Maps in each room show students where to go for shelter.

### **DELIVERIES TO THE SCHOOL**

Flowers, balloons, candy, and other gifts sent to the school during the day will not be delivered to students during school time. The office will notify the student and let him/her know that he/she has something in the office.

### **DELIVERY OF OUTSIDE FOOD DURING LUNCH**

The school will not accept delivery of food by commercial food businesses. A parent/family member is still able to personally drop off food items (from home or purchased commercially) for his/her own child. Families are only able to bring outside food for his/her own family member(s), no purchasing of food for groups or an entire table of students. Food brought to school not following this guideline will be held in the school office and the student will be encouraged to eat a school lunch that day. Students are not to share any food items with other students at any time during the school day.

### **PASSES FOR LEAVING SCHOOL**

All requests to leave the building while school is in session, including the lunch period, must be cleared through the office. Leaving school without permission is classified as truancy.

### **RESTROOM PASSES**

Students need to use a pass to use the restroom. The pass should be obtained from the teacher with whom the student is assigned. Students also need a pass to go to the nurse or Student Services.

### **STUDENT VALUABLES**

Students are not to bring large amounts of money or other valuables to school, and if they wear glasses or watches to keep track of them at all times. Students, not the school, are responsible for valuables. Students may bring valuables to the office to be secured for the day.

The administration strongly recommends that all articles of clothing, jackets, coats, gym clothes, and so forth be clearly marked with both first and last name so that, in the event they are lost, misplaced, or stolen, items may be returned to the proper owner. Students who have lost items should check the lost and found.

### **BICYCLES, SCOOTERS AND SKATEBOARDS**

Bicycles, skateboards, scooters, in-line skates, etc and including electric, are not to be ridden on school property (at the start of the drop-off lane) and must be parked in the racks provided. The school is not responsible for damage or theft of these items.

### **BOOKS AND SCHOOL PROPERTY**

Textbooks and other district property/equipment (i.e. band instruments) represent a large investment by the taxpayers. If school property/equipment is lost, stolen, or damaged, the student is accountable.

A student losing or damaging a book during the year may purchase another book. The office will issue a receipt for the replacement book. If the book is located, money will be refunded. The charge for a lost book is based upon current replacement costs.

The teacher in each class will record the book number and the condition of each student's book or school property/equipment issued to the student. These items will be the responsibility of the student. The student will be responsible for keeping books and equipment in usable condition and for turning his/her book in at the end of the year. Fines will be assessed when books are not treated properly. Lost books and books damaged beyond repair will be charged at the price of a new book.

### **VISITORS**

All visitors must report to the office upon arrival at the school building. Parents are encouraged to visit Liberty Middle School. The only school-age visitors permitted are former Liberty Middle School students and prospective students. Students from the Papillion La Vista Community Schools are not considered visitors and will not be allowed. Visits are limited to 1 day. Please contact the school office/principal at least 24 hours in advance of any visit. All

requests for visitors during the week before semester break or the last week of school will be denied.

### **LOCKERS**

Students have been provided with lockers for the storage of backpacks, hats, coats, etc., and school related materials. All students assigned a school locker shall be subject to the following provisions:

1. For the safety and welfare of the student, ownership of the locker is maintained by the school district, and the student is granted a limited use of the locker solely in accordance with this policy.
2. The only items that may be placed in the lockers are backpacks, articles of clothing, schoolbooks, or supplies relating to school use, lunches, and personal items that the student needs for school activities.
3. The school district reserves the right to have its officials inspect the contents of any locker (including athletic lockers) at any time when the safety and/or welfare of the school or the student body is in question. This statement should be considered PRIOR NOTICE OF LOCKER SEARCH PROCEDURE.
4. Students are assigned to lockers. Locker assignments will not be changed without office approval.
5. Students are responsible for keeping their lockers in working condition. They are to report any damage to the office as soon as it occurs. Students with lockers that do not lock at the end of the year will be fined accordingly. No marking or printing on lockers is allowed.

**ATHLETIC LOCKS** - All students who enroll in Physical Education or participate in athletics will receive a lock from the Athletic Department. At the end of the athletic season or the school year, the lock will be returned to the school. Students will be charged for the replacement cost of a lost lock. It is the student's responsibility to keep his or her combination a secret. We will keep the combinations to all locks in the office for security purposes.

Students are held responsible for the care of their own personal equipment. They should always be careful to put away books and other possessions in their lockers when they are not in use, and to keep the lockers orderly and LOCKED. The school does what it can to safeguard students against theft by keeping traffic in halls at a minimum. However, if students persist in leaving their lockers open or rigged to be opened without a combination, then depositing money and valuable property in unlocked lockers, they own the responsibility for any loss of possessions.

## **PART V - ACTIVITIES**

### **PHILOSOPHY**

The Middle School program is based on the same rules and regulations as the High School program. While there are some fundamental differences in philosophy, the training rules for participants and the responsibilities for the coaches are the same.

It is the philosophy that all Liberty Middle School students should have the opportunity for meaningful participation in extracurricular activities, both inter-school programs and intra-school programs. For Liberty Middle School athletes, the emphasis is on improving individual skills and providing opportunities for students to learn the responsibilities of being a member of a team.

Details regarding required disciplinary procedures for participation in activities and athletics can be found in the Policy/Procedure 5301 on the district website.

### **GOALS OF PROGRAMS**

- To encourage all students to participate
- To provide instruction and reinforce skills
- To promote the value of physical fitness for a healthy lifestyle
- To provide students an opportunity to work with others in a team setting
- To provide an opportunity to develop sportsmanship and fair play
- To have fun

### **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Follow rules established by the coaches
- Care for equipment issued and pay for lost or stolen equipment
- Provide a current physical and parent consent form

### **STUDENT ATHLETE INSURANCE**

The Board of Education does not require participants in athletics to be insured against athletic accidents but strongly recommends they be insured against accidents at parent expense. There are many individual and group athletic policies available and parents are urged to investigate and study the various policies so that they may purchase the accident coverage they prefer.

The school will not be responsible for any injuries, which occur in practice or games.

### **PHYSICALS AND PARENT CONSENT**

Each year a complete physical examination (7<sup>th</sup> grade) or sports physical (8<sup>th</sup> grade) shall be obtained before a student may participate in any phase of the interscholastic program in Liberty Middle School.

There is no exception to this rule.

Each physical shall be valid for one year from the date of examination. This examination is to be given by any physician of the student's choice and the fee is to be paid by the student. The

student shall obtain the physical examination form and parent consent form from the coach or Activity Director's office. Parent consent forms are required from both seventh and eighth grade students.

#### **ATTENDANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

Regular full-day attendance is required to participate in school activities; this includes practice. An exception will be made to this rule only when a physician or dentist provides written permission for a student to participate on a particular day after having missed all or part of that day, and family emergencies.

#### **WEIGHT ROOM AND BUILDING USE**

No student is to be in the building or weight room without being supervised by a teacher or coach.

#### **ACTIVITIES**

Activities are subject to change based on the number of participants, staff supervision, and the needs and interests of the students. The following is a list of activities available to students enrolled at Liberty Middle School: Basketball, Cross County, Drama Club, Football, Game Club, Honor Society, Jazz Band, Intramural Sports, Science Club, LEO Club, LEADERS Club, Math Club, Show Choir, Student Council, Track, Volleyball, Weight Training, Wrestling and Yearbook. This list may change during the course of the school year.

## **Part VI - District-Wide Information for Student Handbooks Grades 7-12**

### **NON-DISCRIMINATION**

The Papillion La Vista Community School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, age or other protected status in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Students: Director of Student Services, 420 South Washington Street, Papillion, NE 68046 (402) 537-6200 ([studentservices@plcschools.org](mailto:studentservices@plcschools.org)). Employees and Others: Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, 420 South Washington Street, Papillion, NE 68046 (402) 537-6206 ([AskHR@plcschools.org](mailto:AskHR@plcschools.org)). Complaints or concerns involving discrimination or needs for accommodation or access should be addressed to the appropriate Coordinator. For further information about anti-discrimination laws and regulations, or to file a complaint of discrimination with the Office for Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Education (OCR), please contact OCR at One Petticoat Lane, 1010 Walnut Street #320, Kansas City, Missouri 64106, (816) 268-0550 (voice), or (877) 521-2172 (telecommunications device for the deaf), or [ocr.kansascity@ed.gov](mailto:ocr.kansascity@ed.gov).

### **CHILD FIND NOTICE**

The Papillion La Vista Community Schools has an ongoing goal of locating and identifying all children, birth through age 21, who have special needs. The district will provide any child or youth who has a disability an appropriate public education at no cost to the parents of the child. Children or youth with disabilities are those who have developmental delays, hearing impairments or deafness, vision impairments or blindness, emotional disturbance, health impairments, specific learning disabilities, speech and language impairments, intellectual disability, orthopedic impairments, autism, multiple impairments or traumatic brain injuries. In addition, children and youth with any disability which substantially limits a major life activity may receive accommodations to allow them access to an appropriate education (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act).

Papillion La Vista Community Schools requests your help in locating children and youth with disabilities who are eligible to benefit from Special Education or 504 accommodations. If you know of a child or youth who is a resident of the district, who may have a disability and is not receiving needed services, please contact the Director of Special Services, 420 S. Washington Street, Papillion, NE 68046, (402) 537-6221. Also, if you know of someone who may need this notice translated to another language, given orally, or delivered in some other manner, please contact the same person.

### **FORWARD**

This handbook is intended to be used by students, parents, and staff as a guide to rules, regulations, and general information about the Papillion La Vista Community Schools.

Although the information found in this handbook is detailed, it is not intended to be all-encompassing or to cover every situation that may arise during the school day or year. The administration reserves the right to make decisions or rule revisions at any time that reflect the

well-being of all students that may or may not be covered in this document or of which may be impacted by the enactment of a new state or federal law. Should a situation arise that is not specifically covered in this handbook, the administration will make a decision based on the law and the common good of the students and staff.

This handbook does not create a “contract.” Each student is responsible for becoming familiar with the handbook and knowing the information contained within. Parents are encouraged to use this handbook as a resource and to assist their child in following the rules contained in this handbook.

## **SCHOOL MEALS PROGRAM**

School breakfast includes grains, protein, juice, fruit, and milk. We also sell items a la carte (individually priced). School breakfast is planned for convenience and offered just before school. High School breakfast starts at approximately 7:15 a.m. (7:30 a.m. on Wednesdays for late start day). Middle School breakfast starts at approximately 7:30 a.m. daily. Breakfast menus are located on the District app and website.

School lunch offers several entrée options each day in addition to a Fruit and Vegetable Bar. A meal includes entrée (protein + grain), fruit, vegetable, and milk. We also sell many items a la carte (individually priced). Menus can be viewed on the School District app or on the District Website at [www.plcschools.org](http://www.plcschools.org). A student's lunch period, lasting approximately 30 minutes, is determined by his/her period class assignment.

Each student has a meal account with us which is accessed at the cashier station through a touchless scanner.

Meal prices are approved by the Board of Education each summer and are posted on the website following approval.

Parents may deposit lunch money directly into their student's lunch account via our online system. For detailed instructions on enrolling in the online system, visit the District website in the Parents, School Meals, Online Lunch Accounts section or go directly to the student meals family portal at [linqconnect.com](http://linqconnect.com). Cash or checks are also taken for deposit into the meal account in the morning before school starts or at the cashier station while purchasing lunch. Students may also pay cash for meals but are encouraged to draw from their meal account money to speed up lunch lines. Parents can check account balances at any time on the district app or by checking online at [linqconnect.com](http://linqconnect.com).

We have established meal charge procedures that describe how parents are notified of low or negative meal account balances. These procedures are distributed annually to parents at the beginning of the school year. Students will also be reminded by the cashier when their balance is low, and they need to deposit money.

Families can qualify for free or reduced-price meals if they receive SNAP or TANF benefits, qualify for other programs, or if their income is below certain limits. An Application for Free/Reduced Price Meals can be completed online or with a paper copy of the application.

