WESTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Westford Academy Student Handbook
2026-2027

30 Patten Road
Westford, MA 01886
978-692-5570

Daniel Twomey
Principal

Betsy Murphy
Dean

Amanda Welch
Dean

Robert P. Ware
Dean

WPS Website

TRANSLATIONS

Amharic: የአማርኛ መመሪያ

French: Manuel de français

Gujarati: ગુજરાતી હેન્ડબુક

Hindi: हिंदी हैंडबुक

Khmer: សៀវភៅណែនាំភាសាខ្មែរ

Korean: 한국어 핸드북

Portuguese: Manual de Português

Pashto: د پښتو لارښود

Russian: Русское руководство

Simplified Chinese: 简体中文手册

Spanish: Manual de español

Traditional Chinese: 繁體中文手冊

Turkish: ürkçe el kitabı

Ukrainian: Український посібник

Vietnamese: Sổ tay tiếng Việt

WESTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Strategic District Improvement Plan 2027-2030

Our Overarching Mission and Values

We value the development of curious lifelong learners who are responsible, empathetic members of the community, demonstrating innovation through a wide variety of opportunities within inclusive, joyful learning environments that embrace their variability and honor their diversity. We believe in preparing our students for active, positive participation as both local and global citizens by developing and fostering creativity, communication, collaboration, and critical thinking.

Core Values

S — **Safety:** physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing

P — **Perseverance:** fostering resilience and growth mindsets

I — **Inclusion:** committing to equality for all

R — **Respect:** both of ourselves and those around us

I — **Integrity:** in our work, in our actions, in our choices

T — **Teamwork:** collaborating with others toward a common goal

Strategic Objectives

1. Ensure Equity: Continue to infuse our equity work into our curriculum, instruction and assessment—the heart of what we do—to ensure high-quality learning experiences for every student

2. Ensure Equity: Assess our orginazational structures to ensure equtable learning environments for all of our students

3. Promote Social Emotional Wellbeing: Prioritize mental health and wellness for all of our students and staff by exploring strategies to minimize academic and or social emotional "pressure valves" that negatively impact performance

- Westford Academy - Blanchard - Stony Brook - Abbot - Crisafulli -
- Day - Miller - Nabnasset - Robinson - ROUTES -

WESTFORD ACADEMY DIRECTORY

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION: 978-692-5570

Daniel Twomey	Principal	Ext. 7404

Robert P. Ware Dean	Grade 10 & Grade 9 (A-F)	Ext. 7438
Amanda Welch Dean	Grade 12 & Grade 9 (G-M)	Ext. 7403
Betsy Murphy Dean	Grade 11 & Grade 9 (N-Z)	Ext. 7416

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE: 978-692-5560

Dr. Christopher Chew, Ed.D.	Superintendent	Ext. 2102
Ms. Courtney Moran	Assistant Superintendent	Ext. 2104
Mr. Gerard Coughlin	Director of Pupil Services	Ext. 2111
Ms. Jie "Jenny" Lin	Director of Finance	Ext. 2106
Ms. Colleen Wallace	Director of Food Services	Ext. 2109

2026-2027 WESTFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Ms. Valery Young, Chair
Ms. Kathryn Clear, Vice-Chair
Ms. Laurie Oliver, Secretary
Mr. William McDonald
Mr. Thomas Laflamme
Ms. Shana Farnsworth
Dr. Jessica Silverman

school-committee@westfordma.gov

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DISCLAIMER

District Administration and Westford Academy reserves the right to make necessary changes in the Student Handbook.

STUDENT RIGHTS

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY / CHAPTER 622 & TITLE IX

In accordance with the regulations of Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, all courses of study, extra-curricular activities, services, and facilities offered by the school are available without regard to race, color, sex, religion, gender identity or national origin.

Furthermore in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, United States of America, no person shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity.

Under both Chapter 622 and Title IX, provisions for grievance procedures are made. Any student, Caregiver/Parent or other person or group who believes that these regulations have been or are being violated, may so notify the Principal, Superintendent of Schools, and Chapter 622/Title IX Coordinator. The School Department will respond promptly, but no later than (30) thirty days, in writing to the party filing the grievance. The party filing the grievance may also submit a copy of the grievance to the *Bureau of Equal Educational Opportunity of the Department of Education*. Should a non-compliance be found, procedures for making changes will be made immediately initiated both to correct the non-compliance and to provide particular remedies to the person or group affected.

