



Manchester Essex Regional High School

Student Handbook

MANCHESTER ESSEX REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

Dear Students and Families,

Welcome to Manchester Essex Regional High School!

The Student Handbook serves as a comprehensive guide to our school's policies, procedures, and expectations. It has been thoughtfully designed to create a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment for all members of our school community. The handbook describes our school's operational procedures, academic guidelines, and services available to you here at MERHS. The student handbook is available on our website; please refer to the handbook when needed to help assist you in your high school experience.

We are here for you to help you achieve your goals in high school, and beyond. We aim to keep our Vision of the Graduate at the forefront of your educational experience. Take advantage of your time here and make the most of your opportunities.

By adhering to the guidelines outlined in the Student Handbook, students play an integral role in fostering a positive and harmonious school environment that allows everyone to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. We encourage parents and guardians to review the handbook alongside their children, as it provides an excellent opportunity for open discussions about school values, goals, and responsibilities.

Throughout the academic year, our teachers, administrators, and support staff are available to address any questions or concerns you may have regarding the Student Handbook or any other school-related matters. We value open communication and believe that together, we can build a strong and supportive educational community. We are excited to work with you throughout your high school career and we look forward to seeing the positive impacts you make on our school community.

Respectfully,

Julie Sgroi

Julie Sgroi
Principal

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Mission/Vision/Core Values

Mission

The Mission of the Manchester Essex Regional School District (MERSD) is to provide a high quality, comprehensive, student-centered educational experience that prepares them for a post-secondary educational or service experience, a career, and life as an engaged member of society.

Vision

MERSD, with the partnership and support of member communities, will provide educational opportunities and resources so that all students can realize their individual, unique, and highest potential, achieve academic excellence, value integrity and honesty, and become intellectually curious and critical thinkers.

Core Values

Student Centered

We believe schools must establish a safe environment that supports the development of all students. Schools must engage all aspects of a child's development, including knowledge, a sense of self, emotional well-being, physical health, and skills and strategies to negotiate an ever-changing and unpredictable world.

Student Achievement

We believe MERSD should foster a learning environment that encourages academic achievement, social and emotional freedom and engagement, collaboration and creative problem-solving; the skills to confront new ideas with both rigor and sensitivity, and the awareness to and ability to extend the skills beyond the academic core to include experiential learning, the arts, cultural awareness, and physical and social emotional health.

Equity

We believe our schools must strive to create a just and equitable environment that respects individual differences and the diversity of our communities, country, and world.

Family & Community Partnerships

Schools are a reflection of their communities. We believe that providing a quality education that prepares our students for an unpredictable world is a shared responsibility, fostered by partnerships among the schools, families, educational non-profits, businesses and the community-at-large.

Resources

We believe the District and our community partners should collaborate to provide the necessary funding to equip our students with the essential critical thinking, analytic, communication, and problem-solving skills they need to be productive, contributing members of our local and global communities and deliver on the promise of our students' potential.

Vision of the Graduate

Empathetic Global Citizen
Responsible Collaborator
Critical Thinker
Effective Communicator
Personally Accountable
Social/Emotional Awareness
Innovative and Creative

MERHS Vision of a Graduate

Global Citizen

- Understands and accepts different cultures and beliefs
- Seeks out and participates in a variety of cultural experiences
- Participates in meaningful community service
- Demonstrates an awareness of current events
- Recognizes cause and effect within a variety of global and social systems
- Understands the importance of acting as a responsible citizen

Collaborator

- Acknowledges and respects perspective of others
- Participates actively and equitably in group settings
- Seeks appropriate resources to carry out responsibility as part of a group
- Can identify and work towards a common goal
- Advocates for ideas while resolving conflict within a group

Critical Thinker

- Recognizes and questions implicit/explicit bias
- Evaluates ideas, information and sources for validity, relevance and impact
- Reasons and weighs evidence from multiple perspectives to reach conclusions
- Recognizes patterns and can make inferences
- Draws appropriate conclusions
- Synthesizes information to solve problems and draw appropriate conclusions

Communicator

- Demonstrates responsible digital communication
- Expresses ideas in a purposeful and confident manner both verbally and in writing
- Writes and speaks clearly for a variety of audiences and purposes
- Employs active listening
- Acknowledges multiple perspectives
- Considers impact of written and spoken word
- Advocates for self and others

Self Aware Individual

- Accountable for one's own words and actions
- Practices academic integrity
- Practices self-care skills
- Overcomes academic and personal barriers to meet personal goals
- Demonstrates empathy
- Expresses emotions in a meaningful way
- Strives to maintain life balance

Innovators and Creators

- Demonstrates open-ended thought
- Willingness to take academic risks
- Displays curiosity
- Demonstrates habits of mind that identify the requisite skills and knowledge needed to solve a complex problem.
- When faced with a problem, recognizes and understands failures and seeks alternate solutions independently
- Employs resiliency in the face of a challenge

Manchester Essex Regional High School Bell Schedule

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
7:45-8:40	A	G	F	E	D	C	B
8:44-9:39	B	A	G	F	E	D	C
9:43-10:33	U	U	U	U	U	U	U
10:37-11:37	D	C	B	A	G	F	E
11:41-1:11 1st lunch: 12:11-12:41 2nd lunch: 12:41-1:11	E	D	C	B	A	G	F
1:15-2:15	F	E	D	C	B	A	G
	DROP C & G	DROP B & F	DROP A & E	DROP G & D	DROP F & C	DROP E & B	DROP D & A

Academic Information

The following materials should provide students and parents with the information needed to build a solid academic plan for the high school years, with dual goals of meeting graduation requirements and designing a program that challenges each student to meet his / her/their full potential. Good planning requires ongoing communication among students, parents, teachers and school counseling. We welcome your questions and encourage individual meetings with your child's school counselor as needed. You are your child's most important teacher and role model.

School Counseling Mission Statement

The mission of the School Counseling Department is to provide a comprehensive and developmental school counseling program of services that promotes the academic, social/emotional, and career potential of all students. Through counseling, advocacy, collaboration, leadership, and systemic change, counselors navigate students to become life-long learners, responsible community members, and to achieve personal excellence.

Because of the wide variety of opportunities at Manchester Essex Regional High School, as well as the diversity of entrance requirements of thousands of post-secondary schools and vocations, it is imperative that the student seek the advice and assistance of his/her/their school counselor in selecting the courses that are appropriate to the student's and parent's expectations.

The school counseling staff presents group seminars with materials designed to meet the developmental needs appropriate to students at each specific grade level. The School Counseling Office strongly encourages students to make appointments to discuss any issues which might arise.

- Students may make appointments by signing up with their assigned counselor. Except in cases of emergency, students may only schedule appointments during non-academic blocks (study halls). Appointments may also be made before or after school, with the consent of the student's counselor.
- Parents may make appointments with their child's counselor by contacting the counselor directly or by contacting the counseling administrative assistant.

Massachusetts Guidelines for College and Career Readiness

The Massachusetts High School Program of Studies (MassCore) is the recommended program of study that Massachusetts high school students need in order to be better prepared for college and a career. Developed by an advisory group from the K-12, higher education and business sectors MassCore maintains flexibility for students and high schools while allowing core requirements. Courses included in MassCore should be rigorous, engaging and based on appropriate Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks/ higher education recommendations.

MassCore recommends a comprehensive set of subject area courses and units as well as other learning opportunities to complete before graduating from high school.

The recommended program of studies includes: four years of English, four years of Math, three years of a lab-based Science, three years of history, two years of the same world language, one year of an arts program and five additional: “core” courses such as business education, health and /or technology. Mass Core also includes additional learning opportunities including Advanced Placement classes, dual enrollment, a senior project, online courses for high school or college credit, and service or work based learning.

Graduation Requirements

A total of 110 credits are required for graduation, along with successful completion of all areas of competency examinations required by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 40 hours of Community Service, completion of Senior Choice of Related Experience (SCORE) and attendance at MERHS for at least one semester.

Specific requirements include: Subject Area	<u>Years</u>	<u>Credits</u>
English	4 years	20 credits
Mathematics	4 years	20 credits
Science	3 years	15 credits
Social Studies	3 years (two year US History)	15 credits
World Language	2 years (same language)	10 credits
Physical Education	4 Years	10 Credits
Community Service	40 hours	20 hours to be completed by the end of grade 10.
The remainder of the 110 credits may be taken in elective areas.		

Four Year Plan

Students are encouraged to take as intensive a four-year program as possible. All students are encouraged to go beyond minimum requirements in the core areas. Students are strongly urged to take a world language throughout all four years of high school. Currently two years of a world language is required as a minimum requirement for admission to most colleges. In addition, many colleges have a 3rd or 4th year expectation for the admitted students. Most core courses are a year-long and award 5 credits. Electives may be year-long or semester courses of 2.5 credits. Each student is encouraged to enroll in 35 credits per year but is required to carry at least 30 credits unless otherwise approved by the Principal.

Community Service Graduation Requirement

Volunteer service is a way for many people, particularly adolescents, to develop a sense of community. The MERHS Community Service Requirement will provide students with the

opportunity to involve them in a variety of enriching, useful, and practical experiences that serve the school and community.

Through community service, students can learn new skills, assume responsibilities, become aware of the needs of others, and learn the importance of unselfish serving and giving. Community service links students to the wider world and exposes them to people and situations outside their previous experiences.

Each student at MERHS will be required to perform a minimum of 40 hours of community service between the last day of eighth grade and the last day of school as a senior. This requirement may be satisfied through participation in a single activity or combination of approved activities. Students graduating from MERHS must satisfy their Community Service Requirement. Students should participate in community service projects at the rate of ten hours per year.

Definition of Community Service – A recognized community service activity at MERHS is one that:

- Is performed without compensation
- Has some institutional or organization affiliation; all government, charitable and non-religious IRS-ruled non-profit organizations automatically qualify as community service providers
- Does not involve participation in church or synagogue related activities which have the distinct purpose of promoting religion and/or advancing, supporting churches or synagogues.
- Results in a service to at least one person other than the student and is generally a benefit to the “community.”
- Occurs during or outside of the school day.
- May be used to satisfy more than one requirement, i.e., Boy Scouts, National Honor Society, etc.

Guidelines for Earning Community Service Credit – To earn credit for community service:

- The service must meet prior definition
- The service needs not be pre-approved by the School Counseling Department
- The service must be verifiable from information provided on the community service completed by the service supervisor.

Course Levels

The entire MERHS curriculum is a college preparatory program with room for individuals to work at different levels in all the core areas, according to their particular strengths and weaknesses. In the 9th and 10th grades two levels are offered: College Prep and Honors. In the 11th and 12th grades Advanced Placement courses are added, so that a total of three levels are available for the last two years of high school. Levels represent the different academic standards offered in our courses. Decisions regarding placement are made on an individual basis, using teacher recommendations, grades from prior courses, placement and standardized test scores

where applicable, and input from the student, parents, and the school counselor. More detailed explanations of the expectations of each level of instruction are found in the Program of Studies..

Course Withdrawal/Change Policy

Dropping a course requires the approval of a student's parent/guardian, teacher and department chair. If dropping a course would result in a student carrying fewer than 30 credits for the year, the drop will not be allowed unless an appropriate course can be added. A student who drops a course during the year may not complete that course in summer school. The policies for withdrawing from courses or change levels are as follows:

- Courses dropped during the first three weeks of the school year (or semester for semester courses) will not report on the report card.
- Courses dropped after three weeks will have a grade reported for the quarter and transcript and a "W" or "W" recorded for the remaining quarters of the school year.
- Students requesting a change to drop or add a course must do so within the recognized add/drop period of the first three weeks of school. Withdrawals occurring before the fourth week of school will not be noted on the transcript as a "W".
- Students wishing to add or drop a class must complete an Add/Drop Form. These forms are located in the school counseling office. The form must be completed fully. A student should follow his/her/their current schedule until the process is completed and a new schedule is generated.
- Upward level changes may occur during the first three weeks of the first marking period and within one week after the first quarter grades are posted.
 - To change a level, a student should complete a Course Level Waiver Form.
 - Course Level Waiver Forms are reviewed by the Department Chair who will issue a decision regarding change of placement
 - Any appeals regarding decisions in level change should be directed to the Principal.
- Downward level changes may occur during the first three weeks of the first quarter and within one week of the first quarter grades being posted.
 - To change a level, a student should complete a Course Level Waiver Form.
 - Course Level Waiver Forms are reviewed by the Department Chair who will issue a decision regarding change of placement
 - Any appeals regarding decisions in level change should be directed to the Principal.
- There will be no level changes made during the third and fourth quarter
- There will be no parental/guardian overrides when there are clearly defined departmental criteria and/or stated course prerequisites.

Grading System

Grading System		AP	Honors	College Prep
A+	98-100	6.0	5.5	4.5
A	93-97	5.7	5.2	4.2
A-	90-92	5.4	4.9	3.9
B+	87-89.9	5.1	4.6	3.6
B	83-86	4.8	4.3	3.3
B-	80-82.9	4.4	3.9	2.9
C+	77-79.9	4.1	3.6	2.6
C	73-76	3.8	3.3	2.3
C-	70-72	3.5	3.0	2.0
D+	67-69.9	3.1	2.6	1.6
D	63-66	2.8	2.3	1.3
D-	60-62	2.5	2.0	1.0
F	0-59.9	0	0	0

The Valedictorian and Salutatorian are named at the end of first semester of senior year based on their rank in class. At a minimum, a student must be enrolled as a full time student at MERHS throughout sophomore, junior and senior years to be eligible for Valedictorian and Salutatorian.

At the beginning of a course, teachers will describe course expectations, requirements, and criteria used for grading tests, written and oral reports, projects and research papers. Teachers will also discuss other factors which may affect the student's grade, such as class participation. Culminating experiences will be required in English, math, science, social studies and world languages. Students who are unsure about the grading requirements for a course should resolve questions with the teacher.

Students who fail a required course must repeat the course the following year. Students who fail a course but have maintained an average of at least 50% during the school year may be eligible to attend summer school to make up for lost credit. Prior to enrolling in a course the student must have signed approval by his or her School Counselor, classroom teacher and Department Chair. Students earning an average less than 50 will be required to repeat the full-year course at MERHS or other program pre-approved by the Principal.

