

# **GROTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



**2025 - 2026**

**Groton Middle School Handbook**

The Groton Board of Education meets on the second, third, and fourth Monday of each month. Please check our website at [www.grotonschoools.org](http://www.grotonschoools.org) for location of meeting.

## **GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Contact Board of Education members through the Central Office  
1300 Flanders Road, Mystic, CT 06355  
(860) 572-2100  
[board-of-ed@groton.k12.ct.us](mailto:board-of-ed@groton.k12.ct.us)

Beverly Washington, Chairperson  
Adrian Johnson, Vice Chairperson/Secretary  
Andrea Ackerman, Ed.D.  
Constantine Antipas  
Sean Corcoran  
Ian Thomas  
Jay Weitlauf  
Jennifer White  
Michael Whitney, Ph.D.

## **CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATORS**

Susan Austin, Superintendent of Schools  
Anne Marie Mancini, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent  
Denise Doolittle, Director of Pupil Personnel Services  
Samuel Kilpatrick, Director of Buildings and Grounds  
Clint Kennedy, Ph.D., Director of Technology Services  
Laurie LePine, Director of Human Resources  
Rita Parciak, Director of Finance

## **GROTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION**

Groton Public Schools is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. It is the policy of the Groton Board of Education that no person shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise discriminated against under any program, including employment, on the basis of sexual orientation, race, color, creed, religion, age, sex, gender identity or expression, marital status, national origin, handicap, ancestry, physical or mental disability, or lack of proficiency in the English language.

Inquiries regarding Groton Public Schools' nondiscrimination policies should be directed to Anne Marie Mancini, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, at Groton Public Schools' Administrative Offices, 1300 Flanders Road, Mystic, CT 06355 or (860) 572-2175. Any person having inquiries concerning Groton Public Schools' compliance with Title IX or Section 504 should contact Denise Doolittle, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, at Groton Public Schools' Administrative Offices, 1300 Flanders Road, Mystic, CT 06355 or (860) 572-2150.

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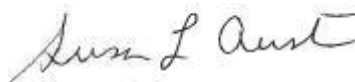
Dear Students and Parents:

The Groton Public Schools is committed to excellence in its academic programs and services which it provides to its students. The school district recognizes that each child is unique. Meeting the many diverse needs presented by our students is a challenge which the Groton Public Schools accepts enthusiastically.

In partnership with parents, we will ensure that all children will learn, and that they will grow up to be contributing citizens within our democratic society.

It is our hope and expectation that each of our students will experience a successful school year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan L. Austin".

Susan L. Austin  
Superintendent of Schools

*Communication is the key to understanding.*

## **Building Administrators**

Peter Bass, Principal  
Keith Danieluk, Assistant Principal  
Jemal Davis, Assistant Principal  
Samantha Singleton, Assistant Principal

## **GMS MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of Groton Middle School is to create a unified, inclusive, and safe learning community which meets the needs of all learners. To achieve this goal, faculty and staff will work collaboratively and respectfully with the families we serve to inspire students to become inquiring, engaged, and compassionate members of their communities. These efforts aim to encourage students to move forward as globally responsible individuals who consider and value the experiences of others that may differ from their own.

## **GMS VISION STATEMENT**

The vision of Groton Middle School is to learn together as one creative, innovative, equitable, and globally responsible school community.

## **COURSE OF STUDY**

Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, and Math are required core subjects taught to students throughout grades 6, 7 and 8. Algebra is offered in grade 8 for recommended students.

Each grade level has three teams. Students are assigned to a team each year. Students on a team will share the same four core teachers (math, language arts, science, and social studies) for the year. These four teachers meet multiple times each week to plan together with a focus on student needs and their learning style. The team approach encourages collaboration and communication between school and home.

For additional information, please see our [Course Catalog](#).

### **STEAM and International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (IB/MYP)**

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) is integrated throughout the curriculum to foster the student inquiry, collaboration, and critical thinking skills which are also areas which IB/MYP holds important for students to develop. These skills will prepare students for academic and career situations which may not even exist yet. GMS has a variety of STEM and Arts classes for students to take independently from the core curriculum, however, the STEAM theme is woven throughout all classes. By incorporating this theme, students are more engaged and challenged to use problem solving and real-world applications. Groton Middle School is an authorized International Baccalaureate MYP school in partnership with Fitch High School.

The essence of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Programme (MYP) is that it emphasizes intellectual challenge. It encourages students aged 11 to 16 to make practical connections between their studies and the real world, preparing them for success in future study and in life.

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world. As IB learners, we strive to be:

Inquirers • Knowledgeable • Thinkers • Communicators • Principled • Open-minded

Caring • Risk-takers • Balanced • Reflective

## **Awarding of HS Credit**

The Groton Board of Education awards high school credit to middle school students who successfully complete core courses, which have been designated by the Board for high school credit, such as Honors Algebra 1. For additional details, please refer to Groton Board of Education policy #6146.

## **World Language**

Both Spanish and French are offered. Students select the language they will take as they enter GMS and will stay with the same language for all three years

## **Homework**

Research evidence indicates a positive correlation between homework, student performance, and achievement. Regular homework will be assigned to students. Homework assignments should:

- Be related to classroom instruction.
- Be age and developmentally appropriate.
- Provide reinforcement and enrichment of classroom instruction which can be independently completed by the student.
- Emphasize critical thinking, problem-solving and written expression.
- Emphasize quality over quantity.
- Be reviewed/assessed once submitted.
- Contribute to the evaluation of the student's performance.

Homework should be relevant and instructionally sound and should not be used for disciplinary purposes. It should be noted that, on occasion, individual students may have to complete unfinished classroom work in addition to the regularly scheduled homework assignments.

## **Computer/Internet Use**

Each student is issued a computer to use by the school district. Prior to receiving authorization to use the Internet, students and their parents/guardians must sign a "Permission and Contract" document provided by the school district. Use of the Internet is a privilege, and all students must abide by the Groton Board of Education "Internet Use Policy and Procedures" to assure it is used appropriately and responsibly.

## **Marking System**

Letter grades are used to indicate a pupil's progress and achievement. Our Marking System is as follows:

A – Excellent

B – Good

C – Average

D – Poor but passing

F – Failure

P – Passing

I – Incomplete, used mainly in cases where a student has been absent. A student receiving a grade of Incomplete, for Semester 1, has a period of ten (10) school days from the date of return to make up work.

Pluses and minuses will be used.

Anytime during a marking period, when the work of a pupil is falling below what might normally be expected, the teacher will take one or more of the following steps: (1) request a conference with the parents; (2) telephone the home; (3) email; (4) send home unsatisfactory work for signature of parent or guardian.

### **International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (IB/MYP) Assessment and Grading**

MYP Students at GMS will be required to do a real-world connected presentation, exam, project or other assessment at the end of each unit of study that will demonstrate what the student has learned. During the unit, teachers give frequent feedback to help the learning process. In IB/MYP, grading is based on a growth model, therefore, grades are not averaged like in traditional grading systems. Instead, students receive grades based on their current levels of performance.

In each subject group, there are four criteria for achievement. These criteria are measured with a specific rubric created by the teacher and presented to the students prior to the assessment so students will know exactly on what they are being assessed.

The final grade is given using a number scale of 1 through 8, with 1 being the minimal achievement level and 8 being the highest.

### **Make-Up Work**

A student who has been absent or dismissed is expected to make up all school work. Students should initiate and make arrangements with their teachers to make up assignments missed on the day of their return to school.

When students are absent three or more days due to illness or extenuating circumstances, parents may make arrangements with the Guidance Office for assignments. Assignments will not be provided in advance to students who miss school for vacations.

### **Honor Roll Requirements**

To be eligible for High Honors, a student must have an A (and may have one B) in each of the major subjects and no grade below a C in a special subject. To be eligible for Honors, a student must have a B in each of the major subjects and no grade below a C in a special subject. A student with a grade below C in a major or special subject is not eligible for either Honor Roll. Major subjects for each grade are Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, Mathematics, and for eighth graders Level 1 World Language. Honor Roll is posted at the end of each Semester.

### **Report Cards/Conferences**

Report cards are issued at the end of each Semester. Conferences are held twice a year. The school encourages parent-teacher-pupil conferences throughout the year. Additional conferences can be arranged by contacting the Guidance Office. Report cards will be electronic unless otherwise requested by a parent.



# **PARENT/SCHOOL CONNECTION**

## **PTO**

There is an active Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) at GMS.

## **Parent Involvement**

A child's educational success is a partnership shared by school and family, including all those who play an important role in the child's well-being. Student achievement increases when families are active in the learning process. Educators recognize and acknowledge the family's role as the primary facilitator of their children's education.

Families are welcome in all Groton schools. Their support and assistance are actively sought in their child's social, emotional, and academic development. Please refer to the Volunteer Policy.

Parent involvement programs in our school support and respect family responsibilities and diversity as well as link parents to programs and resources within the community. All families will be provided opportunities for involvement.

Family and school communications are two-way, regular, meaningful, and respectful. Effective communication requires that both the family and the school initiate contact and provide vital information about a child's strengths, challenges, and accomplishments.

# **SCHOOL COUNSELING SERVICES**

The overall focus of the school counseling program is to address the unique concerns of the middle school child. We address their needs through a Developmental Guidance Program. This is a comprehensive program of services that is designed to respond to the personal/social, career, and educational needs of ALL pupils. These needs are met through classroom guidance activities and structured group experiences. Individual counseling continues to remain a vital part of our program.

Students and parents are encouraged to make contact with the counselors to discuss school progress, adjustment, career, and academic goals.

# **THINGS TO KNOW**

## **Transfers**

If a student is to be transferred to another school, notification should be given to the Guidance Office immediately. Records will be forwarded to the new school upon receipt of an official written request and signed permission from parent or guardian.

## **New Residents**

Families who are moving into Groton with school-aged children are required to make an appointment with the School Registrar located at the Central Office. To transfer children to the Groton School District, the following information should be presented to the Central Office Registrar:

1. Birth Certificate
2. Address – proof of residence in Groton Public Schools, Report Card or transfer sheet from previous school
3. Verification of immunizations
4. Physical

Upon receipt of the above information, arrangements will be made by the Groton School District to obtain additional needed student records from the last school attended. Visits to your children's school should be arranged by contacting the school.

### **School Hours**

7:50 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Delayed Opening Schedule: 2 hour delay - 9:50 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

3 hour delay - 10:50 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Early Dismissal Schedule: 7:50 a.m. to 12:17 p.m.

### **Tardiness**

Because we feel that being on time is important, we try to help each student develop habits of punctuality. School begins promptly at 7:50 a.m. If a student should ever be late, they must follow this procedure:

1. Go directly to the Main Office through the main entrance.
2. Sign in the book (under tardy) filling in all the information. Bring a note from home explaining reason for tardiness.
3. Secure an admit slip and show it to the class teacher. Students who are tardy to school three times will meet with their assistant principal and will receive a detention. Progressive discipline will be followed for students who are repeatedly tardy. Please note that students who are tardy due to their bus arriving to school late will not be held responsible for this tardy.

### **No School**

Normal delayed openings will be 2 hours unless otherwise notified. Notice of such closing is broadcast through ParentSquare and on our GPS website at [www.grotonschools.org](http://www.grotonschools.org). Please check your messages.

**NOTE:** It is important that your contact number and email address be kept up-to-date with your child/children's school so that you receive all messages.

### **Supplies, Textbooks, Material, and Equipment**

The school district will purchase such books, supplies, materials, and equipment necessary to meet the needs of instruction in the schools. All books and equipment shall be loaned and materials and supplies furnished to all pupils.

### **Lockers**

Lockers are available and will be assigned at the beginning of the school year. Lockers are to be kept closed and locked when not in use. Students should not divulge locker combinations. Only school issued locks may be used. All lockers are the property of the Groton Public Schools and are subject to inspection by the administration at any time.

## **Passes**

Passes must be used during the school day whenever the student requests or is requested to leave homeroom or class.

## **Emergency Procedures**

**Fire Drills and Lockdown Drills** are conducted during the school year. During a fire drill, students must pass quickly and silently in a single file to the nearest exit as directed by the teacher and remain with their class. Directions for this procedure will be found in each classroom near the exit door. After the fire drill, students will return to their classes at the direction of the teacher.

For a drill or in the event of an emergency, a lockdown may be initiated. When a lockdown is announced, students and school personnel shall follow the lockdown procedures which are reviewed at the very start of school and also throughout the school year.

## **Potassium Iodide (KI) Pills**

Potassium Iodide pills are available for all students. In the event of an accident at any of the nearby nuclear reactors, it is possible that radioactive iodine could be released into the atmosphere. Radioactive iodine can be absorbed into the thyroid gland. Potassium iodide, also known by its chemical name “KI”, is an over-the-counter drug that protects the thyroid gland from radioactive iodine. Your child’s school has been stocked with enough KI pills for all staff and students. All parents/guardians are asked to fill out a potassium iodide (KI) student medication authorization form. This form must be filled out once for the duration of the student’s enrollment in the school district. The form is available from the school nurse.