TITLE IX OF THE EDUCATION AMENDMENTS OF 1972

The Westford Public Schools does not tolerate discrimination against students, Caregivers/Parents, employees or the general public on the basis of sex. The Westford Public Schools is also committed to maintaining a school environment free of harassment based on sex, including harassment based on gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy or pregnancy status. The Westford Public Schools' policy of nondiscrimination extends to students, staff, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business; no person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in employment, admission to a public school of Westford or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school on account of sex.

How to Report Sexual Harassment: Individuals are encouraged to report allegations of sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator(s) identified below or the Principal. Any report of sexual harassment, as defined under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, will be responded to promptly in accordance with the *District's Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedures*, available: Here pg.14. Reports of discriminatory harassment not constituting sexual harassment as defined under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, will be initially addressed through the *District's Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure* and may, if dismissed under that procedure, be investigated in accordance with the *District's Civil Rights Grievance Procedures*, available: Here pg.14. Upon receipt of a report of sexual harassment, the Title IX Coordinator will: (1) promptly and confidentially contact the complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures; (2) inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a Title IX Formal Complaint; (3) consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures; (4) if the school district does not provide the complainant with supportive measures, document the reasons why such response was reasonable; and (5) explain to the complainant the process for filing a Title IX Formal Complaint. Inquiries about the application of Title IX may be directed to the District's Title IX Coordinator and/or the Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. The District's Title IX Coordinator is:

Courtney Moran, Assistant Superintendent
23 Depot Street, Westford MA 01886
978-692-5560 cmoran@westfordk12.us

NOTIFICATION OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Westford Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, homelessness, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability in admission to, access to, employment in, or treatment in its programs and activities. Accordingly, 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 or in employment in its services in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI); on the basis of sex, in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; on the basis of disability, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title II); or on the basis of age, in accordance with the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (Age Discrimination Act) and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967. Nor does it discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, gender identity or sexual orientation, in accordance with Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971 (M.G.L. c. 76 s. 5) and M.G.L. Chapter 151B. The District also does not discriminate on the basis of homelessness in a manner consistent with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act.

ADA (Employee) Coordinator: Dr. Christopher Chew, Superintendent of Schools
ADA (Student) Coordinator & Homeless Coordinator: Mr. Gerard Coughlin, Director of Pupil Services
Section 504 Coordinator: Ms. Courtney Moran, Assistant Superintendent
Title VI Coordinator: Dr. Christopher Chew, Superintendent of Schools
Title IX Coordinator: Courtney Moran, Assistant Superintendent

WESTFORD ACADEMY DIVERSITY, EQUITY and INCLUSION STATEMENT

At Westford Academy, we strive to develop an inclusive and equitable school community where every individual is welcomed, respected, valued, and supported.

We strive to reflect and value the faces, voices, and experiences of our diverse community in our curriculum, school activities, and celebrations. We recognize that all members of our community bear responsibility for this important work. Diversity includes but is not limited to: socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, language, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, religion/spiritual beliefs and values, geography, cognitive and physical abilities, and age. Celebrating diversity at Westford Academy entails creating equitable learning environments for all students. The diversity among our students, faculty, and staff is essential to achieving the desired outcomes of the school. We aim for students to feel, learn, and advance in a manner that reflects who they are, and empowers them to acknowledge the positive attributes that the different aspects of their identities bring to the learning experiences.

An inclusive learning environment where all students are free to learn openly, to make more significant interpersonal connections with peers and educators, to see themselves represented in the curriculum and surroundings, and to have a protected space to bring their whole authentic selves is one that enriches the overall learning experience. Westford Academy is committed to cultivating a sense of belonging in the climate of our school, district, and within the community. When our students feel connected to their educational environment, it generates tremendous benefits to their educational outcomes.

Furthermore, students and staff are essential elements to the success of this statement. However, when this statement may be challenged or violated, Westford Academy will hold individuals accountable for their actions or conduct and seek to repair harm or damage to any individual. See Student Conduct and Harassment sections of this handbook for possible consequences.

WESTFORD ACADEMY HONOR CODE

A healthy academic environment depends on honesty, integrity, and mutual respect, and part of Westford Academy's mission is to instill an understanding of and respect for honorable behavior in its students. For their part, students have a responsibility to understand Westford Academy's expectations for honorable behavior and to ensure that they meet those expectations.

It is expected that all Westford Academy students will abide by the following Honor Code: "As a member of the Westford Academy community, I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I condone or enable those who do so."