A student who receives a grade of "incomplete" on their report card, has two weeks after the grading period to complete outstanding work. After two weeks, the grade of incomplete will be changed to an "F" if required work is not complete. Extensions may be granted by the Principal. Students are encouraged to meet with the teacher if they have received an incomplete in any course.

Quarter Dates

Quarter 1	
Mid-Quarter	9/26/2025
Quarter Ends	10/31/2025
Quarter 2	
Mid-Quarter	12/5/2025
Quarter Ends	1/23/2026
	No Semester Exams
Quarter 3	
Mid-Quarter	3/4/2026
Quarter Ends	4/3/2026
Quarter 4	
Mid-Quarter	5/12/2026
Quarter Ends (tentative)	6/12/2026

GPA Calculation

GPA's for all students are calculated using all courses in which the student enrolled. The only courses that will not be included in the calculation are physical education, courses taken pass/fail, courses not taken at MERHS and online courses. The Valedictorian and Salutatorian will be selected using this calculation. MERHS will not release class rank, but will however, release decile ranking in the form of the school profile.

Honor Roll

The Honor Rolls are compiled at the end of each grading period. In order to be named to an honor roll, students may not have any "incomplete" for the grading period. Grades from all courses have equal weight in determining honor roll status.

HIGH HONOR ROLL	HONOR ROLL
All grades of A- and above	All grades of B- and above

National Honor Society

Selection to the MERHS Chapter of National Honor Society conforms to the guidelines set by the National Council. Selection to NHS is a privilege, not a right, which is applied fairly and consistently to all candidates. Students do not apply for membership; instead they provide information to be used by the MERHS Faculty Council to support their candidacy for membership. Membership is granted only to those students selected by the Faculty Council. The selection process is open to sophomores and juniors who meet the following criteria:

- As the first step in the process, juniors and seniors student academic records are reviewed to determine those who are scholastically eligible for membership, *i.e.*, those persons who meet the required cumulative, 4.35 GPA for grades 9-12. This review generally occurs at the start of the school year.
- Junior and Senior students who are eligible scholastically (*i.e.*, "candidates") are notified and informed that for further consideration for selection to the chapter, they may complete the Candidate Form available on the NHS Advisor's website. This form outlines the candidate's accomplishments in the areas of leadership, service, honor and character. This form also requires a statement by the student regarding any discipline issues beyond the classroom that involve the Dean or police since the start of high school. Any violation of school rules or public law substantial enough to result in suspension from school will be grounds for not considering a student for selection as a member until at least 12 calendar months have passed.
- The selection procedure is determined by the NHS Faculty Council, a five-member selection committee facilitated by the chapter adviser who sits as the sixth, non-voting member of the group, and approved by the principal.
- Additional faculty input is invited from all faculty members. It is important to note that the actual selection of new members is made by a vote of the five appointed members of the Faculty Council; the additional comments are used to supplement the candidates' application when considering selections.
- The Candidate Form is then reviewed by the Faculty Council for verifiable information about the candidates relevant to their consideration for membership. The leadership, service, honor and character of all candidates are reviewed carefully according to a standard rubric.
- Prior to notification of any candidates, the chapter adviser reports to the principal the results of the Faculty Council's deliberations for approval. Lists of selected and non-selected students, as well as reasons for non-selection, are incorporated into this meeting. This assures the support of the administration prior to any notification.
- Formal notification of all candidates who have provided the required levels of verifiable information for leadership, service, honor and character and their parents is provided in writing about selection and the timing of the induction ceremony. Formal notification of students who are not selected is also provided in writing.
- Attendance at the Induction Ceremony is mandatory for successful membership. The Induction is held during the second quarter. Once selected, members are expected to continue to meet the selection criteria for each quarter of the school year. Each member must maintain a cumulative, weighted GPA of 4.35, volunteer a minimum of five hours of community service per quarter of the school year that is above and beyond the graduation requirements, fulfill significant leadership roles each year, participate in MERHS chapter activities and continue to demonstrate exemplary character and honesty.

The dates for the NHS selection for the 2025-2026 school year are as follows*:

Notify candidates: September 30, 2025

Candidate Application Forms due Friday, October 10, 2025

Candidates notified of result Friday, October 24, 2025

Appeals due by Monday November 3, 2025

Appeals decided by Monday November 10, 2025

Induction on Thursday, December 4, 2025

*Dates subject to change slightly due to extenuating circumstances.

Students not selected by the Faculty Council to be inducted to NHS may appeal the Faculty Council decision according to the following procedure:

Appeals must be registered with the chapter adviser within 2 weeks* of notification of non-acceptance. If no appeal has been registered within 2 weeks, all records pertaining to this round of selection are considered inactive, and cannot be activated again. Records are retained for 1 full year after the selection process and are then destroyed.

There are no regulations requiring the giving of a reason for non-selection, however the MERHS NHS indicates the reasons for non-selection in the notification (letter, email, etc.). Indeed, it is the contention of the national office as well as the MERHS Society that if the recommended selection process has been followed and undertaken in all its aspects in a fully professional manner, then there should be nothing to hide from the appellant regarding their non-selection.

The content of an appeal should include an explanation of why the original application should be reconsidered. This explanation must be an elaboration of the originally submitted material, and not new information. Duplication of the original submission and new information that was not included on the original application are not permitted.

After submission, the appeal is reviewed by the advisor along with the summary notes from the Faculty Council review. Two outcomes are then possible:

- 1 Resubmission of the student's information to the Faculty Council for reconsideration.
- 2 Submission of the relevant information to the principal who consults with the Faculty Council or advisers regarding their decision-making processes.

Outcomes of an appeal can include, but are not limited to:

- 1 Rejection of the appeal, sustaining of the original judgment
- 2 Request from the principal for the Faculty Council to reconsider the case
- 3 A change in the decision, resulting in the selection of the student in question
- 4 An overturning of the Faculty Council's decision by the administration
- 5 Referring the appeal, following rejection, to the next step in the local school hierarchy (e.g., superintendent).

The national office recognizes the nature of these guidelines as being both new and possibly contrary to existing procedures on many campuses. The national office encourages advisers, Faculty Councils, and principals to review this information carefully as they address the issue of appeals at the local level.

Once inducted a member's records will be reviewed at the start of each semester. Meeting the above standards will result in continuation as an NHS member. Not meeting the above standards will result in probation for a minimum of one semester. During probation, students will not participate in NHS activities nor be officially affiliated with the NHS. Should non-compliance extend into another semester, the member will be considered for dismissal from the Society and a hearing will be scheduled. Any report of flagrant violation of either school rules or public law by a member will cause the Faculty Council to review the report, hear the member's account of the situation and determine whether probation, dismissal, or no action is merited.

The Faculty Council can select to discipline a member by placing them on warning (sometimes referred to as suspension or probation), during which time they are considered NOT IN GOOD STANDING with the chapter, although technically still retaining membership. Such warning periods will be for a minimum of one semester, after which regular membership is restored. Only members who are in good standing will be allowed to wear the Society's emblem and participate in the Society's activities. Notation of membership on any document must denote the probation period (for example, on applications and other formal documents where NHS membership is valued.)

National Art Honor Society

PURPOSE/GOAL:

The purpose of NAHS is to provide students with ways to be recognized for their artistic talents, artistic interests and to create leadership roles for the chapter to operate effectively. NAHS spotlights the role of the arts in both the school and local community with a major emphasis on community service.

REQUIREMENTS FOR CANDIDACY:

Students are recruited for NAHS based on their interest in working on artistic-related projects as a group. Students should be enrolled in an art course and maintain a minimum of a B average in that class. Students will pay a small fee for dues and attend all meetings. Students will participate in the induction ceremony as well as complete 5 hours of community service.

Manchester Essex Scholar

The highest academic award a student at MERHS can receive is to be named a Manchester Essex Scholar. This recognition is given at the end of the junior year. In order to become a Junior Scholar, a student must achieve the following;

- A minimum cumulative grade point average of 4.7 under criteria established by the Student Achievement Awards Committee (SAC). A qualifying GPA must be based on a minimum of five semesters in courses from the five major academic areas of English, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Foreign Language. All 5 semesters must be taken from grades 9 through the first semester of grade 11.
- To continue as a Senior Scholar, the same standard must be maintained at the end of the first semester of the senior year. Selection as Junior Scholar is not a prerequisite to the Senior Scholar award. Determination of this award is again the responsibility of the SAC.

Academic Awards

In addition to the foregoing honors, there are numerous awards available to Manchester Essex students. Many of these awards are made possible by generous donations from members of the community, past and present, to honor those who have made contributions to the towns of Manchester and Essex. There are also a number of book awards provided by local organizations and colleges to outstanding students in every class and recognition of outstanding students in each department area.

School Day

The school day begins with the first block at 7:45am and ends at 2:15pm. From 2:15 to 3:00pm is reserved for matters such as after school assistance from teachers, detention, and extracurricular activities. Students should arrive at school with enough time to be organized and ready for the first block class and may leave school after 2:15pm, if they have no further commitments. Extracurricular activities take place after 2:15pm, and the library is open from 2:15 pm to 3:30 pm.

Senior Privilege – Senior students that have a study hall during the first block may arrive at school at 8:40am with parent approval. Senior students that have a study hall during the last block may leave school at 1:15pm with parent approval. Students **MUST** sign out in the main office. Failure to do so will lead to loss of the privilege.

Attendance

Students are expected to be in school on time and to attend all classes each day. If a student is absent or going to be late, the student's parent/guardian is expected to call or email the school office. **Calls should be made to (978) 526-4412 before 9:00 a.m.** The Main Office should be notified of **all** absences. Calls and messages can be made 24 hours a day.

Any student not in school by 8:00 am will not be allowed to participate in after school or extra/co-curricular activities. The only exception is seniors with first block privilege.

Absence

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Excellent attendance and school success go hand in hand. Although we recognize that illness and emergency may cause a student to be absent periodically, we hope these situations are limited. The more often a student is absent—even if the absence is unavoidable—the more difficult it is for the student to stay engaged and academically successful. It is important to understand that all missed instructional time negatively impacts student outcomes. Families play an essential role in ensuring that their child attends school consistently and on time every day. If families face specific attendance challenges, our staff is available to partner with families to find appropriate support. It is vital to work as partners to support our students' success.

WHAT DOES MA STATE LAW SAY ABOUT SCHOOL ATTENDANCE?

Massachusetts' compulsory school attendance law (G.L. c. 76, § 1) requires children between the ages of 6 and 16 attend school every day. General Laws chapter 76 sets out many aspects of compulsory attendance, including the responsibilities of parents/guardians and school committees.

Parents/guardians responsibilities:

- ensure that a child in their care attends school. G.L. c. 76, §2.
- call the school at a designated number at a designated time as established by the school committee to report a child's absence and reason for it. G.L. c. 76, §§1A, 1B.

Schools keep parents informed of their child's attendance through:

- Phone calls
- Holding a parent/guardian or student meeting
- Attendance letters

Following state guidelines, attendance will be taken daily for each student in each class. Student attendance is a factor in school and district accountability. This means that all schools and families need to work together to minimize chronic absenteeism.

CHRONIC ABSENCES

Students who miss 10% of days enrolled regardless of whether such absences are excused or unexcused (e.g., 18 days absent when enrolled for 180 school days) are considered [chronically absent](#). National [research](#) shows that chronic absenteeism erodes the academic and social skills students need to succeed in school.

Additionally, The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has determined that a student absent from school *for any reason* for 10% or more of the school year (18 days

in a typical year/situation) is classified as “chronically absent” in the DESE Accountability System. This classification can have a negative impact on schools’ accountability rating and should be avoided if at all possible. To avoid students hitting this DESE benchmark, letters will be mailed home when students have 5 absences, 10 absences, and 15 absences (cumulative). At the 10- and 15-day mark, a meeting with a school administrator will be requested and, in some cases, required.

DOCUMENTED ABSENCES

The state’s compulsory school attendance law (G.L. c. 76, § 1) applies to all absences from school, even if they are considered “documented” at the school level. Certain absences can be considered “documented” at the school level if they are due to:

- Medical (with documentation)
- Bereavement
- Religious
- College Visit/Postgraduate Appointments
- Nurse Dismissal

In order for an absence to be marked documented, students must provide documentation to the main office for each day they are absent from school. This documentation must include the date absent, the reason for the absence, and the parent/guardian’s signature. If the absence is anticipated, (for example, in the case of a college visit), parents/guardians should notify the school in advance of the absence.

ABSENCE RESPONSIBILITIES

Students and families should communicate regularly with teachers and plan to make-up for missed school work. In the case of an unanticipated absence, students are expected to confer with teachers and establish a mutually acceptable timeframe for the completion of missed assignments, class work and tests.

Working together we can help our students have strong attendance. Your voice is critical in reaffirming to your student your expectation that they go to school every day and how important that habit is to ensuring they graduate high school on time. Here are some resources created by Attendance Works that you can use to help support your student:

[For Middle & High School Families \(English\)](#)

[Other Languages Linked \(Elementary & Secondary\)](#)

A student is considered absent when he/she/they has not been in school for at least four of the six regularly-scheduled blocks. Students who have been reported as absent may not be in the school building for any reason nor may they participate in extracurricular activities on the day of the absence.

Any student who exceeds these limits will be in jeopardy of losing full credit for the course or courses in question. Should a student exceed the limit for absences and be in jeopardy of losing credit for a course, the student, or the student's parent/guardian, may make a written request for a review within three (3) days of the issuance of report cards. The Principal, school counselor, teacher, student and parent(s)/guardian will meet to review the matter. If the outcome of the review process is not satisfactory, appeals may be pursued in accordance with the procedures set forth in Appendix B. The appeal must be made within 5 days of the notification.

Tardiness

Being late or "tardy" to school deprives the student of valuable class time and disrupts others when the student joins the class. A student is considered late if he/she/they **is not in class** at the beginning of the first block at 7:45 a.m. Parents will be notified by automatic call each time their child is late to school. A student who is late to school must first report to the Main Office to sign in before proceeding to class.

- Students who have excessive tardies (**arriving to school after 7:45 a.m.**) will meet with the Dean of Students. Tardiness after this meeting may result in an after-school detention or other consequence.
- Seniors who are chronically late may lose parking privileges.

