Sippican School
2025-2026
Student Handbook

Our Mission:

The Sippican School community will be responsible, respectful and kind to ensure a nurturing learning environment.

Our School Rules:

Be Respectful
Be Responsible
Be Kind

Sippican Elementary School
16 Spring Street
Marion, MA 02738
(508) 748-0100
(508) 748-1953 FAX

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Sippican School is a member of Massachusetts Superintendency Union #55

Administration

Superintendent:
Mr. Michael S. Nelson, M. Ed.
Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning:
Dr. Sharlene Fedorowicz
Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations:
Mr. Howard Barber CPA, SFO, MCPPO
Assistant Superintendent of Student Services:
Dr. Jaime Curley

Marion School Committee

• Chairperson: April Nye • Vice Chairperson: Nichole Daniel
• Mary Beauregard • Nichole Nye McGaffey • Michelle Smith

The **Marion School Committee** meets regularly throughout the school year. These meetings may be in person or remote. The purpose of the Marion School Committee is to: set strategic direction for the school system; develop, oversee, and evaluate educational policy; act as the legal agent for the Commonwealth, and represent the Marion community.

Sippican School Council

The Sippican School Council was established pursuant to the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993. In coordination with the principal of the school, the Council assists in the identification of educational needs of the students and in the review of the annual school budget. In addition, the Council has an ongoing responsibility to assess the needs of the school with respect to its educational goals and standards and to formulate and review annually a school improvement plan to advance these goals, to address identified needs, and to improve student performance.

The Sippican School Council meets the third Tuesday of each month, from 3:15- 4:15 p.m. Meetings will be held in person or remotely over Zoom. All are welcome to attend. Please check the posting at Town Hall or the school calendar on our website for meeting agendas each month.

Welcome to Sippican School

Dear Sippican School Families,

Welcome back to all in the Sippican School Community! We look forward to a successful year of teaching and learning.

We are thankful to families for entrusting your children to us. Sippican School will continue to be a place where students thrive under the guidance of a professional and nurturing staff.

The District continues to follow through on its strategic plan. Each child will be immersed in 21st century skills. They will be collaborating and thinking with peers as well as being immersed in developing skills related to project based learning . We are here to support families and answer any questions you may have. We look forward to working together to make this a happy, safe, and successful year.

Best,

Lynn Dessert, Principal
Gregory Thomas, Assistant Principal

Important Telephone Numbers

Sippican School (508)748-0100
Central Office/Superintendent's Office (508)758-2772
ORR Junior High School (508)758-4928
ORR High School (508)758-3745
Early Childhood Coordinator/Project GROW (508)758-2772 ext.1948

In order to ensure the safety of our students, all doors at the school are locked during school hours.

All visitors to the school must report to the main office, entering through the Spring Street entrance, unless otherwise instructed for specific events. Sippican School is a smoke-free learning environment.

Smoking is prohibited in the building, on the school buses, and anywhere on school grounds.

Sippican School Staff

2025-2026 Administrative Staff

• Lynn Dessert - Principal • Gregory Thomas - Assistant Principal

• Principal's Secretary - Shari Pacheco •

Special Education Secretary-Lisa Daniels • Karen Bertram, RN-School Nurse

Classroom Teachers

Project Grow: Sarah Goerges
Kindergarten: Lisa Horan, Melissa Rogers, Marti Medeiros
Grade One: Molly Cruise, Jean Roseman, Ashley Sweatland
Grade Two: Julie Bangs, Emily Halkett
Grade Three: Julia Bandera, Tracy Feeney, Kimberly Souza
Grade Four: Leanne Dineen, Melanie Smeaton, Susan Swoish
Grade Five: Cathleen Furtado, Heather White
Grade Six: Nicole Boussy, Erin Furfey, Bill Roseman

Specialists:

• Jessica Barrett **–** Library Media Specialist • James Oliveira - Physical Education

• Margaret Harrington- Art • Hannah Moore - Instrumental Music • Patricia Richard - General Music • Chelsey Lawrence - Enrichment

Student Support Staff: • Mackenzie Emmons - Behavior Specialist • - School Psychologist • Kristina Tetreault - School Adjustment Counselor • Tracy Anthony - Special Education • Denise Bouvette - Special Education • Emilee Cote - Special Education • Jaryd Gioiosa - Special Education • Amanda LeMarier - Special Education • Amy Wiggins - Special Education • Tricia Silva - Special Education • Zenobia Nelles - Special Education • MaryJayne Couet - Reading Specialist • Stacey Riquinha - Reading Specialist • Sarah Jacques - Speech & Language • Doreen Lopes – Early Childhood Coordinator

School Assistants / Special Needs Assistants: • Meghan Allen • Sydney Arruda

• Heather Austin-Ripley • Makayla Bumpus • Donna Dunn • Heidi Kilpatrick

• Robbin McMorrow • Taylor Mitchell • Jennifer Nye-Denham • Jenna Sylvia

• Tammy Szteliga • Pamela Tobin

Title I: • Lynn-Ann Dixon • Nadeen Mardo

Cafeteria Staff: • Paula White • Julie Best • Noreen Mackie

Supervisor of Building Maintenance: • Cody Leonardo

School Resource Officer (SRO)

The goal of the partnership between Sippican School and the Marion Police Department is to support and foster the safe, healthy development of all students. Through the use of law enforcement resources and with the mutual understanding that school participation is indispensable, we can achieve positive outcomes for students and the larger school community.

The specific goals (related to students) of the partnership are to:

- Foster a safe and supportive school environment that allows all students to learn and flourish regardless of race, religion, national origin**,** immigration status, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, and socioeconomic status.
- Promote a strong partnership and lines of communication between school and police personnel.
- Encourage relationship-building by the SRO such that students and community members see the SRO as a facilitator of needed support as well as a source of protection.
- Offer presentations and programming to the school focusing on criminal justice issues, community and relationship building, and prevention**,** health, and safety topics.

Any question, concern, or complaint that a member of the school community may have with respect to the SRO or the SRO Program, should be handled in the following manner:

- Members of the school community may contact the building principal for support;
- Questions, concerns, or complaints should be provided, in writing (in their preferred language), to the building principal.
- The building principal may collaborate with the Superintendent of Schools and Police Chief as needed regarding any questions, concerns, or complaints.

General School Information

SCHOOL HOURS: ***8:40 AM - 3:00 PM***

Sippican Transportation Information

Bus Transportation

Bus routes for the Old Rochester Regional School District and Massachusetts School Superintendency Union #55 for the Towns of Marion, Mattapoisett, and Rochester are established yearly. Eight buses transport our students. Routes are modified slightly each fall to accommodate new membership. Any questions regarding bus routes and/or stops that affect your child should be addressed to the District's transportation provider, **Amaral Bus Company Inc.** Ms. Cheryl Sweeney, Dispatch Manager at amaralbustritown@gmail.com or Phone: (508) 324-0551. Press 1 (for Amaral Bus Co). Then press 2 (for Tri-Town District).

Changes in student transportation plans are strongly discouraged. Please Contact the main office with any questions or requests.

Arrival Routine:

- **Breakfast:** Available from 8:30 AM to 8:40 AM in the cafeteria.
- **For the safety of all students, please ensure that dropped-off students and independent walkers enter the building through the main office doors in the morning.**
- **Arrival Time:** Please ensure your child arrives between 8:40 AM and 8:49 AM. Students should be in their class by 8:50 AM.
- **Tardy:** Tardy will be recorded at 8:51 AM.

Dismissal Routines:

- **Kindergarten:** Students are dismissed at 2:50 PM.
- **Grades 1-6:** Students are called and dismissed at 2:55 PM.
- **For the safety of our dismissal routines, please notify us by 2:00 PM if you need to make any changes to your child's dismissal plans.** This includes situations like needing to pick up your child early from the bus. Please try to make these changes as early as possible to ensure a smooth dismissal process.

Dismissal Locations:

- **Independent Walkers and Parent Pick-Ups:** Students will be dismissed to their grade level doors.
    - **Grades K & 6:** First door on the left side of the building **(pink sign)**
    - **Grades 1 & 2:** Last door on the right at the front of the building **(nearest to the playground) (blue sign)**
    - **Grades 3 & 4:** Main entrance at the front of the building **(yellow sign)**
    - **Grade 5:** Middle door at the front of the building **(near the bird feeder) (orange sign)**

Bus Departure:

- Buses will leave the building no later than 3:08 PM.

Student Emergency Information or Status: Parent Notification to Sippican School

To ensure student safety, changes in family situations, addresses, or cell and telephone numbers **must be** reported to the school office ***immediately.*** It is important that all our records are up to date.

Please update your child's PowerSchool information as soon as possible. This information serves as an annual 'affidavit', attesting to a student's residency in our community.

Families moving from the community should notify the school office at least three days before their departure so transfer materials can be prepared. A *release of information* form must be received from the "new" school before any records will be forwarded.

Attendance

School attendance is compulsory. Attendance law states that:

- ***The Commonwealth of Massachusetts G.L. c. 76 sect. 1 requires that every child, with certain exceptions, between ages established by the state board of education, must attend a public day school or some other approved school, during the time when public schools are in session.***

- ***Under G.L. c. 76, sect. 1, necessary absences by a student may not exceed 7 full-day or 14 half-day sessions in any 6-month period.***

- ***Under G.L. c. 76, sect. 1, a pupil who is not present during at least half a session must be marked and counted as absent on the school register.***

All Massachusetts schools are accountable for student achievement. Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) mandates particular indicators of success for all schools with one being "chronic absenteeism. "All students are considered "chronically absent" if they miss 10% of the school year.