Applications can be found in the School Meals section of the District website. Paper copies are available at the school or by calling 402-537-6250.

If you have questions about our programs, please contact the Food Service Office at 402-537-6250.

#### U.S.D.A. Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at:

[http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) Email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

### **ACTIVITIES & ATHLETICS**

A wide variety of activities and athletic programs are offered. Information about activities and athletics may be found in the Activities & Athletic Handbooks for Students/Parents. All district handbooks may be found online at [www.plcschools.org/handbooks](http://www.plcschools.org/handbooks) or you may contact your school's activity director if you have questions about athletic/activity programs offered at your child's school. Information, eligibility requirements, rules of conduct, due process, parental consent, etc., may be found in the Activities & Athletic Handbook.

## **BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICIES & HANDBOOKS**

Board of Education policies and all student/parent handbooks may be found on school websites and/or the Papillion La Vista Community Schools website [www.plcschools.org](http://www.plcschools.org)

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES**

We are committed to working with parents and the community to ensure a positive educational program for our students. Board policies and procedures are established in the areas of parental access to textbooks and curriculum materials, school courses and instructional activities, parental access to records, and student participation in surveys. [Board policy](#) provides specific information regarding these concerns. Parents who have questions about any specific issues should contact their child's teacher or principal.

## **ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS**

Families should enroll online at [www.plcschools.org](http://www.plcschools.org). The following information is required by the building at the time of enrollment/registration:

- Certified copy of the child's birth certificate.
- Proof of address/residency
- Proof of a physical exam and vision evaluation within 6 months prior to entry are also required if entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade, or coming from out-of-state.
- Proof of immunizations required by Nebraska

School officials may also require information regarding previous academic placement (transcripts, etc.), so they can determine proper placement (grade & courses).

Nebraska law requires all students entering kindergarten or beginning grade (pre-K, K, or 1st) have a physical examination prior to the start of the school year, but not more than 6 months prior to the start of the school year. A physical examination is also required of students coming from out-of-state.

In addition, children entering school for the first time (Pre-K, K, or 1<sup>st</sup>) or transferring from out-of-state must obtain a vision evaluation from their physician or a licensed optometrist within 6 months prior to entry.

A printed form signed by a licensed physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner indicating that a physical examination was administered on a specific date shall constitute sufficient evidence of a physical examination. Forms are available from your child's school and on our website. Waivers may also be available in certain situations – contact your school health office if you have questions.

Your school's health office can also provide you with a list of possible low cost or free health clinics in the area that could conduct your child's physical examination and vision evaluation.

## **STUDENT RECORDS & DIRECTORY INFORMATION**

The Superintendent is responsible for establishing administrative procedures regarding compiling, maintaining, releasing and accessing student records. The procedures shall follow the

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) and Nebraska Law and Regulations.

Procedures can be found in [Board Policy 5501](#) (Student Records), [Board Policy 1201](#) (Directory Information), and [Board Policy 1202](#) (Records Retention).

## **CHILDREN'S ONLINE PRIVACY AND PROTECTION ACT**

The Papillion La Vista Community Schools utilizes a variety of software applications and web-based tools operated by third party vendors to support student learning. These instructional supports are vetted by district staff to ensure they are compatible with the goals of the Papillion La Vista Community Schools. The Papillion La Vista Community Schools supports teaching and learning by allowing staff and students to access applications, websites, and online services operated by third parties. These include Microsoft Office 365, Google Apps for Education, Pearson web-based products, Houghton Mifflin web-based products and numerous other educational tools. A representative list of many of these learning resources can be found at [www.plcschools.org](http://www.plcschools.org).

In using websites and other online tools, school district staff will comply with the Children's Online Privacy and Protection Act (COPPA), including the following:

1. Except as provided below, the school will not allow companies to collect personal information from children under 13 for commercial purposes.
2. The school will make reasonable efforts to disable advertising in educational computer applications.
3. This policy allows the school to act as an agent for parents in the collection of information within the school context. The school's use of student information is solely for education purposes.

Parents with questions regarding the use of websites and other online instructional supports by their child are encouraged to contact the principal at their child's school building.

## **STUDENT SURVEYS**

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) affords parental rights regarding the District's use of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. [Board Policy 5501 \(Student Records\)](#) provides related information and District procedures.

## **HEALTH SERVICES & ILLNESS**

Health services staff includes registered nurses and trained health paraprofessionals who are supervised by registered nurses. Each school building has designated personnel who are responsible for first aid, emergency response, medication administration, and minor illness care.

Students who become ill or sustain injuries in school should report to the health office. If there is a need for the student to go home, the health office will inform the parents or persons designated as emergency contacts. Serious or life-threatening injuries/ illnesses will be sent by rescue squad to the hospital and parents/contacts will be notified. Please contact the school with any changes in telephone numbers or contact information as soon as they occur.

Additional information regarding school health and welfare—including Health Action Plans—can be found in [Board Policy 5601](#).

### **When to Stay Home**

If your student has a temperature/fever (defined as 100.4 degrees or higher) please keep your student home for 24 hours after your student's temperature has returned to normal (without use of fever-reducing medicines such as ibuprofen, acetaminophen). If your student has an unexplainable rash or pink eye, keep your student at home. Call and ask the nurse if you are not sure. Injuries sustained at home should be treated there. Please keep healthy students in school and ill students at home.

### **Immunization Requirements**

For purposes of compliance with Nebraska immunization requirements, the school shall require the presentation of an immunization history containing the name of the vaccine with the month, day, and year of administration. The most current information regarding Nebraska requirements may be found at: <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Immunization/School-Summary-RR-English.pdf>.

Please be sure your student's immunizations comply with the Nebraska requirements. By law, students who do not present proof of immunization must be excluded from school until such proof has been presented. Contact the school nurse if your child requires a medical or religious waiver.

### **Medications At School**

Whenever possible, the parent/guardian should arrange medication schedules to eliminate the need for giving medication during school hours. Parents/guardians who wish to have their child receive medication from school personnel must comply with school district procedures.

The district reserves the right to review and decline requests to administer or provide medications that are not consistent with standard pharmacological references, are prescribed in doses that exceed those recommended in standard pharmacological references, or that could be taken in a manner that would eliminate the need for giving them during school hours. The district may request parent/guardian authorization to consult with the student's licensed healthcare provider regarding any medication prescribed by such licensed healthcare provider.

1. Prescription medication will be given with written permission from both the parent/guardian and the licensed healthcare provider. A current pharmacy label will be accepted as written permission from the licensed healthcare provider. Prescription medication must be brought to school in the prescription-labeled container, including the student's name, licensed healthcare provider's name, and directions for administering the medication. Please send only a one-month supply of medication to ensure proper storage and administration. Changes in the type, dosage or frequency of medication will require a new medication administration permit.
2. Non-prescription medication may be given with written permission from a parent/guardian with specific instructions for administration. Non-prescription medication must be brought to school in the manufacturer's container with the dosage

label intact. Any dosage outside the recommendation on the manufacturer's label will require a written order from the licensed healthcare provider.

3. Per Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services guidelines, all medications must be transported to and from school by a responsible adult.
4. Unclaimed medications will be disposed of per district protocol at year-end or upon student withdrawal.

Student health information will be shared with appropriate staff as needed. Medication permit forms are available at the school health office or on the district website under health services or visit [www.plcschools.org/healthservices](http://www.plcschools.org/healthservices). See Board Policy [5604 \(Medication Administration\)](#) for additional requirements regarding medications at school.

### **Communicable Diseases**

The district follows the guidelines from the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services and the Sarpy County Health Department. A more detailed listing is available in the health office of each school. Call the health office for your school if you have any questions.

- Chicken Pox - Exclude until all lesions are crusted/dry and student is without fever.
- Colds - May return if no fever.
- Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis) - May return when eye is normal in appearance or with written physician approval.
- Fifth's Disease – Exclude until fever and malaise are gone. May return when no longer contagious (once the rash appears).
- Pertussis (whooping cough) – Exclude until written physician approval. Exclude inadequately immunized close contacts. Report any possible pertussis illness to the school as soon as suspected case.
- Impetigo - Exclude until lesions are treated, acute symptoms resolved or with written physician approval.
- Lice (head or body) - Students with live lice will be sent home for treatment. May return to school after treatment. (Provide school with verification of appropriate treatment method – box or bottle of treatment used)
- Ringworm - If affected areas cannot be covered with clothing/dressing during school, student will be excluded until treatment started.
- Strep infections – Exclude until fever free (without the use of fever reducing medication) and under treatment for 24 hours.
- Staph infections (MRSA and other) – Students with confirmed staph infections must keep the lesions covered at school. Proper hygiene, hand washing and avoidance of sharing personal items is necessary.
- Influenza – Exclude for duration of illness and fever free (without the use of fever reducing medication).
- COVID-19 – Guidance from the Sarpy County Health Department will be followed.

### **Concussions**

What is a concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head. A concussion can also occur from a fall or a blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. A concussion, which may or may not result in loss of consciousness, disrupts normal brain

functions. Even what seems to be a mild bump or blow can be serious (dhhs.ne.gov/pages/concussion).

What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion?

A concussion can impact various aspects of a person’s well-being, including physical abilities, cognitive functions such as thinking and memory, emotional stability, mood, and sleep patterns. See [Signs and Symptoms of Concussion](#) for more information, including what to watch for according to your child’s age (McAvoy, 2024, p.7).

PHYSICAL	COGNITIVE	EMOTIONAL	SLEEP / ENERGY
Headache/Pressure/Dizziness	Feel in a “fog”	Irritability	Fatigue
Nausea / Vomiting	Feel “slowed down”	Personality change	Excess sleep
Blurred vision / Sensitivity to light / Seeing “stars”/ Vacant stare / Glassy eyed	Difficulty remembering	Sadness	Trouble falling asleep
Numbness / Tingling/Neck pain	Difficulty concentrating / Distracted	Nervousness / Anxiety	Drowsiness
Ringing in ears/Sensitivity to noise	Slowed speech	Lack of motivation	Sleeping less than usual
Poor Balance / Disorientation	Easily confused	Inappropriate emotions / Feeling more “emotional”	

What are the risks of sustaining a concussion?

According to the [REAP guidelines](#) from the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and the Brain Alliance, the primary concern with concussions in children and teens is the heightened risk of further brain injury during recovery. A second impact, even minor, can lead to severe complications, including permanent brain damage or, in rare cases, death. To support recovery, students must be removed from high-risk physical activities, such as sports and active play, until medically cleared. Additionally, cognitive and social demands should be reasonably reduced and gradually reintroduced over approximately four weeks to allow the brain adequate rest and recovery.

What actions should a student and parent/guardian take in response to sustaining a concussion?

Inform the school and notify your coaches. Schools will follow protocol established by the Nebraska Concussion Awareness Act, Nebraska Department of Education and the Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services.

### **Student Allergies**

Due to the increasing number of students with allergies to certain foods, animals, or other materials, please do not bring homemade foods or family pets into classrooms. Principals have the authority to restrict foods or pets from school campus. See below for specific procedures regarding animals at school.

### **Health Screenings**

Various health screenings are required by Nebraska law, including vision, hearing, height, weight, and dental. Individual students and complete grade levels will be screened in compliance with the guidelines set by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.

Parents/guardians will be notified that screenings will take place. Health office personnel and selected assistants will conduct the screenings. Parents/guardians will be contacted by the school nurse if their student does not pass a screening with a recommendation for a more thorough follow up assessment.

Parents/Guardians who do not wish for their child to participate in a school health screening must submit a written statement to the school principal in advance of the screening.

- For hearing, vision, and/or dental screenings: The statement must (1) confirm that the child has undergone the required screening within the past six months, and (2) be signed by a qualified healthcare examiner, such as a physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse–nurse practitioner. A statement submitted under this section is valid for the school year in which it is submitted; a new statement must be submitted each time such screening is required by these regulations.
- For height and weight measurement: the statement must object to such screening, be signed and dated by the parent or guardian, and be submitted before the screening is conducted. A statement submitted under this section is valid for the school year in which it is submitted; a new statement must be submitted each time such screening is required by these regulations.