Any student who arrives at school after 8:00 a.m. is ineligible to participate in athletics, extra-curricular and co-curricular activities. Students who arrive to class beyond the first fifteen minutes of class time will be considered absent for the class. Such absences contribute to the overall number of absences and course credit may be affected. **Tardiness to class without a pass may result in teacher detention.**

Truancy

Truancy is unauthorized absence from school for the whole or part of a school day and includes "cutting class." Unauthorized absences are cumulative and may affect course credit. Students who are absent without authorization and cannot demonstrate that they were on school grounds during a class absence will be considered truant. A determination of truancy will result in a conference without parents/guardians, and successive detentions for repeat violations.

Leaving Campus

Under circumstances such as a free last period or by permission of the principal, seniors may leave campus before the end of the school day. Seniors must sign out at the Main Office before leaving. Unauthorized departures will be considered truancies.

Early Dismissals

A student who must leave school before the dismissal time of 2:15 p.m., must have permission from home before leaving the building. Parent/guardian may call or email the school office. Students must sign out at the Main Office before leaving school and upon return. Early dismissal from a class with more than fifteen minutes of class time remaining is considered an absence, and such absences from class will be factored into the overall absence record.

After School Extra Help

Students may seek extra help from teachers before or after school by arrangement. Teachers may determine that students need extra assistance with particular classroom work, or that the time between 2:15 and 3:00 p.m. is needed to make up missed class work or tests. In this situation, teachers may require the student to return to the classroom after the 2:15 p.m., dismissal. This is not optional and the obligation takes precedence over other obligations the student may have. In the event that after-school assistance conflicts with other obligations, for example, detention, the student must obtain a note from the teacher requiring the student to receive after-school assistance and resolve any conflicts with those imposing detention or other obligations. So that students may access after school help, extracurricular activities and sports will not start until 3p.m.

Building Use

Students who are in the school building after regular school hours must be there for a particular purpose, such as meeting with a teacher, a detention obligation, an after-school extracurricular activity or need to use the library or media center.

All after-school activities must have a faculty advisor present. Student groups must have building use requests approved by the faculty advisor and by the administrator in charge of student activities. Activities that meet after 3:30 p.m. will be under the sole supervision of the coach or advisor. All district policies enacted by the School Committee pertaining to building use must be followed.

Cafeteria

Breakfast and lunch are provided for students in the cafeteria. Students may purchase additional items a la carte as desired. There are several options provided for breakfast and lunch. Suggestions or concerns about the Cafeteria should be addressed to the School Nutrition Director. Food and drink is to be consumed only in the Cafeteria.

Lockers

While all students are assigned lockers for their use during the school year, lockers remain the property of the school. Students are responsible for the condition of lockers, which should be kept neat and clean, inside and out. Any student who defaces school property will be required to clean/repair said property, pay for cleaning/repairing if unable to restore to original condition, and serve office detention or suspension. Installed shelving is prohibited because it can result in damage to the locker frame. Freestanding shelving is permitted. Locks which are student property may not be used and will be removed.

Lockers are for the storage of property which students require during the school day, such as books, clothing and lunches. **Valuables should not be brought to school. However, if the student must bring something of unusual value to school, the student is encouraged to leave the item in the Main Office for safekeeping.**

Because lockers are the property of the school, they may be searched upon a showing of reasonable suspicion. Unless situations of danger or other unusual circumstances exist, students will be asked if they wish to be present at the time of any search.

Electronic Devices

The proliferation of electronic devices does not take away their designation as potential “items of distraction” to the learning process. Unauthorized use of any of this technology during the school day may result in it being confiscated. Repeat offenses will result in the student’s loss of this privilege.

Roller Blades and Skateboards

Roller blades and skateboards may not be used on school property. Those who use such means of transportation to and from school must carry the equipment once on school grounds.

Dress

Students are expected to dress in a manner which reflects the seriousness of educational endeavors at MERHS. The school supports individual expression in hair and dress styles, but sets forth the following regulations regarding modesty and appropriateness which will facilitate a respectful school environment.

- Any form of dress which endangers the health or safety or which interferes with educational objectives is not permitted.
- Clothing with inappropriate language or expressions, offensive symbols or advertisements which cause “disruption or disorder” in the school environment is prohibited.
- Footgear must be worn for proper sanitation and health.
- Hats, caps, bandanas, and other head coverings must be removed by request of an adult in the building, unless such articles are worn for religious purposes or are worn as a result of the student’s medical needs.
- Sunglasses are not to be worn inside the building during the school day.

Athletics and Extracurricular Activities

Students not in school by 8:00 a.m. will not be allowed to participate in after-school or extra/co-curricular activities. (Please see Tardy Policy for other restrictions to participation)

Manchester Essex Regional High School offers a variety of athletic and extracurricular activities. Participation is encouraged as part of a healthy lifestyle and well-rounded education. Those who choose to participate in any form of interscholastic competition, be it athletic, debate, DECA drama, or any of the many other opportunities available, represent not only themselves, but also their school and their community. Student competitors are expected to compete, and to conduct

themselves, in ways which reflect pride in themselves and their school. They are expected to set good examples at all times, and to give academic responsibilities first priority.

Chemical Health Rules

Co-curricular & Extracurricular Activities and Athletics

In an effort to provide consistent consequences for all, Manchester Essex Regional High School informs all students participating in extracurricular, co-curricular, or athletic teams or clubs that they are subject to the MIAA's Chemical Health Rules.

As decreed by the MIAA, from the earliest fall practice until June 30 of each school year, a student athlete shall not use, possess, consume, buy, sell, or give away any illicit substance or product, regardless of quantity. These substances or products include any beverage containing alcohol, any tobacco product, tobacco product (including e-cigarettes, vape pens and all similar devices); marijuana (including synthetic); steroids; or any controlled substance. This policy includes products such as "NA or near beer," inhalants (defined as any substance that produces a mind-altering effect when inhaled), and misuse of over-the-counter medications and substances used for the purposes of altering one's mental state.

It is *not* a violation for a student to be in possession of a legally defined drug specifically prescribed by the student's doctor for the student's use. While in school, students may not carry prescription or other drugs. All drugs, prescription or otherwise, must be dispensed at the school's health office.

As stated in the MIAA guidelines, this regulation is not intended to render "guilt by association." A Manchester Essex Regional High School student who is charged by the police for being in possession or under the influence will be found to be in violation of the chemical health policy and will be subject to the penalties listed below. The Principal shall enact the penalty after receipt of a police report describing the offense.

If a student in violation of this rule is unable to participate in interscholastic sports or co/extracurricular activities due to injury or academics, the penalty will not take effect until the student is able to participate again.

Following are the minimum penalties for violation of this policy:

First violation: When the Principal confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a violation occurred, the following penalties will apply:

- Loss of eligibility for the next consecutive interscholastic contests and/or extracurricular activities totaling 25% of all interscholastic contests/activities. No exception is permitted for a student even if the student becomes a participant in a treatment program. It is recommended that the student be allowed to remain at practice for the purpose of rehabilitation. During the suspension a MERHS student may not be in uniform, however, students are expected to attend events to support their team/club unless otherwise prohibited by the high school principal.

1 st Offense 25% of Season	
# Events/Season	# of Events/Penalty
1 – 7	1
8 – 11	2
12 – 15	3
16 – 19	4
20 or over	5

Other penalties include:

- The student will be required to meet with a school-based counselor two times prior to returning competition or performances. The goal of these meetings is to help the student process the incident and to determine if the student requires other social/emotional support.
- The student will lose any elected or appointed leadership position for the remainder of the academic school year.
- The student will not be eligible for any school award whose criterion includes positive citizenship, character or leadership for the remainder of the academic school year.
- Other penalties required by a league, chapter or society in addition to the above will apply.

Second and subsequent violations: When the Principal confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a violation occurred, the following penalties apply:

- The student shall lose eligibility for the next consecutive interscholastic contests or activities totaling 60% of all interscholastic contests or activities.

2nd Offense 60% of Season	
# Events/Season	# of Events/Penalty
1 – 3	1
4	2
5 – 6	3
7 – 8	4
9	5
10 – 11	6
12 – 13	7
14	8
15 – 16	9
17 – 18	10
19	11
20 or over	12

- If during the second or subsequent violations the student of his/her/their own violation becomes a participant in an approved chemical dependency program or treatment program, the student may be certified for reinstatement in MIAA or MERHS activities after a minimum of 40% of events provided the student was fully engaged in the program throughout that penalty period. The director or a counselor of a chemical dependency treatment center must issue such a certificate of completion. All decimal parts of an event will be truncated i.e., all fractional parts of an event will be dropped when calculating the 40% of the season.

2 nd Offense w/ Dependency Program (40% if in the program throughout the penalty period)	
# Events/Season	# of Events/Penalty
1 – 5	1
5 – 7	2
8 – 9	3
10 – 12	4
13 – 14	5
15 – 17	6
18 – 19	7
20 or over	8

Other penalties for a second offense include:

- The student will be required to meet with a school-based counselor two times prior to returning to competition or performances. The goal of these meetings is to help the student process the incident and to determine if the student requires other social/emotional support.
- The student will lose eligibility for all appointed or elected leadership positions for the remainder of the academic school year and the following school year.
- The student will not be eligible for any school award whose criterion includes strong citizenship, character or leadership for the remainder of the academic school year and the following school year.
- Any other penalties required by a league, chapter or society.

Penalties shall be cumulative each academic year. If the penalty period is not completed during the season of violation, the penalty shall carry over to the student's next season of actual participation, which may affect the eligibility status of the student during the next academic year.

Academic Requirements for Athletics

In order to be eligible for athletic competition, students must meet certain academic standards. Eligibility is determined by quarterly marks, not by semester grades. In order to be eligible to play during the first fall marking period, the student must have passed courses equivalent to four one-year major English courses during the preceding academic year. Thereafter, the student

must have passed courses for the marking period which are equivalent in credit to four one-year major English courses. Manchester Essex adheres to the Athletic Eligibility Rules of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA).

Athletic Vacation Policy

To ensure the health and safety of our student athletes who are returning to a sport after a break in practice/competition, it is necessary for them to regain lost cardiovascular fitness, reflexes, and skills of the sport. Therefore, we will adhere to the following guidelines:

Students will practice with the team immediately upon returning from vacation in accordance with the following schedule:

- Four to six days missed, the student will practice for three days before competing
- Three days or less, the student will practice for at least two days before competing
- Students who miss more than six days will meet with the Athletic Director to discuss the length of practice days needed, not to be less than three days

General Rules for Practice and Performance

Individual coaches specify practice and performance rules for the teams they coach. In general, however, athletes should expect to comply with the following expectations:

- Athletes must maintain standards of academic and athletic performance to remain on a team.
- Excessive absence or tardiness may result in suspension from the team.
- Practice equipment issued to students must be worn and must be kept clean and sanitary.
- If a student does not return the equipment issued to him/her, the student must pay for it.
- Athletes are responsible for the care and condition of any locks and lockers issued to them.
- Athletes who must miss practice or games during vacation periods, trips necessitated by family obligations, or school sponsored trips, must notify the coach immediately.
- Coaches determine appropriate dress for team members, especially for away events.
- Athletes may not travel to or from away events by private car, unless a written request is made by the student's parent or guardian, and the request has been approved by the Director of Athletics.
- Coaches may recommend the times that athletes should be home at night.
- After participating in the first game of a sport, a varsity athlete may not change to another sport.
- To be eligible to participate in any after school event a student must arrive at **school no later than 8:00 a.m. and remain in school until the end of the school day. Any student who is dismissed from school for sickness will not be eligible to participate in any school-related activity scheduled for later that day or during the evening.**

Financial Obligations – User Fees

It is the policy of the Manchester Essex Regional School District to charge a user fee for student participation on an athletic team. The fee must be paid prior to the start of each season. If the payment has not been received, the student will be ineligible for practice. Students who qualify for free or reduced lunch through food services will also qualify for a free or reduced athletic fee. No student will be denied access into any program because of inability to pay these supplementary charges. The high school will facilitate a payment plan if necessary to allow for student participation. If the payment plan is not met, the student will become ineligible for participation until the obligation is up to date.

Financial Obligations – Lost Materials, Supplies or Equipment

Students are responsible for all school materials that are distributed to them. It is the responsibility of the student to return materials, supplies, uniforms and/or equipment to teachers, coaches or advisors. If a student fails to return items, they will be issued a bill for the replacement cost. All financial obligations should be met in a timely fashion. Students will be ineligible for participation in senior week activities, including graduation, until all obligations have been met.

Dances

Dances are a part of the social fabric of school. The following rules apply to school dances:

- High School dances end no later than 10:00 p.m. An extension of ½ hour for special occasions may be granted by the Principal.
- Only Manchester Essex Regional High School students and their approved guests may attend a school dance.
- Students must submit the names of guests to the coordinating faculty advisor by Thursday of the week before the dance. Guests whose names are not on the guest list will not be admitted without the approval of the Principal or Dean.
- A guest must be accompanied by a host, who is responsible for the guest's behavior.
- Use or possession of alcohol, drugs or tobacco at school dances violates school policy and will result in the imposition of disciplinary measures.
- Students are not permitted to leave the facility in which the dance is being held until the dance has formally ended. Students who do not comply will face disciplinary action.
- If no administrator is present at a dance, the coordinating faculty advisor has complete supervisory authority.
- Any student who plans to attend the Junior-Senior Prom must buy tickets in advance and register his or her guest. Students may register only one guest.
- On the day of the prom students may not be dismissed before 11:40am
- Dance contracts may be required for some events.

Fundraising

Schools organizations may solicit and conduct fundraising activities only after obtaining permission from the advisor of the activity and Principal. Please see district policy pertaining to fundraising.

Gym Use

Permission to use the gym or weight room must be obtained from a physical education teacher. All activities must be supervised by a teacher or a staff member. Proper athletic gear, including footwear, must be worn at all times.

Expectations for Student Behavior

In order for a school to function effectively, everyone must work together. Any disruption to learning is looked upon as behavior that must be changed so that we can get back to our major purpose. Students, as members of the Manchester Essex Regional High School community, are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is appropriate to their educational purpose and to respect themselves and others. Behavioral expectations apply not only to school but also to all sporting events, public performances and all other school-sponsored events. A student's behavior should not interfere with the rights and civil liberties of others.