## **Dress Code**

### **Groton Public Schools Dress Code Grades 6-12 DRESS FOR SCHOOL AND SUCCESS**

#### **Dress Code Philosophy and Values**

- All students should have the right to dress comfortably and express themselves in school through a selection of clothing, hairstyles, jewelry, and accessories that represent and affirm their identities.
- Student dress codes should support equitable educational access and should not reinforce gender or cultural stereotypes or reinforce marginalization or oppression of any group.

#### **Dress Code Goals**

- Maintain a safe learning environment that is responsive to the specific needs of different classroom environments (e.g. protective clothing in lab settings, athletic attire in PE classes, etc.)
- Ensure that all students are treated equitably regardless of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, body type/size, personal style, household income, or disability.
- Allow students to wear religious attire without fear of discipline or discrimination.
- Prevent students from wearing clothing or accessories that may make it difficult to identify them, interfere with the operation of the school, disrupt the educational process, interfere with the rights or personal space of others, or contribute to a hostile or unwelcoming atmosphere.

## **Dress Code Expectations (“Must/May Not Wear”)**

### **Basic Principle:**

- Clothes must be worn in such a way that all students are covered with material that is not see-through
- Students must wear clothing that securely covers the sternum, groin, and rear end
- Students' clothing should support a school culture where all students feel comfortable, safe and respected

### **Students Must Wear:**

- Shirt/top that is secure with fabric on the front, back, and on the sides under the arms and extends to the navel
- Bottoms are secure (pants, sweatpants, shorts, skirt, dress, and/or leggings), extend to the leg and must be worn to the waist
- Students must wear foot apparel in school at all times
- Shoes that are secure- Some courses may require specialized attire (such as uniforms, safety equipment for lab classes, and required attire and sneakers for PE classes)

### **Students May Not Wear:**

- Hoods up on shirts, sweatshirts, etc.
- Onesie pajamas, capes, blankets, slippers or sunglasses.
- Violent language / images
- Images, logos or language depicting any illegal activity, including use of tobacco, drugs, or alcohol
- Hate speech, profanity, or pornography.
- Images or language that creates a hostile or intimidating environment for others.
- Visible underwear (visible waistbands or straps on undergarments worn under other clothing are not a violation).
- Bathing suits, except as required for PE classes and sports.
- Any item that obscures the face or ears (except as a religious observance or as required PPE).
- Any item that violates the basic principles above.

## **Dress Code Enforcement**

The primary responsibility for the dress and grooming of a student rest with the student and their parents/guardians, and all students are expected to understand and adhere to the dress code. At school, dress code expectations will be enforced consistently and fairly by school staff regardless of the student's gender, race, or other identifying characteristics.

### **Enforcement guidelines:**

- Enforcement of the dress code should not lead to removal from class or loss of class time unless the issue creates a safety concern or violates the dress code non-violence/non-discrimination expectations.
- School staff should address dress code concerns in as private a manner and setting as possible.
- No student should be disproportionately affected by dress code enforcement because of gender, race, body size, or body maturity.
- Students should not be publicly shamed or forced to display their body in front of others (students, parents, staff) in the course of dress code enforcement.
- Students violating the dress code will have three options to address the situation:
  1. Put on their own alternative clothing, if they have it available at school
  2. Borrow alternative clothing from a peer or the school for the day
  3. Have a parent bring alternative clothing for the student to wear

\*Final decisions regarding inappropriate clothing rest with the administration. If feasible, all inappropriate attire must be removed or the student will be sent home. Second and subsequent offenses will be dealt with disciplinary action, up to and including suspension.

## **Athletics/After-School Activities Dress Code**

Students are expected to follow the dress code while at after-school activities sponsored by the school. The Athletic Director, Student-Athletic Advisory Committee members, coaches, and school administration will work together to develop a sports-specific set of acceptable dress expectations for athletic teams to use during conditioning, practice, and competition situations. These guidelines should generally reflect the schoolwide dress code while making accommodations for comfort, safety, and the varied nature of each individual sport.

## **Food Services**

The Groton Board of Education offers a program of food services as a participant in the National School Lunch Program. Prices once set are subject to change by the Groton Board of Education. Free and reduced price lunches and free milk are available to eligible children. A breakfast program is available. At the beginning of each school year, an application form and explanatory letters are sent to all parents. MyPaymentsPlus.com is available to pay for meals. Benefits of MyPaymentsPlus.com are:

- Speeds up serving lines in the cafeteria, providing more time for students to eat their meals.
- Eliminates the worry of lost or forgotten lunch money.
- Ensures that your student will receive a nutritious meal.

Lunch is provided on early dismissal days.

## **Outside Food**

Students are welcome to bring breakfast and lunch items from home. Please note that there is not a microwave or a refrigerator available for student use. We request that parents / guardians **not** deliver food for breakfast or lunch to school; rather, the students should bring these items with them or select something from the cafeteria menu. Food delivery services such as *DoorDash*, *UberEats*, etc., are not permitted for students, and deliveries **will not** be accepted.

## **Visitors**

All visitors shall report to the main office before visiting any person in the building. Upon arrival, visitors are asked to present their picture identifications in the main office and receive a visitor badge. As much as we would like to receive student visitors from other schools, we do not allow this practice.

## **Dances**

In keeping with the middle school philosophy, dances may be held as part of the socialization process. Due to the developmental level of middle school students, these dances will generally be held immediately after school and are for students of GMS. No guests will be allowed.

## **Use of Electronic Communication Devices**

Cell phones are restricted from the time students first enter the school building in the morning until the dismissal bell at the end of the school day.

Electronic communication devices (ECD) and their accessories, including, but not limited to, mobile phones, “smart” watches, earbuds, headphones, etc. should be turned off and be put away in the student’s locker or backpack. When these expectations are not met, the following disciplinary steps will apply.

Disciplinary steps include:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Offense: Student has ECD confiscated and may retrieve ECD at office, at the end of school day.

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: ECD is confiscated and parent/guardian must pick up from main office.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense and beyond: Same as 2<sup>nd</sup> with other disciplinary consequences possible.

Additional disciplinary action may be taken against any student for using an electronic communication device which disrupts the educational environment. This includes using the device to compromise academic integrity, signal others, or otherwise violates school conduct rules of the student or the confidentiality/privacy rights of another individual. Please note that Groton Middle School and Groton Public Schools are not responsible for the theft or damage to ECDs.

### **Class Responsibility**

Students are expected to be in class on time and prepared for their studies. In order to be considered prepared for a class, each student is expected to have: their school issued computer, agenda book, a notebook, pencils, pen, any textbooks assigned for that class, and any other items specified by the teacher

### **Extracurricular Activities**

In accordance with the middle school philosophy, extracurricular activities are offered and encouraged. Activities such as Student Council and various sports are available. Students must maintain passing grades in all subjects to be eligible to participate in all extracurricular activities.

### **Buses**

Students coming by bus are assigned to buses at the beginning of the school year and are expected to take the same bus every day. Only students assigned to a bus are allowed to ride the bus. All bus change requests must be made to the district transportation office for approval. Notes from parents / guardians sent to school indicating a student should take a different bus home will NOT be honored.

A pupil who jeopardizes the safety of others while on the bus may have bus privileges suspended or may face other disciplinary measures. Pupils may also be removed from the bus by the school administrators for unacceptable language or behavior. In these cases, parents / guardians will be required to provide transportation.

### **Buses – Code of Conduct**

Bus transportation to school is a privilege available to all students. However, the privilege can be suspended. The bus is an extension of the school and it is expected that proper behavior will prevail. The driver is in FULL charge on the bus, and his/her instructions are to be obeyed. For safety purposes students must abide by the following:

- Be on time. Buses must meet a schedule.
- Respect personal property while waiting at a stop.
- As the bus approaches, form a single line. Do not move toward the bus until it stops.
- Enter the bus in an orderly manner and take a seat.
- Remain seated while the bus is in motion.
- Quiet conversation is encouraged. Do not distract the driver by loud talk or shouting.
- Appropriate language must be used at all times.
- Do not offend pedestrians or passengers in other vehicles by shouting out of windows or making obscene gestures.
- Nothing is to be thrown or tossed within the bus or out of the bus.

- The carrying of weapons or any object that may be used as a weapon on the bus is prohibited by State law.
- Get on and off at a regular stop.
- Pupils who deface the bus will be held liable for its repair. Should you note any damage, report it immediately to the driver.
- Any student who loses the privilege of riding the bus due to misconduct is still required to attend school.
- Students and parents are invited to discuss any bus problem with the assistant principal.

### **Late Buses**

Late buses are available to students who stay after school for extracurricular activities. Late bus runs and times will be posted on the GPS [website](#).

### **Dismissals**

If it should be necessary for a student to be dismissed before the close of the school day, this procedure is to be followed:

1. Bring a note to the Main Office before 7:50 a.m.
2. All notes must contain:
  - a. The date.
  - b. Time of dismissal.
  - c. Reason for dismissal.
  - d. Signature of parent or guardian.
  - e. Telephone number where parent may be reached.
3. Students will be given a dismissal pass.
4. When the time comes for the student to leave:
  - a. Students will show the teacher the dismissal pass.
  - b. Proceed to locker for belongings, if necessary.
  - c. Report to the Main Office.
  - d. Parent/Guardian will sign the student out, in the office.

### **Dismissals for Illness or Injury**

A student who becomes ill during the day will be dismissed by the principal, assistant principal, or the school nurse after the parent or guardian is notified and has arranged for the student's transportation. It is imperative that the school have on file the telephone number of a relative or friend so that a responsible person can be reached at all times in case of sudden illness or injury.

### **Lost and Found**

Articles found anywhere in the building or on the grounds should be taken to the office. These articles may be claimed there by the person who has lost them. Students should refrain from bringing valuables to school. Unclaimed lost and found articles will be given to local charities.

If money or valuables are found during the day, they should be brought to the office.

# BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICIES

The complete text of all Board of Education policies is available for review in each school and on the district's website at [www.grotonschools.org](http://www.grotonschools.org). Selected policies are summarized in this handbook for student and parent information.

## **Appropriate Use of Technology Policy - (Policy #6141.321)**

Groton Public Schools (GPS) provides its students and staff access to a multitude of technology resources with the understanding that these resources provide opportunities to enhance learning and improve communication within our community and with the global community. The advantages of having access to these resources are far greater than the potential difficulties they may bring. However, with the privilege of access comes personal responsibility to use the resources appropriately.

The district's policies are intended to promote the most effective, safe, productive, instructionally sound and honest uses of networked information and communication tools. Students' use of technology at school shall be for educational purposes only. The district makes a good faith effort to protect its students from exposure to Internet materials that are harmful or explicit by maintaining a system of Internet content filtering devices and software controls that meet federal standards established in the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). The district also educates students and staff on responsible use of technology including Internet resources and communication tools.

### **Digital Citizenship**

As it supports students to develop the citizenship skills necessary to function in society, Groton Public Schools understands its responsibility to help students develop digital citizenship skills, as the Internet and electronic communication has become ubiquitous in the 21st century. Digital citizenship skills enable students to use information and technology in safe, legal, and responsible ways. Administrators, teachers, and staff are expected to model good digital citizenship skills for students in the same manner they model all expected behaviors. Students will receive instruction on the concepts and skills involved in digital citizenship.

A responsible digital citizen is one who:

#### **Respects One's Self:**

- Users show respect for themselves by understanding online behavior is a reflection and representation of oneself. They select online names that are appropriate, consider the information and images posted online as public expressions of themselves, and do not post personal information.

#### **Respects Others:**

- Users show respect for others online. They refrain from using technology to bully, tease, insult, inflame, harass or discriminate and in general, disrespect others. They do not visit sites that are degrading, pornographic, racist or otherwise inappropriate in the school setting. They do not violate others' access to material or others' files, online spaces, or material and never borrow, use or misappropriate another's identity, online password/or another's work product.

#### **Protects One's Self:**

- Users protect themselves by not posting any information including images that may put them at risk. They do not post personal details or contact information or otherwise share private information. They report any attacks or inappropriate behavior directed at them or other abuse. They protect passwords, accounts and resources.



**Protects Others:**

- Users protect others online by not putting others at risk and taking care to not offend others. They report abuse and do not create, forward or disseminate in any manner inappropriate materials, images or communications. Users do not visit degrading, pornographic, racist or other inappropriate sites.

**Respects Intellectual Property:**

- Users understand online resources are the creation of others. They request permission to use resources as necessary, suitably cite any and all use of websites, books, media, etc. and abide by fair use rules.

**Protects Intellectual Property:**

- Users adhere to copyright laws and agreements. They seek permission to use the software and media others produce. They act with integrity when dealing with licensed music, software and other media.