WESTFORD ACADEMY MISSION STATEMENT

Westford Academy, in collaboration with home and community, provides a safe environment where high expectations advance academic excellence. We are committed to promoting integrity and critical thinking, while fostering tolerance and life-long learning in an ever-changing global society.

EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING

Students at Westford Academy will:

Academic Expectations:

1. Access information
2. Read effectively for a variety of purposes
3. Think critically and analytically
4. Communicate effectively
    - Write
    - Speak
    - Listen
    - Perform/Create

Social Expectations:

1. Exhibit respect, honesty, and integrity in all aspects of school life, including curricular, co-curricular, and social activities.
2. Take responsibility for personal actions and behaviors related to physical, mental and emotional development.

Civic Expectations:

1. Participate actively in a variety of school and community programs, preparing them to exercise their civic rights, duties, and responsibilities within our global society.

GUIDELINES FOR CAREGIVER/PARENT - SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

If a problem occurs:

1. Start with the staff member most directly involved. If possible, have your student approach the person to try and resolve the issue on their own.
2. The School Counselor is a resource for support in resolving concerns at any step of the process.

For effective communication, keep in mind:

1. Define your concerns clearly.
2. Express your concerns in a respectful manner.
3. Listen to what the other party has to say without interrupting.
4. Remain open-minded about what the other party has to say.
5. Remember what problem you are trying to solve and remember your goal.
6. Remember that both parties may need a chance to voice their feelings.

We suggest the following chain of communication:

1. Student with teacher.
2. Student and Caregiver/Parent with teacher.
3. Student/Caregiver/Parent with Department Head.
4. Student/Caregiver/Parent with Assistant Principal/ Dean of Students.
5. Student/Caregiver/Parent with Principal.

BELL SCHEDULE 2026-2027

BLOCK	START	END	MINUTES
1	8:00	9:10	70
2	9:15	10:19	64
3	10:24	11:28	64
4 (LONG)	11:28	1:12	104
LUNCH TIMES (26)		**CLASS TIMES**	
1st Lunch	11:28-11:54	11:54-1:12	
2nd Lunch	11:54-12:20	11:28-11:54	12:20-1:12
3rd Lunch	12:20-12:46	11:28-12:20	12:20-1:12
4th Lunch	12:46-1:12	11:28-12:46	
5	1:17	2:20	63

2:25 - 3:25 PM ***After School Activities***
3:25 PM ***Late Buses: Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday***

ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES

Caregiver/Parent Responsibilities
Caregivers/Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that a child under their control attends school daily. Whenever a child is going to be absent from school, the Caregiver/Parent is required to call the school (978) 692-5570, then press 1) prior to 8:40 AM on the date of absence. The Absentee Line is available twenty four (24) hours per day. In the event that a child's name is on the school's absentee list and a telephone call has not been received, the office will call the child's home. If verification is not received from home, the office may refer to the list of names supplied by the Caregiver/Parent on the Pupil Information Card to call for attendance verification.

School Responsibilities
The Department of Education has certain measures in place to monitor the attendance accountability of school systems in Massachusetts. The administration at Westford Academy will track students' attendance rates, chronic absenteeism, patterns of absences, tardies, and dismissals. Administration will send a notification in writing to students/Caregivers/Parents reminding them of the importance of attending school regularly. Pupil absence notices to Caregiver/Parent and pupil absence meetings with Caregiver/Parent will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of M.G.L. c. 76, §1B. Each Principal or designee will notify a student's Caregiver/Parent within 3 days of the student's absence in the event the Caregiver/Parent has not informed the school of the absence.

When a student is absent (unexcused) five (5) or more school days in the school year, the Caregiver/Parent will be notified and provided an opportunity to meet with the Principal, or Principal's designee, to develop an action plan to address the student's school attendance. The parties may seek input from other relevant school staff and/or officials from relevant public safety, health and human services, housing and non-profit agencies. When a student is absent for three consecutive days, the school nurse will call to "check in" and remind the Caregiver/Parent of the excused absences protocol. Students that continue to be absent may be visited at their home by any combination of the school resource officer, counseling staff, Deans, Nurses, and/or any other appropriate school staff. Also, the school may file an application for a Child Requiring Assistance (CRA) in the Juvenile Court by the school in the following situation :

"*Habitual Truant*": A child between 6 and 18, who, without excuse, willfully fails to attend school for more than 8 days in a quarter. The school applicant must state whether or not the child and the child's family have participated in a truancy prevention program. M.G.L. c. 119, § 39E. Under M.G. L. c. 119, § 39G, dismissal must occur when the child turns 16. (Note

the contradiction regarding age limits in these statutory provisions.)