### **Automated External Defibrillator**

Schools are equipped with an automated external defibrillator (AED). In the event of a cardiac arrest, an AED may be administered by designated staff certified in CPR/AED.

### **ANIMALS AT SCHOOL**

Animals are not allowed in school district buildings or on school district property without the written permission of the superintendent or their designee except as provided in [Board Policy 5605 \(Animals at School\)](#) or as otherwise required by law.

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

It is an educational objective of the school to develop each student's ability to formulate and express original thought on projects, papers, and assessments. In an educational era in which collaborative thinking and expanding technological tools such as artificial intelligence are embraced, it is important to educate students about boundaries of academic honesty and to develop ethical work habits. The expectation that students perform at the highest levels of academic honesty is a foundation upon which the academic integrity of the school's educational program rests. Academic dishonesty is therefore considered a violation of school rules. Students and parents/guardians are advised of the following:

### **Definitions**

- **Academic Dishonesty**: Academic dishonesty includes cheating and plagiarism.
  - **Cheating**: Cheating is the use of dishonest methods to gain a personal advantage on academic work product. This includes, but is not limited to, copying another student's academic work product on individualized assignments and assessments, utilizing technology to obtain or share answers on assignments and/or assessments, and obtaining unauthorized assessment copies.
  - **Plagiarism**: Plagiarism is the use of written or spoken text and passing it off as a person's own academic work product, using a created production (including computer-generated or artificial intelligence-created product) without crediting, or committing literary theft. Examples include turning in a paper retrieved from the internet, artificial intelligence or including information from an encyclopedia, book, textbook, web site, database, etc., without citation. A student's academic work product is considered plagiarized if parts of the assignment are taken from another source without giving credit.
- **Academic Work Product**: Student educational work that is presented to the teacher as final submission and includes assignments and assessments.
- **Assignments**: Projects, papers, and daily homework that are submitted as academic work product.
- **Assessments**: Quizzes, tests, and other evaluative methods that are academic work product and used by teachers to determine grades other than assignments.
- **Reasonable Suspicion**: A teacher reasonably suspecting that a student has engaged in academic dishonesty. Reasonable suspicion can be based upon factors that include:
  - Similarities between a student's academic work product compared with another student's;
  - Inconsistency between a student's prior academic work product and the work product presented (and unattributable to reasonable educational growth); and/or
  - Signaling by a school-approved plagiarism screening tool.

Reasonable suspicion is not a conclusive determination.

### **Responses to Academic Dishonesty**

If a teacher has reasonable suspicion that a student has engaged in academic dishonesty, the following procedures will be employed:

1. The teacher shall confer with the student to clarify the origins of the suspected academic work product, obtaining evidence of student work product preparation as necessary.
2. If reasonable suspicion of academic dishonesty persists, the teacher shall notify the student's parent/guardian. The teacher shall also notify the academic department chair and grade level administrator.
3. Based on investigation and review of the evidence, as well as in consultation with the grade level administrator, if the teacher determines that it is more likely than not that the student engaged in academic dishonesty, the student shall be given the opportunity to rewrite and/or retake the assignment/assessment under staff supervision for up to a 40% reduction (per administrative determination) in the point value of the assignment/assessment. The academic dishonesty will be documented in the student's disciplinary record. A second occurrence of alleged academic dishonesty will follow the same procedure, but if it is determined that academic honesty occurred, the student shall be given the opportunity to rewrite and/or retake the assignment/assessment under staff supervision to earn no greater than 60% (per administrative determination) of the point value of the assignment/assessment. Subsequent occurrences of academic dishonesty will result in a "0%" grade for the assignment/assessment at issue.

### **Evolving Tools of Academic Work Product**

To prepare students for a society in which collaborative problem solving and legitimate use of technology-based tools is expected, teachers may require students to prepare collaborative, group-based projects and research projects utilizing technological tools (including artificial intelligence). Teachers will clearly communicate to students the parameters of such assignments/assessments, including whether group academic work product submission or the use of artificial intelligence is permissible. Otherwise, academic work product is expected to be the student's independent and original work.

### **ATTENDANCE/ABSENCES**

Attendance records make up a part of every student's permanent record. Frequent absences from classroom learning experiences disrupt the continuity of the instructional process. The benefit of regular classroom instruction is lost and is difficult to regain even during post-absence make-up sessions and/or homework.

A child is of mandatory attendance age if the child (a) will reach six years of age prior to January 1 of the current school year and (b) has not reached eighteen years of age. Information about possible exceptions may be obtained from your child's principal and/or the Director of Student Services.

### Attendance Officer

The building principal is identified as the attendance officer in each building. They may work collaboratively with the social worker, counselor, nurse, psychologist, teachers, and other key staff to promptly address attendance concerns. This may include working with the student/parent(s) to investigate barriers to regular attendance, developing a collaborative plan designed to improve attendance, and reporting cases of excessive absence to the county attorney.

### Reporting Absence

Parent(s)/guardian(s) are required to notify the school prior to 8:30 A.M., if the student will be absent. If the school has not received a call, the school shall call the parent/guardian or other contacts provided by the parent/guardian to verify the student's whereabouts. Phone calls or notes from parent(s)/guardian(s) may be accepted as verification for absence – check with your student's building regarding the communication method required. Principals may request verification from physicians for students who may have absences due to medical issues/conditions.

### Absences from School - Definitions:

An absence from school will be reported as: 1) an excused absence or (2) an unexcused absence. Students who are absent from their assigned classroom, but who are still in attendance at school or in a school activity may be recorded as 'waived' and such absence from class will neither be counted as 'excused' or 'unexcused'.

Excused Absence is an absence for which there is a valid cause known and approved by the Principal or designee and confirmed by telephone or attested to in writing, signed by a parent/guardian either before or within 2 school days after the date of the absence. Absences should be cleared through the Principal's office in advance whenever possible. All absences, except for illness and/or death in the family, require advance approval.

The principal shall have the discretion to deny approval of any absence depending on the circumstances for each specific student (frequency of absence, academic status, test/work missed, and family trips that could occur during non-school times.) An absence for any of the following reasons may be excused, provided the required procedures have been followed:

- Attendance at a funeral for a member of the immediate family (parents, siblings, and grandparents)
- Illness which causes a student to be absent from school
- Doctor or dental appointment which requires the student to be absent from school
- Court appearances that are required by a court order
- School sponsored activities which require students to be absent from school
- Other absences which have received prior approval from the Principal, and
- Suspension or expulsion from the school building

Unexcused Absence is an absence which is not excused by the parent or school administrator. An absence for which there is no valid cause known to the principal or designee, confirmed by telephone or attested to in writing, signed by a parent/ guardian either before, or within 2 school days after the date of the absence will be recorded as 'unexcused.'

Any absences from school due to illness that extend beyond 3 consecutive school days may be recorded as ‘unexcused’, unless the illness causing such absences is confirmed in writing by a licensed physician or the equivalent.

A student who engages in any unexcused absences may be considered truant as per Nebraska law. Truancy is also a violation of school rules and may require disciplinary consequences.

#### Excessive Absence/Notifications

- The principal or designee shall contact the parents/guardians of any student who has missed 5, 9, and 15 days of school or the hourly equivalent and inform parents/guardians of the possible negative impact that further absences from school may have on the student’s academic success.
- At any point, the principal and/or designee may request one or more meetings with the parent/guardian for the purpose of addressing barriers to attendance. A Collaborative Plan will be developed to reduce barriers and improve attendance. If the parent/guardian refuses to participate in such meetings, the principal shall place documentation of such refusal in the child’s attendance record. The collaborative plan shall consider, but not be limited to:
  - Illness related to physical or behavioral health of the child
  - Educational counseling
  - Educational evaluation
  - Referral to community agencies for economic reasons
  - Family or individual counseling
  - Assisting the family in working with other community services
  - Referral to restorative justice practices or services.

#### Involvement of County Attorney

The school may report to the county attorney when the school has documented the efforts to address excessive absences, the Collaborative Plan to reduce barriers identified to improve regular attendance has not been successful, and the student has accumulated more than twenty (20) absences per year. The school shall notify the child’s family in writing prior to referring the child to the county attorney. Illness that makes attendance impossible or impracticable shall not be the basis for referral to the county attorney. A report to the county attorney may also be made when a student otherwise accrues excessive absences.

Any student who is absent for 30 consecutive school days, and whose building administrator has undertaken all required procedures to eliminate barriers to attendance, may be automatically disenrolled from Papillion La Vista Community Schools unless continued enrollment is required by state or federal law. Disenrolled students may seek admission and re-enrollment in Papillion La Vista Community Schools consistent with the procedures set forth above.

### **TARDINESS TO SCHOOL OR CLASS**

Students are encouraged to arrive promptly to school to ensure a good start for the day. Chronic tardiness (arriving to school late and/or arriving to a class period late) can be disruptive to the student’s learning experience. Prompt and regular attendance can be one important factor in a student’s success in school. Excessive tardiness may result in disciplinary action.

## **STUDENT CONDUCT**

### **Law Violations**

Any student who acts in violation of any of the laws while in attendance at school, on property directly adjacent to that of the schools, during, immediately before, or after school hours, or at a school sponsored activity, shall be subject to possible disciplinary action and report of the violation to local law enforcement officials.

### **Explosives, Firearms, Weapons**

No student may possess, handle, or transmit any weapon while on school grounds, in a school vehicle, or at any school activity or event off school grounds except as permitted by this policy.

***Definition of Weapon.*** The term “weapon” means any object, device, instrument, material, or substance which is capable of causing injury in the manner it is used or intended to be used. Parent(s)/guardian(s) of students found to possess a weapon or dangerous object on school property shall be notified of the incident. The student will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension or expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement.

### **Firearms**

No person may bring, possess, handle or transmit a firearm on school grounds, in a school owned vehicle, or at a school activity or event off school grounds, except as permitted by this policy. Students, who have knowingly and intentionally possessed, used or transported a firearm to school, a school-sponsored activity, or event, shall be expelled for not less than twelve months. The Superintendent shall have the authority to recommend this expulsion requirement be modified for a student on a case-by-case basis. For the purpose of this portion of the policy, the term "firearm" includes any weapon which is designed to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive, the frame or receiver of any such weapon, a muffler or silencer for such a weapon, or any explosive, incendiary or poison gas.

Firearms under the control of law enforcement officials shall be exempt from this policy. The principal may allow authorized persons to display firearms or other dangerous objects for educational purposes. Such a display shall also be exempt from this policy. It shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent to develop administrative regulations regarding this policy.

### **Fighting and Other Disturbances**

You should understand that when a fight occurs, the possibility of injury or damage to other persons or property exists. For your protection and the protection of your building, such actions will not be tolerated at school.

Fighting on school property, fighting directly adjacent to school property, during school hours, and/or fighting at a school sponsored activity will result in disciplinary action, to include suspension or exclusion and may be referred to the law authorities. Causing or attempting to cause physical injury to a school employee or student could result in suspension or expulsion. Any student who interferes among the principle parties in a fight, or contributes to the violent action or disturbance for the purpose of or resulting in prolonging, escalating, or further inflaming the issue, shall also be subject to disciplinary action. (An example might include –

recording a fight on a cell phone and/or posting it on social media.) Students who observe a disagreement or fight in progress must notify a staff member immediately.

### **Drug Use**

On all property owned and operated by the District or at any school sponsored or related activity, the possession, purchase or attempted purchase, distribution, sale or attempted sale, or use of alcohol, nicotine products, or other drugs or controlled substances, imitation drugs or controlled substances and drug paraphernalia by students are prohibited.

The Superintendent may establish exceptions, as allowed by law, that in their opinion further instructional purposes or assist in the safe administration of prescribed medication and medical equipment.