The school administration, along with teachers, is responsible for maintaining the school environment by taking immediate action when a disturbance occurs. We believe that good discipline results from consistent application of rules to each person.

Personal Behavior

Members of the Manchester Essex Regional High School community are expected to interact with one another in a respectful manner which enhances the opportunity for educational and personal growth. This objective is deterred by dishonest, inappropriate and destructive behavior. Such behavior includes, but is not limited to, lying, forgery of notes of any kind; theft; vandalism; profane or obscene language; failing to respond appropriately to those in positions of authority; endangering the safety of others by tampering with fire safety equipment; and continual disruption of the educational environment to the point that a pattern of disruption is developed. The foregoing behaviors will result in disciplinary action ranging from detention to referral to the Principal to suspension. Parents/guardians will be notified of infractions. In extreme cases, expulsion may be considered.

Behavior Toward Others

Abuse of others is a category of behavior that is so serious that it must stand alone in this handbook. Students, faculty and administration of Manchester Essex Regional High School are united in their whole-hearted support of the following statement:

We abhor and reject racial, religious, gender-based and homophobic prejudice in any form. We will not tolerate such actions in our classrooms and school.

The abuse of others can take many forms none of which are acceptable to the Manchester Essex Regional School community. Verbal abuse includes, but is not necessarily limited to, profane or obscene language, threats of any kind, sexual remarks of any kind, insults or verbal harassment which attack someone's gender, sexual orientation, cultural, ethnic or racial background or religious persuasion, and statements which would put a reasonable person in fear of bodily harm. Physically abusive behavior includes intimidating behavior, assault by acts of which would put a reasonable person in fear of bodily harm, any acts which have as their objective an attack on an individual's gender, sexual orientation, cultural, ethnic or racial background or religious persuasion, fighting or endangering the safety of others, including possession of weapons, and

hazing. Instances of verbal abuse or physically abusive behavior will result in notification to parents/guardians and may result in severe disciplinary sanctions, including expulsion. Because such behaviors may also constitute criminal behavior intolerable to the school community and to the community at large, they may be reported to law enforcement authorities. The full text on the School District's Policy Against Harassment is set forth in Appendix E.

Student Use of Social Media

Students are encouraged to always exercise the utmost caution when participating in any form of social media or online communications, both within the MERHS community and beyond.

Students who participate in online interactions must remember that their posts reflect on themselves and the entire MERHS community. Students should consider how they choose to portray themselves and the school.

Students are expected to abide by the following:

- To protect the privacy of MERHS students and faculty, students may not, under any circumstances, create digital photos, voice or video recordings of MERHS community members either on campus or at off-campus MERHS events for online publication or distribution without the person's knowledge and approval of said photo and/or recording. (An exception is for school sponsored publications)
- Students should not use social media sites to publish disparaging or harassing remarks about MERHS community members, athletic or academic contest rivals, etc. Students may be subject to significant disciplinary action whether this occurs on or off school property.

Please see District Policy in appendix for complete policy.

Fighting

Fighting will not be tolerated or condoned in the building or on school grounds. The excuse, "defending oneself," is considered unacceptable, since a fight starts well before the first physical contact is made. Many times the preliminary actions involve verbal comments. A person who considers himself as one who needs to "defend himself" should see a teacher/an administrator/an adult first. Throwing punches in retaliation is not recognized as defending oneself. An acceptable defensive position involves simply blocking any blows. Students fighting, regardless of who initiates the altercation, will be suspended out of school for a minimum of one day.

Possession of Controlled Substances

The possession of controlled substances on school property or at school-sponsored events is strictly prohibited. Controlled substances as defined by M.G.L. c. 94C include illegal drugs as well as prescription medications. Students who need to have prescription medication during the school day must follow the student handbook policy on "Administration of Medication" of the handbook or be subject to discipline as provided for herein. Students who possess a controlled substance for which they do not have a prescription will be subject to suspension or expulsion under M.G.L. c. 71 37H.

Use of Controlled Substances

Any student who attends school or any school sponsored event under the effect of a controlled substance, unless otherwise prescribed, shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

Possession or Use of Alcohol

Alcohol use is unequivocally condemned. Students who attend school or school sponsored events in possession of or under the influence of alcohol will be subject to severe disciplinary consequences including the possibility of expulsion.

Smoking and Possession of Tobacco (including electronic cigarettes and vape products)

It is the policy of the Manchester Essex Regional High School district to provide a learning and working environment that is free from the health hazards related to the use of tobacco. It shall be a violation of this policy for students, staff and visitors to use tobacco in the building and on the school grounds at any time. Manchester Essex Regional High School is a smoke-free environment twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. No person may use or possess tobacco products (including electronic cigarettes and vape products) in school, on school grounds, or on school property, including buses, before, during or after the school day. Students who violate these rules will be subject to the following penalties:

For possession of tobacco:

- For a first offense, the student may receive up to three (3) detentions and the parent/guardian will be notified.
- For a second offense, the student may receive up to five (5) detentions and the parent/guardian will be notified.
- For a third offense, the student may be required to participate in a Health Awareness Program.

For use of tobacco:

- For a first offense, the student may be suspended for up to five (5) days and may be fined \$50.00.
- For a second offense, the student may be suspended for up to five (5) days and may be fined \$100.00.
- For a third offense, the student may be suspended for up to five (5) days and may be fined \$150.00. Subsequent offenses may result in expulsion.

Students who participate in athletic or other extra-curricular events will be suspended from those activities as defined in the Chemical Health Policy.

Required Medications

While at school or school related activities, students in need of non-prescription medication shall follow the medications policy. Students must not use over the counter medications in ways in

which they were not intended to be used and are prohibited from sharing or distributing any such medication with other students. Students in possession or under the influence of over the counter medications (contrary to the medication policy herein) or other substances including but not limited to inhalants may be subject to disciplinary action including the possibility of expulsion.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is about consistently acting in a way that is honest and trustworthy. It means taking responsibility for your own learning. Choosing academic integrity takes courage when you are feeling challenged, unmotivated, overwhelmed, or pressed for time. You demonstrate academic integrity when you consistently

- communicate with your teachers;
- follow assignment guidelines;
- submit your own work;
- contribute actively in group projects;
- clearly cite sources you use;
- abide by fair use policies.

MERHS expects all students to conduct themselves with academic integrity.

Plagiarism

Excellent expression of well-formulated ideas is a fundamental skill for academic and career success. Plagiarism interferes with the assessment and feedback process that is necessary in order to promote academic growth. Plagiarism defrauds the instructor with a false view of a student's strengths and weaknesses. It may prevent further instruction in areas of weakness and delay the student in reaching his or her potential.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- taking someone else's assignment or portion of an assignment and submitting it as your own
- submitting material created by someone else or paraphrasing the ideas of another without giving the author's name or source
- presenting the work completed by others as your own
- submitting purchased papers as your own
- submitting papers from the Internet written by someone else as your own
- supporting plagiarism by providing your work to others, whether you believe it will be copied or not
- not citing unusual or controversial facts not considered common knowledge
- not citing audio, digital or live exchanges of ideas, dialogue or information

Education is based on learning specific skills, forming lifelong work habits, and developing mature coping skills according to each student's unique abilities. When students choose to cheat, it may be a symptom of more serious problems such as inappropriate class placement, over-commitment to extracurricular activities, and/or academic desperation. Cheating robs students of their opportunity to become competent learners.

Cheating

Cheating examples include but are not limited to:

- copying, texting, or using an electronic device, or in any way duplicating assignments that are turned in, wholly or in part, as original work
- exchanging assignments with other students, either handwritten or computer generated, whether you believe they will be copied or not
- using any form of memory aid, including electronic devices, during tests or quizzes without the expressed permission of the instructor
- using a computer or other means to translate an assignment from one language into another language and submitting it as an original translation
- giving or receiving answers during tests or quizzes. It is your responsibility to secure your papers, so other students will not have the opportunity to copy from you or the temptation to do so
- duplicate submission - The submission of work (in whole) that has been submitted in a prior or concurrent class without advance consent of the teacher(s) assigning the work.
- taking credit for group work when you have not contributed an equal or appropriate share towards the final result
- obtaining or accessing a test or quiz for the purpose of determining the questions in advance of its administration
- using summaries/commentaries (*Cliff Notes, Spark Notes, etc.*) in lieu of reading the assigned materials

Collaboration

We hope students will learn to review for tests with classmates and will learn to discuss or brainstorm more complicated assignments together. Aside from this, however, unless a teacher specifically asks students to work with others, all homework, class-work, projects, quizzes, tests and papers must reflect a student's own work, ideas, thoughts, and understanding. We expect students to always be honest in their approach to their work. Individual teachers will provide appropriate collaboration guidelines at the start of the school year.

Unauthorized collaboration examples may include but are not limited to:

- sharing a take-home examination, case write-up, lab report, or any other assignment with a peer without express permission from the instructor.

- completing an academic exercise with the aid of a peer, but unfairly crediting all work to oneself.

Consequences

First Infraction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher will have a discussion with the student about the incident • The teacher will notify the administration & parent • The administration will make note of the incident • If the incident is determined to be a violation of the academic integrity policy, the student will receive a 0 for the assignment.
Second Infraction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher will have a discussion with the student about the incident • The teacher will notify the administration & parent • The administration will make note of the incident. • If the incident is determined to be a violation of the academic integrity policy, the student will receive a 0 for the assignment • Administrator, School Counselor, Parent and Student may meet to discuss
Third Infraction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher will have a discussion with the student about the incident • The teacher will notify the administration & parent • The administration will make note of the incident • If the incident is determined to be a violation of the academic integrity policy, the student will receive a 0 for the assignment • Administrator, School Counselor, Parent and Student will meet to discuss

Discipline

Manchester Essex Regional High School generally follows the concept of progressive discipline. Typically, repeat offenses will result in sanctions of increasing severity. However, the school reserves the right to impose more serious consequences for violations of a serious nature regardless of the student's prior disciplinary record. Penalties for failure to comply with the school rules and regulations, or refusal to follow lawful instructions or answer questions from school officials include detention; loss of privileges; suspension from school activities including but not limited to athletic events, dances and field trips; suspension from school; exclusion from graduation; expulsion.

Progressive Discipline

This is a guideline for progressive discipline. Greater severity of offense could lead to greater consequences at any time. The determination will be made by the administration. Police involvement may occur at any time.

	First Offense	Second Offense	Third Offense
General Disruptive Behavior	Reflect w/teacher and plan to change behavior	Detention (s); Parent phone call w/teacher & admin	Detention (s); Parent conference w/ admin and counselor
Willful defiance of a teacher/staff member	Reflect and plan to change behavior	Detention (s); Parent phone call	Detention (s)/Possible suspension; Parent conference w/ admin and counselor
Arriving tardy to class (not first block)	Teacher conversation	Detention	Detention
Cutting Class (more than 10 minutes late without excuse)	Detention	Up to 5 Detentions; Parent phone call	5 Office Detentions; Parent conference w/ admin and counselor
Obscene/Profane gestures/language inappropriate for an educational setting	Reflect and plan to change behavior; Call to parent; Up to 5 detentions; Refer to Counselor	Reflect and plan to change behavior; Call to parent; Suspension; Refer to Counselor	Reflect and plan to change behavior; Call to parent; Suspension; Refer to Counselor; Possible police involvement
Fighting	Possible external suspension for cooling off period; Call to parent	External suspension up to 3 days; Parent conference w/ admin and counselor	Suspension 3 – 5 days; Parent conference w/ admin and counselor
Harassment	Meet with Counselor; Call to Parent; Possible suspension	Possible Suspension; Regularly schedule counselor meetings; Parent conference w/ admin and counselor	External Suspension
Bullying	Meet with counselor; Call to parent; Possible suspension	Possible Suspension; Regularly scheduled counselor meetings; Parent conference w/ admin and counselor	External Suspension
Possession of Drugs	1 - 3 Day suspension;	5 Day suspension; Drug counseling;	Possible expulsion/Referral

	Counselor meeting; Parent conference w/ admin and counselor	Parent conference w/ admin and counselor	to Recovery High School
Distribution of Drugs	5 Day suspension w/ expulsion recommendation; Contact Police	Expulsion recommendation	
Use of Drugs	3 -5 Day suspension; Counselor meeting; Parent conference w/ admin and counselor	5 Day Suspension; Drug counseling; Parent conference w/ admin and counselor	Possible expulsion/Referral to Recovery High School
Possession of Alcohol	1 - 3 Day suspension; Counselor meeting; Parent conference w/ admin and counselor	5 Day Suspension; Alcohol counseling; Parent conference w/ admin and counselor	Possible expulsion/Referral to Recovery High School
Distribution of Alcohol	5 Day Suspension w/ expulsion Recommendation; Contact police	Expulsion recommendation	
Use of Alcohol	3 -5 Day suspension; Counselor meeting; Parent meeting w/ Counselor & Admin	5 Day Suspension; Alcohol Counseling; Parent meeting w/ counselor & Admin	Possible expulsion/Referral to Recovery High School
Possession of Tobacco product including vape paraphernalia	3 Detentions; Confiscation of paraphernalia; Call to parent	5 Detentions; Confiscation of paraphernalia; Call to parent	Suspension; Participation in health awareness program; Confiscation of paraphernalia; Call to parent
Distribution of tobacco product including vape paraphernalia	3 -5 Day Suspension; Counselor meeting; Parent meeting w/ Counselor & Admin	5 Day Suspension; Health awareness program; Parent meeting w/ Counselor & Admin	Possible expulsion
Use of tobacco product including vape paraphernalia	3-5 Day suspension; \$50 fine by town; Call to parent; Confiscation of paraphernalia	5 Day suspension; \$100 fine by town; Call to parent; Confiscation of paraphernalia	5 Day suspension; \$150 fine by town; Call to parent; Confiscation of paraphernalia
Vandalism* *Consequence may be substantially higher as result of	Restitution; Call to parent; 3 Detentions	Restitution; Call to parent; 1-3 Day suspension	Restitution; Call to parent; Suspension

nature of vandalism and may include police action (for example: writing on a desk vs. spray paint building)			
Theft	Restitution; Call to parent; 1 – 3 day suspension; Possible police involvement	Restitution; Call to parent; 3 -5 day suspension; Police involvement	Restitution; Call to parent; 5 day suspension/possible expulsion; Police involvement
Possession of Weapon	1-5 day suspension; Police involvement; Call to parent; Expulsion hearing	Police involvement Expulsion hearing	
Possession of Explosives	Police Involvement Expulsion		
Gambling	Reflect and plan to change behavior; Call to parent; Detentions; Refer to Counseling	Reflect and plan to change behavior; Call to parent; Suspension; Refer to Counseling	Reflect and plan to change behavior; Call to parent; Suspension; Refer to Counseling; Possible police involvement

Detention

There are two types of detention. “Office Detention” is disciplinary in nature and may be required as punishment for violation of school rules. “Teacher Detention” requires a student to report to a teacher as a result of disciplinary issues within the classroom. “Teacher Detention” takes precedence over “Office Detention,” but it is the student’s responsibility to talk to the teacher(s) involved to resolve conflicts and to obtain a note from the teacher assigning teacher detention to show to the Main Office staff or to other teachers.