In accordance with M.G.L. c.76, §18, students with ten (10) consecutive school day absences, that are often indicative of an intent to permanently withdraw from school, Westford Academy will attempt to convene an Exit Interview meeting within (10) calendar days to provide information about the detrimental effects of early withdrawal from school, the benefits of earning a high school diploma, and alternative education programs and services that may be available. Dates for the meeting will be offered in writing and if the student/Caregiver/Parent is unwilling to participate in an Exit Interview and the date passes, the student will be administratively dis-enrolled from Westford Academy. However, even in the event of an administrative disenrollment, a student may have the right to reenroll at Westford Academy in the future to continue their education while they remain of school age.

Excused Absences/ Excused Tardy/ Excused Dismissal

Examples of excused absences/tardies/dismissals are for illness of the student with a doctor's note, medical appointments, death in the student's family, observance of a religious holiday, court appointments, college visits (limited to three (3) such visits per year), extraordinary circumstances or school sanctioned absences such as field trips. All excused absences will need documentation provided to the attendance secretary. All work missed because of an excused absence/tardy/dismissal will be made up following the Make Up Policy of the Handbook. Most importantly, the student should make contact with each teacher involved because different arrangements may be made at the sole discretion of the teacher.

Unexcused Absence /Tardy /Dismissal

An absence/tardy/dismissal occurs when a student is absent from school, late to school or dismissed from school, with or without Caregiver/Parent approval, for any other reasons, including, but not limited to, family vacation, no reason given, doing errands, driver's ed, cutting classes, etc. Students who have an unexcused absence, tardy, or dismissal on the day of an assessment may not be allowed to make-up the assessment unless Administrative approval is given.

Specific Rules Regarding Attendance

1. **A student who is absent from school may not participate or attend** any school or co-curricular activity on that school day or evening without an Administrator's approval. This includes weekend activities if the student is absent on the last day of the school week. A student must be present for 3 full blocks on the day of an activity of a sport, club, or organization to be eligible to participate on that day. Exceptions must be cleared through an Administrative Team decision. Suspension / detention will be a reason for not being able to participate in a practice, game, or after-school activities.
2. Students who do not have **absences verified** within twenty four (24) hours will be considered **truant** and will be assigned one (1) day of in-school suspension followed by four (4) office detentions.
3. Junior and Senior students are allowed up to **three (3) days per year to visit college** campuses. In order for these absences to be excused, students should request a note from the college admissions office verifying their visit and give that note to their school counselor upon their return to Westford Academy.
4. Absences of five **(5) or more consecutive days** will require a letter from a physician. Note: Any medical excuses for prolonged illnesses must be provided to the attendance secretary prior to the close of a specific quarter.
5. **5 or more absences in a quarter** will result in the loss of credit in all classes, except in cases of prolonged illnesses, or additional circumstances as determined by the administration and appropriate staff. *See Loss of Credit*.
6. **Absences due to suspension** may count toward the accrual of 6 or more absences of any kind in a quarter. The student is responsible for making up for all work missed.
7. Prior to any planned **travel which will result in a student's absence for more than ten (10) consecutive school days,** a Caregiver/Parent must: (a) un-enroll their child from school; and (b) either complete a Homeschool Application, or identify the school in which they will enroll their child during said absence.
8. A student may not be penalized for their **observance of a religious holiday.** The student is expected to complete work impacted by the religious observance *within one week of the holiday*. Any missed tests or quizzes shall be taken within a week of the missed day, at a time mutually agreeable to the teacher and the student. Staff and teachers shall provide students with class notes or syllabus, and any assignments prior to the absence if requested and if available. Otherwise these items shall be provided upon the return from a religious holiday.

9. **Teachers are not required to provide advance assignments to students in light of family vacations,** and the school and the individual teacher(s) are not required to assume responsibility for providing individual tutoring or extensive individual help for the student when they return.

Absence From Class

Students who miss over half or the entire class without a note from a school official are deemed to have "cut" class. Students who miss over half the class period with a note are considered to be "Absent Excused."

Discipline for unexcused class absences. (Class Cuts)

a. First Offense Teacher detention, Caregiver/Parent notified, zero for class participation/work, & administration notified.
b. Second Offense Two (2) office detentions, **loss of credit,** Caregiver/Parent notified by administration.
c. Third Offense In-school suspension, Caregiver/Parent conference with student.
d. Additional Offenses Three (3) days in-school suspension, recommendation for outside counseling, Caregiver/Parent notified by administration.