Full days of attendance are essential to the learning process. If a child is to be out of school, parents/guardians should call the nurse's office at **508-748-0100** before 9:00 am on the morning of the absence. Please provide the following information in the message that you leave on the answering machine: **student's name, teacher, and reason for absence**. If a call is not received and a student is absent, the School Nurse uses the *Blackboard Connect* messaging system to contact parents/guardians at home or work. **After any absence, students should present a parent's note indicating the reason for the absence to the School Nurse.**

Absences are "excused" for only the following reasons:

- Bereavement
- Hospitalization
- School-sponsored trip
- Documented court or legal commitment
- Obligatory religious holidays
- Illness substantiated by a note (five or more continuous absences for medical reasons must be substantiated by a physician's note).
- Weather so inclement as to endanger the health of a child

A child may also be excused for other exceptional reasons with approval of the Principal or designee.

In instances of chronic or irregular absence reportedly due to illness, the school administration may request a physician's statement certifying such absences to be justified.

Some excess absenteeism occurs because families take vacations during school time. This is strongly discouraged. Teachers will not provide assignments prior to vacations taken during school time. After students return to school they will be made aware of missed assignments, making them up as soon as possible. Missed assignments are factored into students' grades.

When Absences Exceed Three or More Days

On the THIRD day of consecutive absence or tardiness, the school nurse or a designee of the principal will call the student's home. Each Principal or designee shall make a reasonable effort

to meet with any student, and that student's parent/guardian, who has missed five (5) or more unexcused days (a school day shall be equal to two (2) or more class periods in the same day) in a school year. The meeting shall be to develop action steps to improve student attendance and shall be developed jointly by the Principal or designee, the student, and the student's parent/guardian. The parties may seek input from other relevant school staff and/or officials from relevant public safety, health and human service, housing, and no profit agencies.

On the eighth day of an unexcused absence, the school attendance officer will be notified and a complaint for Failure to Cause School Attendance pursuant to *G.L. c. 76, sect. 2* ***may*** be filed in Wareham District Court.

If the students' absences or tardiness occur on a regular basis and impede their academic progress,the school, as a mandated reporter, must consider filing a Child Requiring Assistance (CRA) report. Depending on circumstances, the school district may choose to file a 51A with the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families.

Tardiness

Tardiness negatively impacts the educational progress of all students. Therefore, the above policy will also be followed for excessive tardiness.

Dismissals

All dismissal policies are developed with students' learning and safety in mind. Policies are developed with input from the Sippican School Committee and town safety officials.

Dismissals During the School Day

No child will be dismissed from school during the day unless an authorized adult has come to the office to sign the child out. This applies to daily, or occasional, pickup arrangements. Students being dismissed before the end of the school day must bring a note to the homeroom teacher that morning. Students will be called from class *when the parent/guardian arrives.*

Any Change in Dismissal Routine

A note or alternative transportation forms from a child's parent/guardian must be provided before a child is allowed to leave school with any adult other than a parent or if he/she is normally transported by bus. There must be a note for each change to a child's routine. Bus changes are allowed for childcare purposes only, not for play or party dates. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) must arrange with the office beforehand for a bus switch. This restriction is in place for each child's safety.

Riding Bicycles to School

Students may ride their bicycles to school provided that they wear a helmet (as required under state law) and obey all traffic regulations. **A blanket permission note is required before students begin riding to and from school.** Bikes should not be ridden on sidewalks just outside school where children and adults are walking. Students not following safety rules may have their riding privileges revoked.

Food Service

School Breakfast & Lunch

The State of Massachusetts has signed into law on August 09, 2023; all children in public schools will receive 1 FREE Breakfast and 1 FREE Lunch per day, permanently.

Extra full student breakfast and lunches are available for $2.75 for each breakfast meal and $3.50 for each lunch per day. Milk costs $.65. A la Carte menu choices are available at a variety of prices. *Free and Reduced Lunch Assistance* forms are sent home at the start of the school year, but applications are available at the school office and accepted throughout the year. Review them carefully and refer to these forms that are part of the opening packet to see if they pertain to you.

Lunch Procedure

Brief description:

- Lunch in the building cafeteria
- Students will come to the cafeteria, meal choices (hot or cold) are placed on the counter, the student takes their meal package and proceeds to the cashier.
- Students enter their lunch code.
- Children eat their meals at tables or a desk safely spaced.
- Lunch monitors clean and sanitize desks after children leave and prior to the next group entering.

Lunch Menus

Lunch menus will be posted on the District Food and Nutrition Website.

Free and Reduced Lunch Applications:

Families should still complete a Free and Reduced Lunch Application if you might be eligible for free/reduced meals. Each application can be downloaded and emailed to the Food and Nutrition Director or by applying online. The application for Free and Reduced Lunch can be found on the District website under Food and Nutrition Services.

Even though lunches are free, we still need to maintain our Titan accounts in good standing with a debitable balance. If students want an extra milk or snack, there will be a charge for those items and the student's K12PaymentCenter account will be used.

Bringing Lunch from Home

If you choose to have your child bring lunch from home each day, to keep it cold, we recommend (1) bringing food in an insulated lunch bag with a frozen gel pack or frozen juice box; (2) freezing the sandwiches overnight (will thaw by lunchtime but keep cold until then); (3) packing the foods in a cooler with ice or another cold source.

School Visits

All visitors and volunteers are required to have a valid driver's license or Massachusetts issued identification card to be scanned-in upon entering the building *for any reason*; office staff will provide badges to wear once the ID is scanned into our system and each visitor is approved to enter. This includes stops at the Nurse's station. **All visitors who do not have a valid driver's license or Massachusetts issued ID card will not be allowed to enter the school during operating hours.**

Parents or guests wishing to visit a particular class are asked to plan with the teacher or the principal at least one day in advance. Teachers will always welcome an extra pair of hands; we encourage you to become an active part of our volunteer staff. Massachusetts State Law requires that all regular classroom volunteers, lunchroom visitors and field trip chaperones have a Criminal Record (CORI) check. These forms must be completed in the school office before your first volunteer visit.

Dress and Appearance

School is a place where student learning is a priority. A student's attire may influence his/her attitude as well as how much he or she learns. Student dress, therefore, is expected to be in good taste, appropriate for the weather and for academic work. It is not our purpose to dictate specific dress, but rather to ensure that our students are dressed in such a way as to contribute to their success and help generate a positive learning environment throughout our school. Students are not to be attired in clothing, which compromises safety or modesty or is disruptive to the educational process.

In order to assist parents in planning for their student's school apparel, the following guidelines are presented. Students are prohibited from wearing any clothing, including masks, that contain offensive or obscene symbols, slogans or words that degrade any gender, cultural, religious, or ethnic values, clothing that contains language or symbols oriented toward violence, drugs, or alcohol.

The administration reserves the right to determine appropriateness of clothing consistent with these guidelines. A student whose clothing is determined inappropriate for school will be required to arrange for other, more appropriate clothing to be provided.

Decorative footwear and flip-flops can create a safety issue when students play at recess and during Physical Education classes. Therefore, flip-flops or any other type of open-toed shoes are strongly discouraged for safety reasons.

All coats, boots, sweaters, sweatshirts, backpacks, lunchboxes and hats should be clearly marked with students' names. For those of you who have seen our Lost and Found area, you know that this can be a problem. Take the time to label! This will allow items to be returned easily if lost, or avoid confusion when two items are similar. Several cases of lost clothing were donated to charity during the last school year.

Recess

All students will have outdoor recess. Only in very inclement weather is recess held indoors. **Please be sure that your child is properly dressed.** Decorative footwear and flip-flops can create a safety issue when students play at recess. Therefore, flip-flops or any other type of opened-toe shoes are discouraged. We strongly recommend sneakers for all students.

Student Valuables

It is strongly recommended that students do not bring large sums of money, cell phones, hand-held video games, toys or stuffed animals to school.

Inclement Weather: Cancellations and Delays

Please be attentive to our telephone messaging system for news of school cancellations or delays. During stormy weather the District may call school for an entire day, or for a one to two hour delayed opening. If bad weather develops during the school day, afternoon classes or special programs and after-school activities may be canceled. It is important that families have plans in place for dealing with these possibilities.

We utilize the “BlackBoard” communication program that is capable of contacting all RMS families within a five to ten-minute window. As soon as the Superintendent has determined a delay, closing, or early dismissal, we will send out a “BlackBoard” call.

Because all district schools utilize the BlackBoard system, storm delays and closings may not be broadcast on local television stations. We ask that you not call the school office or the police station. The dispatcher reports they receive many calls that interfere with their ability to handle true emergencies.

Should the decision be made to close school early or cancel after-school activities, due to inclement weather, an attempt will be made to contact parents, using all emergency contact numbers within the “BlackBoard” system. In the event of a non-weather emergency, we will contact all parents using the same system.

Telephone Calls

Responsibility is an important attribute for all students. If students have forgotten books, classwork, or musical instruments, classroom teacher discretion will determine whether a call can be made via the classroom telephone. Teachers’ classroom phones are capable of local calling only. In cases of illness or emergency, calls will be made by the school nurse, an administrator, guidance counselor or personnel in the main office. Students will not be called to the phone for any reason. Messages will be taken in cases of illness and emergency.