The Superintendent shall develop and administer procedures for the implementation and enforcement of this policy.

### **Student Conduct:**

It shall be District procedure to make available to each student a copy of the standards of conduct for student behavior, which prohibits the possession, purchase or attempted purchase, distribution, sale or attempted sale and use/consumption of nicotine, alcohol and other drugs or drug look-alikes and of the disciplinary sanctions that may be taken for violation of such standards of conduct. This information will be in the Student Handbooks. It will also be given to all students who may enroll in the District after the start of the school year.

### **Evaluation and Treatment:**

Information regarding drug/alcohol evaluations, education, counseling, and treatment programs are available to all students and parent(s)/guardian(s) through the school counselors and principals.

### **Curriculum:**

[Policy #6201](#) includes the implementation of age-appropriate, developmentally based drug and alcohol education and prevention instruction for all students. This instruction may be incorporated into pre-existing curricula and/or through specific programs implemented by the classroom teachers and school counselors.

### **Disciplinary Actions:**

Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary sanctions being taken within the bounds of applicable law, as outlined in the [Student Conduct, Vandalism, and Disruption Policy & Procedures 5301](#), ranging from suspension to expulsion from school. Any violation of this policy shall also result in a referral to appropriate authorities for criminal prosecution. Sanctions for violations of this policy and any requirements for the student to be able to return to school may be adjusted by school administrators as a result of cooperative actions taken by the student and his/her parent(s) to seek a drug evaluation, and any recommended treatment as a result of that evaluation. The cost of such evaluation and recommended treatment is the responsibility of the parent(s). In addition, specific procedures for enforcement of this policy follow for such areas as:

- Drug Searches by Canine Units
- Drug Use in the Schools - Elementary
- Drug Use in the Schools - Secondary

Should building administrators determine that a specific situation warrants it, they may decide it is in the best interest of all students to conduct more intensive investigations. These can include searches of lockers, books, book bags, clothes and cars parked on school premises. The Superintendent may also authorize a student drug screening program, the use of law enforcement drug dogs, and/or the hiring of undercover police officers to follow up on referrals of possession or distribution of controlled substances by students in the District.

#### **Notice Concerning Designation of Law Enforcement Units:**

The District designates the Papillion Police Department, La Vista Police Department, Bellevue Police Department, Omaha Police Department, Nebraska State Patrol, and Sarpy County Sheriff's Department as the District's "law enforcement units" for purposes of:

- Enforcing any and all federal, state or local law.
- Maintaining the physical security and safety of the schools in the District.
- Maintaining safe and drug free schools.
- Contracting for specific services to be conducted for educational and safety purposes.

The District designates its building principals collectively as the District's "law enforcement unit." Each building principal is a law enforcement unit officer who is (1) authorized to refer possible violations of any local, state, or federal law to Papillion Police Department, La Vista Police Department, Bellevue Police Department, Omaha Police Department, Nebraska State Patrol, and Sarpy County Sheriff's Department; and (2) charged with maintaining the physical security and safety of the District.

#### **Drug Searches by Canine Units:**

Purpose: A proactive approach to help maintain an alcohol and drug free school environment.

- The building principal will initiate the process and gain authorization from the Superintendent or his/her designee, to proceed.
- The building principal will contact the law enforcement agency with jurisdiction for that school and work with them in contacting the law enforcement canine unit to set up a date and time.
- The building principal and law enforcement canine unit will discuss the specific plan of areas to be searched. The request may involve any or all school building facilities, vehicles in school parking lots or other areas where student vehicles are parked during or after school hours.
- If on a school day when students are in session, a notification would go over the public address system directing students to stay in their classrooms while the canine search is taking place.
- During the search, the administrative staff and counselors will be assigned to designated areas of the building to facilitate smooth handling and any student emergencies.
- If the canine unit alerts to a student's vehicle, the student will be required to unlock the vehicle doors and trunk for an internal inspection. Any refusal to unlock the vehicle will

be handled by law enforcement and the student will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension or expulsion.

- Any illegal drugs and/or contraband found on school grounds, whether in a student locker, vehicle, or any place on school grounds, will be confiscated, turned over to law enforcement and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted. The student will be subject to disciplinary action as specified in the student handbook.
- At the conclusion of the search, a debriefing will be held with police involved, school officials and the District public information office to review procedures, suggestions for changes and information that would be shared with the public.

When a student's manner and/or conduct at school or a school related/sponsored activity causes school personnel to suspect that a student has been using alcohol/drugs, that student shall be referred immediately to an administrator. If, in the opinion of the administrator, the student has been consuming or is in possession of alcohol/drugs or look-alikes, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted, and the student immediately withheld from classes/activities. Law enforcement will be contacted. The principal may request the school nurse to assist in observation of the student. A Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) may also be contacted to assist with the investigation.

Any student at school or a school related/sponsored activity, found to be under the influence, in possession of and/or distributing alcohol, drugs, drug paraphernalia, or look-alikes will be suspended for 6 to 19 days, and/or recommended for expulsion. The parent(s)/guardian(s), law enforcement, and school social worker will be notified by the school administrator. The student may be dropped from the activities/organizations in which they participate.

### **Responsibility of Student/Parent to Self-Report**

It is recommended that the parent(s)/guardian(s) contact the school social worker and an appointment for a chemical dependency evaluation be made prior to the student returning to school. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be asked to sign a release of information for the evaluation to be sent to the school social worker. The school may also request that the student submit to drug testing. The cost of any drug testing and/or evaluation will be paid by the student/parent (guardian).

After the evaluation, the administrator, school counselor, school social worker, parent(s)/guardian(s) and student will meet to determine appropriate follow up action. If a chemical dependency education/treatment program is recommended, the student must successfully participate in or have successfully completed a program before any suspension days will be waived. Cost of any program or counseling will be the responsibility of the student/parent (guardian).

Should building administrators determine that a specific situation warrants it, they may determine that it is in the best interest of all students to conduct more intensive investigations. These can include searches of lockers, books, book bags, clothes and cars parked on school premises. The Superintendent may also authorize a student drug screening program, the use of law enforcement drug dogs, and/or the hiring of undercover police officers to follow up on referrals of possession or distribution of controlled substances by students of the District.

**Definitions:****Student:**

Any individual enrolled either part-time or full-time in the District or who is representing the District as a participant in a District operated or sponsored activity

**Possession:**

Includes having on their person, or within their personal property, or has under their control such a substance.

**Distribution:**

Means the transfer, sale, transmitting or giving of the item or substance in question to any other person, with or without the exchange of money or other valuables.

**Use/Consumption:**

Reasonable suspicion exists to believe that the student has taken drugs/alcohol. This may be based on, but not limited to: the odor of alcohol/marijuana, etc., on a student's breath or clothing; physical indicators such as dilated or pinpoint pupils, slurred speech, irregular and/or rapid heartbeat, uncontrollable laughing or chuckling, nausea, etc.; testimony of a reliable witness; evidence of impairment of a student's ability to think and act correctly and efficiently.

**Alcohol:**

Any substance subject to the jurisdiction of the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission.

**Drug:**

As defined by Neb. Rev. Stat. Section 28-401, as being an illegal or controlled substance, including but not limited to: uppers, downers, barbiturates, amphetamines, methamphetamines, LSD, heroin, hashish, cocaine, marijuana, or hallucinogenic. This also includes any substance, which is used for the purpose of mind, mood, or behavior alteration (e.g., glue, steroids, inhalants, etc.).

**Look-alikes:**

Any substance that looks like and/or is said to be an illegal drug or controlled substance, but is not.

**Drug Paraphernalia:**

All equipment, products and materials of any kind, which are used, intended for use, or designed for use in manufacturing, injecting, ingesting, inhaling or otherwise introducing any drug into the human body.

**Purchase/Attempted Purchase:**

Reasonable suspicion exists to believe the student attempted to or successfully paid someone for any amount of alcohol, tobacco, other drug or drug look-alike.

**Sale/Attempted Sale:**

Reasonable suspicion exists to believe the student attempted to or successfully accepted payment, in any form, for any amount of alcohol, tobacco, other drug or drug look-alike.

## **TOBACCO/NICOTINE USE & ELECTRONIC SMOKING/VAPORIZING DEVICES**

The policy of Papillion La Vista Community Schools prohibits students from the use, possession, distribution and/or sales of nicotine products on or adjacent to school property (including while in a vehicle), in a school bus or van, or as a participant of school related/sponsored activities. Lighters, matches, smoking paraphernalia, cigarette/cigar packages, and/or chew/snuff tins, electronic/vaporizing devices are also included in this policy. These items will be confiscated and disciplinary action will be taken.

### **Definition of Smoking:**

Smoking consists of, but is not limited to, being seen holding a lit or unlit cigarette, electronic/vaporizing device, cigar or tobacco, or being seen throwing a cigarette, cigar or tobacco away, or being seen with smoke coming out of the nose or mouth, or being in a rest room stall or car with smoke/vapor rising out, or admitting to having smoked and/or chewed tobacco, including electronic/vaporizing devices on or adjacent to school property or at a school related/sponsored activity.

## **DISTRICT COMPLAINT PROCEDURE (including complaints re. discrimination or harassment)**

The District's complaint procedure applies to students, parents/guardians, patrons and District employees, unless the complaint is subject to a different procedure pursuant to law or policy. Generally, individuals who have a complaint should discuss their concerns with appropriate school personnel to resolve problems. When such efforts do not resolve matters satisfactorily, including matters involving discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, age or other protected status or basis as enumerated in Board Policy 1001, a complainant should follow the procedures set forth in [Board Policy 2102 \(Complaint Procedure\)](#). Students and employees who believe they have been subjected to sex harassment in violation of Title IX of the Federal Code should also refer to [Board Policy 5208 \(Title IX\)](#), which supplements this policy.

## **BULLYING AND HARASSMENT**

It is the policy of this District to provide a learning environment free from discriminatory insult, intimidation, bullying or any other forms of harassment. The Superintendent shall develop and administer procedures for implementation of this policy and those prescribed steps to be taken for preventing and reporting incidents of bullying or harassment in school. School staff will implement programs and instruction designed to prevent all forms of bullying and harassment by and against students. This policy shall be reviewed by the Board annually.

This policy shall pertain to any form of bullying or harassment of students by other students. The sexual harassment of students by other students is governed by [Board Policy 5208](#). The harassment or sexual harassment of students by school district employees is governed by other board policies.

School officials shall report any known or suspected violations of the Nebraska Criminal Code to law enforcement authorities. Any actions taken by law enforcement personnel are outside of the sanctions imposed by school officials under this policy.

**General Statement:**

Students are expected to conduct themselves as good citizens at all times, free of any bullying or harassing behavior toward others. Harassment of another student, school employee, agent or official on the basis of the person's sex, race, color, age, religion, national origin, marital status or disability is strictly prohibited.

Students are prohibited from using electronic devices (e.g. computers, cell phones, tablets, etc.) and mediums (e.g. social media, internet, apps, etc.) to bully, harass or threaten any student or staff member. If a student violates this requirement the offending student may face disciplinary actions up to and including suspension or expulsion. Students should be advised that this form of disruption of the educational process may subject them to disciplinary actions, even if the student originally accesses the device or Internet site while off-campus or after school hours.

**Definition of Harassment:**

Harassment is defined as behavior which is: severe, pervasive, or persistent; creates a hostile environment at school; is sufficiently serious that it interferes with or limits a student's ability to participate in or benefit from school services, activities, or opportunities; and is based on a student's race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or religion. Bullying and harassment based on protected class is unique and may require additional investigation. The appropriate district staff member or coordinator will promptly investigate harassment complaints that violate the district's anti-discrimination policies pursuant to the district's complaint policies.