**Responsibilities**

- The user is responsible for all of his/her actions and activities involving technology, including personal portable technology. Examples of user responsibilities include but are not limited to the following:
  - Keeping all school accounts and passwords confidential.
  - Logging on school technology with own user identification and password.
  - Logging off when leaving the computer.
  - Using the computers or other technology with teacher permission and supervision.
  - Taking precautions to prevent viruses.
  - Using permissible personal technology only for educational purposes and in designated areas and at designated times.

**Unacceptable Use**

- Examples of prohibited conduct include but are not limited to the following:
  - Using the instructional network or Internet access for commercial business, political or religious advocacy purposes, solicitation or illegal activities of any kind.
  - Access or dissemination of obscene or pornographic material.
  - Sending material critical of or which may be offensive or objectionable to others, or using the network or Internet to threaten or harass others.
  - Engaging in cyberbullying
  - Harassing network users, infiltrating computing systems and/or damaging software components.
  - Making any unauthorized entry to or alteration of any document, either paper or electronic, not created by user.
  - Sharing one's account with anyone or leaving account open or unattended.
  - Disclosing personal information about oneself or another student.
  - Subscribing to online services without approval of district staff.
  - Deliberately misusing the network and its peripherals.
  - Installing of software.
  - Intentionally bypassing the network filters.
  - Tampering with the hardware or software or system configuration.
  - Accessing executables from external sources.

**Regulations**

The Board of Education directs the Superintendent or his designee to develop accompanying regulations to provide specific guidance for students in their use of district technology and personal technology including the use of social media both in and outside of school as well as guidance for staff in their use of technology with students. This guidance shall address staff responsibilities to educate students about

appropriate and safe online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms as well as cyberbullying awareness and response.

### **Consequences for Violation**

The Superintendent will set forth in the regulations consequences for violation of this policy, its regulations and other unacceptable use of technology. Such consequences may include revocation of privileges, disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion from school, and/or legal action. The Groton Board of Education reserves the right to cooperate with law enforcement officers in investigations related to illegal activities conducted by students in their use of technology.

### **Student Conduct - (Policy #5131)**

**Parents** - Parents shall be expected to cooperate with school authorities regarding the behavior of their children. Parents shall be held responsible for the willful and chronic misbehavior of their children.

**Students** - Students shall be properly instructed in rules and regulations of acceptable conduct; they shall then be responsible for understanding and complying with the standards of behavior described herein. Any student who fails to comply with these rules and regulations concerning student behavior is liable to suspension, in-school suspension, or expulsion.

### **Pledge of Allegiance - (Policy #6115.4)**

Each school within the district shall provide time each school day for students to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Such recitation is voluntary. If, because of some personal philosophy or belief, a student has made the personal decision not to recite the Pledge, such student may choose to remain seated and silent. Students may wish to use this time to reflect on their philosophy, belief, or remember loved ones. In any event, all students must be courteous and respectful of the beliefs of others.

### **Attendance - (Policy #5113)**

The Groton Board of Education recognizes that regular attendance in school is fundamental to a child's achievement. Instructional experiences that occur in school are meaningful and essential components of the learning process. Time lost from class is irretrievable. It shall be the policy of the Groton Public Schools to encourage regular, daily attendance by all students.

Connecticut State Board of Education policy states that, *"A student is considered to be "in attendance" if present at his/her assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school (e.g., a field trip), for at least half of the regular school day. A student who is serving an out-of-school suspension or expulsion should always be considered absent."* According to this policy, a student who is not "in attendance" is considered absent.

In order to identify those students who are chronically absent and at risk of becoming truant and to provide clear guidance to school districts for complying with truancy laws and reporting student truancy statistics, the State Board of Education has adopted the following definitions and guidance regarding student absences:

**Disciplinary Absences** – Absences that are the result of school or District-level disciplinary action (e.g., out-of-school suspension and expulsion) are excluded from State-level accounting and will not be counted against the student for the purpose of this policy.

**Excused Absences** – A student’s absence from school shall be considered excused if written documentation of the reason for the absence has been submitted within ten (10) school days of the student’s return to school, or the absence is in accordance with section 10-210 of the Connecticut General Statutes (exclusion for medical reasons), and student’s absence meets the following criteria:

- A. For absences one through nine (1-9), a student’s absences from school are considered excused when the student’s parent/guardian approves such absence, regardless of the reason, and submits appropriate documentation; and
- B. For the tenth and subsequent absences, a student’s absences are considered excused for the following reasons:
  - 1. Student illness (Note: all student illness absences must be verified by an appropriately licensed medical professional for the absence to be excused, regardless of the length of the absence);
  - 2. Student’s observance of a religious holiday;
  - 3. Death in the student’s family or other emergency beyond the control of the student’s family;
  - 4. Mandated court appearances (additional documentation required);
  - 5. The lack of transportation that is normally provided by a school district other than Groton (no parental documentation is required for this reason); and
  - 6. Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by the Principal, or his/her designee, per the guidance in this policy.

**Unexcused Absences** – A student’s absence from school shall be considered unexcused unless it meets the definition of an excused absence (including the documentation requirements) or the absence was a disciplinary absence.

Note that the State Board of Education’s policy only considers a student absent when he/she misses half or more of the normal school day. A student missing less than half the school day will be considered tardy; student tardiness shall be dealt with at the school building level.

### **Documentation of Student Absences**

The State Board of Education requires careful and thorough documentation of all student absences. Parent or guardian notes and other documentation are central to determining whether a student’s absence is excused or unexcused. While a written note from a parent or guardian will likely be the most common form of documentation, other methods of reporting a student’s absence are acceptable, such as a parent/guardian making a report in person to the designated school staff member, through an online system with controlled access, or via video chat. E-mail and texting do not meet the State’s security requirements; however, e-mail may be used to deliver a scanned image of a note.

The school staff must be certain that the student’s parent/guardian was the one providing the information regarding the student’s absence in order for it to be excused should the absence meet all the applicable criteria specified herein.

School staff must receive or generate documentation for each instance of absence, which is one or more consecutive school days absent. Schools should only accept notes covering a series of absences for non-consecutive school days if the absences share a common cause.

Once a student has accrued a total of none (9) absences, including both excused and unexcused, additional documentation (besides the note from the student’s parent/guardian) is required in order for absences resulting from illness or mandated court appearances to be excused:

- A. Students missing school for mandated court appearances must provide additional documentation such as a policy summons, a subpoena, a notice to appear, or a signed note from a court official.
- B. For absences resulting from illness, students must either provide a signed note from a medical professional who has evaluated the student confirming the absence and giving an expected return date or have the school nurse verify the student's absence with the medical professional treating the student. Families who lack health insurance and/or those with limited means may find it challenging to meet this requirement to obtain a note from a licensed medical professional. In these cases, school nurses can evaluate the ill student, either in person or over the telephone, and, where appropriate, provide the required documentation for an excused absence.

For parents/guardians who are not proficient in reading and writing English, the schools shall make efforts to help these parents report their child's absences, including accepting notes in languages other than English. For parents who are not proficient in writing in any language, schools should verbally inform them of the attendance requirements and that they may report a student's absence in person at the school.

### **Absences for Emergency Situations**

For the purposes of the definition of excused absences, emergencies are generally significant events that are outside of the control of the student's family. They are normally short absences consisting of a few days at most. The only required documentation is a parental note clearly explain the emergency situation that result in the student's absence. Examples of emergencies include, but are not limited to:

- Family member who is very ill and close to dying;
- Student's home is lost to fire or eviction;
- Family's home being quarantined;
- Natural disaster;
- A student who is a parent and whose child needs to go to the hospital; or
- A family member's military deployment or return from deployment.

### **Absences for Extraordinary Educational Opportunities**

From time to time, students may be presented with an exceptional opportunity for an experience of an educational nature. While these events may not be part of the student's normal schoolwork, they can provide an excellent chance to further their education. Students and their parents/guardians must understand that approval as an excused absence is made on a case-by-case basis, in consideration of a number of factors, and that opportunities approved for one student may not be approved for another. Under the specific criteria outline herein, the days devoted to these opportunities can count as excused absences:

- The opportunity must be education in nature and have a learning objective related to the student's coursework or plan of study;
- It must be an opportunity not ordinarily available to the student;
- It must be grade and developmentally appropriate; and
- The content of the experiences must be highly relevant to the student.

It is important that the school administration, the student, and the student's family all have a common understanding of the extraordinary educational opportunity that is being requested and approved. To that end, building-specific procedures implementing this policy shall include the following:

- All requests for approval of an exceptional educational opportunity as an excused absence must be submitted in writing prior to the event, bear the signature of the student and his/her parent or guardian, describe the learning objective of the opportunity, and detail how the objective is linked

to the student's coursework or plan of study; include additional documentation as appropriate to support a full understanding of the opportunity.

- Approval of an exceptional educational opportunity as an excused absence should be in writing, detail any requirements placed upon the student as a condition of approval, include the specific days approved for the opportunity, and include the caveat that the school administration may withdraw its approval if the opportunity is canceled or the student fails to meet the mutually-agreed-upon requirements of the approval.

Within ten (10) days after the end of the approved period for the extraordinary educational opportunity, the student must submit all required documentation as specified during the approval process, or the time away from school will be considered an unexcused absence.

### **Truancy**

Connecticut State law defines a "truant" as a child age five to eighteen years, inclusive, who is enrolled in Groton Public Schools and has four (4) unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten (10) unexcused absences from school in any school year. Studies have shown that students who are truant are in danger of having significant difficulty in making the same academic progress as their peers who regularly attend school.

Within ten (10) school days after a student's fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) unexcused absence in a month or tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) unexcused absence in a school year, the school administration shall hold a meeting with the parent/guardian of the student who has become truant, or with such other person having control of the truant student, to review and evaluate the reasons for the child being truant.

If the truant student's parent/guardian, or other person having control of the truant student, fails to attend the required meeting or if such parent/guardian or other person otherwise fails to cooperate with the school administration in attempting to solve the truancy problem, the school administration will refer to recommendations from the Tiered Intervention document.

(See regulations and addendum.)

### **Investigating Student Absences**

The Superintendent is authorized by the Board to designate one or more District employees to serve as an attendance officer for the purpose of investigating student absences. The role of an attendance officer is to gather/verify information so that school personnel may better understand the factors contributing to the student's absenteeism. This may include a visit to the student's residence.

When a principal believes that a student's absences, excused or not, are having a negative impact on the student's academic performance and that more information is needed regarding the factors behind the student's absenteeism, the principal shall recommend to the Superintendent that an attendance officer be assigned to further investigate the situation. Only the Superintendent, or her/his designee, may authorize the use of an attendance office in Groton Public Schools.

### **Implementation**

The Superintendent is responsible for the development of District-wide and building-specific procedures to implement the requirements of this policy. All elementary schools shall use a common procedure regarding student tardiness, absenteeism, and truancy. These procedures shall provide for:

- the clear expectation among students and their parents/guardians regarding the need for regular, consistent attendance at school;
- a uniform understanding among staff, students, and their parents/guardians of the requirements for excused absences;
- the potential of consequences for unexcused absences; and
- the possibility that a student may be required to receive remedial assistance even when all absences are excused but potentially have negatively impacted their education.

The Board requires that District and building-level procedures developed to implement this policy contain the following specific elements:

1. Annually at the beginning of each school year and upon enrollment during the school year, the school administration shall inform students and their parents/guardians of the school attendance requirements, the building-specific procedures regarding absenteeism, and obtain a phone number or other means of contacting the parents/guardians during the school day. This and all subsequent notifications regarding student absenteeism shall be made in such a manner as to be easily understood by both students and their parents/guardians (for example, using an alternative language when the primary language in the home is not English).
2. Each school shall monitor individual student absences; additionally, Fitch High School will track student absences for each class.
3. Whenever a child enrolled in grades Kindergarten to eight fails to report to school on a regularly schedule school day and no indication has been received by school personnel that the child's parent or other person having control of the child is aware of the pupil's absence, school personnel shall make a reasonable effort to contact the student's parents/guardians by telephone in regard to the student's absence. If school personnel are unable to reach the student's parents/guardians via telephone, then a letter will be sent to the student's home address requiring the parents/guardians to contact the school.
4. The District and each school shall have procedures for coordinating services with and making referrals to community agencies providing child and family services. These organizations should be used to address, where appropriate, the student's personal or family issues that may be affecting his or her ability to attend school on a regular basis.
5. Student tardiness and unexcused absences may be used as factors in determining eligibility to participate in extra-curricular activities.
6. In an effort to prevent absenteeism from rising to the level that it affects a student's academic performance, building-level procedures implementing this policy shall include a tiered series of interventions designed to recognize the factors uniquely affecting a student's attendance and put in place various support actions that can have a positive effect on both their future attendance and academic performance.