Cell phones and Smartwatches

A student may carry or keep a cell phone or Smartwatch in his/her backpack **if authorized by the school office**. The phone or Smartwatch must be shut off and kept in the child’s locker/backpack and may be used only for emergency or unusual circumstances as agreed by parents and administration. The phone or Smartwatch may not be used to receive or send messages anytime during school hours **or on school buses**. Student phones or Smartwatches used to make, or receive, unauthorized calls during school hours, or on a bus, will be confiscated by the school administration or the bus driver.

Homework and Independent Reading

The School Committee has established homework guidelines that all teachers follow. Your child's teacher will establish homework routines appropriate to his/her grade level. The School Committee policy can be acquired through the main office at the school. We ask all family members to become “Reading Partners” with our students. Research shows the more children read, the better readers they become. We encourage all students to read independently each night for 20–30 minutes before bed. In some classrooms, Student Reading Logs are sent home for students and/or parents to initial.

Photographs of School Activities for Local Papers

Opt-Out Procedure for Parents Who Do NOT Want Their Child’s Picture to Appear

As part of our public relations efforts, local newspapers are invited to photograph many school programs and events. Students are often included in these photos. As a parent, you have the right to

request that no picture of your child is used in this way. **You must complete the online forms or make this request in writing by completing a FERPA Privacy Form, included in this packet, and returning it to the Principal before September 10th.** If no letter is on file, we assume parental permission is granted for photographs to appear in local newspapers or on our school website.

Opt Out for Library Books

If you prefer that your child does not check out a specific library book, you may opt out of having your child check out the book by emailing your school's librarian with the exact title of the book and the author's full name. If no email was sent to opt out, your student will have full access to the variety of books available in the library. Here is the link to the library book platform Alexandria: https://sippican.goalexandria.com/

Parent Involvement/Parent Concerns

1. Being actively involved in your child's school is one way to alleviate concerns about his or her education. The parent volunteer group at Sippican (VASE) meets for an hour once a month either on Zoom or in person at the school.

2. Parent volunteers are needed to be a part of our School Council. In June of 1993, the Massachusetts State Legislature passed and Governor Weld signed into law The Education Reform Act of 1993 . Section 53 of Chapter 71 of the Education Reform Act of 1993 calls for the establishment of a School Council at each elementary, secondary, and vocational school in the Commonwealth. The school council provision of the act is intended to enhance parent and community participation in the school. The PTA, by law, is responsible for conducting the election of all parent representatives to the School Council. The nomination and election process is conducted each September. The School Council meets monthly with the principal of the school and assists in the writing and implementation of the School Improvement Plan and the review of the annual school budget. Representation from primary and intermediate grade students' families, as well as special education parents (if available), staff members and the community sit on this advisory team. Meetings are typically one afternoon per month from 3:15-4:15 pm.

3. The Sippican School Committee sets its meeting schedule at the start of the school year, and these meetings are typically in the evening (6:30pm). Meetings are held in person and over Zoom at the Sippican School and are televised. School committee schedules, meeting resources and meeting minutes are available online here: https://www.oldrochester.org/district/sc

Constructive criticism of our school is welcomed on the assumption that it is motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of the educational program and to equip the school to perform its tasks more effectively. Complaints are resolved most expeditiously if they are first taken to the staff member or administrator immediately in charge of the area in which a problem arises, then through successive administrative levels to the Principal, Superintendent, and subsequently to the School Committee, if necessary. Anonymous letters serve no positive purpose when trying to resolve problems and will not be given the same weight as an identified correspondence. The School Committee has adopted a policy to be followed when a parent/guardian has a concern that has not been satisfactorily addressed. A copy of that policy is available at the school office.

Our principal and vice principal are available to all parents. Please call the school office or contact the principal directly via email: lynndessert@oldrochester.org. All teachers are accessible via the school's e-mail carrier as well. Go to our school website to access a list of those emails.

First Aid/Emergencies

If a sudden illness or an accident occurs at school, the school nurse will administer first aid and immediately notify parents. Parents are responsible for transporting the student home in the event of illness or injury. If a serious illness or accident (life-threatening accident) occurs at school, the Marion EMS will be called for transport to the hospital.

Health Information

Make sure your child is up to date on their physical and immunizations. Talk to your health care provider and school nurse about health concerns you have for your child.

Submit emergency health information forms with correct contact information as soon as the school year begins. If your child exhibits any of the symptoms listed above during the school day they will need to be picked up from school promptly.

The Sippican School reserves the right to establish such health requirements, in a manner consistent with state and federal law, and which remain in place until rescinded by the School Committee and/or the Superintendent.

Health Records

Student health records are kept in a locked file in the nurse's office. It is the parents' responsibility to keep the nurse informed of new medical information. Students are required to have physical examinations in grades 3 and 6.

Vision/hearing screenings and height/weight measurements are done yearly. Parents are notified only if the results are not within normal limits. Postural screening is done only for students in grade 5. Screening for head lice is done as needed.

Dispensing Medications

Children are not permitted to carry medications on the bus or in the school building. A signed order from a physician, dentist, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant is required to administer any prescription medications in school, as required by Massachusetts General Law. Parental permission is also required. A Medication Protocol form that covers non-prescription medications is included in this packet. Special arrangements for medication administration during field trips must be made with the school nurse. Medications will be given by a parent or by a school representative who has permission from the parent. Children will be allowed to self-administer inhalers on field trips only, with permission of the school nurse and when parental permission is on file at the nurse's office.

Additional Services Available

Sippican School offers a stimulating learning environment; there is a blend of the basics such as reading, language arts, mathematics, higher order skills such as decision-making and processing, blended with a rich offering of music, art and physical education.

The academic program at Sippican School is enriched by a variety of programs offered at varying grade levels. These include:

- Title I
- Social Work/Counseling Services
- Availability of the School Psychologist
- Reading Recovery and Reading Specialist Support
- Enrichment Specialist
- Choral and instrumental music programs
- Science Fair
- Garden Club

Since we are all different with varying needs, Sippican School provides many Special Education services to students (who are eligible) including:

- Inclusive support in regular classrooms
- Pull-out instruction when warranted
- The availability of the school psychologist
- Speech and Language therapies
- Occupational and physical therapies
- School Social worker small group/individual support

Non-Discrimination in Curriculum

Consistent with Massachusetts regulations, 603 CMR 26.05(1), the Marion School District, through its curricula and materials, encourages respect for the human and civil rights of all individuals, regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation. In accordance with district guidelines, families may request information from the building principal on available accommodations related to curriculum content.

Health and Guidance Curricula

ORR District Health and Guidance Curricula have been implemented across all grade levels at Sippican. There are nine general topics covered with the specific content tailored to the developmental needs of our differing age groups. The topics are as follows:

Growth & Development

Students will learn the basic characteristics of physical growth and development, including body functions and systems throughout the life cycle, and will acquire skills to promote and maintain positive growth and development (At the fifth-grade level, students will have an introduction to the human reproductive system. A parent letter will be sent out prior to the presentation).

- **Nutrition**

  Students will gain the knowledge and skills to select a diet that supports health and reduces the risk of illness and future chronic diseases.

- **Social & Emotional Health**

  Students will acquire knowledge about emotions and physical health, the management of emotions, personality and character development, and social awareness; and will learn skills to promote self-acceptance, make decisions, and cope with stress, including suicide prevention.

- **Family Life**

  Students will gain knowledge about the significance of the family on individuals and society, and will learn skills to support the family, balance work and family life, be an effective parent, and nurture the development of children.

- **Interpersonal Relationships**

  Students will learn that relationships with others are an integral part of the human life experience and the factors that contribute to healthy interpersonal relationships, and will acquire skills to enhance and make many of these relationships more fulfilling through commitment and communication.

- **Disease Prevention & Controls**

  Students will learn the signs, symptoms, and treatment of chronic and communicable diseases, and will gain skills related to health promotion, disease prevention, and health maintenance.

- **Safety & Injury Prevention**

Students will gain the knowledge and skills to administer first aid and carry out emergency procedures, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation, will avoid, recognize, and report verbal, physical, and emotional abuse situations, and will assess the factors that contribute to intentional and unintentional injury, including motor vehicle accidents, fire safety, and weapons safety.

- **Violence Prevention**

  Students will learn how their actions affect others, will understand the power that positive character traits can have in violence prevention, will gain skills to report incidents of violence and hurtful behavior to adults in the school and community, will avoid engaging in violence, and identify constructive alternatives to violence, including how to discourage others from engaging in violence.

If parents/guardians wish their children to be exempt from any portion of the Health Curriculum, a written request should be addressed to the school principal.

Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) Testing

Once during the school year, students in grade 5 participate in the Science Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) Test. Also, once a year all students in grades 3-6 will participate in the English Language Arts & Mathematics Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests. Testing during this school year will take place at the following times:

Grades 3–8 ELA and Mathematics, and grades 5 and 8 STE (computer-based tests)	
ELA Testing Window:	**March 24–April 18**
Math Testing Window:	**April 28–May 23**
Science Testing Window:	**April 28–May 23**

It is critical that all students be present during MCAS testing.