Loss of Class Credit

If a student has (5) five or more absences of any kind in a quarter it will result in the loss of credit in all classes, except in cases of prolonged illnesses, or extraordinary circumstances as determined by the administration and appropriate staff.

If a student loses credit in any quarter, the only way credit could be reinstated is if the student is without any additional attendance infractions during any other quarter and completes curriculum work and/or quality community service as determined by the administration in conjunction with the teacher. A student who loses credit for two (2) quarters in a semester course or three (3) quarters in a full year course will not receive credit for the course.

Evaluation Process: A Review Committee composed of the student's Assistant Principal/Dean, School Counselor, and teacher meets to review information provided by teachers and staff which includes credit, attendance status, and disciplinary records. This review takes place prior to the close of each quarter. Students may not make up a course grade in which they lost credit during the school year by attending summer school except in circumstances determined in advance through the evaluation process. **Students may not take the same course twice.**

TARDY TO SCHOOL

School begins at 8 AM. Students are considered "tardy to school" if they arrive at class after 8 AM. Attendance for the day is taken by first block teachers. Students who arrive after 8 AM should report to the Attendance Secretary (ext. 7405) in the Counseling Office for a pass to class. Excused tardies will be granted for the same criteria as excused absences, such as doctors appointments, court dates, etc., when documented with a note. Parents do not need to notify the school for unexcused tardies.

The following consequences apply to being tardy to school each quarter (OD = Office Detention):

1. Six (6) tardies to school = two (2) O.D., Caregiver/Parent(s) notified
2. Nine (9) tardies to school = three (3) O.D., Caregiver/Parent(s) notified
3. Twelve (12) tardies to school = 1 day of in-school suspension, office detention assigned, Caregiver/Parent meeting requested
4. Fifteen (15) tardies to school = 2 additional days of in-school suspension, office detention assigned, Caregiver/Parent meeting requested

TARDY TO CLASS

Students who arrive to class after the bell without a note from a school official (i.e. Administrator, Teacher, Nurse, etc.) are considered unexcused tardy.

The following consequences apply to being "Unexcused tardy" to class each quarter:

1. Three (3) unexcused tardies = one class cut resulting = one teacher-detention
2. Six (6) unexcused tardies = second class cut = one office detention plus loss of credit

DISMISSALS

If a Caregiver/Parent wishes to have a student dismissed early from school for any reason, a note must be brought from home and given to the Main Office prior to morning attendance, or the Caregiver/Parent may contact the school prior to 8:40 AM on the date of dismissal (978-692-5570, then press 1). In all cases, if a student must leave the building for any reason, they must check with the Administrative Office Secretary and have a pass in their possession before leaving. Students leaving school assuming permission has been granted, when in fact it has not, will be considered truant.

Students who have an unexcused dismissal on the day of an assessment may not be allowed to make-up the assessment unless Administrative approval is given.

Dismissal after the fact is **unacceptable** unless it is an emergency, verified by a Caregiver/Parent. In other words, a Caregiver/Parent must notify the school of the need for their student to be dismissed before the student leaves school.

DRIVER EDUCATION

Students who schedule driving lessons during the school day must do so during DLT (Directed Learning Time). Students who do leave for driving lessons must follow the regular dismissal procedure.

RIGHTS OF THE EIGHTEEN-YEAR OLD STUDENT

Eighteen (18) year olds enjoy certain rights in school that other students do not have. When you turn eighteen (18), you have the legal rights of an adult. However, the school can continue to keep your Caregiver/Parent informed about your progress and whereabouts. The school cannot require that your Caregiver/Parent sign your report cards/grade updates or permission slips for field trips. You, as an adult, can give yourself permission to go on a trip.

Your school **cannot** require that you have absence notes signed by your Caregiver/Parent. Your school **can** notify your Caregiver/Parent that you were absent. Additionally, Caregiver/Parent has access to the student's school record even if the student is eighteen (18) years of age. If a student who is eighteen (18) years or older wishes not to have their records sent to the Caregiver/Parent then a request must be made in writing and submitted to the Principal/Assistant Principal of the High School.