### **Sexual Harassment - (Policy #5145.5)**

The Groton Public Schools recognize that sexual harassment, including sexual assault, is unlawful sex discrimination. The Board of Education (Board) prohibits sex discrimination/sexual harassment in the District's education program or activities. Education program or activity includes locations, events, or circumstances over which the school exercises substantial control over both the respondent (alleged perpetrator of sexual harassment) and the context in which the sexual harassment occurs. In addition to occurring on school grounds, sexual harassment may potentially occur off campus, in places or situations where athletic and extracurricular activities occur, on field trips, on the school bus, at school related conferences, or through use of school technology.

Schools shall respond to sexual harassment occurring in the District's education program or activities for which they have "actual knowledge." "Actual knowledge" means notice of sexual harassment or an allegation of sexual harassment brought to the attention of the Title IX Coordinator, any official of the school who has authority to institute corrective measures on the behalf of the school, as well as to any other employee of an elementary or secondary school.

Sexual harassment may take the form of student-on-student, employee-on-student, employee-on-employee, student-on-employee, or may be perpetrated against students or employees by third parties under the control of the District. Students who engage in proven sexual harassment may be subject to discipline, up to and including expulsion. Employees who engage in proven sexual harassment may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, as well as, other action required under the law including but not limited to a referral to DCF for suspected child abuse.

### **Definition of Sexual Harassment for the Purposes of Title IX**

Sexual harassment is conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

- (i) A school employee conditioning an education benefit or service on participation in unwelcome sexual conduct (i.e. quid pro quo)
- (ii) Unwelcome conduct that a reasonable person would determine is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the District's education program or activity;
- (iii) "Sexual assault" as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1092 (f)(6)(A)(v)(the Clery Act), "dating violence" as defined 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(10), "domestic violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(8), or "stalking" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(30) (the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)).

Examples of sexual harassment may include, but are not limited to:

- pressure for sexual activity
- repeated remarks with sexual or sexually demeaning implications
- unwelcome or inappropriate touching
- sexual assault
- suggesting or demanding sexual involvement accompanied by implied or explicit threats concerning a student's grades or academic standing or an employee's employment status
- telling lewd jokes or sharing stories about sexual experiences – even if not directed at an individual but done in his/her presence to cause him/her discomfort
- sending unwanted suggestive or lewd emails, letters or other communications or sharing images of a sexual nature around the workplace or displaying posters, items, or screensavers of a sexual nature
- repeatedly asking for dates despite being rebuffed
- making sexually offensive gestures or facial expressions
- dating violence or stalking

### **Other Definitions**

"Complainant" is defined as a person who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

"Respondent" is defined as a person who is alleged to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

“Supportive measures” are defined as non-disciplinary, non-punitive, individualized services, offered as appropriate and without charge to a complainant or respondent before or after the filing of a formal complaint, or where no complaint has been filed.

## **Title IX Coordinator**

The Superintendent of Schools shall designate and authorize the Director of Pupil Personnel Services to be the District's Title IX Coordinator. This individual shall be given the title of, and shall be referred to as, the Title IX Coordinator and shall be responsible for ensuring compliance across the District with Title IX, corresponding state law, and applicable Board policy concerning sex discrimination/sexual harassment.

Applicants for admission and employment, students, parents, or legal guardians of elementary and secondary school students, employees, and, all unions shall be notified of the name or title, office address, electronic mail address, and telephone number of the Title IX Coordinator.

The Title IX Coordinator's contact information shall be posted on the District's website and included in student and employee handbooks and published in other locations as deemed appropriate.

## **Reporting Sexual Harassment**

Any person, including, but not limited to, students, parents or guardians, employees, bystanders, or third parties (whether or not the person is the alleged victim), may report sexual harassment, including sexual assault, occurring in the District's education program or activities. Reporting may occur in person, by mail, by telephone, or by electronic mail, using the contact information provided for the Title IX Coordinator, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person's verbal or written report. Reports may be made at any time, including during non-business hours.

A formal complaint is defined as a document filed by a complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment against an individual and requesting that the District investigate the alleged sexual harassment. In an instance where the Title IX Coordinator signs the complaint, the Title IX Coordinator is not a party to the complaint nor is such action taken on behalf of the complainant.

The Title IX Coordinator will make forms available for both informal reports and formal complaints of sexual harassment. Additionally, such forms will be posted on the District's website. Informal reports are permissible and may be brought by any person. However, only a complainant and the District's Title IX Coordinator may file a formal complaint. All formal complaints shall be investigated. Supportive measures shall be offered to a complainant with or without the filing of a formal complaint.

There is no time limit on a complainant's decision to file a formal complaint, but complainants are encouraged to report incidents of sexual harassment promptly, and/or to file a formal complaint.

## **Response including Supportive Measures**

Any school employee with actual knowledge of sex discrimination/sexual harassment shall promptly inform the District's Title IX Coordinator. The failure to do so may be grounds for disciplinary action.

Upon actual knowledge of sexual harassment, the Title IX Coordinator will promptly contact the complainant to advise and discuss with the complainant 1) the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a formal complaint, 2) the right to file a formal complaint, and 3) how to file a formal complaint.



A complainant, as well as a respondent shall be offered free, individualized “supportive measures” (e.g. counseling, course related adjustments, modification of work or class schedules, escort services, increased security/monitoring of certain areas, mutual restrictions on contact between the parties) designed to restore or preserve equal access to education with or without a formal complaint. These, as well as other measures, may be part of a final remedy.

Upon the filing a formal complaint, the complainant will be provided with a copy of this policy and its grievance procedures.

Written notice shall be provided to the respondent and to the complainant advising that a formal complaint has been filed. The respondent shall be entitled to a presumption of innocence during investigation of the complaint. Both parties will be treated fairly throughout the investigation and shall be entitled to an unbiased investigator who has not prejudged the matter being investigated.

Complaints that fail to allege a violation of Title IX shall be dismissed without investigation. This does not preclude the school administration from investigating or addressing the underlying conduct under relevant codes of conduct or board policy.

### **Emergency Removal/Administrative Leave**

An emergency removal of a respondent from the education program or activity is permissible provided that the District conducts an individualized safety and risk analysis and determines that emergency removal is necessary to protect a student or other individual from an immediate threat to physical health or safety and notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision is provided. This does not modify any rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

An employee-respondent may be placed on administrative leave during the pendency of a grievance process.

### **Informal Resolution**

At any point in the formal complaint process, the Districtwide Title IX Coordinator, in his/her discretion, may offer to facilitate an informal resolution option such as mediation or restorative justice.

Both parties must give voluntary, informed written consent.

Either party has a right to withdraw consent at any time, in which case the formal investigation shall proceed.

The informal resolution process shall not be available if the complainant/victim is a student and the respondent is an employee.

### **Grievance Procedures**

The District will promptly and thoroughly investigate all formal complaints of sexual harassment in accordance with established grievance procedures.

District grievance procedures shall be established in the form of a regulation accompanying this policy.

The grievance procedure shall be used for the reporting and investigation of, and response to, a formal complaint of sexual harassment in the District's education program and activities against a person in the United States.

The District's grievance procedures shall be designed to comply with the regulation under Title IX as promulgated by the U.S. Department of Education, as it may be amended from time to time. Among other required provisions, the grievance procedures shall establish standards for fairness and equity, including a requirement that the decision maker not be the same individual as the Title IX Coordinator or the investigator shall:

- Explain how to file a complaint;
- address required notice;
- set out timelines for various components of the investigation and adjudication process;
- establish and explain grounds for the dismissal of a complaint;
- provide and explain the appeal process available to both parties;
- include a presumption of innocence for the respondent;
- state the evidence standard to be used to determine responsibility;
- require objective evaluation of all available evidence.

### **Training**

Training shall be provided to Title IX personnel in accordance with the regulation under Title IX as promulgated by the U.S. Department of Education, as it may be amended from time to time. Additional training may be provided to all school employees as deemed advisable.

### **Prohibition Against Retaliation**

Retaliation against any party, witness, or other participant to the grievance process is prohibited. Retaliation may form a basis for a complaint under this policy. The charging of a person with a code of conduct violation based upon a person making a materially false statement in bad faith in an investigation is not considered retaliatory.

### **Dissemination, Posting, and Discussion of Policy**

This policy along with its accompanying regulation/grievance procedure shall appear in the Student Handbook, be discussed with students at least annually and more often as needed, be posted in prominent and accessible locations in each school building and in the Board of Education offices, and be published on the District's website along with the name/title and contact information for the Title IX Coordinator.

### **Record Keeping**

The District shall keep records related to reports of alleged sexual harassment for a minimum of seven years, including investigation records, disciplinary sanctions, remedies, appeals, and records of any action taken, including supportive measures. Additionally, the Districts must also keep for a minimum of seven years any materials used to train Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision makers, any employee designated to facilitate an informal process.

## **Alternate Complaint Procedures**

In addition, or as an alternative to the filing of a sex discrimination/sexual harassment complaint through the District's grievance procedure, a person may choose to file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights of the United States Department of Education.

## **Statement of Protected Rights**

Application of this policy and its grievance procedure shall not be interpreted to restrict rights protected under the U.S. Constitution, including the right to free speech, to be free from self-incrimination, and to due process of law.

## **Safe School Climate**

In accordance with Public Act 11-232, An Act Concerning the Strengthening of School Bullying Laws, the Groton Public Schools has developed a Safe School Climate Plan which is based on the National School Climate Standards. The plan, which is available on the district's website, presents a vision and framework for a positive and sustainable school climate through the implementation of the following standards:

1. The school community has a shared vision and plan for promoting, enhancing, and sustaining a positive school climate.
2. The school community sets policies specifically promoting:
  - a. The development and sustainability of social, emotional, ethical, civic, and intellectual skills, knowledge, dispositions and engagement; and
  - b. A comprehensive system to address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage students who have become disengaged.
3. The school community's practices are identified, prioritized, and supported to:
  - a. Promote the learning and positive social, emotional, ethical, and civic development of students.
  - b. Enhance engagement in teaching, learning, and school-wide activities.
  - c. Address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage those who have become disengaged.
  - d. Develop and sustain an appropriate operational infrastructure and capacity building mechanisms for meeting this standard.
4. The school community creates an environment where all members are welcomed, supported, and feel safe in school: socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically.
5. The school community develops meaningful and engaging practices, activities, and norms that promote social and civic responsibilities and a commitment to social justice.

If you have questions about the District's Safe School Climate Plan, please contact Denise Doolittle, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, at (860) 572-2152. To speak to the Safe School Climate Specialist in your child's school, please contact the school directly.

## **Anti-Bullying - (Policy #5131.911)**

The Groton Public Schools maintains a firm policy prohibiting bullying. Bullying is defined as the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyber bullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district, or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district that:

- a. Causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property,
- b. Places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property,

- c. Creates a hostile environment at school for such student,
- d. Infringes on the rights of such student at school, or
- e. Substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but is not limited to, a written, oral or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

**Bullying may take many forms, such as but not limited to:**

1. Physical violence and attacks;
2. Taunts, name-calling or put-downs or discriminatory slurs;
3. Targeting of a student based upon that person's actual or perceived "differentiating characteristics" such as race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, national or ethnic background, disability, physical appearance, socioeconomic status, or a student's association with a person or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics;
4. Threats and intimidation;
5. Extortion or stealing of money and possessions;
6. Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

A comprehensive program to address bullying at all school levels is essential to reduce incidents of bullying. Therefore, bullying prevention and intervention programs shall be implemented at all Groton Public Schools. These programs will strive to develop a school environment:

- which firmly limits bullying behavior;
- where non-hostile, non-physical, negative consequences are consistently applied in cases of bullying behavior;
- where adults act as authorities and positive role models; and
- where students and parents are included in efforts to improve the school climate.

**Prevention and intervention strategies may include, but not be limited to, the following:**

- implementing an evidenced-based model for positive behavioral interventions;
- a school climate survey;
- a bullying prevention committee;
- clear display and reinforcement of school rules;
- adult supervision;
- school-wide training related to a safe school environment;
- provision for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying and annual notification of the process for reporting bullying.

**The following standards shall be observed in dealing with observed bullying behavior:**

1. Students are encouraged to report acts of bullying to teachers and school administrators, on an anonymous basis, if necessary or appropriate.
2. Parents or guardians of students may file written reports of suspected bullying with the school principal.

3. Teachers and other school staff members who witness acts of bullying or receive student or parent reports of bullying are required to notify the school principal/designee immediately and in writing. This immediate communication must be accompanied by an acknowledgement that the principal/designee has received the information.
4. Principals or other designated school administrators shall investigate all written reports and review all anonymous reports of bullying, and report their findings to the Superintendent of Schools. Each such report shall include an intervention strategy where appropriate. No disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report. An anonymous report may lead to a more thorough investigation.
5. The parents or guardians of students who commit any verified acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of any victims of bullying shall be notified of the bullying behavior, including a description of the response of the school staff to such acts and any consequences that may result from the commission of further acts of bullying. Both sets of parents/guardians will receive in writing an invitation to attend separate meetings to discuss intervention efforts. Documentation of invitations shall be maintained.
6. Appropriate corrective action shall be taken by school administrators to ensure that bullying behavior does not continue and to prevent retaliation against any person who reports, or is the victim of such bullying, including disciplinary and/or counseling action where appropriate.
7. Each of the Groton Public Schools shall maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying and shall make such list available for public inspection.
8. Reasonable training will be made to all staff holding an educational certificate where there is not an evidence-based model approach.
9. If anyone feels appropriate action has not been taken, a written complaint can be filed with the Title IX Coordinator.