**Definition of Bullying:**

Bullying is defined to mean any ongoing pattern of physical, verbal, or electronic abuse on school grounds, in a vehicle owned, leased, or contracted by a school being used for a school purpose by a school employee or his or her designee, or at school-sponsored activities or school-sponsored athletic events, subject to the general rule regarding prohibited use of electronic devices stated above. Bullying is further defined to include any intentional, hostile or offensive verbal, written, graphic, demonstrative, or physical act that has the purpose of exerting domination over another student through the act of intimidating, frightening, oppressing, or adversely controlling the student and that is disruptive of the educational environment.

**Reporting Procedures:**

Any person who believes his/her rights to a learning environment free of all types of bullying or harassment has been jeopardized, should report such incidents to their classroom teacher, school counselor, building principal or any other adult supervisor in the school.

**Disciplinary Actions:**

Students whose actions or utterances are determined to be in violation of [Policy 5203](#) shall be subject to possible disciplinary actions as outlined in [Policy 5301 \(Student Conduct, Vandalism and Disruption Policy\)](#) and [Policy 2102 \(Complaint Procedure\)](#).

## **STUDENT TECHNOLOGY USE**

Technology used at Papillion La Vista Community Schools will enhance the learning experience as dictated by the approved curriculum and mission statement of the school. The District intends that the use of the campus computer system, network and other technology promote greater academic collaboration and communication throughout the school community. The educational program includes activities which educate students about bullying, bullying prevention and digital citizenship. Any unauthorized use that affects the operation or performance of the system is prohibited.

The District will adhere to all copyright and legal responsibilities as defined by federal and state laws. Students will adhere to the laws, policies and rules governing computers including, but not limited to, copyright laws, rights of software publishers, and license agreements. Students may not use any technology device provided by the School District to commit acts of terrorism, assault, threats and or to violate others' rights.

The District will treat records that exist in electronic form in the same manner as other records are treated pursuant to state and federal law.

The following items will help ensure proper use of programs and files within the district:

- A. The District will comply with license agreements and/or policy statements contained in software packages used by the District. Questions about compliance with license agreements or use of a software package will be resolved, with the assistance of or through, direct negotiations between the Director of Information Technology and the software publisher or copyright holder.
- B. The District will provide licensing for products considered essential to district use. This includes but is not limited to a Productivity Suite, a student information system, Email, and Finance System.
- C. The District will filter internet sites required by the Children's Internet Protection Act and other deemed to be inappropriate.
- D. Due to the nature of filtering technology, the filter may at times filter pages that are appropriate for student research. The system administrator may override the technology protection measure for the student to access a site with legitimate educational value that is wrongly blocked.

Inappropriate use of technology (computers, devices, wireless systems) includes but is not limited to:

- A. The download or use of illegal copies of copyrighted material.
- B. The use of offensive material. This includes displaying or transmission of sexually explicit images, messages or cartoons; racial slurs or acts of terrorism, assault or threats.
- C. Use for the purpose of solicitation or proselytization for commercial, religious, political, personal or any other non-student-related activity.
- D. Unauthorized use of District computers/devices in an attempt to gain access to inappropriate or unsanctioned material.
- E. Inappropriate use of Email. The district provides email for all staff and students. Email will not be used to transmit offensive or damaging material. Use of private email accounts by students is forbidden.

F. Indirect access to network services. Including using personally owned network equipment or computer equipment in an attempt to bypass the network filter.

Additional rules governing student use of District issued devices shall be found in the document titled Technology Student Use Handbook.

### **Cyber-bullying**

Cyberbullying includes, but is not limited to, the following misuses of technology: harassing, teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another person by sending or posting inappropriate and hurtful email messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or web site postings including blogs.

Students or staff who feel that they have been the victim of such misuses of technology should not erase the offending material from the system. They should print a copy of the material and immediately report the incident to a school official. All reports of harassment in cyberspace will be investigated fully. Consequences for engaging in this type of misconduct may include, but are not limited to, the loss of computer privileges, confiscation of cell phones, detention, suspension, or expulsion from school. Law enforcement may also be contacted and involved.

## **CELL PHONES AND PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Students are prohibited from using cellular phones or other electronic devices while at school, except as deemed appropriate by the building administration or a student's education team. See the building section of this handbook for this school-specific rules.

## **DETENTION**

Detention period is a time when the student is assigned to stay after school, come in before school, during lunch or stay another arranged time for any infractions of acceptable student behavior, including attendance. Detention time is set at the discretion of the teacher or acting principal. Unacceptable behavior during the detention period may result in suspension from school.

Students should fully understand that any teacher in the building has the authority to correct misconduct at any time. Therefore, it is conceivable that a teacher might assign a detention to a student who is not in any of his/her classes. Failure to serve detentions by the assigned date will result in a referral to an administrator. Students who fail to serve a detention for an administrator will serve a more severe consequence.

## **STUDENT DRESS**

General Regulations. The District prohibits student attire or appearance that:

- Causes or is likely to cause a material and substantial disruption to the District's programs and activities.
- Promotes, depicts, or refers to violence, drugs, alcohol, vulgarity, obscenity, illegal activity, hate speech, bullying speech, or harassing speech.
- Includes words, gestures, or images that contain or imply sexual content or innuendo.
- Otherwise undermines the District's mission to inculcate the habits, manners, and values

fundamental to civility, community, and the educational environment.

The District reserves the right to request immediate attire changes from students. The District will require students to adhere to uniform standards and/or wear district approved or issued uniforms in order to participate in activities.

Altering a student's appearance or removing or altering a student's attire without consent from their parent/guardian/caregiver is not allowed. Additionally, students' hair should not be permanently or temporarily altered by school personnel.

**Cultural and Religious Attire.** Students are allowed to wear religious attire, adornments, and other attire associated with race, national origin or religion, or tribal regalia. Additionally, students are permitted to wear natural and protective hairstyles including but are not limited to braids, locks, twists, tight coils or curls, cornrows, Bantu knots, afros, weaves, wigs, or head wraps.

Any person who is a member of an indigenous tribe of the United States or another country may wear tribal regalia in any public or private location where the person is otherwise authorized to be on school grounds or at any school function.

**Health and Safety Considerations.** Students may be required to wear protective clothing or equipment or otherwise modify their attire or secure their hair to ensure the safety of themselves and others. In such cases, a good faith effort to reasonably accommodate students will be made to ensure safety without compromising religious beliefs, grooming practices, or requiring students to permanently alter their appearance. The least restrictive means appropriate to address the identified health or safety concern shall be used.

**Health and Safety Accommodation Process.** If a health and safety standard accommodation is necessary, the District will:

1. Engage in a good-faith effort to reasonably accommodate the student.
2. Notify the student's parent or guardian of such an attempt to accommodate the student's appearance or any attire, tribal regalia, hairstyles, adornment, or other characteristic associated with race, national origin, or religion.
3. Attempt to obtain consent from a student's parent or guardian prior to altering a student's appearance or removing or altering a student's attire, tribal regalia, hairstyle, adornment, or other characteristic associated with race, national origin, or religion.

**Recordkeeping.** The District will record efforts made to accommodate a student's appearance, attire, hairstyle, adornment, or other characteristics associated with race, religion, sex, disability, or national origin. Each record must include: the student's name; federally identified demographic characteristics; date of the occurrence; the health and safety standard relating to the accommodation; the nature of the accommodation requested; staff involved; communication with parents/guardians/caregivers, and; the outcome of the effort.

**Enforcement.** Violations of this policy shall be addressed in a manner consistent with the board's

policies regarding student discipline.

### **SEARCH AND SEIZURE**

The school retains the right to search lockers, cars, backpacks or other property in the possession of the student, on or adjacent to school grounds or at school sponsored activities, including away activities when there is reasonable cause and/or suspicion. The school may also seize items that are deemed illegal, inappropriate or a nuisance item. Parents may be required to pick up items taken and disciplinary action may be taken as a result of a search or seizure.

### **AUDIO AND VIDEO RECORDING**

Students, staff, parents/guardians, and patrons should assume that any class or activity in the school may be recorded by the school district for legitimate educational purposes. There is no reasonable expectation of privacy within classrooms, common areas of the school building or on school grounds outside of the building. Recordings permitted pursuant to this policy may only be used for authorized purposes and may not be republished without additional, written consent from a school administrator. For purposes of this policy “recording” includes still photographs, video, audio, and other similar data captured in any medium.

### **Secret Recordings**

No person is permitted to make surreptitious recordings on school grounds.

### **Recordings Made By Parents/Guardians and Patrons**

Parents/guardians and patrons may make recordings of school activities in a non-disruptive manner including things like athletic contests to the extent permitted by law unless otherwise lawfully restricted by the administration. Parents/guardians or patrons may not make recordings if they are volunteering or visiting school during the school day without permission of the administration or supervising staff member and subject to this policy, such as recording their child’s classroom activities or recess. Parents may not record meetings with administrators or staff, including meetings related to a student’s IEP, IFSP or 504 plan. Violation of this policy will result in immediate termination of any meeting that is being recorded and may be grounds for exclusion from school property, loss of volunteer privileges, or other restrictions deemed appropriate by the administration.

### **Recordings Made By Staff**

Staff members may make recordings of classroom instruction, student behavior or performance, and school activities without prior administrative approval only for legitimate educational purposes. Staff members may not make secret recordings while on duty, even if those recordings do not violate state or federal criminal or privacy laws.

### **Recordings Made by the District**

The Papillion La Vista Community Schools Board of Education authorizes the use of video recording devices for monitoring interior and exterior public areas, as well as in district owned or contracted student transportation vehicles, for the purposes of ensuring the health, welfare and safety of staff, students and visitors, safeguarding district facilities and equipment and maintaining student discipline and an appropriate educational and work environment. The

devices shall not be placed or operational in locations in which individuals have a high expectation of privacy, such as restrooms and locker rooms.

### **Procedure 5706–District Video Recording**

- A. Placement. Video recording devices are authorized to be placed in public areas in school facilities and on school grounds, as well as in district owned or contracted student transportation vehicles. The video recording devices shall not be placed in locations in which individuals have a high expectation of privacy, such as restrooms and locker rooms.
- B. Notice. Notice that video recording cameras are being utilized shall be given through appropriate mechanisms, such as by posting signs in the building entry and other locations and by including a notice in the student-parent and staff handbooks.
- C. Use of Video Recordings. Video records may be used as a basis for student or employee disciplinary action and for making reports to law enforcement.
- D. Interference with the Video Recording System. Students or staff who vandalize, damage, disable, render inoperable, or otherwise interfere with video recording equipment or recordings, or use the video recording system in a manner that is not consistent with the purposes set forth in this procedure, shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action (up to and including expulsion for a student and termination for a staff member) and referral to appropriate law enforcement authorities.

### **DESIGNATION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT UNITS**

The District designates the Papillion Police Department, La Vista Police Department, Bellevue Police Department, Omaha Police Department, Nebraska State Patrol, and Sarpy County Sheriff's Department as the District's law enforcement units for purposes of:

- A. Enforcing any and all federal, state or local law.
- B. Maintaining the physical security and safety of the schools in the District.
- C. Maintaining safe and drug free schools.
- D. Contracting for specific services to be conducted for educational and safety purposes.

The District designates its building principals collectively as the District's "law enforcement unit." Each building principal is a law enforcement unit officer who is (1) authorized to refer possible violations of any local, state, or federal law to Papillion Police Department, La Vista Police Department, Bellevue Police Department, Omaha Police Department, Nebraska State Patrol, and Sarpy County Sheriff's Department; and (2) charged with maintaining the physical security and safety of the District.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINARY DUE PROCESS**

The District expects both individual students and the entire student body to follow standards of conduct that maintain an optimum educational environment. Students are expected to respect and accept the authority of school personnel during class hours and during school related activities.

Students are expected to comply with established regulations and are subject to discipline, suspensions and expulsions as detailed in administrative procedure and student handbooks.

The Superintendent shall establish administrative procedures to ensure that the District will offer all expelled students an alternative school, class, or educational program, as is provided for in Nebraska State Law.