DISMISSAL PROCEDURES (18 year olds)

Dismissals will be granted for medical and dental appointments. If you are dismissed for a medical appointment, you need to see the Attendance Secretary with a note signed by you dismissing yourself for the specific appointment. The note should contain: Name of the Doctor/Dentist, phone number, and time of the appointment. The school may verify this information before dismissing the student. The student will be permitted back into school if the student provides a note from the physician confirming the appointment.

If an 18 year old student becomes ill during the day, and wishes to dismiss him/herself to go home (without a previously scheduled doctor's appointment), they must first see the nurse. If the nurse has on file a note from a Caregiver/Parent indicating permission to allow the student to dismiss themselves for medical reasons, the nurse may grant permission for such dismissal. It is the responsibility of the Caregiver/Parent to monitor the frequency of dismissals, and not up to the school to notify the Caregiver/Parent each time this occurs. Students dismissing themselves for health reasons will not be permitted back into school. Students dismissed for reasons other than listed in the excused absence section of the attendance policy will be considered to have accrued an unexcused dismissal.

ABSENCES (18 year olds)

Please see the Attendance Secretary to excuse yourself for an absence from school. They will provide you with an excused pass for your teachers. The school may still call your Caregiver/Parent regarding any absence from school.

ACADEMICS

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

In accordance with The Westford Public Schools & School Committee Policy #6112: Homework I

HOMEWORK

Rationale: Homework should be a useful adjunct to in-school learning. It should be an application or adaptation of a classroom experience.

Purpose: Homework consists of assignments or activities intended for:

- Preview/Preparation for an upcoming class
- Practice/Refinement/Reinforcement of skills and concepts learned in class
- Integration of newly learned concepts and skills with what students already know

Beyond these provisions, the Westford Public Schools believe that truly effective homework includes the following considerations:

- It should be meaningful for students by having real world connections when applicable.
- It should contain problem-solving activities and assignments that challenge students to think critically.
- It may include project-oriented, long-term assignments to enable students to integrate their learning.
- It should be differentiated in accordance with needs, skill deficits, and strengths of students when necessary.
- It should incorporate student choice when appropriate.
- It should provide challenges and extensions to further expand opportunities for learning.

Expectations: We acknowledge that students work at different paces; therefore, the homework times listed in our regulation (R6112) are intended to be used as a guide. These times are to identify a maximum number of minutes per night and do not reflect the amount of homework a teacher is "supposed to" assign to students. Homework assignments are assigned at the discretion of the teacher as long as it meets at least one purpose listed above and does not exceed the times listed below. As a result, teachers are welcome to assign less than the maximum amounts. Additionally, if a teacher sees that a student has mastery of a certain concept and, as a result, the student will not benefit from additional practice, it is appropriate to modify the quantity or expectations to avoid "busy work" assignments.

Time & Responsibilities: The maximum times below refer to assigned nightly homework and do not include reading for pleasure or practice with a self-selected text, which is encouraged. Home expectations for long-term projects that are assigned will be included in the nightly maximum (see chart below).

Grade Time Expectations	Teacher Responsibilities	Student Responsibilities	Caregiver/Parent Responsibilities
GRADES 9-12 0 - 30 min. per course per night **or** 0 - 2.5 hours per course per week *AP Courses & Dual Enrollment* 4 - 5 hours per course per week	● Homework expectations for long-term projects are included in the nightly maximum as well. ● Feedback that is given to students regarding homework assignments should be delivered in a timely manner. ● No homework will be assigned over school vacations/holiday breaks **"Daily homework due the next class may not be added or posted on Google classroom later than 2:40 PM of the school day."**	● Homework is primarily the responsibility of the student. ● Students should manage their time to accommodate studying, long-term and short-term assignments, and extracurricular activities. ● Students should complete homework on time and according to teacher guidelines. ● If students struggle with homework (content and/or exceeding maximum time) on a consistent basis, the students should speak with the teacher for assistance. ● Students are responsible for obtaining from their teachers any missed assignments. ● Students should manage their time to accommodate studying, long-term and short-term assignments, and extracurricular activities. ● Students should be aware of accommodations given to all WPS students. DCAP list. See field trip guidelines, page 39 and make up policy, page 17.	● Caregivers/Parents are encouraged to assist their students' in identifying an appropriate homework area, with limited distractions.

GRADING

The school year consists of eight (8) marking periods; four (4) teacher-made midterm grade updates and four (4) computerized report cards which include mid-year and final exam grades. Achievement grades are given to students at the end of each quarter. These grades reflect the overall evaluation of class contribution based on attendance, participation in class, tests, and related assignments. Achievements are measured numerically with a minimum passing grade of sixty-five (65). No **"Incomplete"** grades will be given without administrative approval.