Student Records

The privacy of student records is guaranteed. Only parents/guardians and appropriate school personnel are allowed access to the information in a student's record. Specific written consent provided by the parent or legal guardian is necessary for any other examination. A student transcript, which includes name, address, and grades, is kept for at least sixty years. However, the student's temporary record, containing standardized test scores, evaluations by teachers, Special Education records, and the like, is given to the student upon graduation or destroyed within five years after the student leaves the school system.

In accordance with the student record regulations of the Massachusetts Department of Education, parents have the right to inspect a student's record. Records are made available within two (2) working days of a request being made. Copies of any part of the record may be requested and a reasonable fee may be charged for the cost of duplicating these materials. It has been our practice to make any student records easily accessible to parents and you will find the office staff most cooperative in this matter.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has adopted procedures for non-custodial parents who wish

to receive separate copies of student records or school notices. Information is available in the school office.

Report Cards and Parent Conferences

It shall be the duty of each teacher at the end of each term or at the end of any period of time designated by the Superintendent, to estimate and to record the progress of students. The report card is an effective means of communicating an individual student's progress in relation to the curriculum and his/her own mastery of skills and social development. In the elementary grades, the written record is a standards-based report that indicates a student's progress.

Sippican School operates on a three-term grading cycle.

Marking Periods	Report Cards go home
Term 1: **Marks Close 11/26/25**	**12/12/25**
Term 2: **Marks Close 3/13/26**	**3/20/26**
Term 3: **Marks Close 6/1/26**	**6/10/26 (Day 180)**

Regular communication between school and home is important if we are to be successful. Conferences between parents and teachers are scheduled once during the school year, but if questions about your child's progress should arise in any curricular area, do not hesitate to initiate a conversation with teachers at any time.

Promotion/Retention of Students

It is expected that students progress annually from grade to grade. Exceptions are made only when it is in the best educational interest of the student.

Student Enrichment

Sippican offers various ways for students to enrich their academic learning. Here are some examples:

- Science Fair
- Band opportunities for grades 4-6 including the *FORM* concert which showcases all bands in the district.
- Choral opportunities for grades 4-6 including the *FORM* concert which showcases all choruses in the district.
- After School Activities: These are a collaboration between VASE and teachers. Brochures are sent home with students before the sessions begin

Field Trips

During the year, field trips may be scheduled at each grade level. A student's behavior while on these trips will reflect upon his/her school. Misconduct will not be tolerated. A permission slip must be signed by one of his/her parents or guardians before a student can participate in the field trip. The form must be returned to the teacher in charge prior to the trip. All school rules apply to field trips. Any child may be denied the privilege of going on a field trip based on poor academic performance or inappropriate behavior.

Internet Use Policy

An Internet user agreement is given to students at the beginning of their elementary experience. Students and parents sign and return the agreement and it is kept on file.

General Statement and School Rules

Sippican School emphasizes a positive, community-based sense of responsibility and respect throughout the school day. Students learn what is expected of them through the consistent modeling from the adults around them. Students, teachers, administrators and parents all work together to maintain a safe, orderly school environment where everyone can learn and grow.

Classroom teachers implement the Responsive Classroom curriculum to proactively teach and reinforce courtesy, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control (CARES).

Students are expected to follow the school-wide rules that follow. These rules apply at all times, in all areas of the school.

- **Be Respectful**
- **Be Responsible**
- **Be Kind**

The following matrix outlines Sippican School rules.

Sippican School Wide Behavior Expectations

School-Wide Rules/Expectations	Typical Settings/ Contexts						
	All settings	Assemblies	Restroom	Cafeteria	Recess	Hallway	Bus
Be Respectful	*Calm and quiet bodies	*Calm and quiet bodies *Polite clapping *Still feet	*Quiet voices	*Wait quietly in line *Stay in your seat	*Take turns	*Walk single file on the right *Voices off in line	*Quiet voices *Calm and quiet bodies
Be Responsible	*Take care of materials *Do your best *Follow Directions and stay on task	*Raise a quiet hand *Listen with your whole body *Eyes on the speaker	*Think 2 2 Pumps 2 Pulls 2 points	*Use quiet voices *Raise your hand *Take only what you will eat *Eat your own food	*Use equipment safely *Keep your hands and body to yourself *Line up safely and silently when the whistle blows	*Go directly where you need to go *Have what you need *Eyes forward	*Sit facing forward in your seat *Keep things in your backpack *Walk to your bus *Keep aisles clear
Be Kind	*Treat others with respect	*Hands to yourself	*Gentle knock on stall door *One student per stall	*Help a friend in need *Say please/thank you *Hands and body to yourself	*Share *Include everyone *Use kind words	*Hands and body to yourself	*Kind words *Hands and body to yourself

Most of the expectations stated in this handbook are district-wide policies. Within Sippican School, an office referral form is available for teachers to fill out when a student needs to go to the office for disciplinary reasons. This form allows teachers to communicate the particular offense. Students who are referred to the office for serious offenses will meet with the principal, assistant principal. Consequences vary depending on the offense.

School Staff Role in Establishing High Behavioral Expectations

Teachers and support staff model and reinforce positive behavior and compliance with school-wide rules and values. In addition, teachers implement classroom rules and policies. Generally, these rules are developed with student involvement appropriate to age and social development.

Teachers follow all disciplinary steps outlined in their program on a consistent basis. This may include notes or phone calls home, after school time, individual contracts as deemed appropriate, or other strategies. Teachers and parents who have ongoing concerns about a student's behavior have several sources of support including the School Adjustment counselor and Administration.

Responsive Classroom

Sippican School utilizes the Responsive Classroom approach in supporting our students in the learning process. All Sippican teachers participate in Responsive Classroom training.

Responsive Classroom is a way of teaching that creates a safe, challenging, and joyful classroom and schoolwide climate for all students. Teachers who use the Responsive Classroom approach understand that all of students' needs—academic, social, emotional, and physical—are important. Elementary and middle school teachers create an environment that responds to all of those needs so that your child can do his or her best learning. The Responsive Classroom approach develops teachers' competencies in four key areas:

1. Engaging Academics—Teachers create learning tasks that are active, interactive,appropriately challenging, purposeful, and connected to students' interests.
2. Positive Community—Teachers nurture a sense of belonging, significance, and emotional safety so that students feel comfortable taking risks and working with a variety of peers. 3. Effective Management—Teachers create a calm, orderly environment that promotes autonomy and allows students to focus on learning.
4. Developmentally Responsive Teaching—Teachers use knowledge of child development, along with observations of students, to create a developmentally appropriate learning environment.

BULLYING PREVENTION

The Old Rochester/MA School Superintendency Union #55 School Districts are committed to providing a safe, positive and productive educational environment where students can achieve the highest academic standards. No student shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyberbullying.

"Bullying" is the repeated use by one or more students or school staff members of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target´s property;
- places the target in reasonable fear of harm to themselves, or of damage to their property;
- creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

"Cyber-bullying" means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the creation of an electronic medium in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Bullying and cyber-bullying may occur in and out of school, during and after school hours, at home and in locations outside of the home. When bullying and cyber-bullying are alleged, the full cooperation and assistance of parents and families are expected.

For the purpose of this policy, whenever the term bullying is used it is to denote either bullying, or cyber-bullying.

Bullying is prohibited:

- On school grounds;
- On property immediately adjacent to school grounds;
- At school-sponsored or school-related activities;
- At functions or programs whether on or off school grounds
- At school bus stops;
- On school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the school district; or,
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the schools;

Bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the school district if the act or acts in question:

- create a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringe on the rights of the target at school; and/or
- materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Prevention and Intervention Plan

The Superintendent and/or their designee shall oversee the development of a prevention and intervention plan, in consultation with all district stakeholders, which may include teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians, consistent with the requirements of this policy, as well as state and federal laws. The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be reviewed and updated at least biennially.

The Principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the bullying prevention and implementation plan within their school.

Reporting

Students, who believe that they are a target of bullying, observe an act of bullying, or who have reasonable grounds to believe that these behaviors are taking place, are obligated to report incidents to a member of the school staff. The target shall, however, not be subject to discipline for failing to report bullying.

Each school shall have a means for anonymous reporting by students of incidents of bullying. No formal disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Parents or guardians, or members of the community, are encouraged to report an incident of bullying as soon as possible.

A member of a school staff shall immediately report any instance of bullying the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the school Principal or their designee.

Investigation Procedures

The Principal or their designee, upon receipt of a viable report, shall promptly contact the parents or guardians of a student who has been the alleged target or alleged perpetrator of bullying. The actions being taken to prevent further acts of bullying shall be discussed.

The school Principal or a designee shall promptly investigate the report of bullying, using a Bullying/Cyber-bullying Report Form which may include interviewing the alleged target, alleged perpetrator, staff members, students and/or witnesses.

Support staff shall assess an alleged target´s needs for protection and create and implement a safety plan that shall restore a sense of safety for that student.

Confidentiality shall be used to protect a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or is witness to or has reliable information about an act of bullying.

If the school Principal or a designee determines that bullying has occurred they shall take appropriate disciplinary action and if it is believed that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator, the Principal shall consult with the school´s resource officer and the Superintendent to determine if criminal charges are warranted. If it is determined that criminal charges are warranted, the local law enforcement agency shall be notified.