Except in cases of unavoidable accident, students will be expected to pay for all damage they cause to school property.

The Superintendent is authorized to initiate civil or criminal proceedings against any individual or group that damages school property or disrupts the orderly process of education.

Any disciplinary action taken by staff must be consistent with the requirements of other applicable laws, including but not limited to the IDEA, Section 504 and Title IX.

Students who are participants in co-curricular activities (athletics and activities) are subject to the rules set forth in the District Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct is intended to promote responsible student behavior, which reflects positively upon the students, the school district, and the community. It applies to all students involved in co-curricular activities, which are defined as activity and athletic programs sponsored by and through the school district. Any student who violates the provisions of the Code or receives a citation by law enforcement for a criminal offense shall be subject to the consequences set forth therein. The Code of Conduct is found in the Athletics/Activities Student Handbook, which can be accessed at [www.plcschools.org/handbooks](http://www.plcschools.org/handbooks) or in Board of Education Procedure 5301A (found at [www.plcschools.org](http://www.plcschools.org))

All students are expected to respect and accept the authority of school personnel when at school activities, on school grounds, in school vehicles (including contracted vehicles) and as stated in C(1) of “Conditions and Procedures.” All students are expected to comply with established regulations and are subject to discipline, suspensions and expulsions according to [Board of Education Policy 5301](#).

### **General Statement:**

- A. Any rule, which specifies a particular action as a sanction for particular conduct, shall be binding on all students, school officials, Board members, and hearing examiners.
- B. Expulsion is specified as a sanction for particular conduct under rules and standards promulgated by the Board only in cases where the Board has determined that the conduct has the potential to seriously affect the health, safety, or welfare of the students engaged

in the conduct, other students, staff members, or any other person, or to otherwise seriously interfere with the educational process.

- C. Rules shall be distributed to students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) at the beginning of the school year, or at the time of enrollment, if during the school year.
- D. Rules shall be posted in conspicuous places in each school during the school year.
- E. Changes in rules and standards shall not take effect until reasonable effort has been made to distribute such changes to all students and parent(s)/guardian(s).

### **Types of Exclusion:**

- A. Short Term Suspension
  - 1. Up to and including 5 school days.
- B. Emergency Exclusion
  - 1. Immediate exclusion if the student has a dangerous disease, or the student's conduct presents a threat to the physical safety of the school community or is so extremely disruptive as to make temporary removal necessary to preserve the rights of other students to pursue an education.
- C. Long Term Suspension
  - 1. More than 5 school days but less than 20 school days.
- D. Expulsion
  - 1. Except as set forth below in Sections C-2 and C-3 under Long-Term Suspension, Expulsion and Mandatory Reassignment, the expulsion of a student shall be for a period not to exceed the remainder of the semester in which it took effect unless the misconduct occurred (a) within ten school days prior to the end of the first semester, in which case the expulsion shall remain in effect through the second semester; or (b) within ten school days prior to the end of the second semester, in which case the expulsion shall remain in effect for summer school and the first semester of the following school year. Such action may be modified or terminated by the school district at any time during the expulsion period.
- E. Mandatory Reassignment
  - 1. Involuntary transfer to another school within the system in connection with any disciplinary action.

### **Conditions and Procedures:**

- A. Short-Term Suspension
  - a. The following behavior constitutes grounds for this type of exclusion:
    - i. Conduct set forth in Section C1, below under Long-Term Suspension, Expulsion and Mandatory Reassignment.
    - ii. Other violations of rules and standards of behavior adopted by the Board of Education or the administrative or teaching staff of the school, that occur on or off school grounds, if such conduct interferes with school purposes or there is a connection between such conduct and school.
- B. The following procedure is required for short-term suspension:
  - a. The principal must make an investigation.

- b. The principal may suspend the student after the principal determines that it is necessary to help the student, to prevent interference with school purposes, or to further school purposes.
- c. Prior to such suspension, the student must be given oral or written notice of the charges, an explanation of the evidence against the student, and an opportunity to present the student's version.
- d. Within 24 hours of such additional time as is reasonably necessary following suspension, not to exceed an additional 48 hours, the principal must:
  - i. Send a written statement to the student, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), describing the student's conduct or rule violations.
  - ii. Set forth the reasons for the action taken in the written statement.
  - iii. Make a reasonable effort to confer with parent(s)/guardian(s) before or at the time the student returns to school, and shall document such effort in writing.
  - iv. Any student who is suspended may be given an opportunity to complete any class work, including but not limited to, examinations missed during the period of suspension.

C. Pre-Kindergarten through Second Grade Students

- a. Notwithstanding any other provision of this policy, an elementary school shall not out-of-school suspend a student in pre-kindergarten through second grade unless the student brings a deadly weapon as defined in section 28-109 on school grounds, in a vehicle owned, leased, or contracted by a school being used for a school purpose or in a vehicle being driven for a school purpose by a school employee or his or her designee, or at a school-sponsored activity or athletic event. As an alternative to suspension, the school district may take any action authorized by law, including those provided in section 79-258.

D. Long-Term Suspension, Expulsion and Mandatory Reassignment

- a. The following behavior constitutes grounds for these types of exclusions when it occurs on school grounds, in a vehicle contracted for school purposes, or at a school event or otherwise as set forth in paragraph, below:
  - i. Use of violence, force, coercion, threat, intimidation, or similar conduct in a manner that constitutes a substantial interference with school purposes;
  - ii. Willfully causing or attempting to cause substantial damage to property, stealing or attempting to steal property of substantial value, or repeated damage or theft involving property;
  - iii. Causing or attempting to cause personal injury to a school employee, to a school volunteer, or to any student. Personal injury caused by accident, self-defense, or other action undertaken on the reasonable belief that it was necessary to protect some other person shall not constitute a violation of this subdivision;
  - iv. Threatening or intimidating any student for the purpose of or with the intent of obtaining money or anything of value from such student;
  - v. Knowingly possessing, handling, or transmitting any object or material that is ordinarily or generally considered a weapon (see also board policy on weapons and firearms);

- vi. Engaging in the unlawful possession, selling, dispensing, or use of a controlled substance or an imitation controlled substance, as defined in section 28-401, a substance represented to be a controlled substance, or alcoholic liquor as defined in section 53-103.02 or being under the influence of a controlled substance or alcoholic liquor (note: the term “under the influence” for school purposes has a less strict meaning than it does under criminal law; for school purposes, the term means any level of impairment and includes even the odor of alcohol on the breath or person of a student; also, it includes being impaired by reason of the abuse of any material used as a stimulant);
- vii. Public indecency as defined in section 28-806, except that this prohibition shall apply only to students at least twelve years of age but less than nineteen years of age;
- viii. Engaging in bullying as defined in section 79-2,137 and in these policies;
- ix. Sexually assaulting or attempting to sexually assault any person if a complaint has been filed by a prosecutor in a court of competent jurisdiction alleging that the student has sexually assaulted or attempted to sexually assault any person, including sexual assaults or attempted sexual assaults which occur off school grounds not at a school function, activity, or event. For purposes of this subdivision, sexual assault means sexual assault in the first degree as defined in section 28-319, sexual assault in the second degree as defined in section 28-320, sexual assault of a child in the second or third degree as defined in section 28-320.01, or sexual assault of a child in the first degree as defined in section 28-319.01, as such sections now provide or may hereafter from time to time be amended;
- x. Engaging in any other activity forbidden by the laws of the State of Nebraska which activity constitutes a danger to other students or interferes with school purposes; or
- xi. A repeated violation of any of the following rules if such violations constitute a substantial interference with school purposes:
  - 1. The use of language, written or oral, or conduct, including gestures, which is profane or abusive to students or staff members. Profane or abusive language or conduct includes, but is not limited to, that which is commonly understood and intended to be derogatory toward a group or individual based upon race, gender, national origin, or religion;
  - 2. Dressing or grooming in a manner which violates the school district’s dress code and/or is dangerous to the student's health and safety, a danger to the health and safety of others, or which is disruptive, distracting or indecent to the extent that it interferes with the learning and educational process;
  - 3. Violating school bus rules as set by the school district or district staff;

4. Possessing, using, selling, or dispensing tobacco, drug paraphernalia, an electronic nicotine delivery system, or a tobacco imitation substance or packaging, regardless of form, including cigars, cigarettes, chewing tobacco, and any other form of tobacco, tobacco derivative product or imitation or electronic cigarettes, vapor pens, etc.;
5. Possessing, using, selling, or dispensing any drug paraphernalia or imitation of a controlled substance regardless of whether the actual substance possessed is a controlled substance by Nebraska law;
6. Possession of pornography;
7. Sexting or the possession of sexting images (a combination of sex and texting - the act of sending sexually explicit messages or photos electronically);
8. Engaging in hazing, defined as any activity expected of someone joining a group, team, or activity that humiliates, degrades or risks emotional and/or physical harm, regardless of the person's willingness to participate. Hazing activities are generally considered to be: physically abusive, hazardous, and/or sexually violating and include but are not limited to the following: personal servitude; sleep deprivation and restrictions on personal hygiene; yelling, swearing and insulting new members/rookies; being forced to wear embarrassing or humiliating attire in public; consumption of vile substances or smearing of such on one's skin; branding; physical beatings; binge drinking and drinking games; sexual simulation and sexual assault;
9. Bullying which shall include cyberbullying, defined as the use of the internet, including but not limited to social networking sites such as Facebook, cell phones or other devices to send, post or text message images and material intended to hurt or embarrass another person. This may include, but is not limited to; continuing to send email to someone who has said they want no further contact with the sender; sending or posting threats, sexual remarks or pejorative labels (i.e., hate speech); ganging up on victims by making them the subject of ridicule in forums, and posting false statements as fact intended to humiliate the victim; disclosure of personal data, such as the victim's real name, address, or school at websites or forums; posing as the identity of the victim for the purpose of publishing material in their name that defames or ridicules them; sending threatening and harassing text, instant messages or emails to the victims; and posting or sending rumors or gossip to instigate others to dislike and gang up on the target;
10. Violation of the district's computer acceptable computer use policy are subject to discipline, up to and including expulsion;
11. Knowingly possessing, handling, or transmitting any object or material that is ordinarily or generally considered a simulated or "look-a-like" weapon;

12. Using any object to simulate possession of a weapon;
  13. Knowingly making a false statement or knowingly submitting false information during the Title IX grievance process or any other school investigation or making a materially false statement in bad faith in the course of a Title IX grievance proceeding or any other school investigation; and
  14. Any other violation of a rule or regulation established by a school district staff member pursuant to authority delegated by the board.
  15. Violation of the school's surreptitious recording policy.
- E. Mandatory expulsion for firearms, explosives, or weapons and suspension or expulsion for intentionally causing an injury to employee, volunteer, or student.
- a. The following behavior constitutes grounds for mandatory expulsion:
    - i. Knowingly possessing, handling, transmitting, using, intimidating with, or threatening to use any object or material that is ordinarily or generally considered a firearm or explosive, including guns, firearms and pipe bombs.
    - ii. Using or threatening to use knives and/or chemical substances (including but not limited to: mace, pepper guns, and bleach), and any other object that could be used to injure another person.
  - b. The expulsion of a student for the knowing and intentional possession, use or transmission of a firearm as defined in 18 U.S.C. 921, shall be for a period of one year.
  - c. The expulsion of a student for the knowing and intentional use of force in causing or attempting to cause personal injury to a school employee, school volunteer, or student, as outlined in C-1-c above shall be for a period not to exceed the remainder of the school year in which it took effect if the misconduct occurs during the first semester. If the expulsion takes place during the second semester, the expulsion shall remain in effect for summer school and may remain in effect for the first semester of the following year.
  - d. Any expulsion that remains in effect during the first semester of the following school year shall be automatically scheduled for review by the hearing examiner before the beginning of the school year with notice to the student and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s).
- F. The following procedure is required for long-term suspension, expulsion, and mandatory reassignment listed in Section C.
- a. The decision to recommend discipline shall be made within two school days after learning of the alleged student misconduct. The principal must file a written charge and summary of the evidence supporting the charge with the Superintendent on the date of the decision to discipline.
  - b. Within 2 school days of the decision to long-term suspend, expel, or mandatorily reassign,, written notice must be sent by registered or certified mail by the principal to the student and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) informing them of their rights. A copy will be forwarded to the Superintendent on the same date.
  - c. This notice shall include the following:
    - i. Rule allegedly violated and a summary of the evidence.
    - ii. Penalty, which the principal has recommended.