#### **Physical Examinations - (Policy #5141.31)**

- **Sports Physicals** - It is the policy of the Board of Education to require physicals for participation in sports prior to Kindergarten, sixth, and tenth grades. Physicals for participation in sports for athletes shall be required within thirteen (13) months prior to the date the student is to participate in interscholastic sports. Documentation of this physical must be placed in the student's health record.

The Board of Education recommends that all physicals be performed by the student's own physician. If, for some reason, this is not feasible, the school will assist the parent in contacting the School Based Health Center.

- **Mandated Physicals** - It is the policy of the Board of Education to require periodic health assessments prior to kindergarten, sixth, and tenth grades, unless objected to in writing on religious grounds by the parents or guardians of the student (or by the student if age 18 or over). No record of such medical examination shall be open to public inspection.

#### **Suspension/Expulsion - (Policy #5114)**

All employees in the school system shall have an obligation to monitor the behavior of students and to report student misbehavior in accordance with the terms of the Groton Board of Education policy on Suspension/Expulsion. The Board's complete policy is included in a separate booklet.

Definitions of significant words and phrases in the policy and the sections of the policy are included here. Refer to the policy to fully understand the Suspension/Expulsion topic.

**Note to students:** If for any reason you are in possession of anything that you have a question about, discuss this with any adult in the school.

## Definitions

- A. **Bullying** is defined as the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district, or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district that:
- a) causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property,
  - b) places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property,
  - c) creates a hostile environment at school for such student,
  - d) infringes on the rights of such student at school, or
  - e) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but is not be limited to, a written, oral or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

Bullying may take many forms, such as, but not limited to:

1. physical violence and attacks;
  2. taunts, name-calling or discriminatory slurs, including but not limited to insulting, disparaging or derogatory comments regarding a person's race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, national or ethnic background, disability, physical appearance, socioeconomic status, or a student's association with a person or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics;
  3. threats and intimidation;
  4. extortion or stealing of money and possessions;
  5. cyberbullying.
- B. **Controlled substance** means a drug or other substance identified under schedules I, II, III, IV, or V in Section 202(c) of the Controlled Substances Act (21 USC 812 (c)). 34 CFR 300.530 (i)(1). "Illegal drug" means a controlled substance, but does not include a controlled substance that is legally possessed or used under the supervision of a licensed health care professional, or that is legally possessed or used under any other authority under that Act or under any other provision of federal law. 34 CFR 300.530 (i)(2).
- C. **Cyberbullying** means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone, or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.
- D. **Dangerous instrument** is any instrument, article, substance or device which is capable of causing death or serious physical injury, or which poses a serious threat to school personnel, students or property, including by way of example, but not limited to any knife with a metal blade or a razor, utility knife, box cutter, or any instrument, article or substance which, under the circumstances in which it is used or attempted or threatened to be used, is capable of causing death or serious physical injury to persons or property.
- E. **Deadly weapon** is any weapon, whether loaded or unloaded, from which a shot may be discharged, or a switchblade knife, gravity knife, billy, blackjack, bludgeon, or metal knuckles, as defined in C.G.S. 53a-3(6).

- F. **Emergency** is a situation under which the continued presence of the student in school poses such a danger to persons or property or such a disruption of the educational process that a hearing may be delayed until a time as soon after the exclusion of the student as possible.
- G. **Expulsion** is the exclusion from school privileges for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, and is deemed to include, but not be limited to, exclusion from the school to which the student in grades three to twelve, inclusive was assigned at the time the disciplinary action was taken, provided the exclusion does not extend beyond a period of one calendar year.
- H. **Exclusion** is any denial of public school privileges to a student for disciplinary purposes.
- I. **Firearm** is any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive, the frame or receiver of any such weapon, any firearm muffler or firearm silencer, or any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas such as a bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, mine or any similar device, and excluding an antique firearm, as defined in 18 U.S.C. 921, as amended.
- J. **In-School Suspension** is the exclusion from regular classroom activity for no more than ~~five~~ (5) ten (10) consecutive school days, but not exclusion from school, provided the exclusion does not extend beyond the end of the school year in which the in-school suspension was imposed.
- K. **Martial arts weapon** is a nunchaku, kama, kasari-fundo, octagon sai, tonfa or chinese star, as defined in C.G.S. 53a-3(21).
- L. **Removal** is the exclusion from a classroom for all or part of a single class period, provided the exclusion does not extend beyond ninety (90) minutes.
- M. The Part B regulations state that the term **serious bodily injury** has the same definition found at Section 1365(h)(3) of the U.S. criminal code. 34 CFR 300.530 (i)(3). That provision defines serious bodily injury as bodily injury that involves a substantial risk of death; extreme physical pain; protracted and obvious disfigurement; or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty. 18 USC 1365 (h)(3); 71 Fed. Reg. 46,722 (2006).
- N. The term **seriously disruptive of the educational process**, means a marked interruption or severe impediment of the day to day operation of the school. In making such a determination the administration may consider, but shall not be limited to: whether the incident occurred within close proximity of a school; whether other students from the school were involved, or whether there was any gang involvement; whether the conduct involved violence, threats of violence, or the unlawful use of a weapon, as defined in C.G.S. 29-38, and whether any injuries occurred; and whether the conduct involved the use of alcohol or drugs. This definition of "A seriously disruptive of the educational process" shall apply to all portions of this Policy.
- O. **Suspension** is the exclusion from school privileges, or from transportation services only, for no more than ten (10) consecutive school days, provided the exclusion does not extend beyond the end of the school year in which the suspension was imposed. A student in grades preschool to two, inclusive, may be given an out-of-school suspension if it is determined by the administration that such suspension is appropriate based on evidence that the student's conduct on school grounds is of a violent or sexual nature that endangers persons. In addition, it is a person's duty [as a mandated reporter] to report suspected child abuse or neglect is not limited by this provision.
- P. The definition of a **weapon** under the IDEA mirrors the definition of a "dangerous weapon" found in the U.S. criminal code. 34 CFR 300.530 (i)(4). The criminal code defines "dangerous weapon" as "a weapon, device, instrument, material, or substance, animate or inanimate, that is used for, or is readily capable of, causing death or serious bodily injury, except that such term does not include a pocket knife with a blade of less than 2.5 inches in length." 18 USC 930 (g)(2).

#### Suspension/Expulsion Policy Outline:

Section I	Definitions [provided above]
Section II	Removal of students from class
Section III	In-school suspension of students; Reassignment

Section IV	Suspension of students
Section V	Expulsion of students
	A. Procedure
	B. Special Education
	C. Student records, transfer and withdrawals
	D. Readmission
Section VI	Standards governing suspension and expulsion
	A. Statutorily required expulsion proceedings
	B. Statutorily prohibited expulsion or out-of-school suspension of preschoolers and students in kindergarten through grade two with certain exceptions
	C. Statutorily required expulsion for students in grades K through 2 who commit certain offenses
	D. Statutorily required expulsion of preschoolers who possess a firearm
Section VII	Notice of disciplinary policies and action
Section VIII	Statutory modification
Section IX	Exclusion from co-curricular and extra-curricular activities

### **Off-School Misconduct - (Policy #5131.8)**

Students are subject to discipline, up to and including suspension and expulsion for misconduct, even if such misconduct occurs off-school property and during non-school time.

Such discipline may result whether: 1) the incident was initiated in the school or on the school grounds, or 2) even if the incident occurred or was initiated off-school grounds and non-school time; if after the occurrence there was a reasonable likelihood that return of the student would contribute to a disruptive effect on the school education or its process by threatening:

1. The school's orderly operations;
2. The safety of the school property, or
3. The safety and welfare of the persons who work or study there.

Examples of the type of such off-school misconduct that may result in such discipline include, but are not limited, to:

1. Use, possession, sale or distribution of dangerous weapons;
2. Use, possession, sale or distribution of illegal drugs; or
3. Violent conduct, where any such activity has the reasonable likelihood of threatening the health, safety or welfare of school property, individuals thereon, and/or the education process.

For example, if it is determined that a student's use, possession, or sale of drugs in the community has a reasonable likelihood of endangering the safety of students or employees because of the possibility of such sales in the school; or if violent conduct in the community presents a reasonable likelihood of repeating itself in the school environment; or if any similar type of misconduct in the community has a reasonable likelihood of being continued or repeated in school or of bringing retaliation or revenge into the school for such off-school misconduct, the Board may impose discipline up to and including suspension and/or expulsion.

### **Dangerous Instruments - (Policy #5131.7)**

The Board of Education, concerned for the safety and welfare of all students and school personnel in school and at school sponsored activities, prohibits carrying of a dangerous instrument on, or introducing a dangerous instrument onto school grounds or at school sponsored events or on any school vehicle.



Possession and/or use of any such dangerous instrument by a student shall result in an expulsion hearing, as required under Board of Education policy 5114.

### **Video Surveillance - (Policy #5131.111)**

The Board of Education, having carefully weighed and balanced the rights of privacy of students and staff against the district's duty to maintain order and discipline, finds that it is appropriate to provide for the use of video camera surveillance in its transportation vehicles and on school grounds. Video surveillance shall only be used to promote the order, safety and security of students, staff and property.

### **Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco - (Policy #5131.6)**

It is the policy of the schools to take appropriate action in the handling of incidents in the schools involving the possession, sale, and/or use of behavior affecting substances. These substances shall include but not be limited to alcohol and controlled substances as defined by the Penal Code of the State of Connecticut and inhalable substances (including gases, solvents, butane, propane, adhesives).

In the event that the student is under the influence of a drug or alcohol, or engaged in the illegal activity of possessing or selling drugs and/or alcohol, he/she will be suspended/expelled from school in accordance with the suspension/expulsion policy.

Personal privacy rights of students shall be protected as provided by law.

School properties may be inspected by school authorities in the interest of maintenance, health and safety. Inspections for the location of drugs, narcotics, liquor, weapons, poisons, and missing properties are matters relating to health and safety and may be regarded as reasonable purposes for inspection by school personnel.

The Board is also concerned that other substances, not listed as "controlled substances", such as contained in common household items and inhalants, if purposely used inappropriately, can also have a stimulant, depressant or hallucinogenic effect on students. Inappropriate use, possession, sale or distribution of these non-controlled substances will result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to, suspension and/or expulsion. Further, grade level appropriate education pertaining to proper use of these materials and the danger of abuse shall be presented.

Smoking and/or possession of tobacco products by students are prohibited on school grounds, at school activities and on school buses at all times.

### **Psychotropic Drug Use - (Policy #5141.231)**

The Board of Education prohibits all school personnel from recommending the use of psychotropic drugs for any student enrolled within the school system. This shall not prohibit (nor require) a recommendation by the school's medical staff, including school nurses and/or the District's medical advisor, for evaluation by an appropriate medical practitioner. Further, upon the consent of the student's parents or guardians, school personnel may consult with the medical practitioner regarding such use.

The refusal of a parent or other person having custody of a child to administer or consent to the administration of any psychotropic drug to the child shall not, in and of itself, constitute grounds for referral to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) unless such refusal causes such child to be neglected or abused, as defined in C.G.S. § 46b-120.

## **Surveys of Students (Student Privacy) - (Policy #6162.51)**

All requests to conduct surveys, analyses or evaluations shall be submitted to the Superintendent of Schools.

In this policy, “surveys, analyses, or evaluations” refer to methods of gathering data for research purposes.

No student shall be required as part of any program to submit to any survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning:

- A. Political affiliations or beliefs of the students or the student’s parents;
- B. Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student’s family;
- C. Sex behavior or attitudes;
- D. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
- E. Critical appraisals of others;
- F. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
- G. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student’s parents;
- H. Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program without the prior written consent of the student’s parent/guardian.) For the purpose of this policy, “instructional material” does not include academic tests or assessments.

All instructional materials, regardless of format, including teachers’ manuals, films, tapes or other supplementary material which will be used in connection with any such survey, analysis, or evaluation shall be available upon request for inspection by the student’s parent/guardian, or of the student, if he/she is 18 years of age or older. Academic tests and assessments are not included.

A parent may inspect, upon request, a survey created by a third party before the survey is administered or distributed to a student.

Parents shall have the opportunity to exclude their children from participating in such surveys, analyses, or evaluations; request to exclude students from surveys shall be submitted within 48 hours of the administration of the survey.