The investigation shall be completed within fourteen school days from the date of the report. The parents or guardians shall be contacted upon completion of the investigation and informed of the results, including whether the allegations were found to be factual, whether a violation of this policy was found, and whether disciplinary action has or shall be taken. At a minimum the Principal or their designee shall contact the parents or guardians as to the status of the investigation on a weekly basis.

Disciplinary actions for students who have committed an act of bullying or retaliation shall be in accordance with district disciplinary policies.

Each school shall document any incident of bullying that is reported per this policy and a file shall be maintained by the Principal or designee. A monthly report shall be provided to the Superintendent.

Confidentiality shall be maintained to the extent consistent with the school's obligations under law.

Retaliation

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying, shall be prohibited.

Target Assistance

The Schools shall provide counseling or referral to appropriate services, including guidance, academic intervention, and protection to students, both targets and perpetrators, affected by bullying, as necessary.

Training and Assessment

Annual training shall be provided for school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students in preventing, identifying, responding to, and reporting incidents of bullying.

Age-appropriate, evidence-based instruction on bullying prevention shall be incorporated into the curriculum for all K to 12 students.

Publication and Notice

Annual written notice of the relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to students and their parents or guardians, in age-appropriate terms.

Annual written notice of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to all school staff. The faculty and staff at each school shall be trained annually on the bullying prevention and intervention plan applicable to the school.

Relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff shall be included in the school employee handbook.

The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be posted on the Schools website.

LEGAL REFS.: Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended
Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO Commission
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
603 CMR 26.00
M.G.L. 71:37O; 265:43, 43A; 268:13B; 269:14A
REFERENCES: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education´s Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan
CROSS REFS.: AC, Nondiscrimination
ACAB, Sexual Harassment
JIC, Student Discipline
JICFA, Prohibition of Hazing
JK, Student Discipline Regulations
SOURCE: MASC Updated 2023

Approved by the Joint School Committee on September 28, 2023.

Video Cameras

The School Committee, after carefully considering the privacy rights of students and drivers and the District's duty to ensure discipline and protect the health, welfare, and safety of staff and students on school transportation vehicles, has authorized the use of video cameras on its transportation vehicles when deemed necessary by school administration.

School Bus Conduct Rules

1. Treat your bus driver and other passengers with respect and courtesy.
2. Get on and off the bus by moving slowly and safely.
3. Passengers must be seated at all times with their feet on the floor, and facing forward. 4. Conversations should be carried on in a normal tone of voice. Shouting is inappropriate and unsafe.
5. Arms and heads must be kept inside the bus.
6. Windows may be open only by the bus driver or with his/her permission
7. Aisles must be kept clear at all times.
8. Profane and bullying language is forbidden.
9. Horseplay is unsafe and forbidden.
10. Throwing objects is unsafe and forbidden.

Bus Discipline Policy

The driver to the offending student, school principal and the student's parents in writing will report violations of bus rules promptly. Violations may result in the loss of bus privileges or application of discipline sanction up to and including suspension.

1st Offense – Warning

2nd Offense – **Assigned Seat at Front of Bus**– *This will be strictly enforced in conjunction with changes to our bullying policy*

3rd Offense - **5-day bus suspension**

Repeated Offenses* - Consideration of permanent exclusion

*Including exclusion from the bus for the balance of the school year.

Complete copies of the Transportation Policy are available upon request and for all new incoming students. 19

The Old Rochester Regional School District has established rules and policies regarding bus discipline. Bus drivers report violations of rules to administration. Parents receive a written notice of the incident and its consequences. are advised that school buses are equipped with videotape equipment. Taped incidents may be used in the process of dealing with infractions of school bus rules.

Copies of the Old Rochester Regional School District Bus Policy are available at the Sippican office or by visiting the link below.

https://z2policy.ctspublish.com/masc/browse/oldrochesterset/rochester/EEAE/z2Code_EEAE

Idling

School buses and personal motor vehicles are strictly prohibited from idling on school grounds.

Tobacco and Vaping

Paraphernalia or possession/use of tobacco and/or vaping within school buildings, facilities, on school grounds, and on school buses is prohibited. See School Committee Policies ADC and JICH.

Student Behavior Expectations

Old Rochester Regional School District's school discipline philosophy recognizes and respects the rights and dignity of others. As a community of educators, we believe that building relationships with students is paramount. This includes collaboration with students and their families, so together we can partner to ensure student success. We need the support of all stakeholders, especially our families, to make this goal a reality.

The ultimate goal of our school discipline philosophy, including restorative practices, is to build inclusive school communities that allow students to remain actively engaged in learning and minimize time taken from instruction and learning.

Rules for behavior in school are necessary to protect the educational rights and privileges of all students. It is essential that all students accept personal responsibility for maintaining high standards of conduct, including the observance of all school rules. The purpose of the Sippican Elementary School discipline policy is corrective; it is to encourage students to improve their conduct.

The school's discipline code is designed to assist students to show respect for others and their property, as well as for themselves. We ask our students to take a look at themselves and their actions. Being respectful is defined as having common courtesy, treating others kindly, saying please and thank you, etc. Students are reminded of these goals throughout their school day. Students are expected to comply with school rules and accept the leadership of teachers and school staff. Students should fully understand that any staff member in the building has the authority to address behavior at any time. Students must adhere to school rules not only on school grounds, but also on the way to and from school, on school buses, during after school activities, field trips and any other time when they are under school supervision. All students must also comply with state and federal laws as they apply to the conduct of minors and juveniles

Our intentions for school discipline are aligned with the following objectives:

- Students, parents/guardians/caregivers, and school personnel, are provided with a clear understanding of the various administrative responses to discipline as described in the student handbook.
- Utilization of discipline practices that are progressive and tiered by design.
- The exercise of any of a student's rights ceases when it impacts the rights of another individual or group.
- No student has the right to disrupt the educational process within a school or designated learning environment.
- Provide students with ample restorative opportunities to change behavior and nurture relationships when possible.
- Provide professional learning and support to employ strategies and actions that align with the principles of restorative practices.

- Every reasonable effort will be made to keep students actively engaged in their learning environment as much as possible.

- An office visit, detention, suspensions, and/or expulsions are used judiciously in alignment with the expectations of student behavior.

Each day in our schools, we support our students' social emotional learning and development, while employing practices to help strengthen our learning community. We are focused on building healthy, positive relationships, preventing harmful behavior, productively resolving conflict with individuals and groups, and fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment.

We value open dialogue to repair relationships, and we remain committed to the idea that harmful and disruptive behavior shall not be permitted to interfere with other students' access to learning. Families are encouraged to reach out to classroom teachers, school social workers or school administration with any questions or concerns.

Student Code of Conduct: (Standards for due process, as set forth in M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H, 37H½ and 37H¾,)

In addition to providing students with academic rigor and educational opportunities, the staff and community of the Old Rochester Regional School District & MA Superintendency Union #55 strive to support students' conduct and discipline toward becoming contributing members of society and achievement of their individual and collective goals. Students are expected (a) to arrive at school and at classes promptly, (b) to be in attendance every day except for illness or family emergencies, (c) to be prepared for classroom work, (d) to contribute in positive ways to the activities of each class, and (e) to accept responsibility for any inappropriate actions while working to be sure they are not repeated.

Our Code of Student Conduct provides guidelines for students to maintain a positive and supportive environment where students and staff are able to work collaboratively. It establishes every individual's responsibility to respect the rights of others. Finally, it identifies possible consequences for misconduct, ensuring that students know in advance of their actions what obligations may be due.

Conduct expectations are based on a system of progressive discipline, where an administrator has the discretion to significantly increase penalties in cases of second or subsequent offenses, or in cases where the severity of the infraction requires it. In addition, student discipline might be provided not only to hold students accountable for inappropriate behaviors but also to teach students about their responsibilities for good citizenship. Students may participate in a community service project or other alternative remedy as a means of accountability. Alternative remedies may include (but are not limited to): lunch detention, structured school day, collaborative problem solving, removal of privileges, referral to outside support (e.g. counseling).

The principal or designee will consider ways to re-engage the student in the learning process and shall not suspend the student until alternative remedies have been employed and their use and results documented. Alternative remedies may include, but shall not be limited to: (i) mediation; (ii) conflict resolution; (iii) restorative justice; and (iv) collaborative problem solving. Principals or designees will document the use and results of alternative remedies. Principals or designees do not have to utilize alternative remedies in the following situations: 1) if the alternatives are unsuitable or counter-productive, and 2) in cases where the student's continued presence in school would pose a specific, documentable concern about the infliction of serious bodily injury or other serious harm upon another person while in school.

See School Committee Policies JK and JIC.

File: JIC - STUDENT DISCIPLINE

The School Committee believes that all students deserve every opportunity to achieve academic success in a safe, secure learning environment. Good citizenship in schools is based on respect and consideration for the rights of others. Students will be expected to conduct themselves in a way that the rights and privileges of others are not violated. They will be required to respect constituted authority, to conform to school rules and to those provisions of law that apply to their conduct.

Each Principal shall include prohibited actions in the student handbook or other publication to be made available to students and parents/guardians.

Principals and staff shall not use academic punishment of any form as a consequence to inappropriate behaviors/actions by students.

The Principal may, as a disciplinary measure, remove a student from privileges, such as extracurricular activities and attendance at school-sponsored events, based on the student's misconduct. Such a removal is not subject to the remainder of this policy, law, or regulation.