- iii. A statement that, before long-term suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment can be invoked, the student has a right to a hearing, upon request, and that if the student is suspended pending the outcome of the hearing, the student may complete classwork and homework, including, but not limited to, examinations, missed during the period of suspension pursuant to district guidelines which shall not require the student to attend the school district's alternative programs for expelled students in order to complete classwork.
  - iv. Notice of the student's rights to a hearing upon request.
  - v. The District's hearing and appeal procedures.
  - vi. A statement concerning the right to examine the student's academic and disciplinary records and any affidavits to be used at a hearing.
  - vii. A statement concerning the right to know the identity of witnesses who will appear at a hearing, and the substance of their testimony.
  - viii. A form on which the student and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) may request a hearing.
- G. When a notice of intent to discipline a student by long-term suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment is filed with the Superintendent, the student may be suspended by the principal until the date the long-term suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment takes effect if no hearing is requested or, if a hearing is requested, the date the hearing examiner makes the report of his or her findings and a recommendation of the action to be taken to the Superintendent, if the principal determines that the student must be suspended immediately to prevent or substantially reduce the risk of (a) interference with an educational function or school purpose or, (b) a personal injury to the student himself or herself, other students, school employees, or school volunteers.
- H. The following preliminary procedure must be followed if a hearing is requested within 5 school days of the receipt of notice:
  - a. The Superintendent shall recommend appointment of a hearing examiner within two school days after receipt of the hearing request. The student or the student's parent or guardian may request designation of a hearing examiner other than the hearing examiner recommended by the superintendent if notice of the request is given to the superintendent within two school days after receipt of the superintendent's recommended appointment. Upon receiving such request, the superintendent must provide one alternative hearing examiner who is not an employee of the school district or otherwise currently under contract with the school district and whose impartiality may not otherwise be reasonably questioned. The student or the student's parent or guardian must, within five school days, select a hearing examiner to conduct the hearing who was recommended or provided as an alternative hearing examiner, and shall notify the superintendent in writing of the selection. The superintendent must appoint the selected hearing examiner upon receipt of such notice.
  - b. The hearing examiner must, within two school days after being appointed, give written notice to the principal, the student, and the student's parent or guardian of the time and place for the hearing.
  - c. The hearing shall be held within a period of five school days after appointment of the hearing examiner, but such time may be changed by the hearing examiner for

good cause with consent of the parties. No hearing shall be held upon less than two school days' actual notice to the principal, the student, and the student's parent or guardian, except with the consent of all the parties.

- d. The principal or legal counsel for the school, the student, and the student's parent, guardian, or representative have the right to receive a copy of all records and written statements referred to in the Student Discipline Act as well as the statement of any witness in the possession of the school board or board of education no later than forty-eight hours prior to the hearing.
- e. If a hearing is requested more than five school days following the receipt of the written notice, but not more than thirty calendar days after receipt, the Superintendent shall appoint a hearing examiner. The hearing will be held according to the requirements of section 79-269. The student shall be entitled to a hearing but the consequence imposed may continue in effect pending final determination.
- f. If a request for hearing is not received within thirty calendar days following the mailing or delivery of the written notice, the student shall not be entitled to a hearing.

#### **Formal Hearings:**

- A. The following rules apply when a hearing is conducted:
  - a. The following shall attend the hearing: the hearing examiner, the student, the student's representative (if any), the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), and, if necessary, the counsel for the school board.
  - b. Witnesses may be present only when giving information at the hearing.
  - c. Anyone may be excluded by the hearing examiner if they disrupt an orderly hearing.
  - d. The student may speak in the student's defense and question witnesses; the student may choose not to testify; the student may be excluded when discussing the student's emotional problems or psychological evaluation.
  - e. The principal shall present statements, in affidavit form, to the hearing examiner of anyone having information about the student's conduct and the student's records, only if these have been made available to the student; the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) or representative prior to the hearing. Upon request, the student's records shall be explained and interpreted to the student, parent(s)/guardian(s) or representative prior to the hearing.
  - f. The hearing examiner is not bound by rules of evidence or other courtroom procedure.
  - g. The following persons may ask persons to testify at the hearing: the student, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) or representative, the principal and hearing examiner.
  - h. The testimony shall be under oath; the hearing examiner shall administer the oath.
  - i. The persons listed in (g), above, shall have the right to question any witness giving information at the hearing.
  - j. Any person giving testimony is given the same immunity from liability as a person testifying in a court case.
  - k. The proceeding shall be recorded at District expense.

1. If more than one student is charged with violation of the same rule and acted in concert, a single hearing may be held unless student interests may be substantially prejudiced as determined by the hearing examiner.
- B. Report of the Hearing Examiner
- a. The report shall include the hearing examiner's findings, a recommendation of the action to be taken, and the reasons therefore in terms of the needs of both the student and the school board.
  - b. The report shall be reviewed by the Superintendent who may change, revoke, or impose the sanctions recommended. In no case may the Superintendent impose a sanction more severe than the hearing examiner's recommendations.
  - c. Written notice of the recommendations by the hearing examiner and the Superintendent's determination shall be sent by registered mail or personal delivery to the student and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s).
  - d. Upon receipt of the written notice, the Superintendent's determination shall take effect.
- C. The Record and the Appeal
- a. The record shall consist of the charge, the notice, the evidence presented, the hearing examiner's findings and recommendations, and the action of the Superintendent.
  - b. On appeal to a court, the record shall also consist of any additional evidence taken and any additional action taken in the case and shall also include the rules and regulations of the Board relied upon by the District in its determination to suspend, reassign, or expel the student.
  - c. Appeal to the School Board may be made within 7 school days following receipt of written notice of the determination of the Superintendent, by the student, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), by a written request, filed with the Secretary of the Board or with the Superintendent.
- D. Hearing of the School Board
- a. The following rules will apply when there is a hearing in front of the School Board:
    - i. It may be held either before the Board or a committee of the Board consisting of not less than three members.
    - ii. It must be held within a period of 10 school days after request; such time for hearing may be changed by mutual agreement of the student and Superintendent.
    - iii. The appeal shall be made on the record, but new evidence may be admitted to avoid substantial unfairness. The new evidence shall be made a part of the record.
    - iv. After examining the records and taking new evidence, if any, the Board, or the designated committee thereof, may withdraw to deliberate privately upon the record and new evidence.
    - v. When the Board deliberates, it may reopen the hearing to receive additional evidence subject to the right of all parties to be present.
    - vi. The Board may alter the Superintendent's recommendations but may never impose more severe sanctions.

- vii. Final determination of the Board shall be personally delivered or sent by registered mail to the student and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s).
- viii. An appeal of the Board's decision must be taken to the district court of the county where the action is taken. Appeal must be made within 30 days after service of the final decision of the Board.

**Settlement Not Precluded:**

Nothing in this procedure shall preclude the student, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), or representative from discussing and settling the matter with appropriate school personnel prior to the time the long-term suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment takes effect.

**Alternative School, Class, Program:**

The district shall either provide an alternative school, class or educational program for expelled students. Should the parent(s)/guardian(s) refuse to participate in the alternative education, the District has no further obligation.

**Suspension and Expulsion of Students with Disabilities**

Suspension and expulsion of verified or eligible disabled students under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 51, shall comply with District procedures and state and federal law.

Refer to procedure 6301

**Suspension and Expulsion of Students Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

Suspension and expulsion of eligible disabled students under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 shall comply with district procedures and state and federal law.

**EMERGENCY EXCLUSION**

**A. Basis and Initial Issuance**

1. A student may be subject to emergency exclusion for the following reason(s):
  - a. Dangerous communicable disease.
  - b. Creating a danger to self or others.
  - c. Conduct that is so extremely disruptive as to make removal necessary to preserve the rights of other students to pursue an education.
2. An emergency exclusion shall be based upon a clear, factual situation and last no longer than is necessary to avoid the dangers set forth in Section A-1, a-c, above.
3. An emergency exclusion for 5 school days or less shall be subject to the same procedures set forth for short-term suspension in [Policy 5301](#). The written notice to the student and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) shall include a description of the hearing procedures provided by law.

**B. Extension of Exclusion**

1. Extension of Exclusion: Pursuant to the Student Discipline Act, the principal has the authority to exclude a student from school for up to five school days on an emergency basis. If the superintendent or superintendent's designee determines that it is appropriate to consider the extension of an exclusion beyond five days, such consideration shall be made according to the procedures set forth below.
  - a. The superintendent or the superintendent's designee shall notify the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) that the principal has proposed the extension of the exclusion. The notice shall include notice of a recommended hearing examiner and an alternate hearing examiner for consideration by the parent(s) or guardian(s) if a hearing is requested.
  - b. The student's parent(s) or guardian(s) may submit a request for a hearing on the proposed extension of the exclusion within one school day of receiving the notice of the proposed extension.
  - c. If the parent(s) or guardian(s) do not request a hearing within one school day of receiving oral or written notice, the proposed extension of the exclusion shall automatically go into effect.
  - d. The parent(s) or guardian(s) shall notify the superintendent within one school day of receiving notice of the recommended extension and proposed hearing examiner and alternate hearing examiner if the alternate hearing examiner is preferred.
  - e. The hearing examiner shall promptly give written notice of the time, date and place of the hearing. The hearing will be held within ten school days after the initial date of exclusion; provided, the hearing may be held more than five school days after receipt of the request upon a showing of good cause. No hearing will be held on less than two (2) school days notice unless otherwise agreed to by the student's parent(s) or guardian and school officials.
  - f. If a hearing is requested, the principal may determine in their sole discretion that the student shall remain excluded from school until the hearing officer makes a recommendation to the superintendent.
  - g. Prior to the hearing, the student and their parent(s) or guardian(s) shall have the right to examine and have school officials explain the student's records and any affidavits that will be used by school officials at the hearing.
  - h. The hearing may be attended by the hearing examiner, the principal (or designee), the student, and the student's parents or guardian(s). The student may be represented at this hearing by a representative of the family's choice.
  - i. The student and their parent(s) or guardian(s) may ask any person with knowledge of the events leading up to the sanction or with general knowledge of the student's character to testify on behalf of the student. If school personnel or other students are requested to testify by the student's parent(s) or guardian(s), the hearing officer shall endeavor to help obtain the presence of such witnesses at the hearing.
  - j. The student and their parent(s) or guardian(s) have the right to request in advance of the hearing the issues which the administration will propose in support of the extension, and the general nature of the testimony of any administrative or expert witnesses.

- k. The student and witnesses may be excluded at the discretion of the hearing examiner in accordance with state statutes. The student may speak in their own defense and may be questioned on such testimony but may choose not to testify. The school district shall make available to testify at the hearing any employee who is a witness to the matter upon request from the parent(s) or guardian(s).
- l. The principal or their designee shall present evidence supporting the recommended extension of the exclusion. Witnesses will give testimony under oath of affirmation and may be questioned.
- m. The hearing examiner shall prepare a report of their findings and recommendations and forward the report to the superintendent.
- n. The superintendent will review the hearing examiner's report and determine whether to extend the exclusion. They shall have the decision delivered or sent by registered or certified mail to the student, student's parent(s), or guardian(s). If the superintendent decides to extend the exclusion, the extension will take effect immediately.

### **SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER**

The purpose of the School Resource Officer Program is to enhance the relationship between local law enforcement, students, parents, and staff. The goal is to promote positive citizenship among our youth by utilizing the resources of the school district and the local police department. The officer will be a resource and make class presentations in the areas of drug abuse resistance programs, law related education, criminal justice system orientation, delinquency and prevention, and community responsibility to students, parents, and other groups associated with the district.