Out of school suspensions

(Offenses not related to M.G.L. c. 71, sec. 37H and 37H1/2)

A student serving an out of school suspension is not to be in the school building or on school grounds or at any school functions unless he or she has been readmitted to school or has received permission from the Principal to enter the building. Any student who’s continuing presence poses a danger to individuals or to property or poses a material and substantial disruption of the order of the school may be removed from school immediately. Such emergency removals may be made if, in the administrator’s judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption, and such removal shall not exceed two (2) school days.

In an emergency removal situation the administrator shall:

- Make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student's parents of the emergency removal, the reason for the need for emergency removal, and other applicable matters;
- Provide written notice to the student and parent consistent with the due process requirements for a short term and, when appropriate long term suspension;
- Provide the student an opportunity to be heard within two (2) school days, unless there is mutual agreement to extend the time for the hearing;
- Render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing and in writing no later than the following school day.

Short-Term Suspension

(Offenses not related to M.G.L. c. 71, sec. 37H and 37H1/2)

The Principal/Dean may issue a short-term suspension, meaning ten (10) days or less, to a student whose conduct does not comply with the provisions of this Student Handbook. Prior to suspension, the student is entitled to written notice of:

- The charge;
- The basis for the charge;
- The potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension;
- The opportunity for the student, with their parent present, to have a hearing with the administrator concerning the suspension, including an opportunity to present their side of the story and/or dispute the charge;
- The date, time and location of the hearing;
- The right of the student and the student's parent to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate.

For short-term suspensions, the Principal/Dean will make reasonable efforts to notify the parent of the opportunity to attend the hearing. A minimum to two attempts to contact the parent in a manner specified by the parent for emergency notification shall be considered reasonable. If the administrator is unable to reach the parent, and has documented the attempts to contact the parent, the administrator may proceed with the hearing without the parent present. After such hearing, the administrator shall provide written notice of:

- The decision maker's findings of fact and decision;
- The discipline if a penalty is to be imposed;
- The effective date of the disciplinary action.

Long-Term Suspension

(Offenses not related to M.G.L. c. 71, sec. 37H and 37H1/2)

The Principal/Dean may issue a long-term suspension, meaning an out of school suspension for more than ten (10) days, to a student whose conduct does not comply with the provisions of this Student Handbook. Prior to being suspended, the student is entitled to all of the notice elements of a short term suspension (see above), plus the following:

- In advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the administrator may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not;
- Notice of the disciplinary measures that student faces as a result;

- Notice of the date, time and place of a disciplinary hearing;
- The right to be represented by a parent, attorney or advocate;
- The right to question and present witnesses and present evidence, though the student may not be compelled to do so;
- The right to request that the hearing be recorded by the administrator, and a copy of the audio recording provided to the student or parent upon request; and
- The administrator’s decision, the specific grounds for the decision and the right to appeal the decision. The written decision shall include
 - Identification of the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants in the hearing;
 - The key facts and conclusions reached;
 - The length and effective date of suspension as well as a date of return to school;
 - The opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of removal;
 - The right to appeal the decision to the Superintendent or designee, including the process for appeal.

If a student chooses to appeal the suspension, he/she/they must do so in writing within five (5) calendar days after the decision is received. An extension of seven (7) days will be granted if such an extension is requested within the initial five (5) days. The Superintendent shall hold a hearing on the student’s appeal within three (3) school days of receiving the student’s request for an appeal unless parent/ student requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days . The Superintendent shall provide the student written notice of the date, time and place of the hearing. After the Superintendent has conducted the hearing, the Superintendent shall give written notice to the student of the decision, which shall be final.

Expulsions

Expulsion is the most severe sanction the school can impose. It means permanent removal from the school system. A student may be expelled by the Principal for conduct covered by M.G.L. c. 71 37H and 37H ½ (e.g., possession of a weapon, possession of controlled substance, assault on a teacher, convicted of a felony). Any other exclusion from school shall not exceed ninety (90) school days. When excluded from school, the student will be provided a written educational plan.

The District has developed a School-wide Education Service Plan to ensure that students who are expelled or on long-term suspension have the opportunity to receive educational services and make academic progress. The Principal or Dean of Students provides a copy of the plan to all students expelled or long-term suspended. The Education Service Plan is also available at www.mersd.org.

Health

Mandated Screening

Throughout a child’s school career, the Massachusetts State Department of Public Health, School Health Unit, requires certain screenings to be completed by the School Nurse. The mandated screenings are:

- **Vision and Hearing** grade 7 & 10
- **Spinal or Postural Screening** in grades 6–9. This screening for scoliosis is done yearly during these grades when the greatest growth spurts occur. If you choose not to have the screening performed by the School Nurse, it **MUST** be documented on the physical examination completed by the child's Physician or Nurse Practitioner.
- **Physical Exams and BMI Screening** are required in grades 7 & 10.

The school nurse must be notified prior to the start of school if you do not want your child to participate in state mandated screenings.

Please be aware that Athletics and Health Services do not share physicals. If your child is an athlete, and is in grade 7 or 10, a separate form must be submitted to Athletics and Health Services. Please keep a copy of all paperwork at home for your records.

Health Room

The goal of the Health Room is to provide professional health care and guidance and to coordinate the resources of the school, home and community as they pertain to the total health of students and staff. The Health Room is open from 7:30am to 2:15pm, Except in an emergency, students in need of health room services must have a pass from their classroom teacher to proceed to the Health Room.

If a student becomes ill or injured in school:

- First aid is administered immediately.
- A parent/ guardian is contacted.
- If the parent/ guardian is not available, the individual identified on each student's emergency card as an emergency contact will be called to help locate the parent/guardian or to take the student home. Students will not be released from school, without the permission of the parent/guardian or without an adult present in the home.
- If the situation appears to require immediate medical attention, the student's physician will be called. If the physician is not available, the covering physician will be consulted. If neither, the physician or the covering physician is available, the school physician will be contacted.

Because of the possibility of emergencies, all students must have current, completed emergency notification cards on file.

Health Regulations

Families also need to be aware of the following health regulations.

- Parents/guardians of students with special health needs or who are considered "at risk" – those with diabetes, asthma, seizures, severe allergies, etc. – should advise the school nurse of the condition, any medications taken by the student, any side effects of such

medication, and the manner in which acute episodes should be handled. Conferences with teachers can be arranged through the school nurse.

- If a student's oral temperature is over 99.6F, the student must be kept at home until the temperature has been normal (98.6F.) for at least twenty-four (24) hours. This regulation protects not only the ill student, but others who might be infected with the illness. Students who return to school while they are ill contribute to the proliferation of illness during the school year. If the student returns to school with a fever, or develops an oral temperature over 99.6F during the school day, the student will be sent home after evaluation by the school nurse.
- If your student develops a highly contagious disease such as chicken pox, strep throat, impetigo, pertussis, Hepatitis A, bacterial conjunctivitis or head lice, please notify the Health Room at once. Any of these conditions will result in dismissal from school after evaluation by the school nurse. An antibiotic or other treatment approved by a health care professional must be administered for a minimum of twenty-four hours before the student will be permitted to return to school. Students who have had chicken pox must be evaluated by the school nurse before they will be permitted to return to class.
- State law requires all students to have been vaccinated. Students who have not been vaccinated may be excluded from school.

Administration of Medications

School policies regarding the administration of medications are designed for the safety and protection of all students and are as follows:

- Before students may carry or self-administer any medications during the school day, the student, parent/ guardian and school nurse must enter into an agreement specifying the conditions under which such medication may be administered, AND the parent/ guardian must provide written authorization for the student to administer the medication. At the discretion of the school nurse, the student may be required to provide a written order from the prescribing health care professional for the medication and its administration by the student.
- If medication for a chronic or episodic condition must be administered during school hours, the medication must be provided to the school nurse in a pharmacy or manufacturer-labeled container provided by the parent/guardian. A student who is taking prescription medication should request the pharmacy to prepare separate prescriptions for home and school so that medication is not forgotten in school and treatment disrupted. Medication should be provided in no more than a thirty-day supply.
- Before medication can be administered in school, the following forms must be completed and on file in the Health Room. Forms are available in both the Main Office and the Health Room.
- Consent form for administration of medication, signed by a parent/guardian; Medication order signed by the student's prescribing health care provider. For ongoing conditions, the order must be renewed as needed and must be current for each academic year. If the

medication is to be administered for ten (10) days or less, the pharmacy-labeled container may be used in lieu of a prescription order at the discretion of the school nurse.

- All unused, discontinued or outdated medications will be returned to the parent/guardian, and all medications will be returned at the end of the school year.
- Non-prescription medications may only be administered by the school nurse in accordance with the regulations of the State Department of Health.
- Students are expected to report to the Health Room at the appropriate time for their medication.

School Cancellation

Cancellation or delayed opening due to weather conditions or other emergency will be communicated through a ConnectEd message.

The Superintendent will make the decision to close school due to hazardous weather or other emergencies. The Superintendent may dismiss school before the regular dismissal time if hazardous weather conditions or other types of emergencies exist. Parents and students are urged NOT to contact the local police station for this information. All information will be communicated via a ConnectEd message.

District Policies

File: ADB

Policy Concerning Drugs And Alcohol

The Manchester Essex Regional School Committee recognizes the complexity and seriousness of personal and societal problems resulting from drug and alcohol abuse. Drug and alcohol abuse can destroy the lives of individuals and erode the fabric of a community. While the Committee believes that those who are afflicted by substance abuse should be aided in dealing with this problem, use of controlled substances and use of alcohol in certain ways are crimes under Massachusetts law, and criminal conduct within the schools will not be tolerated. At a minimum, mere possession of either drugs or alcohol in, or within certain distances of, public schools not only violates school district policy, but is a crime in itself. It is not the responsibility of the school to advise students or School District personnel of the laws and legal penalties pertaining to controlled substances and illegal use of alcohol. Those who violate the law do so at their peril and must bear the consequences of their actions. In enacting this policy, it is the intent of the

Committee to safeguard the well-being of the majority; to assist those who will benefit from substance-abuse counseling; to hold individuals responsible for their own conduct; and to make the consequences of offending conduct clear and certain.

As used in this policy, the word, "drugs" means any controlled substance as defined in Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 94C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine and heroin, as well as over-the-counter or prescription medications used in ways for which they were not intended and commonly-available substances used in ways for which they were not intended. The word "alcohol" means any alcoholic beverage. The phrase, "School District personnel" means any employee of the Manchester Essex Regional School District whose primary place of work is within the schools; as well as any individual acting in a recognized volunteer capacity in connection with school or school-sponsored activities. The phrase, "school-sponsored activity" means any activity conducted under the auspices of the Manchester Essex Regional School District which involves students or takes place at a location in which students are, or may reasonably expected to be, present. The phrase, "administrator" means any or all of the following: the Superintendent of Schools, Assistant Superintendents or Curriculum Director, Principals, Deans, and Director of Special Education.

A. Policy Applicable To Students

1. While engaged in any school-sponsored activity, students may not:
 - a. Possess, use, distribute or be under the influence of, any controlled substance as defined in Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 94C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine and heroin. Such activity constitutes a serious crime under Massachusetts law.
 - b. Possess, use or distribute over-the-counter or prescription medications or commonly available substances for use in ways for which they were not intended.
 - c. Possess, use or distribute any alcoholic beverage nor be under the influence of any alcoholic beverage.
2. In the event that any school personnel receive a complaint or report concerning an alleged violation by a student of any portion of the preceding paragraphs A. 1. (a) through (c) or has reason to believe such violation may have occurred, such school personnel shall immediately refer the matter to the building administrator for further inquiry or investigation. School personnel have a duty to comply with this provision.
3. Upon completion of the investigation, should the administrator determine that any violation of paragraphs A. 1. (a) through (c) has occurred, penalties to the student will occur. These penalties will be cumulative during the student's enrollment in the Manchester Essex Public Schools. The following are penalties which apply to students:
 - a. For a first offense involving drugs or alcohol or both, the student's parents will be notified and police authorities will be notified. At the discretion of the building

administrator, the student may be expelled from the school. If the student is not expelled, the student will be suspended from school for a period of up to five days. Student participation in a recognized substance abuse program will be considered in determining the length of the suspension. The student will be readmitted to school only after a meeting among the student, the student's parent(s) or guardian and appropriate school personnel, as determined by the principal. This meeting will include discussion and formulation of a long-term treatment program for the student. If appropriate, a request for an investigation under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 119, sec.51A will be filed with the Massachusetts Department of Social Services.

- b. For a second offense involving drugs or alcohol or both, the student may be expelled from school at the discretion of the principal. The student's parents will be notified and police authorities will be notified. If the student is not expelled, the student will be suspended from school for up to ten days. Student participation in a recognized substance abuse program will be considered in determining the length of the suspension. The student will be readmitted to school only after a meeting among the student, the student's parent(s) or guardian and appropriate school personnel, as determined by the principal'. This meeting will include discussion, formulation and adoption of a long-term treatment program for the student. In order to remain in school, the student must provide evidence of participation in the treatment plan on an ongoing basis. The student and the student's parents or guardian will be advised that any subsequent offense by the student will result in expulsion, They will also be advised that expulsion carries with it the legal requirement that should the student enroll in another public school, the Manchester Essex Regional School District is required by law to advise the receiving school of the reason for expulsion.