The Superintendent shall provide each Principal with a copy of the regulations promulgated by DESE and shall have each Principal sign a document acknowledging receipt thereof, which shall be placed in their personnel file.

Disciplinary Investigations

Nothing shall prevent a school administrator from conducting an investigation, including student interviews, of a school-related disciplinary incident. After a behavior complaint is made, an investigation will take place. This investigation, in accordance with M.G.L Ch 76, Section 5, will be nondiscriminatory, and will take into account explanations from involved parties and witnesses. Student discipline shall be addressed on an individual basis with each student, and may range from a conversation with the student to an expulsion, depending on the infraction. Individual student discipline will only be discussed with the family/guardians of the child directly involved. No information regarding students or their discipline will be given to anyone who is not a parent or guardian of that child. If the disciplinary procedures herein have been implemented and have been unsuccessful in changing the unacceptable behavior of a student, the parents/guardians will be contacted by the administration and may be asked to come into school to meet with their child’s team of teachers and/or the administration.

Suspension

In every case of student misconduct for which suspension may be imposed , a Principal shall consider ways to re-engage the student in learning. Unless specific reasons are documented as to why such alternative remedies are unsuitable or counter-productive, and/or in cases where the student's continued presence in school would pose a specific, documentable concern about the infliction of serious bodily injury or other serious harm upon another person while in school, the principal shall not suspend or exclude a student until alternatives have been employed and their use and results documented. Alternatives may

include but shall not be limited to the use of evidence-based strategies and programs such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and collaborative problem-solving.

The superintendent and/or principal shall also implement district/school-wide models to re-engage students in the learning process which shall include but not be limited to positive behavioral interventions and support models, and trauma sensitive learning models.

Notice of Suspension:

Except for emergency removal or an in-school suspension of less than 10 days, a Principal must provide the student and the parent/guardian oral and written notice, and provide the student an opportunity for a hearing and the parent/guardian an opportunity to participate in such hearing before imposing suspension as a consequence for misconduct. The Principal shall provide both oral and written notice to student and parent/guardian in English and in the primary language of the home if other than English. The notice shall include the rights enumerated in law and regulation. To conduct a hearing without a parent/guardian present, the Principal must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent/guardian.

The principal or a designee shall notify the superintendent in writing, including by electronic means, of any out-of-school suspension imposed on a student enrolled in kindergarten through grade 3 prior to such suspension taking effect. That notification shall describe the student's alleged misconduct and the reasons for suspending the student out-of-school. For the purposes of this section, the term "out-of-school suspension" shall mean a disciplinary action imposed by school officials to remove a student from participation in school activities for 1 day or more.

For any suspension or exclusion under this section, the principal or designee of a school in which the student is enrolled, shall provide to the student and parent/guardian, notice of the charges and the reason for the suspension or exclusion in English and in the primary language spoken in the home of the student. The student shall receive the written notification and shall have the opportunity to meet with the principal, or a designee, to discuss the charges and reasons for the suspension or exclusion prior to the suspension or exclusion taking effect. The principal, or a designee, shall ensure that the parent or guardian of the student is included in the meeting, provided that such meeting may take place without the parent or guardian only if the principal, or a designee, can document reasonable efforts to include the parent or guardian in that meeting.

Emergency Removal

A Principal may remove a student from school temporarily when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the Principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption. The Principal shall immediately notify the Superintendent in writing of the removal including a description of the danger presented by the student.

The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days following the day of the emergency removal, during which time the Principal shall:

1. Make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student's parent/guardian of the emergency removal, the reason for the need for emergency removal, and the other matters required in the notice as referenced in the applicable regulation;

2. Provide written notice to the student and parent/guardian as required above. The notice shall include the rights enumerated in law and regulation;

3. Provide the student an opportunity for a hearing with the Principal that complies with applicable regulations, and the parent/guardian an opportunity to attend the hearing, before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for hearing is otherwise agreed to by the Principal, student, and parent/guardian;

4. Render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day, which meets the requirements of applicable law and regulation.

A Principal shall also ensure adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation prior to removal.

In School Suspension- Not more than 10 days consecutively or cumulatively

In-school suspension is a disciplinary action that the Marion, Mattapoisett, Old Rochester, or Rochester School District utilizes as an alternative to short-term suspension and to restore acceptable student behavior. Situations and/or circumstances related to Student Discipline may result in the disciplinary action that includes in-school suspension. When applicable, restorative practices are utilized. Procedures have been developed to ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) and students have due process afforded to them through a discipline hearing:

- It is the responsibility of the Principal to immediately notify the student of the disciplinary charge and to provide the opportunity to the student to dispute the allegations and to explain any circumstances prior to the decision to suspend in-house. If the Principal determines that the student did commit the disciplinary action, the student's in-house suspension must not exceed ten days cumulatively or consecutively in a school year. The student must be notified of the length of in-house suspension.

- The Principal must orally notify the parent(s) and/or guardian(s) of the disciplinary action, consequence, duration and reasons for concluding such consequence. Furthermore, the Principal should notify (at least two attempts) the parent(s) and/or guardian(s) of their right to meet and discuss the student's academic performance and behavior and ways to prevent further discipline, as soon as possible.

- The Principal will notify in writing, a notice of in-house suspension and offer a meeting to discuss the event and decision on the day of the suspension or as soon as possible.

- Educational services will be provided throughout the duration of any in-house suspension to ensure that a student can make academic progress, compared to all other students.

Principal's Hearing - Short Term Suspension of up to 10 days

The hearing with the Principal shall be to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and

explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequences for the infraction.

At a minimum, the Principal shall discuss the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information.

The student also shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the Principal should consider in determining whether other remedies and consequences may be appropriate as set forth in law and regulation.

The Principal shall provide the parent/guardian, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the Principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.

The Principal shall, based on the available information, including mitigating circumstances, determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, what remedy or consequence will be imposed.

The Principal shall notify the student and parent/guardian of the determination and the reasons for it, and, if the student is suspended, the type and duration of suspension and the opportunity to make up assignments and such other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal, as required by law and regulation. The determination shall be in writing and may be in the form of an update to the original written notice.

If the student is in a public preschool program or in grades K through 3, the Principal shall send a copy of the written determination to the Superintendent and explain the reasons for imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the short-term suspension takes effect.

Principal's Hearing - Long Term Suspension of more than 10 days but less than 90 days (consecutive or cumulative)

The hearing with the Principal shall be to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequences for the infraction.

At a minimum, in addition to the rights afforded a student in a short-term suspension hearing, the student shall have the following rights: In advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the Principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not; The right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's/parent's/guardian's expense; The right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so; The right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district; The right to request that the hearing be recorded by the Principal, and to receive a copy of the audio recording upon request. If the student or parent/guardian requests an audio recording, the Principal shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made and a copy will be provided to the student and parent/guardian upon request.

The Principal shall provide the parent/guardian, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the Principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.

The Principal shall, based on the evidence, determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension as required by law and regulation, what remedy or consequence will be imposed, in place of or in addition to a long-term suspension. The Principal shall send the written determination to the student and parent/guardian by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent/guardian for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the Principal and the parent/guardian.

If the Principal decides to suspend the student, the written determination shall: Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing; Set out the key facts and conclusions reached by the Principal; Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school; Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of removal from school as required by law and regulation; Inform the student of the right to appeal the Principal's decision to the Superintendent or designee, but only if the Principal has imposed a long-term suspension. Notice of the right of appeal shall be in English and the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate, and shall include the following information: The process for appealing the decision, including that the student or parent/guardian must file a written notice of appeal with the Superintendent within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long-term suspension; provided that within the five (5) calendar days, the student or parent/guardian may request and receive from the Superintendent an extension of time for filing the written notice for up to seven (7) additional calendar days; and that the long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the Superintendent decides to reverse the Principal's determination on appeal.

If the student is in a public preschool program or in grades K through 3, the Principal shall send a copy of the written determination to the Superintendent and explain the reasons for imposing an out-of-school suspension before the suspension takes effect.

Superintendent's Hearing

A student who is placed on long-term suspension following a hearing with the Principal shall have the right to appeal the Principal's decision to the Superintendent.

The student or parent/guardian shall file a notice of appeal with the Superintendent within the time period noted above (see Principal's hearing - Suspension of more than 10 days). If the appeal is not timely filed, the Superintendent may deny the appeal, or may allow the appeal in his or her discretion, for good cause.

The Superintendent shall hold the hearing within three (3) school days of the student's request, unless the student or parent/guardian requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days, in which case the Superintendent shall grant the extension.

The Superintendent shall make a good faith effort to include the parent/guardian in the hearing. The Superintendent shall be presumed to have made a good faith effort if he or she has made efforts to find a day and time for the hearing that would allow the parent/guardian and Superintendent to participate. The

Superintendent shall send written notice to the parent/guardian of the date, time, and location of the hearing.

The Superintendent shall conduct a hearing to determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense of which the student is accused, and if so, what the consequence shall be. The Superintendent shall arrange for an audio recording of the hearing, a copy of which shall be provided to the student or parent/guardian upon request. The Superintendent shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made of the hearing and a copy will be provided to the student and parent/guardian upon request. The student shall have all the rights afforded the student at the Principal's hearing for long-term suspension.