Insofar as practical acknowledges that there may be circumstances in which a research request is made or is approved only after the school year has begun. When this occurs, the school unit should notify parents far enough in advance for them to access surveys and related instructional materials and to exclude their children from participating, if desired.

## **Homeless Children and Youth - (Policy #5118.1)**

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act, reauthorized in January 2002, ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. Homeless children and youth are defined as (A) individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and (B) includes: (i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement; (ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; (iii) children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces,

abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; (iv) migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii); and unaccompanied youth who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian and are living in the above circumstances.

Children and youth who meet the federal definition of homeless will be provided equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as other children and youth in the District. Homeless children and youth will also have access to educational programs and other services, if needed, to enable them to meet the same challenging State student academic achievement standards to which all students in the District are held. Homeless children and youth will not be separated from the mainstream school environment nor will they be denied enrollment based on lack of proof of residency or lack of documentation of required physical examinations and immunizations.

For additional information regarding the provision of education to homeless children or youth contact Denise A. Doolittle, District McKinney-Vento Liaison at 1300 Flanders Road, Mystic, CT 06355 or at 860-572-2152.

### **Migrant Students - (Policy #6141.312)**

The Superintendent will develop and implement a program to address the needs of migrant children in the District. Migrant students are students who move with itinerant workers (parent(s)/guardian(s)) who travel from one area to another in search of work. This program will include a means to:

1. Identify migrant students and assess their educational and related health and social needs.
2. Provide a full-range of services to migrant students including applicable Title I programs, special education, gifted education, vocational education, language programs, counseling programs, and elective classes.
3. Provide migrant children with the opportunity to meet the same statewide assessment standards that all children are expected to meet.
4. Provide advocacy and outreach programs to migrant children and their families and professional development for district staff.
5. Provide parents/guardians an opportunity for meaningful participation in the program.

### **Migrant Education Program for Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Involvement**

Parent(s)/guardian(s) of migrant students will be involved in and regularly consulted about the development, implementation, operation, and evaluation of the migrant program.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) of migrant students will receive instruction regarding their role in improving the academic achievement of their children.

For purposes of this policy, the term “migrant” student shall mean a student who is, or whose parent or legal guardian is, a migratory agricultural worker, including a migratory dairy worker and migratory fisher worker, and who, within the preceding thirty-six (36) months, has changed school districts to obtain or for his/her parents to obtain, agricultural, fishing or dairy work.

# **SCHOOL DISCIPLINE ISSUES**

The middle school's discipline guidelines may be found in the appendix section of this handbook. (Actual consequences may vary as determined by the administration.)

## **Positive Behavior Interventions and Support**

Positive Behavior Interventions and Support or PBIS involves a proactive and comprehensive continuum of support designed to provide opportunities for all students to achieve social, behavioral, and learning success. Through the PBIS initiative, a leadership team in each school develops a framework to support student behavior at the individual, classroom, and school-wide level. This framework is then established with the entire school community to create procedures for teaching positive expectations, routines, and behaviors and strategies to discourage inappropriate behavior. Students with behavioral concerns receive increased positive support through behavioral interventions, which focus on the teaching and reinforcement of appropriate behaviors and social skills development. There are greater opportunities for student success when students have clearly defined expectations that are taught and reinforced. The set of clearly stated positive expectations and behaviors are posted throughout the school and in each classroom for quick, easy reference. These postings usually display the school's unique logo or mascot to increase school spirit. Individual, classroom, and school-wide incentives as well as positive contacts and communications with families are provided to encourage and recognize appropriate behavior. PBIS improves the overall climate of the school community and involves parents as partners, while improving student academic success.

## **Detentions**

Improper conduct may result in a detention. The following are procedures to be carried through in the case of any detention:

1. A detention will be issued to the student and the parent notified. In certain instances, parents may be notified of the detention by phone. This will take place if the detention is to be served on the same day as the offense.
2. All students are to report to the assigned detention immediately after school.

If a student does not comply fully with the above directions, is absent from detention without an acceptable excuse, or is removed from detention for misbehavior, the student will receive either additional detentions or possible suspension.

## **Fighting/Play Fighting**

Fighting, play fighting and aggressive behavior are strictly forbidden. Failure to comply will result in disciplinary action.

## **Leaving School Grounds**

Students may not leave school grounds during the school day. Students arriving on buses cannot leave school grounds after getting off their bus. Once students are dismissed, they may not leave school grounds, return, and take the late bus.

## **Selling**

Students are not allowed to sell candy, gum, etc., in school unless special permission is granted by the administration.

## **Snowballs**

During inclement weather, when snow is on the ground, there is to be no snowball throwing. Disciplinary action will be taken if such occurs.

## **Toys/Electronic Communication Devices**

Materials such as laser pointers, water pistols, or any item which could interfere with the educational process are not to be brought to school. Electronic recording devices of any type are strictly forbidden.

## **Dances/End of Year Field Trips**

1. 10 days school absences and/or tardiness without medical note may preclude a student from participating in the school privileges (i.e. field trips, dances).
2. Multiple days ISS/OSS may result a student from not participating in the end of year events (i.e. field trips, dances).
3. One ISS/OSS after April break – student is not allowed to attend end-of-year field trips without an appeals process.

# **SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAM SERVICES**

VNA of Southeastern CT provides the school nursing service for the Groton Schools. A professional registered nurse is responsible for carrying out the many activities of the school health program. The professional registered nurse is assisted by school health aides in specific areas. The goal of the school health program is to assist each child to attain and maintain his/her optimum state of health so that he/she may benefit to the maximum degree from his/her educational experiences. The means of accomplishing this goal are to reduce the obstacles to learning caused by poor health and to contribute to education in healthful living.

## **Health Requirements for Registration**

The Groton Board of Education, in accordance with the Connecticut General Statute (Section 10-204A), requires that the required immunizations be documented by submission of a record at the time of registration.

Immunization record or proof of immunity to certain diseases must be confirmed in writing by a physician or by lab confirmation. Parents or guardians may check the specifics of the required immunizations by contacting their child's pediatrician, the school nurse, or the school nurse supervisor at 860-444-1111.

According to Connecticut State Statute (Public Act 80-449; An Act Concerning School Health), all students are required to have a health assessment and mandated immunizations prior to public school enrollment.

Military students who do not have proof of an updated physical examination and/or immunization records upon registering for school will have 30 school days from the first day the student attends school to submit all necessary documentation to the school nurse. Military students will be subject to exclusion from school if the health requirements are not met within the 30 school day grace period.

Medical exemptions must be accompanied by a physician's note and a religious exemption must be accompanied by a written statement from the parent/guardian.

Each medical record will be reviewed by school nursing staff and verification will be made as to compliance with State Statute. This information will be transferred to a permanent health record and should be kept current by notifying the school nurse when your child receives updated immunizations and physical examinations.

The required immunizations are as follows:

1. DTP/DTaP/TD
2. Polio
3. Hemophilus Influenza Type B (HIB)
4. Hepatitis B (HBV)
5. Measles, Rubella and Mumps (MMR)
6. Varicella
7. Pneumococcal
8. Influenza
9. Hepatitis A

### **Health Services Offered**

The school nurse is available for counseling in these situations:

1. **Illnesses** – Counsels students and contacts parents as necessary.
2. **First Aid** – Administers first aid and emergency care as needed.
3. **Immunization Clinics** – Information regarding clinics can be obtained from the school nurse.
4. **Physical Examinations** – Provided by SBHC with parental permission. Prior to 6 and 10, and sports activities at the middle and high schools.
5. **Scoliosis Screening** – For students in grades 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9.
6. **Vision Tests** – For specific grade levels and for anyone who is referred.
7. **Hearing Tests** – For specific grade levels and for anyone who is referred.
8. **Teacher Nurse Conferences.**
9. **Health Education** – Does health education sessions on varying subjects in the classroom as a resource person.
10. **Health Counseling Services** – To students, parents, and faculty in relation to health problems.
11. **Home Visits** – Made on behalf of students for varying reasons.
12. **Multi-Disciplinary Team Member** – Works as needed with all professional school personnel to find the appropriate education program for individual students.

You are encouraged to contact your school nurse with any questions or problems which you may encounter regarding the health of your child.

### **Physical Examination**

Each pupil enrolled in the public schools is required to have a health examination at periodic intervals. It is required that the first examination be done within the year preceding the child's entrance to school. A health assessment form shall be given to you on the registration day. Physical assessments are also required prior to Grade 7 and Grade 10. These must be completed prior to that school year or the student will be excluded from school the beginning of the next year. Please refer to the Board policy on Physical Examinations on page 25 of this handbook.

Mandated components of the physical examination are as follows:

1. Hemocrit or hemoglobin test, height, weight and blood pressure; speech upon school entry;
2. Gross dental exam, vision, hearing, scoliosis screening and chronic disease assessment;
3. Immunizations as listed above.

Conferences will be held with the parents or guardians and the school nurse on the day of registration.

**TB Testing (PPD):** TB skin test to be done if student falls into certain high-risk groups or at the discretion of the physician.

### **General School Health Information**

**Health Records:** An individual cumulative health record is maintained for each child. The information recorded shall consist of a health history filled out by the parent or guardian at the time of registration. Results of ongoing screening test are also incorporated into the record as they are performed at school. It is *imperative* that the parent/guardian notify the school nurse if a child has received an update on immunization or has received a physical examination from the family physician. This cooperative effort is extremely beneficial in ensuring effective health care and prevents duplication of effort.

Health problems may restrict some students from participation in some school activities, such as physical education. In these circumstances, a note from a family physician describing the condition and advising the type and length of restriction is required. Permanent excuses must be renewed at the opening of each school year.

**Communicable Disease:** If a child is absent due to a diagnosed communicable disease such as chicken pox, please notify the school. When your child has recovered, he/she may be readmitted by the school nurse. In certain cases, such as infectious hepatitis, it may be necessary to have a readmission slip from a physician.

**Emergencies:** Health care provided in schools is restricted to first aid in accidents and illness. Emergency cards, providing written authorization for further care, as well as the name of physicians and other persons to be called in an emergency, should be on file for each child. It is of prime importance that the school be provided with an emergency telephone number in case of a medical emergency or routine illness which requires exclusion. The parent/guardian shall provide the school with an alternate telephone number of a relative, or neighbor, who has agreed to respond when the parent or guardian cannot be reached. This person should live within a reasonable distance from the school and be willing to accept the responsibility of providing transportation so that the child can be picked up at the school. This person will be responsible for your child's care and decisions made in your absence. The school will immediately summon an ambulance in cases of serious emergency.

**Medications in the schools:** Students are not allowed to have any type of medications in the school. A physician's written order and parent's or guardian's authorization is required for a nurse, or, in her absence, the principal or designee, to administer medications. A form is available at each school to be filled out by the prescribing physician and signed by the parent or guardian. This form is returned to the school and kept with the child's health record.

Self-administration of medication will be allowed provided certain criteria are met. In the case of inhalant medications, self-administration may be approved with a prescription from a physician and written parental consent on file.

The medication must be given to the school nurse by the parent or guardian. The medication can then be administered, as prescribed by the school nurse, or in her absence, the principal or designee. These forms must be reviewed at specified intervals.

No more than a 3-month supply of medication can be kept at the school at one time. Parents should pick up any unused medications at the end of the school year or they will be destroyed.

**Exclusion:** A child can be excluded from school for various illnesses or injuries. The school nurse recommends exclusion to the principal or designee according to the policies set by the school medical advisors and the State Department of Health. Students are also excluded if there is evidence of pediculosis or scabies.

## ATHLETIC POLICY

The coaching staff has discussed its sports program as it relates to the entire school curriculum. It has come up with various thoughts and ideals that it feels should provide the guidelines for the program. The various thoughts and ideals listed below provide the guidelines for the program.

It is felt that students going out for an interscholastic sport should realize:

1. The interscholastic program is a special activity, not a required program.
2. Selection to this is a privilege.
3. They should expect special rules and regulations to be part of each program.
  - **Unexcused Absences** – From practice the day before a game, a student cannot participate in the activity but may be required to accompany the team at the coach's discretion.
  - **Unexcused Absences or Tardiness** – Standards to be set by individual coaches, but will reflect the attitude that such occurrences are not acceptable and could lead to dismissal from the club.
  - **Excused Absences or Tardiness** – Mechanics for such will be established by the individual coaches but will reflect the attitude that it is the student's responsibility to communicate with the coach.
4. They are representatives of the school and their conduct should reflect positive ideals during the school day as well as at athletic events.
5. Being in a special program, their conduct will be more obvious to teachers, administrators, parents and peers.
6. School policies and responsibilities have priority over athletics.
7. Education is the school's primary role; therefore, scholastic performance must be at an acceptable level to be a part of the athletic program.
8. The coaches have a responsibility to uphold acceptable values, to set rules and regulations for their sport, and to handle violations in a consistent and fair manner.