If appropriate, a request for an investigation under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 119, sec. 51 A will be filed with the Massachusetts Department Of Social Services.

- c. Upon a third offense involving drugs or alcohol or both, the student will be expelled from the Manchester Essex Regional School District.

B. Policy Applicable To Manchester Essex Regional School District Personnel

1. While engaged in any school-sponsored activity, school district personnel may not:
 - a. Possess, use, distribute or be under the influence of any controlled substance as defined in Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 94C including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine and heroin.

- b. Possess, use or distribute over-the-counter or prescription medications or commonly available substances for use in ways for which they were not intended;
 - c. Possess, use or distribute any alcoholic beverage nor be under the influence of any alcoholic beverage.
 - d. Procure, distribute, or in any way provide to students any alcoholic beverage, any controlled substance as defined in Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 94C, or any over-the-counter or prescription medications or commonly-available substances for use in ways for which they were not intended.
2. In the event that any administrator receives a report concerning a violation by school district personnel of any portion of the preceding paragraphs A. 2., B. 1. (a) through (d) or has reason to believe such violation may have occurred, the administrator shall proceed to investigate the complaint in accordance with the procedures set forth in School District Policy KLD or its successor.
 3. Upon completion of the investigation, should the administrator determine that any violation of paragraphs A. 2. or B. 1. (a) through (c) has occurred, the administrator will issue sanctions against the individual or individuals involved, which include, but are not limited to, a verbal or written reprimand, suspension with or without pay and termination of employment. In cases in which a violation of paragraphs B. 1. (a) or B. 1. (c) has occurred, police authorities will be notified. Should the administrator determine that any violation of paragraph B. 1. (d) has occurred, police will be notified and the employment of the school district personnel will be terminated.
 4. Should an administrator have reason to believe that any school district personnel suffer from a problem with drugs or alcohol, the administrator is encouraged to advise such individual or individuals of the Towns of Manchester and Essex Employee Assistance Programs, a confidential assistance program which is available to employees of the Towns of Manchester and Essex and their families, or of other assistance programs and encourage such school district personnel to seek assistance.

First Reading: 2/27/01

Adopted: 3/13/01

SOURCE: Manchester-Essex

Smoking on School Premises

Use of any tobacco products within the school buildings, school facilities, or on school grounds or school buses by any individual, including school personnel and students, is prohibited at all times.

A staff member determined to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action.

A student determined to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to the student discipline code.

This policy shall be promulgated to all staff and students in appropriate handbook(s) and publications.

Signs shall be posted in all school buildings informing the general public of the District policy and requirements of state law.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REF: M.G.L. 71:37H

Policy Against Harassment Including Harassment Based Upon

Sex, Race, Color, National Origin, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity Religion, Age And/Or Handicap

I. POLICY PREAMBLE

The Manchester Essex Regional School District is committed to the prevention of harassment based upon sex, race, color, national origin, religion, age, handicap and/or disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity. This policy has been developed to ensure that the educational opportunities of all students, and the employment conditions of all employees, are not threatened or limited by such harassment. This policy defines prohibited conduct, the personal responsibilities of all students, employees, and agents of the School District to ensure prohibited conduct does not occur, a referral procedure for reporting violations of this policy, and defined disciplinary procedures if violations of this policy have been substantiated.

II. HARASSMENT/PROHIBITED CONDUCT DEFINED

A. Prohibited Conduct includes, but is not limited to the following conduct when related to a person's sex (gender), race, color, national origin, religion, age, handicap and/or disability and sexual orientation, gender identity, and when such conduct is unwelcome by the recipient:

1. name calling, teasing, jokes, rumors, or other derogatory or dehumanizing remarks
2. pulling at clothing and other possessions
3. graffiti
4. notes or cartoons
5. unwelcome touching of a person or clothing'
6. offensive or graphic posters, pictures, or book covers
7. any words or actions that provoke feelings of discomfort, embarrassment or hurt

Prohibited Conduct: slurs, swastikas, and related types of verbal harassment can be instances of a hate crime and can be pursued in the legal system as a civil rights violation. Hate crimes will be reported to appropriate law enforcement agencies for anti-bias criminal investigations.

The foregoing list was provided to give some concrete examples of conduct that constitutes harassment. However, all members of the Manchester community must assess their conduct in light of the following definitions of the various forms of harassment. Thus, if certain conduct is not listed in the foregoing list, but does fall into one of the following definitions of harassment, then the conduct is harassment and is prohibited conduct.

B. Sexual Harassment/Gender /Gender Identity Harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical contact or other verbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:

1. submission to that conduct or communication is made a term or condition, either explicitly or implicitly, of obtaining an education, or obtaining or retaining employment;

2. submission to or rejection of that conduct or communication by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting the individual's education or employment;
3. that conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's education or employment, or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational or work environment;
4. that conduct adversely affects an individual's academic or employment opportunities.

Sexual Harassment includes but is not limited to:

1. unwelcome verbal harassment or abuse;
2. unwelcome pressure for sexual activity;
3. unwelcome sexually motivated or inappropriate touching, patting, pinching, or other sexual contact other than reasonable and necessary restraints of students by teachers, administrators, or other school personnel to avoid physical harm to persons or property;
4. unwelcome sexual behavior or words, including demands for sexual favors, accompanied by implied or overt *threats* concerning an individual's educational or employment status;
5. unwelcome sexual behavior or words, including demands for sexual favors, accompanied by implied or overt *promises* of preferential treatment with regard to an individual's educational or employment status;
6. unwelcome behavior or words directed at an individual because of gender;
7. sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral reference to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life; comment on an individual's body, comment about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;
8. displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons;
9. inquiries into one's sexual experiences;
10. discussion of one's sexual activities.

Sexual harassment can include prohibited conduct as defined above that occurs between members of the same or opposite sex.

Sexual harassment in the workplace and retaliation against an individual for filing or cooperating in an investigation of a complaint is unlawful.

- C. Harassment based upon race, color, national origin, religion, age, handicap and/or disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity consists of conduct that:
1. has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive academic or work environment;
 2. has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic or work performance;
 3. otherwise adversely affects an individual's academic or employment opportunities.

III. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Individual: All students, teachers, administrators and other school personnel of the Manchester School District are responsible for creating an environment that is free of harassment and other offensive behaviors, and for conducting themselves in a manner consistent with the spirit and intent of this policy.
- B. Principals: Principals are responsible to ensure that this policy is conspicuously posted in each classroom, school office, and other appropriate student/employee work areas, and that it is printed in each school's student handbook. The posting shall include the name, mailing address, and telephone number of each school's harassment contact, as well as the name, address, and telephone number of the District Human Rights Officer.
- C. Superintendent: The Superintendent is responsible for the dissemination of this policy and training. The Superintendent will:
1. develop a method of discussing this policy with students and employees.
 2. provide appropriate training to administrators and others who are assigned the responsibility to implement the procedures of this policy.
 3. See that this policy is reviewed at least annually for compliance with state and federal law.

IV. REPORTING PROCEDURES

Any person who believes s/he has been the victim of harassment by a student or employee of the Manchester Essex Regional School District or any third person with knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute harassment should report the alleged acts immediately to the appropriate school official as designated in this policy. The reporting party or the complainant is encouraged to use the **report form** (see attachment I) available from each Principal of each school or available from the School District's Central Office, but oral reports will be considered complaints as well. Nothing in this policy shall prevent any person from reporting alleged prohibited conduct to a different administrator than the administrator designated, or in the case of a student, to a district employee.

In each school building the Principal is the person responsible for receiving oral or written reports of harassment.

District-wide the School Committee hereby designates the Director of Curriculum as the District Human Rights Officer to receive complaints or reports of harassment from any individual, employee or victim of harassment and also from principals as outlined above.

V. COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES

Upon receipt of a report or complaint of alleged prohibited conduct, the responsible administrator shall initiate a timely investigation of the complaint.

The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the complainant(s), the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and others that may have knowledge of the alleged incident(s) or circumstances giving rise to the complaint. The investigation may also consist of any other methods and documents deemed pertinent by the investigator.

In determining whether "alleged conduct" constitutes a violation of this policy, the investigator shall consider the surrounding circumstances: the nature of the behavior, past incidents or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationship between the parties involved and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred. Whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all facts and surrounding circumstances. In instances of confirmed harassment, parents of all individuals involved will be notified.

The investigation will be completed as soon as practicable and the building contact person will file a written report with the Human Rights Officer. The report will include a determination of whether the allegations have been substantiated as factual and whether they appear to be violations of this policy. The complainant will be informed in writing as to whether or not the allegation of harassment was substantiated.

During the entire process of reporting, investigation, and corrective action (if applicable), confidentiality will be maintained to every extent possible..

VI. CORRECTIVE ACTION

Upon completion of an investigation and substantiation of the complaint, the School District will take appropriate corrective action. Such action may include, but is not limited to, an apology, direction to stop the offensive behavior, counseling or training, warning, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, transfer, termination or discharge. School District action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with requirements of applicable collective bargaining agreements, Massachusetts and federal laws and School District policies.

At the close of an investigation, the complainant will be informed in writing that the alleged harassment was substantiated or not substantiated. In accordance with state and federal law regarding data or records privacy, the complainant will also be informed that appropriate corrective action has been taken.

In the case of substantiated harassment by an employee,, the Superintendent will include a written statement of the findings, the corrective action taken, and the consequences of continued harassment, in the individual's personnel file with a copy to place in a file kept in the Central Office for a period of 60 years.

In the case of substantiated harassment by a student, the principal will include a written statement, as above, in the student's discipline file.

VII. REPRISAL

The School District will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, or school employee who retaliates against any person who reports an alleged violation of this policy or any person who testifies, assists, or participates in an investigation, or who testifies, assists, or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such harassment. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment.

VIII. RIGHT TO ALTERNATIVE COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

These procedures do not deny the right of any individual to pursue other avenues of recourse that may include:

- A. Filing charges with the Massachusetts Department of Education, Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Office of Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education; Office of the District Attorney for the Eastern District.
- B. Initiating civil action or seeking redress under criminal statutes and/or federal law.

IX. HARASSMENT AS CHILD ABUSE

Under certain circumstances, alleged harassment may also constitute abuse or neglect under G.L. c. 119 51 A. If so, State requirements for mandatory reporting must be followed.

LEGAL REFS.: Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments to the Civil Rights Act
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
The Age Discrimination in Employment Act
The Americans with Disabilities Act
Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971
M.G.L. 151B; 265:37 265:39; 266:98; 266:126A and 126B

SOURCE: Manchester-Essex

Student Absences And Excuses

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential for success in school. The Committee does recognize that parents of children attending our schools have special rights as well as responsibilities, one of which is to ensure that their children attend school regularly, in accordance with state law.

Therefore, students may be excused temporarily from school attendance for the following reasons:

1. Illness or quarantine.
2. Bereavement or serious illness in the family.
3. Weather so inclement as to endanger the health of the child.
4. Observance of major religious holidays.

A child may also be excused for other exceptional reasons with approval of the school administrator.

Accordingly, parents will provide a written explanation for the absence and tardiness of a child. This will be required in advance for types of absences where advance notice is possible.

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 justifiable.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 76:1; 76:16; 76:20

Exclusions And Exemptions From School Attendance

Denial of Admission

Denial of admission means the withholding of the privilege of enrolling in a school of the District.

The following shall be the grounds for denial of admission to school or diversion to an appropriate alternative program:

Graduation from the twelfth grade of any school or receipt of any document evidencing completion of the equivalent of a secondary curriculum;

Failure to meet the requirements of age by a student who has reached the age of six years at a time after the beginning of the school year, as fixed by the School Committee as provided in Massachusetts General Laws;

Having been expelled during the same school year from this District or any district in the Commonwealth;

Not being a resident of the District and the District has opted not to participate in the School Choice Law;

Failure to comply with the provisions of the Massachusetts School Entry Immunization Law.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37H; 76:12; 76:12A; 76:12B
603 CMR 26:00

Student Rights And Responsibilities

The School Committee has the responsibility to afford students the rights that are theirs by virtue of guarantees offered under the federal and state constitutions and statutes. In connection with rights, there are responsibilities that must be assumed by students.

Among these rights and responsibilities are the following:

1. Civil rights--including the rights to equal educational opportunity and freedom from discrimination; the responsibility not to discriminate against others.
2. The right to attend free public schools; the responsibility to attend school regularly and to observe school rules essential for permitting others to learn at school.
3. The right to due process of law with respect to suspension, expulsion, and decisions the student believes injure his/her/their rights.
4. The right to free inquiry and expression; responsibility to observe reasonable rules regarding these rights.
5. The right to privacy, which includes privacy with respect to the student's school records.

It is the School Committee's belief that as part of the educational process students should be made aware of their legal rights, and of the legal authority of the School Committee to make and delegate authority to its staff to make rules regarding the orderly operation of the schools.

Students have the right to know the standards of behavior that are expected of them, and the consequences of misbehavior.

The rights and responsibilities of students, including standards of conduct, will be made available to students and their parents through handbooks distributed annually.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37H; 71:82 through 71:86

Student Conduct

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.

Any of the following actions may subject a student to expulsion by the Principal under the terms of M.G.L. 71:37H and/or M.G.L. 71:37H ½:

1. Found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon or a controlled substance.
2. Who assaults a Principal, Dean, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff member on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events including athletic games.

Students will be subject to suspension, expulsion (subject to School Committee action), or other disciplinary measures included in the District code of conduct which shall include, but not be limited to, the following actions:

1. Intentionally causing or attempting to cause damage to school property; or stealing or attempting to steal school property.
2. Intentionally causing or attempting to cause damage to private property; stealing or attempting to steal private property.
3. Intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical injury to another person except in self-defense.
4. Using or copying the academic work of another and presenting it as his/her/their own without proper attribution.
5. Repeatedly and intentionally defying the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, or administrators.

The above prohibited actions will be printed in the student handbook or other publication and made available to students and parents.

School building administrators will not suspend a student, or recommend a student for suspension or expulsion, unless the student has engaged in one of the prohibited actions mentioned above or included in the student code of conduct

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REF: M.G.L. 71:37H; 71:37H ½

Student Conduct on School Buses

The School Committee and its staff share with students and parents the responsibility for student safety during transportation to and from school. The authority for enforcing School Committee requirements of student conduct on buses will rest with the Principal.