MARKING SYSTEM

A+ = 98 - 100 A = 93 – 97 A- = 90 – 92	B+ = 87 - 89 B = 83 - 86 B- = 80 -82	C+ = 77 - 79 C = 73 - 76 C- = 70 -72	D = 65 – 69 F = 64 - 0

Letters contained on achievement records are:

P = Pass	WF = Withdrawn Fail	NC = No Credit
F = Fail	EX = Excused	NG = No Grade Received
WD = Withdrawn	Failing MED = Medically Excused	INC = Incomplete

If a student receives a grade of "incomplete", it is their responsibility to arrange for and make-up all work within the appropriate timeframe as determined by the teacher and/or administration at the close of the marking period or a grade of "failing" will be recorded for that period. A grade of "incomplete" cannot be credited toward interscholastic eligibility. In addition to achievement grades, conduct and effort will be reflected through comments printed on the report card.

CONFERENCES AND EXTRA HELP SESSIONS

Teachers welcome the opportunity to have individual conferences with students and/or Caregiver/Parent. Appointments should be made so that teachers will not have to leave their regular classes. Appointments by Caregiver/Parent should be made through voicemail or email. It is far better that the student meets with the teacher after school or during the day when

the teacher is free from the regular classroom to discuss any differences. It is expected that students will initiate the scheduling of extra help sessions with teachers. Staff is available by appointment after school for extra help.

Course Changes

Students are encouraged to work closely with their school counselor during the course selection process. The add/drop period is 10 days from the first day of the semester. Students cannot be added to a different elective after this point and will be added to a DLT. After the start of each school year, changes to a student's program may not be possible for a variety of reasons: class size, single class offerings, conflicts, or disapproval by parent(s)/caregiver(s)/guardian(s), counselor, or teacher.

Full Year Course:

1. Two weeks after 1st quarter report cards are released, students can withdraw from a course if:
   - The student is still carrying 32.5 credits/30 credits for seniors
   - Parent/teacher signatures are secured.
   - *Course will not be noted on transcript*
2. Any point after #1, a student can withdraw from a full year course if:
   - The student is still carrying 32.5 credits/30 credits for seniors
   - Parent/teacher signatures are secured
   - *A withdrawn (W) will be noted on the transcript.*

Semester Courses:

1. Two weeks after 1st grade updates are released, students can withdraw from a course if:
   - Parent/teacher signatures are secured.
   - *Course will not be noted on transcript*
2. Any point after #1, a student can withdraw from a semester course if:
   - Parent/teacher signatures are secured.
   - *A withdrawn (W) will be noted on the transcript.*

MAKEUP POLICY

Scheduled assessments, classwork, and homework missed due to an **EXCUSED ABSENCE** must be made up on the day of a student's return to school, **as long as that course meets on that day.** All other work must be made up within three (3) days of the student's return to school. Work missed due to an absence of two (2) or more consecutive days must be made up within five (5) days after the student returns to school. Due dates for long term projects will not be affected. The above make-up deadlines may be modified, on an individual basis, by a student's IEP, 504 Team, or teacher.

ASSESSMENTS AND MID-YEAR / FINAL EXAMS

A student should take no more than three assessments on a single day, the student should see their teacher to reschedule the most recently assigned assessment that exceeds the third assessment on that school day. This conversation must take place no later than one full school day after the assessment is assigned.

Students are not required to take more than two mid-year or final exams on a calendar day. No exams/quizzes will be administered, or homework will be due, to students taking MCAS during MCAS testing.

If a student is absent for a mid-year or final examination for any reason, the student's parent/caregiver must submit written documentation to the Dean detailing the reason for the absence. Administrative approval is required prior to rescheduling the examination. Upon approval, the Dean will authorize the teacher(s) to arrange a makeup date for the missed examination(s).

Students who require extra time on a mid-year or final exam must use the extra time provided in the schedule on the same day of the regular exam block. Students must remain present during the entire exam block. Make up mid-year or final exams taken after the teachers' last day of the school year will be graded when school reopens in September.

Students who miss a mid-year or final exam and do not follow the guidelines above may receive a "0" for the assessment.

HONOR ROLL

The Honor Roll is calculated for Honors and High Honors. In order to receive High Honors, a student must have an academic average of 90% or above (to include not more than one (1) grade between 80-89). To receive Honors, a student must have an academic average of 80% or above, with no grade lower than 80%. A grade of "C" or below in any class including electives and Physical Education, or an "F" in a pass/fail course, or a "W" or "W/F" automatically disqualifies a student from Honor Roll.