Consistency is important in setting down rules and regulations for the athletic programs; however, there may be differences in the structure of a sport that will not allow total compliance. The following are areas that all teams shall abide by and these will be clarified to all participants of the program:

1. **Scholastic Eligibility** – Students must maintain passing grades in all subjects to participate in interscholastic sports and the cheerleading squad.
2. **Physical Exams** – All participants must have physicals yearly before practice begins.
3. **Parental Permission Slips** – Will be distributed to participants. Parents or guardians must sign for student to continue in the program.
4. **Conduct** – Participants will at all times reflect acceptable behavior and positive ideals and conform to Middle School policies. Those not conforming to such standards may face dismissal from the team.
5. **Absence** – Any student absent from school will not be allowed to participate, travel or join the team that day.
6. **Tardy** – A tardy student must be in school before 10:00 a.m. – exception to be approved if parent or guardian communicates with the administration.
7. **Medical Excuse** – Medical excuse from PE classes – no participation in interscholastic sports.



8. **Detention** – A school or classroom detention on the day of an activity – the student cannot play, suit up or travel on a bus. Detentions will not be rescheduled to accommodate games or practices.
9. **Care of Uniforms/Equipment and Facilities** – Students will be responsible for all lost uniforms/equipment and damaged facilities.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES**

### **Special Education Instruction**

The Planning and Placement Teams (PPT) in each of our schools ensure that students meet the eligibility requirements of the 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) and state regulations. It is also through the PPT process that the district ensures that all students with disabilities aged 3 through 21 who require special education and related services, who have not graduated with a regular high school diploma, receive a free and appropriate public education. The district develops a written plan for each student requiring special education and related services. This plan is called an Individualized Education Program (IEP). An IEP is developed, implemented, maintained, reviewed, revised, and evaluated for all students served by our district.

The district ensures that, to the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities are educated with students who are nondisabled. However, the district provides a continuum of programming options for students to the extent necessary in order to implement the IEP. Each student requiring special education and related services is educated in the school that he or she would attend if he or she did not require special education and related services, unless the IEP requires another placement.

### **Related Services**

The following services are available in each school:

**Psychological services** are provided by certified school psychologists who provide a range of services including support for all students and consultation and collaboration with educators, professionals and parents. School psychologists work collaboratively with teachers and administrators to help create safe and supportive school environments, empower teachers to understand and respond to students' social and emotional needs, develop and monitor academic and behavioral interventions to enable students to attain education goals and personal-social well-being, and coordinate community services, outside providers and agency involvement to prevent problems, enhance independence and promote optimal learning.

**School psychologists** conduct individual assessments to provide information that is helpful in determining a student's eligibility for special education and related services and in the development of individual academic and behavioral programs which maximize the student's achievement and educational success.

**Speech and language services** are provided by certified speech and language pathologists to students who exhibit speech-language impairments that adversely affect educational performance in accordance with the IEP. Speech and language pathologists participate in the development and monitoring of alternative procedures and programs in general education which may be explored and implemented, where appropriate, before a child is referred to special education. When concerns about a child's communication development continue despite the implementation of alternative intervention, speech and language pathologists conduct individual assessments to provide information that is helpful in determining a child's eligibility for speech and language services as special education or a related service.

**Physical and occupational therapy** are provided in accordance with the student's IEP.

**Special education transportation** is provided as a related service in accordance with the student's IEP.

### **Transition Bill of Rights**

A student with an individualized education program (IEP) has certain rights under both federal and state laws. This *Transition Bill of Rights* for parents of students receiving special education will help parents and students understand a student's rights related to getting an education and other important issues regarding the transition to life after high school. School districts will provide this document annually at a planning and placement team (PPT) meeting to all parents, guardians, and surrogate parents of students who are receiving special education services in grades 6-12 as well as to students who are 18 years of age or older.

Students, parents, guardians, and surrogate parents are important members of the PPT. Parents, guardians, surrogate parents, and students 18 years of age or older have the right to receive a copy of *Procedural Safeguards in Special Education* which explains the rights and responsibilities in the federal law called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These procedural safeguards are provided at least annually at a PPT meeting by each school district. This publication describes a student's right to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE) through specialized instruction and related services in a student's IEP.

Students with an IEP have a right to:

1. Receive secondary transition services through their IEP starting at least at age 16, or younger if desired and recommended by the student's PPT.
2. Receive appropriate individualized education services through the end of the school year in which they turn 21 OR until graduation with a regular high school diploma. The school year is defined as July 1 through June 30. This decision is typically recommended by a student's PPT.
3. Attend all PPT meetings, including those related to transition planning, to represent their education/training, employment, and independent living interests, preferences, and strengths.
4. Assist in the development of their IEP with accommodations and modifications designed to meet their unique needs.
5. Develop realistic and specific post-school outcome goal statements (PSOGS) that are measurable, based on their individualized needs and interests, and reviewed annually as part of their IEP.
6. Receive secondary transition services and related supports to help them prepare to meet their post-school goals in postsecondary education/training AND employment and independent living skills if appropriate.
7. Assist in developing annual goals and objectives to include, but not be limited to, those areas in the *Connecticut CORE Transition Skills*, such as health care, transportation, self-determination, and social skills.
8. Identify, explore, and connect with outside agencies as appropriate, including, but not limited to, the following adult service agencies:
  - Department of Developmental Services (DDS),
  - Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS),
  - Department of Public Health (DPH),
  - Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), which includes the Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB) and Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) (see *Easing into Secondary Transition*).
9. Be informed on or before their 17<sup>th</sup> birthday that all parental rights will transition to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18. Under Connecticut law, students may notify the school district (in writing) that their parents, guardian, or surrogate parent shall continue to have the right to make educational decisions with the students when they turn 18.

10. Request consideration for receiving transition-only services between the ages of 18 and 21 if all transition goals and objectives have not been met during their previous years in high school. The following conditions are required:
  - a. Students have met all academic requirements for graduation.
  - b. PPT makes the recommendation for transition-only services that must be reviewed at least annually.
  - c. Transition-only services must be a coordinated set of individualized activities but do not need to be a specialized “program.”
  - d. Transition-only services must provide students with the opportunity to spend at least 80 percent of their time with nondisabled peers.
  - e. Students are entitled to participate in graduation activities upon completion of academic requirements or at the conclusion of transition-only services - this is a decision to be made by the student, parents, and/or guardians or surrogate and the PPT.
  - f. If students participate in transition-only services, the date on their diploma or certificate will be the date that they exit high school (either aging out at 21 or with a diploma or certificate.)

In addition, the following should also be considered:

- g. Transition-only services are typically discussed during the senior year of high school.
  - h. Transition-only services are not needed for graduation, but may include academic, vocational, and independent living activities that will help students meet their post-school goals.
  - i. Transition-only services should be based in the local community to the greatest extent possible in order to prepare students for life after high school.
11. Actively participate in the development and revision of their Student Success Plans, which are required for all students in grades 6-12 to address career, academic, and social/emotional/behavioral skills to prepare for life after high school.
12. Receive, along with their parents, guardians, and surrogate parent, transition resources and other information regarding IEPs developed by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) and their school such as:
  - *Assistive Technology and Postsecondary Transition*
  - *Building A Bridge: A Transition Manual for Students*
  - *Connecticut CORE Transition Skills*
  - *Connecticut IEP Transition Planning Checklist*
  - *Easing into Secondary Transition: A Comprehensive Guide to Resources and Services in CT*
  - *Transition Assessment Resource Manual*
  - *Stepping Forward: A Self-Advocacy Guide for Middle and High School Students*
  - *Student Success Plan Crosswalk*
  - *Technology & Transition: Resource Guide to Creating and Sustaining and AT (Assistive Technology) Team at the High School Level*

If students have questions or have a problem asserting any of these rights, they should first speak to their teacher, school case manager, school counselor, and parent/guardian or surrogate parent. If additional help is needed, students (or their parents, guardians, or surrogate parent) have the right to file a complaint, ask for mediation and, if needed, ask for an impartial due process hearing by contacting the CSDE Due Process Unit at (860) 713-6943. For more information, download a copy of the publication *A Parent's Guide to Special Education* or obtain a copy from the school.

For additional help with transition or special education, call the CSDE at (860) 713-6910 or visit <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/specialeducation>. For assistance in understanding the provisions of the IDEA, call Connecticut's federally designated Parent Training and Information Center, the Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC) at 800-445-2722, email [cpac@cpacinc.org](mailto:cpac@cpacinc.org), or visit <http://www.cpacinc.org/>.

## **Additional Services**

**Homebound Instruction** - Homebound instruction is provided for students who receive special education and related services when recommended by the PPT in accordance with the student's IEP. Homebound instruction is also provided for any student for whom a physician has certified, in writing, that the student's medical condition will cause an absence of at least three weeks' duration. Instruction typically begins no later than two weeks from the first day of absence.

**Alternative Procedures and Program Prior to Referral to Special Education** - Before school personnel refer a student to a Planning and Placement Team (PPT), alternative strategies and programs in general education are explored and where appropriate, implemented. Despite additional supports, a small number of children still may not make adequate progress in developing targeted skills. They may cause a family or a teacher to suspect that a child may have a disability, prompting a request for an evaluation to determine whether a child may require special education.

The Scientific Research-Based Intervention or SRBI process, involves providing students with high-quality instruction and interventions that are matched to student needs, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals, and applying data to inform education decisions. SRBI is a multi-tiered, layered instructional approach that aims to prevent learning impediments and behavioral problems first, and then brings increasingly intense interventions to students who continue to experience difficulty. The primary goal of SRBI is improving academic and behavioral outcomes for all students by eliminating discrepancies between actual and expected performances. Instructional decisions are made by school-based teams and focused on determining the extent to which the student is responding to the interventions based on a review of data that is collected over time.

# **HEALTH**

## **Asbestos Management**

The school district complies with Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act of 1986 (AHERA). Specifically accredited/certified persons will be utilized as required to inspect all school buildings for

asbestos-containing material. Appropriate action will be taken to control the release of asbestos fibers upon completion of inspections. Corrective steps and long-range maintenance in a management plan shall be made available to all concerned persons and filed with the Department of Public Health.

Employees, parents and the public shall be notified of this plan. Records shall be maintained of the location of all known asbestos and records shall be maintained of all abatements. Further information concerning the school district's procedures for asbestos control, removal and disposal can be found in the school district offices.

## **Pesticide/Herbicide Application Plan**

The use of pesticides/herbicides in the Groton schools is regulated. Pesticides/herbicides are not used at the elementary and middle schools in Groton.

## **Green Learning Program**

Environmentally preferable cleaning products that minimize the potential harmful impact on the environment and human health are chosen for use in the Groton schools. Products are chosen that meet or

exceed standards approved by the Federal Department of Administrative Services in consultation with the Commissioner of Environmental Protection. Such products include but are not limited to general purpose cleaners, bathroom cleaners, carpet cleaners, glass cleaners, floor finishes, floor strippers, hand cleaners, and soaps. Employees, students, parents and other entering Groton Public Schools' facilities are prohibited from bringing any cleaning products into the schools.

# GMS FALCONS SOAR

We are...