To ensure the safety of all students who ride in buses, it may occasionally be necessary to revoke the privilege of transportation from a student who abuses this privilege. Parents of children whose behavior and misconduct on school buses endangers the health, safety, and welfare of other riders will be notified that their children face the loss of transportation privileges in accordance with regulations approved by the School Committee.

SOURCE: MASC

Prohibition of Hazing

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 536 of the Acts of 1985, the School Committee hereby deems that no student, employee or school organization under the control of the School Committee shall engage in the activity of hazing a student while on or off school property, or at a school sponsored event regardless of the location. No organization that uses the facilities or grounds under the control of the School Committee shall engage in the activity of hazing any person while on school property.

Any student who observes what appears to them to be the activity of hazing another student or person should report such information to the Principal including the time, date, location, names of identifiable participants and the types of behavior exhibited. Students and employees of the District are obligated by law to report incidents of hazing to the police department.

Any student who is present at a hazing has the obligation to report such an incident. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action by the school against that student and could involve suspension from school for up to three days.

Any student who participates in the hazing of another student or other person may, upon the approval of the Superintendent of Schools, be suspended from school for up to ten (10) school days.

Any student determined by the Principal to be the organizer of a hazing activity may be recommended for expulsion from school but will receive no less disciplinary action than that of a participant.

In all cases relating to hazing, students will receive procedural due process.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 269:17, 18, 19

Hazing

CH. 269, S.17. CRIME OF HAZING; DEFINITION; PENALTY

Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing as defined herein shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

The term "hazing" as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to be contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

CH. 269, S.18. DUTY TO REPORT HAZING

Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars.

CH. 269, S.19. HAZING STATUTES TO BE PROVIDED; STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE AND DISCIPLINE POLICY REQUIRED

Each secondary school and each public and private school or college shall issue to every group or organization under its authority or operating on or in conjunction with its campus or school, and to every member, plebe, pledge or applicant for membership in such group or organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen. An officer of each such group or organization, and each individual receiving a copy of said sections seventeen and eighteen shall sign an acknowledgment stating that such group, organization or individual has received a copy of said sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each secondary school and each public or private school or college shall file, at least annually, a report with the regents of higher education and in the case of secondary schools, the Board of Education, certifying that such institution has complied with the provisions of this section and also certifying that said school has adopted a disciplinary policy with regards to the organizers and participants of hazing. The Board of Regents and, in the case of secondary schools, the Board of Education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution which fails to make such a report.

SOURCE: MASC

Bullying Prevention

The Manchester Essex Regional Schools is committed to maintaining a school environment where students are free from bullying and cyber-bullying and the effects thereof. Acts of bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited:

(i) on school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the school district; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school district and

(ii) 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 acts create 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.

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

A. Definitions

Aggressor is a student who engages in bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation.

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c.71, s. 370, is the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

(i) causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;

(ii) places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property;

(iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the target;

(iv) infringes on the rights of the target at school; or

(v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying may include conduct such as physical intimidation or assault, including intimidating an individual into taking an action against his/her/their will; oral or written threats; teasing; putdowns; name-calling; stalking; threatening looks, gestures, or actions; cruel rumors; false accusations; and social isolation.

Cyber-bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c.71, s. 370 is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying also includes:

(i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;

(ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated above in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying; and

BULLYING PREVENTION

(iii) 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 above in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying may include conduct such as sending derogatory, harassing or threatening email messages, instant messages, or text messages; creating websites that ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate others; and posting on websites or disseminating embarrassing or inappropriate pictures or images of others.

Hostile Environment, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, s. 370, is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation has been perpetrated.

B. Bullying and Retaliation Are Prohibited and Will Lead to Discipline

The Manchester Essex Regional Schools absolutely prohibits bullying, cyber bullying and retaliation as defined above. Students who engage in bullying or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action, however, disciplinary action taken must balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. The range of disciplinary action includes, but is not limited to, one or more of the following: verbal warnings, written warnings, reprimands, detentions, short-term or long-term suspensions, or expulsions from school as determined by the school administration and/or school committee, subject to applicable procedural requirements. Nothing in this policy is intended to prevent the school administration and/or school committee from taking disciplinary action against a student for conduct that does not

meet the definition of bullying or cyber-bullying, as defined above, but nevertheless is inappropriate for the school environment.

C. Reporting Obligations

Reporting by Staff: A member of school staff, including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional, shall immediately report any instance of bullying or retaliation s/he has witnessed or become aware of to the school principal or designee.

Reporting by Students, Parents/Guardians, and Others: The district expects students, parents/guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the school principal or designee. An individual may make an anonymous report of bullying or retaliation, however, no disciplinary action may be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report. A student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Reporting to Local Law Enforcement: At any point after receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, or during or after an investigation, if the school principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that the incident may involve criminal conduct, the school principal or designee will notify the local law enforcement agency. In addition, if an incident of bullying or retaliation occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in a local school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school or collaborative school, the Superintendent of the Manchester Essex Regional Schools or designee will notify local law enforcement if s/he believes that criminal charges may be pursued.

Reporting to Administrator of Another School District or School: If an incident of bullying or retaliation involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school or collaborative school and the Manchester Essex Regional Schools is the first to be informed of the bullying or retaliation, then the Superintendent of the Manchester Essex Regional Schools or designee must, consistent with state and federal law, promptly notify the appropriate administrator of the other school district or school so that both may take appropriate action.

D. Investigation

The school principal or designee shall promptly investigate a report of bullying or retaliation, giving consideration to all the circumstances at hand, including the nature of the allegations and the ages of the students involved. The following are general guidelines for responding to a report of bullying or retaliation. The guidelines will be adapted as necessary to respond appropriately to the complaint.

Pre-Investigation: Even before fully investigating allegations of bullying or retaliation, school personnel will consider whether there is a need to take immediate steps to support the alleged target and/or protect the alleged target from further potential incidents of concern. In taking any such action, however, the rights of both the alleged target and alleged aggressor must be considered.

Written statement of the complaint: The investigator will seek to determine the basis of the complaint, gathering information from the complainant, including such matters as: what specifically happened, who committed the alleged acts, who was present or may have information about the events, when the events occurred (date, time of day), and where the events occurred.

It is helpful to have these facts in writing. If age appropriate, the complainant may be asked to put the complaint in writing and to sign and date it. If the complainant cannot or chooses not to write a complaint, the investigator will record the allegations, read them to the complainant to confirm accuracy, and ask the complainant to sign the document. If the complainant cannot or chooses not to sign, the investigator may sign and date the document her/himself.

Interviews: Once the allegations of the complainant are established, the investigator will gather other evidence, which often involves interviews of the alleged aggressor and/or other witnesses. If appropriate, the investigator should remind the alleged aggressor and witnesses that retaliation against persons whom they believe might have reported the incidents or cooperated with the investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Confidentiality: The confidentiality of the complainant and the other witnesses will be maintained to the extent practicable given the school's obligation to investigate and address the matter.

E. Determination

School personnel must weigh all of the evidence objectively to determine whether the alleged events occurred and, if they did, whether the events constitute bullying or retaliation. The determination must be based upon all of the facts and circumstances and the perspective of a reasonable person. When applied to children, the "reasonable person" standard is generally "that of a reasonable person of like age, intelligence, and experience under like circumstances." See *Ellison v. Brady*, 924 F.2d 872 (9th Cir. 1991).

If bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the school will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. As with the investigation, the response will be individually tailored to all of the circumstances, including the nature of the conduct and the age of the students involved. In addition to taking disciplinary action, the following are examples of steps that may be taken to prevent the recurrence of bullying or retaliation:

Holding parent conferences;

Limiting or denying student access to a part, or area, of a school;

Enhancing adult supervision on school premises;

Excluding from participation in school-sponsored or school-related functions, after-school programs, and/or extracurricular activities;

Providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students. School counselors and others in the school setting who have been trained in working with students on interpersonal issues may be helpful in providing such programs.

Personalized Action Plan and directives for future conduct, including providing the target with a process for reporting any concerns about future conduct immediately. It is critical to involve the student in creating an action plan that involves a reporting process that works for that particular student.

Arranging for communication between the parties, if appropriate, to assist them in resolving issues which have arisen between them. (Such an approach will be used cautiously since communication can sometimes exacerbate, rather than alleviate, the target's concerns and since the conduct often involves an imbalance of power.)

Providing counseling (or other appropriate services) or referral to such services for the target and/or the aggressor and/or for appropriate family members of said students.

F. Closing the Complaint and Possible Follow-Up

School staff will promptly provide notice to the parent/guardian of a target and an aggressor about whether or not the complaint was substantiated and, if substantiated, what action is being taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation. Specific information about disciplinary action taken generally will not be released to the target's parents or guardians—unless it involves a “stay away” or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

If appropriate, within a reasonable time period following closure of the complaint, the administrative staff or designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been any recurrence of the prohibited conduct.

The district will retain a report of the complaint, containing the name of the complainant, the date of the complaint, investigator, school, a brief statement of the nature of the complaint, the outcome of the investigation, and the action taken.

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. 71:370; 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
JBA, Student-to-Student Harassment
JICFA, Prohibition of Hazing
JK, Student Discipline Regulations

SOURCE: MANCHESTER ESSEX

Tobacco Use by Students

Smoking, chewing, or other use of tobacco products by staff, students, and members of the public shall be banned from all District buildings. All forms of tobacco use shall be prohibited on all District property. In addition, tobacco use by students is banned at all school-sponsored events, even though this use does not take place on school grounds.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REF: M.G.L 71:37H

CROSS REF.: ADC, Smoking on School Premises

GBED, Tobacco Use on School Property by Staff Members

Drug and Alcohol Use By Students

In view of the fact that the use of drugs and alcohol can endanger the health and safety of the user, and recognizing the deleterious effect the use of alcoholic beverages or drugs can have on the maintenance of general order and discipline, the School Committee prohibits the use or consumption of any drug or alcoholic beverage on school property or at any school function.

Additionally, any student, regardless of age, who is under the influence of drugs or alcoholic beverages prior to attendance at, or participation in, a school-sponsored activity, will be barred from that activity and subject to disciplinary action.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REF: M.G.L. 272:40A

CROSS REF.: IHAMA, Teaching About Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco

GBEC, Drug Free Workplace Policy

NOTE: The cross references are to related categories in the NEPN classification system.

Searches and Interrogations

Searches by Staff

The right of inspection of students' school lockers is inherent in the authority granted school committees and administrators. This authority may be exercised as needed in the interest of safeguarding children, their own and school property.

Nevertheless, exercise of that authority by school officials places unusual demands upon their judgment so as to protect each child's constitutional rights to personal privacy and protection from coercion and to act in the best interest of all students and the schools.

Searches by school officials of students' automobiles or the student will be conducted in a way that protects the students' rights consistent with the responsibility of the school system to provide an atmosphere conducive to the educational process.

Interrogations by Police

The schools have legal custody of students during the school day and during hours of approved extracurricular activities. It is the responsibility of the school administration to make an effort to protect each student's rights with respect to interrogations by law enforcement officials. Therefore:

1. When law enforcement officials find it necessary to question students during the school day or periods of extracurricular activities, the school Principal or his/her/their designee will be present when possible. An effort will be made to contact the student's parent or guardian so that the responsible individual may be notified of the situation.
2. If custody and/or arrest are involved, the Principal will request that all procedural safeguards, as prescribed by law, be observed by the law enforcement officials.

SOURCE: MASC

Student Complaints and Grievances

The School Committee recognizes that there may be conditions in the school system that are in need of improvement and that students should have some means by which their concerns may be effectively expressed, considered, and dealt with fairly. Such means, if well conceived and understood in advance, can do much to maintain harmonious relationships among the schools and the students and community.

The traditional "open door" policy in the public school system will be continued. Students--and their parents and/or guardians--who believe that the students have received unfair treatment in the form of disciplinary action will have the right to appeal. Any applicable provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws or federal law will be followed by school officials in conducting hearings and reviews of student grievances. In general, appeals procedures will begin with the authority imposing the penalty (for example, Principal or teacher) and may ultimately be referred to the Superintendent and on to the School Committee, which possesses the ultimate authority for discipline in the school system.

Every attempt will be made to seek a satisfactory solution to any legitimate grievance in a friendly and informal manner.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REF: M.G.L. 76:17

Nondiscrimination

Public schools have the responsibility to overcome, insofar as possible, any barriers that prevent children from achieving their potential. The public school system will do its part. This commitment to the community is affirmed by the following statements that the School Committee intends to:

Promote the rights and responsibilities of all individuals as set forth in the State and Federal Constitutions, pertinent legislation, and applicable judicial interpretations.

Encourage positive experiences in human values for children, youth and adults, all of whom have differing personal and family characteristics and who come from various socioeconomic, racial and ethnic groups.

Work toward a more integrated society and to enlist the support of individuals as well as groups and agencies, both private and governmental, in such an effort.

Use all appropriate communication and action techniques to air and reduce the grievances of individuals and groups.

Carefully consider, in all the decisions made within the school system, the potential benefits or adverse consequences that those decisions might have on the human relations aspects of all segments of society.

Initiate a process of reviewing policies and practices of the school system in order to achieve to the greatest extent possible the objectives of this statement.

The Committee's policy of nondiscrimination will extend to students, staff, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business; No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. If someone has a complaint or feels that they have been discriminated against because of their race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability, their complaint should be registered with the Title IX compliance officer.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REFS.: Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964
Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972
Executive Order 11246, as amended by E.O. 11375
Equal Pay Act, as amended by the Education Amendments of 1972

Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972

Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975

M.G.L. 71B:1 et seq. (Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972)

M.G.L. 76:5; Amended 1993

M.G.L.76:16 (Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971)

Board of Education Chapter 622 Regulations Pertaining to Access to Equal Educational Opportunity, adopted 6/24/75, as amended 10/24/78

Board of Education 603 CMR 26:00

Board of Education Chapter 766 Regulations, adopted 10/74, as amended through 3/28/78

CROSS REFS.: ACA- ACE, Subcategories for Nondiscrimination
 GBA, Equal Employment Opportunity
 JB, Equal Educational Opportunities

NOTE: This category is for a general policy covering all types of nondiscrimination and relating to students, staff, and others. Federal and state laws apply.