The Superintendent shall issue a written decision within five (5) calendar days of the hearing which meets the requirements of law and regulation. If the Superintendent determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the Superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than the Principal, but shall not impose a suspension greater than that imposed by the Principal's decision. The decision of the Superintendent shall be the final decision of the school district with regard to the suspension.

Expulsion

Expulsion is defined as the removal of a student from school for more than ninety (90) school days, indefinitely, or permanently as allowed by law for possession of a dangerous weapon; possession of a controlled substance; assault on a member of the educational staff; or a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, or adjudication or admission of guilt with respect to such felony, if a Principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

Any student expelled from school for such an offense shall be afforded an opportunity to receive educational services and make academic progress.

Academic Progress

Any student who is suspended or expelled shall have the opportunity to earn credits, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other schoolwork as needed to make academic progress during the period of his or her removal from the classroom or school. The Principal shall inform the student and parent/guardian of this opportunity in writing, in English and in the primary language of the home, when such suspension or expulsion is imposed.

Any student who is expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days, whether in school or out of school, shall have an opportunity to receive education services and make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, through the school-wide education service plan.

The Principal shall develop a school-wide education service plan describing the education services that the school district will make available to students who are expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days. The plan shall include the process for notifying such students and their parents/guardians of the services and arranging such services. Education services shall be based on, and be provided in a manner consistent with, the academic standards and curriculum frameworks established for all students under the law.

The Principal shall notify the parent/guardian and student of the opportunity to receive education services at the time the student is expelled or placed on long-term suspension. Notice shall be provided in English and in the primary language spoken in the student's home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate. The notice shall include a list of the specific education services that are available to the student and contact information for a school district staff member who can provide more detailed information.

For each student expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days, whether in-school or out-of-school, the school district shall document the student's enrollment in education services. For data reporting purposes, the school shall track and report attendance, academic progress, and such other data as directed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Reporting

The school district shall collect and annually report data to the DESE regarding in-school suspensions, short- and long-term suspensions, expulsions, emergency removals, access to education services, and such other information as may be required by the DESE.

The Principal of each school shall periodically review discipline data by selected student populations, including but not limited to race and ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, English language learner status, and student with a disability status in accordance with law and regulation.

SOURCE: MASC - August 2022

LEGAL REF: M.G.L. 71:37H; 71:37H ½; 71:37H ¾; 76:17; 76:21

603 CMR 53.00

603 CMR 53.10(3) through (5)

603 CMR 53.13(1)Chapter 222 An Act Relative to Student Access to Educational Services and Exclusion from School

Supporting Students with Disabilities and Avoiding the Discriminatory Use of Student Discipline under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and

Questions and Answers Addressing the Needs of Children with Disabilities and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act's (IDEA's) Discipline Provisions.

Approved by the Joint School Committee January 29, 2024.

Special Offenses

Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 37H

G.L. Chapter 71, §37H
Offenses:
On school premises or at school-sponsored events or activities:

- Possession of a dangerous weapon
- Possession of a controlled substance
- Assault on a member of the educational staff

Consequence:

- Exclusion for amount of time up to expulsion;
- Principal may suspend and not expel as he or she deems appropriate

Due Process:

- Constitutional due process;
- Prior notice to student of charge and written notice of right to hearing;
- Right to representation at hearing; and to present evidence and witnesses at hearing.

Appeal from Principal's Decision:

- Right to appeal expulsion decision to superintendent
- Timeline for requesting appeal: ten days from date of expulsion
- Right to counsel at hearing
- Superintendent can make factual determinations as well as determine

consequence.

Provision of Education Services:
Provide every student an opportunity to make academic progress during the period of suspension (whether in-school or out-of-school) or expulsion, to makeup assignments, and earn credits missed. A district that suspends or expels a student for more than 10 consecutive days must provide the student and parent with a list of alternative educational services.

See G.L. c. 76, §21 and 603 CMR 53.13 for details, including required notice.

Discipline Collection and Reporting:

- Collect and report to the Department data concerning the types and lengths of removals, suspensions, and expulsions, and access to education services
- Periodically review discipline data by selected student populations; determine extent of disciplinary removals and the impact on such populations; adjust practice as appropriate
- Department will provide assistance to school(s) if Commissioner identifies school(s) in district that have the highest percentage of suspensions of expulsions in Massachusetts for more than 10 cumulative days in a school year.

  See 603 CMR 53.14 for details.

G.L. Chapter 71, §37H ½
Offenses:
1. A felony charge or felony delinquency complaint against a student.
2. Conviction, adjudication, or admission of guilt with respect to such felony.

Consequence:
1. Felony charge or felony delinquency complaint: suspension for a period of time deemed appropriate by principal if the principal determines the student's continued presence would have a substantial detriment on the general welfare of the school.
2. Felony or felony delinquency conviction or adjudication or admission of guilt with respect to such felony: removal for a period of time up to expulsion (i.e. permanent exclusion) if the principal determines that the student's continued presence would have a substantial detriment on the general welfare of the school.

Due Process (for either suspension or expulsion):

- Constitutional due process;
- Written notice of the charges and of the reasons before the suspension takes effect;
- Principal may determine the appropriate amount of time for suspension;
- Written notice of the right to appeal to the superintendent;
- Suspension remains in effect pending appeal to the superintendent.

Appeal from Principal's Decision to Suspend or to Expel:

- Timeline for requesting appeal: no later than 5 calendar days following the effective date of the suspension/expulsion
- Superintendent must hold a hearing within 3 calendar days of receipt of request and issue a decision within 5 calendar days.
- Superintendent may overturn or alter the decision.

A student may appeal a suspension decision and the subsequent expulsion decision (following the conviction, adjudication or admission of guilt) regarding the same offense.

Provision of Education Services: Same as above

Discipline Collection and Reporting: Same as above

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G.L. Chapter 71, §37H ¾

Offenses: Any offense that is not addressed in 37H or 37H ½.

Consequence:

- May not suspend a student from school long-term (i.e. more than 10 days) until other remedies and consequences have been considered; consider ways to re-engage the student in learning.
- Consequences other than suspension may draw from evidence- based strategies and programs such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and behavioral interventions and supports.
- No student may be suspended for more than 90 school days in a school year.

Due Process:

- Except for in-school suspension and emergency removals, prior oral and written notice of the charge to the student, and to the student's parent, and the opportunity for a meeting/hearing with the principal before suspension takes effect.
- Consult 603 CMR 53:08 for details on notices.
- Consult 603 CMR 53:07 for emergency removal process and 603 CMR 53:10 for in-school suspension process
- Explicit requirement to translate notice of the charges and the reasons in primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate.
- Principal must make and document reasonable efforts to include the parent in

meeting/hearing with the student.

- Principal must audiotape the hearing if requested by the parent and all those attending the hearing must be informed of the taping.
- Following hearing, principal must provide a written decision; and if a long-term suspension imposed, must inform student and parent in writing of the right to appeal to the superintendent and the process to be followed; translate notice of appeal rights in primary language of the home, or other means of communication where appropriate.
- Before any out-of-school suspension of a student in preschool or grades K – 3, principal must notify superintendent in writing of the alleged misconduct and the reasons for suspending the student out-of-school.

Appeal from Principal's Decision:

- Timeline for requesting appeal: written request not later than 5 calendar days following effective date of suspension; parent can request extension for up to 7 calendar days, which must be granted.
- The superintendent must hold a hearing within 3 calendar days of the parent's request for a hearing. The student or parent may request up to 7 additional calendar days. If so, the superintendent must allow the extension. The superintendent may have the hearing without the parent if the superintendent has made a good faith effort to include the parent.
- The student has the right to present oral and written testimony, to cross examine witnesses, and to counsel at his or her expense at the hearing.
- The superintendent must audiotape the hearing and notify hearing participants that the hearing will be taped.
- The superintendent determines the facts and consequences, if any, but cannot impose a consequence greater than the principal decided. A written decision is due within 5 calendar days of the hearing.

Provision of Education Services: Same as above

Discipline Collection and Reporting: Same as above

<u>Sexual Harassment</u>

We are committed to providing an educational environment that is free of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in any form at any level of the school system. Any student or employee found to have condoned or engaged in sexual harassment may, depending upon the extent of his/her participation, be subject to disciplinary sanctions, up to and including suspension, in or out of school, or permanent exclusion from school in the case of a student, and up to and including termination of employment, in the case of an employee.

If a student or employee believes that they have been subjected to sexual harassment, whether by a student, a school employee, or any other person who comes on school property with permission, or that s/he has witnessed the sexual harassment of another, the student or employee should report the incident promptly to the Principal, the Associate Principal, the Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent, or any other administrator with whom the student or employee feels comfortable. A complaint of sexual harassment by a student, or by a parent on the student's behalf, may also be made to any counselor or

teacher. A counselor or teacher who receives such a complaint will notify the appropriate administrator to initiate an investigation.

It is the policy of the school committee to have all complaints of sexual harassment promptly and fully investigated and to take any steps necessary to remedy the situation. Normally, the Principal/Associate Principal will conduct the investigation of a complaint of sexual harassment or a designee selected by the Principal and will include separate private interviews with the complainant, each person accused of harassment and each of the witnesses, if any. The administrator conducting the investigation will ordinarily document the interview, but those interviewed may also be asked to provide a written statement. All students and employees are expected to cooperate fully with any investigation of sexual harassment. Information provided during an investigation of sexual harassment will be accused may be informed of the identity of the complainant or witnesses, but, in those circumstances, the accused will be cautioned against reprisals or recriminations or any attempted intimidation or coercion of the complainant or witnesses. At the conclusion of the investigation, the administrator will prepare a report, which will be shared with both the complainant and the person or persons accused of harassment. If the complainant or the accused is dissatisfied with the results of the investigation, either may discuss the issue directly with the superintendent.