**S**afe

**O**pen-Minded

**A**ccountable

**R**espectful &



**R**esponsible

# GMS FALCONS SOAR

	<b>SAFE</b> <i>Caring Balanced</i>	<b>OPEN- MINDED</b> <i>Inquirers Risk-takers Thinkers</i>	<b>ACCOUNTABLE</b> <i>Knowledgeable Reflective</i>	<b>RESPECTFUL/ RESPONSIBLE</b> <i>Principled Communicators</i>
Classroom	<p>We show we care about others and our learning by remaining on-task.</p> <p>We use classroom materials and supplies appropriately.</p> <p>We follow adult directions.</p>	<p>We value others' ideas by listening to speakers.</p> <p>We include others in our groups and discussions.</p> <p>We are willing to try and practice something new or hard for us.</p>	<p>We are accountable for our actions by being on time and ready to learn.</p> <p>We are willing to make, accept and correct mistakes.</p> <p>We reflect on what we worked on today. Think- "Why is it important to us as learners?"</p>	<p>We communicate using school appropriate tone, volume and language.</p> <p>We work for the entire period to ensure we have completed the task at hand.</p>
Hallway	<p>We walk at all times.</p> <p>We ALWAYS have an individual pass.</p> <p>We keep our hands, feet and objects to ourselves..</p> <p>We stay to the right and use the correct hallway/stairwell..</p> <p>We keep the hallways clean and clear.</p>	<p>We notice and are aware of others in traffic jams.</p> <p>We value learning time and transition quickly and effectively in the hall.</p> <p>We sign out with Who, Where and When.</p>	<p>We know where we need to go.</p> <p>We know and use the most direct route to our destinations.</p>	<p>We arrive to class on time.</p> <p>We use school appropriate language, tone and voice.</p> <p>We respect School and personal property.</p> <p>We go DIRECTLY to our destinations.</p> <p>We put litter in designated containers.</p>

	<b>SAFE</b> <i>Caring Balanced</i>	<b>OPEN- MINDED</b> <i>Inquirers Risk-takers Thinkers</i>	<b>ACCOUNTABLE</b> <i>Knowledgeable Reflective</i>	<b>RESPECTFUL/ RESPONSIBLE</b> <i>Principled Communicators</i>
<b>Restroom</b>	<p>We keep hands, feet and objects to ourselves.</p> <p>We practice proper bathroom sanitation</p> <p>We wash our hands .</p>	<p>We honor the privacy of others.</p> <p>We report vandalism, cleanups and needed repairs immediately.</p> <p>We stay informed about the dangers of unsanitary behaviors and conditions.</p>	<p>We know nearest restroom locations.</p> <p>We always sign out and have passes.</p> <p>We know to use the bathroom for its intended reason and return quickly to class.</p>	<p>We keep the area graffiti-free.</p> <p>We clean up after ourselves.</p> <p>We FLUSH!</p>
<b>Cafeteria</b>	<p>We walk at all times and follow designated traffic patterns.</p> <p>We quiet down, raise our hands and remain seated when adults raise their hands.</p> <p>We keep our hands on our own food and remember that food is for eating.</p>	<p>We know our menu choices and are open to trying new things.</p> <p>We ask adults for help to problem solve conflicts</p>	<p>We know food/drink must be consumed in the cafeteria unless instructed by an adult.</p> <p>We leave the area clear and clean.</p> <p>We know our student ID numbers or have our student IDs.</p>	<p>We use school appropriate language, tone and volume.</p> <p>We use good manners and say please and thank you.</p> <p>We go directly to our seats and remain seated.</p> <p>We know a pass / permission is required to leave the cafeteria (including to the bathroom)</p>



	<b>SAFE</b> <i>Caring Balanced</i>	<b>OPEN- MINDED</b> <i>Inquirers Risk-takers Thinkers</i>	<b>ACCOUNTABLE</b> <i>Knowledgeable Reflective</i>	<b>RESPECTFUL/ RESPONSIBLE</b> <i>Principled Communicators</i>
<b>Bus</b>	<p>We remain safely seated on our bus seats for the entire trip.</p> <p>We care about others when we keep our hands, feet and objects to ourselves.</p> <p>We stay in line when boarding the bus.</p>	<p>We are thoughtful of others by making sure we use school appropriate language.</p> <p>We are open to others sharing a seat with us.</p>	<p>We know and follow the posted bus rules.</p> <p>We are knowledgeable of our assigned buses.</p> <p>We take belongings with us when departing the bus.</p>	<p>We use school appropriate language, tone and volume.</p> <p>We follow posted bus rules and instructions of the bus driver.</p>
<b>Arrival/Dismissal</b>	<p>We care about others' safety by keeping our hands, feet and objects to ourselves.</p> <p>We care for others by using appropriate language.</p>	<p>We think about our schedule and the materials we need for each class.</p> <p>We think about others' needs and are conscientious of others in the hall.</p>	<p>We are accountable for ourselves by putting our phones and electronic devices away and preparing for the school day.</p> <p>When we arrive, we go directly to our assigned area. When we are dismissed, we go directly to our bus area or after-school activity.</p>	<p>We remain in our assigned area or with our supervisor for all before and after-school activities.</p> <p>We make sure our school-issued chromebooks are charged and ready for the day or to take home for work.</p>

	<b>SAFE</b> <i>Caring Balanced</i>	<b>OPEN- MINDED</b> <i>Inquirers Risk-takers Thinkers</i>	<b>ACCOUNTABLE</b> <i>Knowledgeable Reflective</i>	<b>RESPECTFUL/ RESPONSIBLE</b> <i>Principled Communicators</i>
<b>Home Learning</b>	<p>We set and follow a daily routine that allows us to both participate in school and engage in our hobbies and activities.</p> <p>We care for ourselves by following healthy habits.</p>	<p>We are willing to try new technology and learning platforms.</p> <p>We put in time and effort to overcome problems and hurdles.</p> <p>We ask questions and seek out answers in order to better understand our content.</p>	<p>We follow both oral and written directions in order to complete assignments accurately.</p> <p>We read and respond to comments and corrections.</p>	<p>We check our email and learning platforms daily.</p> <p>We complete all assignments in a timely fashion.</p> <p>We make sure our technology is charged and ready for the next day.</p>

# APPENDIX

## Middle School Behavior Classification and Disciplinary Interventions

Level of Infractions	Minor	Middle	Major
Infraction Level Description	<p>Minor level infractions are defined as <b><i>uncooperative, noncompliant</i></b> behavior. These behaviors primarily impact the student, but do not significantly interfere with the educational process. They do not appear chronic, thus do not typically require administrator involvement.</p> <p><b><i>*Four minors of the same behavior = Middle</i></b></p>	<p>Middle level infractions are behaviors which are classified as <b><i>disorderly</i></b> behavior. These behaviors interfere with the educational environment. They may also place others at some risk or harm. As a result, these infractions require administrator involvement. <b><i>Chronic minor level</i></b> infractions are reclassified in this category.</p> <p><b><i>*Three middles of the same behavior = Major</i></b></p>	<p>Major level infractions are <b><i>extremely disruptive</i></b> and/or are <b><i>seriously injurious</i></b>. They cause a serious disruption, interruption or impediment to the operation of a class or other gathering involving students or staff. <b><i>Chronic middle level</i></b> infractions are also considered in this stage. <b><i>Immediate administrative involvement</i></b> is required at this stage.</p>
Behavior Classification (May include but are not limited to the following)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic dishonesty</li> <li>• Accidental Language</li> <li>• Cell Phone</li> <li>• Disobedience (non-compliance)</li> <li>• Dress Code Violation</li> <li>• Eating/drinking in class</li> <li>• Emotional Outburst</li> <li>• Failure to follow directions</li> <li>• Horse Play-minor altercation</li> <li>• Lack of Materials</li> <li>• Not participating in class</li> <li>• Off-Task Behavior</li> <li>• Out of area</li> <li>• Public Display of Affection</li> <li>• Running in the hallway</li> <li>• Sassing/backtalk</li> <li>• Talking loudly/Excessively</li> <li>• Tardiness</li> <li>• Teasing</li> <li>• Throwing items</li> <li>• Verbal altercations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acts of bullying</li> <li>• Bathroom misbehavior</li> <li>• Cursing/profanity (directed)</li> <li>• Deliberate defiance</li> <li>• Invited/uninvited inappropriate physical contact</li> <li>• Leaving area without permission</li> <li>• Minor Property damage/vandalism</li> <li>• Minor physical altercation</li> <li>• Misbehavior for guest teacher</li> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Profanity to staff</li> <li>• Repeated disrespect</li> <li>• Skipping class</li> <li>• Skipping detentions</li> <li>• Standardized Test Violations</li> <li>• Taking or sharing of pictures or videos</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arson</li> <li>• Drugs/Alcohol</li> <li>• Fighting</li> <li>• Harassment</li> <li>• Label Slurs (Hate speech)</li> <li>• Leaving school grounds</li> <li>• Major Vandalism/Destruction</li> <li>• Physical Assault</li> <li>• Porn</li> <li>• Sexting/videotaping/pictures</li> <li>• Sexual Assault</li> <li>• Sexual Harassment</li> <li>• Theft</li> <li>• Threatening</li> <li>• Vaping</li> <li>• Weapons</li> </ul>
Documentation	Educator's Handbook – Minor Incident	Educator's Handbook – Office Referral and PowerSchool	Educator's Handbook – Office Referral and PowerSchool

Level of Infractions	Minor	Middle	Major
Infraction Level Description	<p>Minor level infractions are defined as <b><i>uncooperative, noncompliant</i></b> behavior. These behaviors primarily impact the student, but do not significantly interfere with the educational process. They do not appear chronic, thus do not typically require administrator involvement.</p> <p><b><i>*Four minors of the same behavior = Middle</i></b></p>	<p>Middle level infractions are behaviors which are classified as <b><i>disorderly</i></b> behavior. These behaviors interfere with the educational environment. They may also place others at some risk or harm. As a result, these infractions require administrator involvement. <b><i>Chronic minor level</i></b> infractions are reclassified in this category.</p> <p><b><i>*Three middle of the same behavior = Major</i></b></p>	<p>Major level infractions are <b><i>extremely disruptive</i></b> and/or are <b><i>seriously injurious</i></b>. They cause a serious disruption, interruption or impediment to the operation of a class or other gathering involving students or staff. <b><i>Chronic middle level</i></b> infractions are also considered in this stage. <b><i>Immediate administrative involvement</i></b> is required at this stage.</p>
Possible Interventions and Disciplinary Responses (At the Administrator's Discretion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electronic Device Consequences (refer to handbook)</li> <li>• Natural Consequences</li> <li>• Parent / Guardian Contact</li> <li>• Reminders and Redirection</li> <li>• Restorative Action</li> <li>• Re-teaching of Expectations and Skills</li> <li>• Student/Teacher Conference</li> <li>• Teacher Consequence</li> <li>• Written Reflection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Lower-Level Interventions</li> <li>• After School Intervention</li> <li>• Behavior Contract</li> <li>• Loss of Privileges</li> <li>• Lunch Intervention</li> <li>• Meeting with Administrator</li> <li>• Mentoring Program</li> <li>• Parent / Guardian Contact</li> <li>• Peer Mediation</li> <li>• Referral to School-based Health Center</li> <li>• Referral to Support Staff</li> <li>• Removal from Class</li> <li>• Self-Monitoring Rating Scale</li> <li>• Short-term Behavioral Progress Reports</li> <li>• Teacher / Student / Administrator Meeting</li> <li>• Reflection Assignment</li> <li>• Restorative Action</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Lower-Level Interventions</li> <li>• After School Intervention-Multiple</li> <li>• In School Intervention</li> <li>• Out of School Suspension</li> <li>• Referral to Superintendent for Expulsion Hearing</li> </ul>
Documentation	Educator's Handbook – Minor Incident	Educator's Handbook – Office Referral and PowerSchool	Educator's Handbook – Office Referral and PowerSchool

# Groton Public Schools 2025-2026 School Calendar

## July 2025

0 days / 0 accrued

M	T	W	TH	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

3, 4 July 4<sup>th</sup> Recess  
7-31 SpEd Summer School  
TBD Summer School 9-12 at FHS

## August 2025

3 days / 3 accrued

M	T	W	TH	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

4-14 SpEd Ext ABA Summer Session  
20 Freshman Orientation  
27 First Day of School (K-12)  
29 First Day of School (Preschool, TK)

## September 2025

21 days / 24 accrued

M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

1 Labor Day  
9 TLI-Early Dismissal

## October 2025

22 days / 46 accrued

M	T	W	TH	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

7 TLI-Early Dismissal  
13 Columbus/Indigenous People's Day  
29-31 Parent/Teacher Conferences  
Early Dismissal (ES, MS, HS)

## November 2025

15 days / 61 accrued

M	T	W	TH	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28

4 Professional Development  
11 Veteran's Day  
26-28 Thanksgiving Recess

## December 2025

15 days / 76 accrued

M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

9 TLI-Early Dismissal  
22-31 Winter Holiday Recess

## January 2026

19 days / 95 accrued

M	T	W	TH	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

1, 2 Winter Holiday Recess  
13 TLI-Early Dismissal  
19 Martin Luther King Day

## February 2026

18 days / 113 accrued

M	T	W	TH	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27

10 TLI-Early Dismissal  
16, 17 Presidents Day Recess

## March 2026

21 Days / 134 accrued

M	T	W	TH	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

6 Professional Development  
10 TLI-Early Dismissal  
25-27 Parent/Teacher Conferences  
Early Dismissal (ES, MS, HS)

## April 2026

16 days / 150 accrued

M	T	W	TH	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	

3 Good Friday  
13-17 Spring Recess  
28 TLI-Early Dismissal

## May 2026

20 days / 170 accrued

M	T	W	TH	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

12 TLI-Early Dismissal  
25 Memorial Day

## June 2026

10 days / 180 accrued

M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

12 Tentative Last Day of School-Early Dismissal  
15-18 Snow Make-up Days  
19 Juneteenth  
FHS Graduation - TBD

GRADE LEVEL	MARKING PERIOD ENDS	REPORT CARDS ISSUED
Grades K - 5	Nov 24 Mar 11 June 12	Report cards will be distributed within 10 school days after the marking period ends.
Grades 6 - 8	Oct 30 Jan 23 Apr 1 June 12	Report cards will be distributed within 10 school days after the semester ends.
Grades 9 - 12	Oct 30 Jan 23 Apr 1 June 12	Report cards will be distributed within 10 school days after the semester ends.

No School for Students - Professional Development, Holidays, School Recess

Early Dismissal - Parent/Teacher Conferences, TLI, Last Day of School