If a policy relates to staff only, to students only, or a particular form of non-discrimination, it is better filed elsewhere. Appropriate codes for such statements are indicated by the cross-references.

Regulations pertaining to all forms of nondiscrimination -- or a procedure all persons can resort to for redress of grievances related to nondiscrimination -- would follow under code AC-R.

Law in most instances requires official School Committee approval of regulations in this area.

Nondiscrimination on The Basis Of Sex

The School Committee, in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, declares that the school system does not and will not discriminate on the basis of sex in the educational programs and activities of the public schools. This policy will extend not only to students with regard to educational opportunities, but also to employees with regard to employment opportunities.

The School Committee will continue to ensure fair and equitable educational and employment opportunities, without regard to sex, to all of its students and employees.

The Committee will designate an individual to act as the school system's Title IX compliance officer. All students and employees will be notified of the name and office address and telephone number of the compliance officer.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REFS.: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
45 CFR, Part 86, (Federal Register, 6/4/75)
M.G.L. 76:5; 76:16 (Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971)
Board of Education Chapter 622 Regulations Pertaining to Access to Equal Educational Opportunity, adopted 6/24/75, amended 10/24/78
Board of Education 603 CMR 26:00

CROSS REF.: AC, Nondiscrimination

Sexual Harassment

All persons associated with the Manchester Essex Regional Public Schools including, but not necessarily limited to, the Committee, the administration, staff, and students, are expected to conduct themselves at all times so as to provide an atmosphere free from sexual harassment. Any person who engages in sexual harassment while acting, as a member of the school community, will be in violation of this policy. Further, any retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual harassment or retaliation against individuals for cooperating in an investigation of a sexual harassment complaint is similarly unlawful and will not be tolerated.

Because the Manchester Essex Regional School Committee takes allegations of sexual harassment seriously, we will respond promptly to complaints of sexual harassment and where it is determined that such inappropriate conduct has occurred, we will act promptly to eliminate the conduct and impose such corrective action as is necessary, including disciplinary action where appropriate.

Please note that while this policy sets forth our goals of promoting a workplace and school environment that is free of sexual harassment, the policy is not designed or intended to limit our authority to discipline or take remedial action for workplace or school conduct which we deem unacceptable, regardless of whether that conduct satisfies the definition of sexual harassment.

Definition of Sexual Harassment: Unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature may constitute sexual harassment where:

Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a person's employment or educational development.

Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or education decisions affecting such individual.

Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or educational performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or educational environment.

The Grievance Officer:

The committee will annually appoint a sexual harassment grievance officer [**see below**] who will be vested with the authority and responsibility of processing all sexual harassment complaints in accordance with the procedure set out below:

Complaint Procedure

Any member of the school community who believes that he/she/they has been subjected to sexual harassment will report the incident (s) to the grievance officer. All complaints shall be investigated promptly and resolved as soon as possible.

The grievance officer will attempt to resolve the problem in an informal manner through the following process:

The grievance officer will confer with the charging party in order to obtain a clear understanding of that party's statement of the facts, and may interview any witnesses.

The grievance officer will then attempt to meet with the charged party in order to obtain his/her/their response to the complaint.

The grievance officer will hold as many meetings with the parties as is necessary to establish the facts.

On the basis of the grievance officer's perception of the situation he/she/they may:

Attempt to resolve the matter informally through reconciliation.

Report the incident and transfer the record to the Superintendent or his/her/their designee, and so notify the parties by certified mail.

After reviewing the record made by the grievance officer, the Superintendent or designee may attempt to gather any more evidence necessary to decide the case, and thereafter impose any sanctions deemed appropriate, including a recommendation to the committee for termination or expulsion. At this stage of the proceedings the parties may present witnesses and other evidence, and may also be represented. The parties, to the extent permissible by law, shall be informed of the disposition of the complaint. All matters involving sexual harassment complaints will remain confidential to the extent possible. If it is determined that inappropriate conduct has occurred, we will act promptly to eliminate the offending conduct.

The grievance officer, upon request, will provide the charging party with government agencies that handle sexual harassment matters.

Grievance Officer:

Allison Collins

Director of Student Services

36 Lincoln St Manchester-by-the-Sea, MA 01944

978-526-4919

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REFS.: Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended 45

Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO Commission

Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq. (Title IX)

Board of Education 603 CMR 26:00

Nondiscrimination On The Basis Of Handicap

Title II of the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1992 requires that no qualified individual with a disability shall, because the District's facilities are inaccessible to or unusable by individuals with disabilities, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, and activities of the District or be subject to discrimination. Nor shall the District exclude or otherwise deny services, programs, or activities to an individual because of the known disability of a person with whom the individual is known to have a relationship or association.

Definition: A "qualified individual with a disability" is an individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable modification to rules, policies, or practices, the removal of architectural, communication, or transportation barriers, or the provision of auxiliary aids and services, meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or the participation in programs or activities provided by the District.

Reasonable Modification: The District shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless the District can demonstrate that making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity.

Communications: The District shall take the appropriate steps to ensure that communications with applicants, participants, and members of the public with disabilities are as effective as communications with others. To this end, the District shall furnish appropriate auxiliary aids and services where necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy benefits of, a service, program, or activity conducted by the District. In determining what type of auxiliary aid or service is necessary, the District shall give primary consideration to the requests of the individuals with disabilities.

Auxiliary Aids and Services: "Auxiliary aids and services" includes (1) qualified interpreters, note takers, transcription services, written materials, assisted listening systems, and other effective methods for making aurally delivered materials available to individuals with hearing impairments; (2) qualified readers, taped texts, audio recordings, Braille materials, large print materials, or other effective methods for making visually delivered materials available to individuals with visual impairments; (3) acquisition or modification of equipment or devices and (4) other similar services and actions.

Limits of Required Modification: The District is not required to take any action that it can demonstrate would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of a service, program, or activity or in undue financial and administrative burdens. Any decision that, in compliance with its responsibility to provide effective communication for individuals with disabilities, would fundamentally alter the service, program, or activity or unduly burden the District shall be made

by the School Committee after considering all resources available for use in funding and operating the program, service, or activity. A written statement of the reasons for reaching that conclusion shall accompany the decision.

Notice: The District shall make available to applicants, participants, beneficiaries, and other interested persons information regarding the provisions of Title II of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and its applicability to the services, programs, or activities of the District. The information shall be made available in such a manner as the School Committee and Superintendent find necessary to apprise such persons of the protections against discrimination assured them by the ADA.

Compliance Coordinator: The District shall designate at least one employee to coordinate its efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under Title II of ADA, including any investigation of any complaint communicated to it alleging its noncompliance or alleging any actions that would be prohibited under ADA. The District shall make available to all interested individuals the name, office address, and telephone number of the employee(s) so designated and shall adopt and publish procedures for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action that would be prohibited under the ADA. The school system receives federal financial assistance and must comply with the above requirements. Additionally, the School Committee is of the general view that:

1. Discrimination against a qualified handicapped person solely on the basis of handicap is unfair; and
2. To the extent possible, qualified handicapped persons should be in the mainstream of life in the school community. Accordingly, employees of the school system will comply with the above requirements of the law and policy statements of this Committee to ensure nondiscrimination on the basis of handicap.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REFS.: Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, as amended

Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975

M.G.L. 71B:1 et seq. (Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972)

Title II, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992, as amended

Board of Education Chapter 766 Regulations, adopted 10/74, as amended through 3/28/78

CROSS REFS.: IGB, Support Services Programs

NOTE: Due to federal and state laws, many school committees are adopting policies and extensive regulations pertaining to Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap. At times, policy, regulations, and specific plans for action are combined in one long statement presented as policy. Other school systems present policy and regulatory statements separately.

Policy: IJND

First Reading: 7/21/05

Adopted: 8/30/05

Internet Safety and Network Use Policy

The Manchester Essex Regional School District offers Internet access to its students, faculty and staff. Access to the school's computer network and the Internet service is a privilege, not a right. The intent of this policy is to ensure that users utilize this access in a manner consistent with the purpose of the District's provision of this Internet service.

Purpose

The primary purpose of the Manchester Essex Regional School District's Internet service is to support the educational objectives of the Manchester Essex Regional School District and its educational community in general. The Internet service is not a public forum and the Manchester Essex Regional School District reserves the right to place reasonable limits on materials posted or accessed through the Internet service.

Responsibilities of Students, Faculty, and Staff

Students, faculty, staff, and other users of the District's computer network agree to comply with this policy when using the District's computer network. Use of the District computer network must be **in support of education and research**. The following is a list of prohibited behaviors. While the list is not exhaustive, it illustrates unacceptable uses of the District's computer network.

1. Any use for commercial purposes is prohibited (e.g. advertising, selling, offering to sell, or purchasing products or services). Any use for political purposes is prohibited except using the Internet service to communicate with elected officials.
2. Network accounts are to be used only by the authorized owner of the account. Users shall not share other user's passwords or seek to learn or change other user's passwords, modify other user's files or data, or misrepresent other users of the network.
3. Users shall not intentionally disrupt the use of the network or devices attached to the network.
4. Users agree that hardware or software shall not be destroyed, modified, damaged, or abused in any way.
5. Malicious use of the network to develop programs or computer viruses that harass other users, infiltrate a computer or computer system, damage the software components of a computer or computing system are prohibited.
6. Loading, transmitting, or intentional receipt of hate mail, harassment, threats and other illegal and/or antisocial behaviors are prohibited on the network.

7. Any use for, or in support of, illegal purposes or activities is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, gaining unauthorized access to other systems, arranging for the sale or purchase of drugs or alcohol, participating in criminal gang activity, threatening others, transferring obscene material, or attempting to do any of the above.
8. Use of the network to access or process sexually explicit and/or pornographic material, information about dangerous instruments such as weapons, bombs or explosive devices, inappropriate or obscene materials, illegal software, or files dangerous to the integrity of the local area network or any attached device is prohibited.
9. Users shall not post inappropriate messages when visiting Internet discussion boards, chat rooms, instant messaging or in sending e-mail messages using the Manchester Essex network.
10. Students shall not reveal any identifying personal information about themselves or others such as names or e-mail addresses to others.
11. Software is protected by copyright laws; therefore users shall not make unauthorized copies of software or media found on school computers.
12. Users shall not download or install software on District computers without authorization from the computer staff.
13. Users shall not copy or download copyrighted material without authorization from the copyright holder, unless the copies are used for teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship, or research. Users should use proper citation when referring to downloaded text, images and other media.
14. Users shall not plagiarize material obtained from the Internet. Any material obtained from the Internet and included in one's own work must be cited and credited by name or by electronic address or path on the Internet. Information obtained through E-mail or news sources must also be credited to sources.
15. Users shall not override the Internet filtering software except that staff may disable the filter for purposes of bona fide research.

Privacy

Users should not have an expectation of privacy or confidentiality in the content of electronic communications or other computer files sent and received on the school's computer network or stored in the user's directory or on a disk drive. All communications, including text and images,

may be disclosed to law enforcement or other third parties without prior consent of the sender or receiver.

In order to maintain integrity system-wide and to ensure that users are using the District's computer network in a responsible manner, the Manchester Essex Regional School District reserves the right to:

- Examine all data stored on diskettes involved in the user's use of the Manchester Essex Regional School District's Internet service;
- Log Internet and e-mail use, review communications and monitor file utilization by users of the District network; and
- Immediately remove a user account on the network to prevent further unauthorized activity.

Safety Issues

Use of the Internet has potential dangers. Users are encouraged to read two brochures regarding Internet safety that the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office has prepared. The brochures are entitled *The Internet, Your Child and You: What Every Parent Should Know* and *Internet Safety: Advice from Kids Who Have Faced Danger Online*. Copies of these brochures are available in the Central Office or on the Internet at www.ago.state.ma.us. The following are basic safety rules pertaining to all types of Internet applications.

- Never reveal *any* identifying information such as last names, ages, addresses, phone numbers, parents' names, parents' employers or work addresses, or photographs.
- Use the "back" key whenever you encounter a site that you believe is inappropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable.
- Immediately tell the Building Administrator if you receive a message that you believe is inappropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable.
- Never share your password or use another person's password. Internet passwords are provided for each user's personal use only. If you suspect that someone has discovered your password, you should change it immediately and notify the Building Administrator

Violations

Access to the Manchester Essex Regional School District Internet service is a privilege not a right. The Manchester Essex Regional School District reserves the right to deny, revoke or suspend specific user privileges and/or to take other disciplinary action, up to and including suspension, expulsion (students), or dismissal (staff) for violations of this policy. The district will advise

appropriate law enforcement agencies of illegal activities conducted through the Manchester Essex Regional School District Internet service. The District also will cooperate fully with local, state, and/or federal officials in any investigation related to any illegal activities conducted through the service.

District Responsibility

The Manchester Essex Regional School district will allocate resources to support a safe Internet experience for all students:

- It is the responsibility of the school faculty and staff to supervise usage of the computer network and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy and the Children's Internet Protection Act ("CIPA").
- The District will use technology protection measures (Internet filters) to help prevent users from accessing inappropriate information on the Internet in accordance with the CIPA. In accordance with CIPA, staff may disable the filter for purposes of bona fide research.

The Manchester Essex Regional School district shall not be liable for the action of anyone accessing the Internet through this or any other Internet connection. Users assume full responsibility for any costs, liabilities, or damages arising from the way the user chooses to use his/her/their access to the Internet service.

This Internet Safety Policy was adopted by the Manchester Essex Regional School Committee following a public meeting on August 30, 2005.

DISCLAIMER of STUDENT HANDBOOK

The laws, School Committee policies, and school rules stated in this handbook are intended to ensure the safe, orderly, and educationally sound operation of Manchester Essex Regional High School. In addition to these written provisions, there may be times where, to further insure the safe, orderly, and educationally sound operation of the school, the school administration may enforce a standard of conduct upon students that furthers this end. Furthermore, the school administration has the right to enforce any law, ordinance, or school committee policy not written in this handbook. If a new law or ordinance, or school committee policy is passed, it supersedes current rules.

All programs, activities, and employment opportunities are offered without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, and disability.