Disciplining of Students with IEPs

State and federal regulations provide eligible students with certain procedural rights and protections in the context of student discipline. The Individual Education Program (IEP) for a student must indicate whether the student can be expected to meet the regular discipline code of the school or whether the code should be modified due to the student's disability. Such modifications will be described in the student's IEP.
As provided for in state and federal regulations:

- Any eligible child may be suspended up to 10 school days in any school year.
- After a student with special needs has been suspended for 10 school days in any school year, during subsequent removal, the school district must provide sufficient services for the student to continue to receive a free and appropriate public education.
- A suspension of longer than 10 consecutive school days or a series of suspensions that constitute a pattern are considered to represent a change of placement.
- Prior to a suspension that constitutes a change of placement, district personnel, the parent/guardian and other relevant members of the team will convene a "Manifestation Determination" meeting to review all relevant information to determine whether the behavior was caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the disability or was the direct result of the district's failure to implement the IEP.
- If the Manifestation Team determines that the behavior was not a manifestation of the disability, then the district may suspend or expel the student consistent with the policies applied to any student without disabilities. The district will, however, provide services to enable the student, although in another setting, to continue to participate in the general education curriculum and to progress towards IEP goals. A functional behavioral assessment and appropriate behavioral intervention services will be provided to lessen the likelihood of the behavior reoccurring.
- If the Manifestation Determination determines that the behavior is a manifestation of the disability, then the team will complete a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention plan. Except when the student is placed in an interim alternative education setting, the student will return to their original placement unless the parents and district agree otherwise
- Regardless of the manifestation determination, the student may be placed in an interim alternative education setting (as determined by the team) for up to 45 school days if the behavior involves weapons or illegal drugs, another controlled substance, or the infliction of serious bodily injury on another person at school or school function; or, considered case by case, unique circumstance; or

on the authority of a hearing officer if the district provides evidence the student is "substantially likely" to injure himself or others.
- These procedural requirements apply to students not yet determined to be eligible for special education if the Parent/Guardian has expressed concern in writing or requested an evaluation, or if staff had expressed concerns about the student's behavior directly to the director of student service or other supervisory personnel.

Protections for children not yet eligible for special education and related services

- A child who has not been determined to be eligible for special education and related services under this subchapter and who has engaged in behavior that violates a code of student conduct, may assert any of the protections provided for in this subchapter if the local educational agency had knowledge (as determined in accordance with this paragraph) that the child was a child with a disability before the behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred.

- The Marion School District shall be deemed to have knowledge that a child is a child with a disability if, before the behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred:
    - the parent of the child has expressed concern in writing to the administration, or a teacher of the child, that the child is in need of special education and related services;
    - the parent of the child has requested an evaluation of the child; or
    - the teacher of the child, or other personnel of the District, has expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the child, directly to the director of special education or to other supervisory personnel of the District.

- Marion School District shall not be deemed to have knowledge that the child is a child with a disability if the parent of the child has not allowed an evaluation of the child or has refused services or the child has been evaluated and it was determined that the child was not a child with a disability.

- Conditions that apply if no basis of knowledge
    - In general, if the District does not have knowledge that a child is a child with a disability prior to taking disciplinary measures against the child, the child may be subjected to disciplinary measures applied to children without disabilities who engaged in comparable behaviors.
    - Limitations: If a request is made for an evaluation of a child during the time period in which the child is subjected to disciplinary measures, the evaluation shall be conducted in an expedited manner. If the child is determined to be a child with a disability, taking into consideration information from the evaluation conducted by the District and information provided by the parents, the District shall provide special education and related services, except that, pending the results of the evaluation, the child shall remain in the educational placement determined by school authorities.

Disciplining of Students with 504s

The code of conduct applies to students with and without disabilities; however, students on 504 plans must have an equal opportunity to be successful with classroom rules and behavioral regulations. Section 504 prohibits districts from disciplining students more severely than non-disabled students on the basis of disability. The free and appropriate education (FAPE) requirement of Section 504 provides that appropriate

procedures for discipline are designed to meet individual educational needs of students with disabilities as adequately as the needs of non-disabled students are met.

Students with 504 plans may be excluded from their programs, as can students without disabilities. If students are suspended or expelled, they are entitled to oral or written notice of charges and an appeal for the opportunity to tell their side. Expulsion or suspensions of 10 or more days are considered a change of placement and must follow the procedures designated by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

When students with 504 plans are excluded from their program for more than 10 school days in the school year, it must be determined if the behavior was a result of the students' disability (manifestation determination). If it is determined that the behavior was related to the disability, students may not be excluded from the current educational placement until a new plan is written. The behavioral intervention services and modifications in the plan should address the behavior violation so that it does not recur.

If the student's misconduct is determined not related to their disability then the district may discipline in the same way as other students would be disciplined. 504 students do not have to be provided with a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) during expulsion or suspension for behavior not related to the disability. Students currently engaged in drug or alcohol abuse are not protected under Section 504.

When the placement of students with disabilities is changed for disciplinary reasons, the students and parents are entitled to the procedural protections required by Section 504 and the ADA. A school district may employ due process procedures that meet the requirements of IDEA to comply with the Section 504 and ADA requirements for procedural safeguards. These protections include appropriate notice to parents or guardians, an opportunity for their examination of records, an impartial hearing with the participation of parents or guardians and an opportunity for their representation by counsel and a review procedure. Thus, if, after a reevaluation of an initial placement decision, the parents disagree with the determination regarding the relationship of the behavior to the disability or with the subsequent placement proposal in those cases where the behavior is determined to be caused by the disability, they may request an impartial hearing.

A school district is not prohibited from employing its normal, reasonable procedures short of a significant change in placement for dealing with 504 students who are endangering themselves or others. When students present an immediate threat to the safety of others, school officials may promptly adjust the placement or suspend the students for up to 10 school days, in accordance with rules that are applied evenhandedly to all children.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Old Rochester Regional School District and the Massachusetts Superintendency Union No. 55, Marion, Mattapoisett, and Rochester, Massachusetts are committed to equal employment and educational opportunity for all members of the school community. Students and employees are protected from discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender identity, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, pregnancy, homelessness, or disability in admission to, access to, treatment in or employment in its programs and activities.

The schools are also committed to maintaining a school and work environment that is free of harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, gender identity, pregnancy, homelessness, and disability. Harassment includes physical or verbal conduct that is derogatory; this may include jokes, gestures, unsolicited remarks, or other behavior that creates an intimidating or offensive working or learning environment.

A student or employee who has a concern about discrimination or harassment should inform the Principal or the Superintendent of Schools, who will take appropriate steps to attempt to resolve the situation, such as discussion with involved persons, identifying and questioning of witnesses, and other appropriate steps. In most cases, a resolution will be achieved. However, if it is determined that a hearing is warranted, a hearing will be held before the Superintendent of Schools or a person that he or she may designate.

The goals of the above grievance procedures are to resolve complaints in a fair and timely manner and to ensure compliance with nondiscriminatory practices. Additionally, reprisals or retaliation against any individual who reports on, or files a discrimination or harassment complaint is strictly prohibited.

If you wish to discuss your rights, would like further information, or want to obtain help in filing a complaint, you may contact the Superintendent of Schools. The telephone number is (508) 758-2772 x1956. Any person having inquiries concerning the School District's compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, ADA, or Chapter 622 is directed to contact the superintendent of schools, who has been designated by the School District to coordinate the District's efforts to comply with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, ADA, and Chapter 622, or write to:

Office for Civil Rights
John W. McCormack Post Office and Courthouse
Room 222
Post Office Square
Boston, MA 02109

Conflict of Interest Law and Gifts for Teachers

The Commonwealth's conflict of interest law,G.L. c. 268A, and the financial disclosure law, G.L.c.268B, restrict gifts and gratuities that school staff may receive. All teachers and school volunteers must be made aware of the content of these laws, specifically sections 3 and 23 of 268A, and section 6 of 268B. Section 3(b) prohibits a public employee from requesting or receiving anything of 'substantial value'* which is given for or because of an official act or act within the public employee's official responsibility. Similarly, under section 3(a), no one may give or offer such gifts to public employees.

In addition, G.L.c. 268B, section 6, specifically prohibits public employees or members of their immediate families from soliciting or accepting gifts with an aggregate value of $100.00 or more in a calendar year. Next, under G.L.c. 268A, section 23(b)(2), public (school) employees are prohibited from using or attempting to use their position to obtain for themselves or others unwarranted privileges of substantial value that are not properly available to similarly situated individuals. Finally, even if a gift or gratuity is not of substantial value or does not fall within the prohibitions discussed above, G.L.c. 268A, section 23(b)(3) will, in many situations, require public (school) employees to disclose to their appointing authority, the gift and their relationship with the giver.

All school volunteers are required to be aware of the state's general laws and language surrounding gifts.

Anything worth $50.00 or more is considered to be "of substantial value" for the purposes of the conflict of interest law.

The full content of the State Ethics Commission law is available from the school office or online at http://www.mass.gov.