The officer will perform a variety of professional and technical police work and necessary investigation for the protection of life, safety, health, welfare, and property. All local, state, and federal ordinance and statutes and laws will be enforced.

There may be occasions when circumstances arise in which the School Resource Officer will need to provide direct assistance to school personnel. When assistance is requested and/or becomes necessary for law enforcement to become involved, relevant law, school policies, and law enforcement procedures and practices will be followed.

Procedures governing law enforcement on school grounds can be found in [Board Policy 1002](#).

### **REPORTING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT**

School district staff will report student actions which violate [Board Policy 5301 \(Student Conduct, Vandalism and Disruption\)](#) to law enforcement if:

- 1. The violation includes the possession of a firearm.
- 2. The violation results in child abuse.
- 3. It is a violation of state law that the administration believes cannot be adequately addressed solely by discipline from the school district.
- 4. It is a violation of state law that endangers the health and welfare of staff or students.
- 5. It is a violation of state law that interferes with school purposes.

6. The report is required or requested by law enforcement or the county attorney.

Any actions taken by law enforcement personnel are outside of the sanctions imposed by school officials under board policy.

### **DATING VIOLENCE**

Dating violence, as that term is defined by Nebraska law, will not be tolerated by the school district. Students who engage in dating violence on school grounds, in a school vehicle or at a school activity or that otherwise violates the Nebraska Student Discipline Act will receive consequences consistent with the Act and the district's student discipline policies.

The school district shall provide dating violence training to staff deemed appropriate by the administration and in accordance with Nebraska law.

A copy of this policy shall be included in the student handbook.

### **TITLE IX (including sexual discrimination/sexual harassment complaint process)**

It is the policy of the school district that no person shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any of the school district's programs or activities. See [Board Policy 5208 \(Title IX\)](#) for additional information and [Policy 2102 \(Complaint Procedure\)](#) for detailed reporting procedures.

### **WITHDRAWAL FROM MANDATORY ATTENDANCE**

State law requires that the superintendent's designee meet with the parent/guardian prior to allowing their child to withdraw from mandatory attendance at school. The child must be between the ages of 16-18. At a minimum, this meeting will include the parent/guardian, the student, and the principal. The person designated by the Superintendent to coordinate this process (Director of Student Services) may approve the student to withdraw from mandatory attendance only if they can provide evidence that it is for the purposes of:

- Financial hardship requiring the child to be employed, or
- Illness making attendance impracticable.

### **STUDENT FEES**

**PART ONE:** No fees shall be charged to students, nor shall materials be required from students, for their participation in any school-related course or activity, whether curricular or extra-curricular except as expressly permitted below.

Specific lists of fees to be included in the student handbook can be found in [Board of Education Policy 3307](#).

Extra-curricular Activities and Spectator Events: Fees may be charged for participation in extracurricular activities and to spectators of extracurricular activities. Each school building shall annually submit its extra-curricular fee list to the district for approval and publication in that school's handbook.

- Fees may be charged for participation in extracurricular activities. Extra-curricular activities are those activities or organizations where student participation is voluntary and does not count toward advancement between grades.
- Clubs, teams and organizations for which there may be a fee required for participation may also, as a club, team or organization, decide to make purchases, and may fundraise and/or seek donations according to district policy to assist in the funding of such purchases, which may include, but is not limited to, apparel and trips. The decision of an organization to fund purchases is not a fee charged by the district.
- Fees may be charged for admission to, and transportation to and from, school district activities and events that do not count toward advancement between grades, where student participation is voluntary.
- A school may sell activity tickets, which permit students to attend school district activities and events that do not count toward advancement between grades.
- Field trip fees may only be charged if participation by the student is voluntary and it does not relate to the required curriculum or if the field trip occurs after school hours and does not count toward school attendance.
- Specialized equipment or attire may be required of the student for extra-curricular activities.

Minor Personal Consumable Items: The district may require students to be responsible for the purchase of minor consumable items that are used by the student throughout the school year. The district will establish a master list of those items, which are considered minor personal consumable items, which may be required. Each school building shall choose those items on the list, which will be required of students attending the school. No item, which is not on the buildings list, will be required. Each school shall annually submit its list of required personal consumable items to the district for approval and publication in that school's handbook.

- Schools may stock required personal and consumable items and make such items available to students for voluntary purchase, however, schools may not require students to purchase an item directly from the school or a teacher.
- If a student is unable to provide the minor personal consumable item required the school may, as appropriate, supply the item to the student.

Materials for Course Project: Certain courses for which credit is granted and/or count for advancement between grades utilize materials for projects, which become the property of the student. Schools may require students to provide those materials. Students may, with teacher's permission, supply additional materials or products for their own personal use for projects that become the personal property of the student upon completion of the course or unit. Whether a student is permitted to provide additional materials or products will be at the sole discretion of the District.

Clothing: In addition to school guidelines about general appropriateness of attire, school buildings may require students to furnish and wear non-specialized clothing meeting general guidelines for the specified courses and activities, if the guidelines are reasonably related to the course. Each school's clothing guidelines shall be submitted to the District for approval and publication into the student handbook.

**Musical Instruments:** Students who take an elective instrumental music course shall be required to supply their own instrument and may be required to supply their own music stand except those students who qualify under section 3 of this policy. For those students qualifying under section 3 the district shall not be required to provide for the use of a particular type of musical instrument for any student. The District shall supply the music for such courses.

- Personal supplies related to musical instruments including, but not limited to, items such as reeds, cork lubricant, pipe cleaners, cleaning cloths and other supplies of general upkeep and considered personal consumable items shall be the responsibility of the student. If a student is not able to provide the personal consumable item required, the school may, as appropriate, supply them to the student.
- Schools may require students to furnish their own musical instruments, stands, music and specialized attire for participation in extra-curricular music organizations and activities.

**Lost or Damaged School Property:** A school may require a student to reimburse the school district for repair or replacement of school district property, which is entrusted to the student and is lost or damaged, as well as property of the district damaged through the acts of a student.

**Parking:** Students may be charged a fee to park their cars on school property. The District shall annually determine the amount to be charged for parking. Each school shall publish its parking fee, if any, in the student handbook.

**Yearbook, Class Rings and Other Optional Purchases:** Students may be charged for the purchase of items such as yearbooks, class rings, class sweatshirts, and other such voluntary purchases.

**Food:** Students may be charged a fee for the purchase of breakfast or lunch.

**Summer School:** The District may annually set fees for student participation in classes offered during the summer.

**Night School/Adult Education:** The District may annually set fees for student participation in classes offered to students taking classes through the district's night school/adult education program.

**Post-secondary Education Costs:** A student may be charged the actual tuition and fees associated with obtaining credits from a postsecondary educational institution when a student receives both high school credit and postsecondary education credit from a course being taken as part of an approved accelerated or differentiated curriculum program.

**Student Files and Records:** Fees may be charged for copies of student files or records.

## ***PART TWO*** - Student Fee Fund

Some fees, according to board policy, shall be deposited into the Student Fee Fund and expended for the purpose for which they were collected from students.

### ***PART THREE* - Waiver of Student Fees**

Some fees that are charged in *PART ONE*, may be waived for students who qualify for participation in the free or reduced-price lunch program under United States Department of Agriculture child nutrition programs. Students shall be asked to have a waiver signed allowing access to the District's free and reduced price lunch information or provide information relative to family income so that such eligibility may be determined.

Students wishing to exercise their right to the waiver provision of this policy shall notify the appropriate teacher, their counselor or the appropriate administrator of their eligibility. If the student does not participate in the free-reduced priced lunch program or has not waived the confidentiality of free-reduced status for the purpose of fee waivers as presented on their original free and reduced price lunch application, a determination of eligibility will be made by securing from the parent/guardian the necessary financial data to make the determination.

#### **Fee Waiver Procedure**

Students believing they are eligible for a waiver of identified fees will be granted such a waiver based upon the following events:

- The Director of Food Service will prepare, upon request, a list of students who participate in the free/reduced lunch program and have waived their right to confidentiality for this purpose. The list will be by building. If the student's name appears on this list, the waiver is to be granted. If the student's name does not appear on the list, the following steps must be completed:
  - If the student indicates they do participate in the free/reduced lunch program, a Waiver of Confidentiality form should be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to the school. These forms should be faxed or delivered to the Director of Food Service and he/she will notify the school as to the student's eligibility status.
  - If the student does not participate in the free/reduced lunch program, the free/reduced application form and waiver of confidentiality form should be sent home for the parent/guardian to complete. When returned, these forms should be faxed or delivered to the Director of Food Service and he/she will notify the school relative to their qualification. If faxed, the original still needs to be forwarded, as it is required by Child Nutrition Services, Nebraska Department of Education.
- If the application timing does not allow for verification prior to the necessary deadline, the student shall be granted the waiver until the determination is complete.

### **STUDENT SAFETY – EMERGENCIES**

Each building has plans/procedures to deal with emergencies that may include severe weather, fire, building evacuation, intruders, school bus safety, etc. Each building also reviews safety plans annually. Those plans are reviewed by the school district and area law enforcement annually.

An automated communication system (phone call, text, email, app notifier, social media, etc.) is also used to communicate information to parents/guardian as the situation requires. Please let the district know if you contact information changes.

## **USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES BY OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS**

Board of Education policy does provide for use of district facilities with some limitations, restrictions, and possible fees. Contact the building principal for additional information.

## **VISITORS**

Students are not allowed to bring visitors to school. Non-students and ex-students are not allowed in the school building or on school grounds at any time during the school day. Parents are welcome, but they are encouraged to make an appointment to see a teacher, principal, or visit their student's classes.

Students are also not allowed to visit other school buildings or property without prior approval from the administration of the school being visited. This does not include events open to the public. Students in violation of behavior expectations or who engage in disruptive behaviors at other buildings/on other school campuses (regardless of whether the event is open to the public; with or without visit approval) will be subject to the same disciplinary actions as if the violation(s) occurred at that building.

## **TITLE I – PARENT NOTICE**

As a parent of a student who attends the Papillion La Vista Community Schools, you have a right to know the professional qualifications of the teacher who instructs your child. This is a requirement for all districts that receive Title I funds. Federal law allows you to request the professional qualifications of your child's teacher and the paraprofessional who works with your child and for the district to provide you with this information in a timely manner upon request. In a Title I building, the paraprofessionals must meet highly qualified requirements prior to employment. Please contact Dr. Kati Settles, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources.

## **RESIDENCY, OPTION ENROLLMENT & IN-DISTRICT TRANSFER**

The Board of Education approves attendance boundaries for individual schools within the District using the criteria of safety, educational opportunity, and availability of facilities. For information regarding boundaries contact Student Services at (402) 537-6214, or visit the website at [www.pleschools.org](http://www.pleschools.org). For more information on issues of residency, please contact Student Services at (402-537-6214).

The Papillion La Vista Community Schools shall participate in the Option Enrollment Program to establish residency for tuition-free attendance. The Superintendent will develop administrative procedures to be followed for all Enrollment Option and In-District Transfer applications received by the District. Please see [Board Policy 5004](#) for information regarding In-District Transfers and Option Enrollment. Applications for the option enrollment and the In-District Transfer Program are available at the District's administration office and on the District website.

## **LATE START**

It is possible that due to weather or other conditions the Papillion La Vista Community Schools may utilize a two hour late start. This decision will be made based on conditions and communicated the night before or the morning of the late start day.

All schools will start two hours later than normal. If you receive PLCS transportation (bus or van), please plan on the late start pick up time to be exactly two hours later than normal. If you get picked up at the bus stop at 7:00 a.m., your pick up time will move to 9:00 a.m.

If there is a late start, no school activities will happen before the two hour start time. All after school activities will proceed as normal. There will be no zero hour at the high school.