If a student receives a grade of "incomplete," they are not eligible for Honor Roll. It is their responsibility to arrange for, and make up all work within the appropriate time frame as determined by the teacher and/or administration at the close of the applicable marking period. A grade of "incomplete" cannot be credited towards interscholastic eligibility.

STUDENTS WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL

If a student who has turned sixteen (16) years of age seeks to voluntarily withdraw from school, an exit interview will be scheduled with the Caregiver/Parent, student, and student's school counselor. At that time, the school will provide information regarding available transitional programs, educational services, and student rights. Students must complete a Leaving School Form in order to officially voluntarily withdraw.

If a student who has turned sixteen (16) years of age is absent without medical excuse for ten (10) consecutive school days, the Caregiver/Parent and student shall be sent written notice, within five (5) days from the tenth (10th) consecutive absence, and shall be provided with the opportunity to meet with a designated staff person within ten (10) school days to discuss the student's status and the educational opportunities that are available within the District. At the request of the Caregiver/Parent, the time for said meeting may be extended for an additional fourteen (14) days. If the Caregiver/Parent and student refuse or fail to participate in such a meeting, the student will be considered to have withdrawn from the Westford Public Schools. M.G.L. c. 76, § 18.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS P6110

Graduation Requirements:

To be eligible for graduation from Westford Public Schools, students must successfully complete all credit requirements and achieve competency determination standards. Recognizing that individual

circumstances may vary, the Principal is authorized to waive or defer specific course requirements in cases of verified scheduling conflicts and may approve curriculum modifications upon formal student request.

Requirements for Graduation:

1. A student must pass five 5-credit courses, or the equivalent in semester offerings each year, in order to be promoted to the subsequent year of secondary schooling.
2. The five 5-credit courses must include English and Math at the appropriate level. A student may go to summer school or be tutored to make up subject(s) needed for promotion or graduation, where the adequacy of demonstrated competence in the subject is judged by the administration.
3. A student must pass a minimum of 117.5 credits to graduate, as well as satisfy the requirements specified in item 1 above.
4. Students in grades 9-11 are required to take a minimum of 32.5 credits each year. Students in grade 12 are required to take a minimum of 30 credits. Exceptions require administrator approval.
5. Passing the following subjects are required:

Subject Area	Credit Comment
English Language Arts	20.0
Mathematics	20.0
Science	15.0
History & Social Science	15.0 (World History 5 credits, U.S. History 10 credits)
World Languages	10.0*
Wellness (PE and Health)	10.0 (One semester each year)**
Visual & Performing Arts	2.5
Electives	25
Total	117.5

*The World Language requirement may be waived upon application to the Curriculum Coordinator for World Languages. Students seeking such an exemption should be aware they will not meet minimum entry requirements for the MA University System.

** This graduation requirement will go into effect for the Class of 2030

Policy 6110 Adopted: April 9th, 2001
WESTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Policy Revised: December 20th, 2021 Westford, Massachusetts
Policy Revised: May 27th, 2025

The Principal will make provisions for interpretation of transfer credits so as not to penalize students who transfer into Westford Academy from schools that do not have corresponding graduation requirements. The Principal will also make provision for determining and interpreting graduation requirements in unusual circumstances.

Competency Determination

To receive a Westford Academy diploma a student must earn 117.5 total credits by meeting the minimum graduation requirements of Westford Public Schools Policy 6110 and achieve the State Competency Determination by demonstrating "mastery of a common core of skills, competencies and knowledge… by satisfactorily completing coursework that has been certified by the student's district as showing mastery of the skills, competencies and knowledge contained in the state academic standards and curriculum frameworks in the areas measured by the MCAS high school tests…." In order to demonstrate that mastery, Westford Academy students must meet the following requirements:

Required to Earn Competency Determination	
Subject Area	**Passing Grade in Course or Coursework**
English	English 9 *and* English 10 (or equivalent/advanced coursework)
Math	Algebra 1 *and* Geometry (or equivalent/advanced coursework)
Science	Biology, Chemistry or Physics (or equivalent/advanced coursework)

Credit for Foreign Study
Students who are away for a term or year to participate in a student exchange program or otherwise study abroad may receive credits toward high school graduation when (1) study plans are approved by the school administration in advance; and (2) the institution where the study occurred submits a record of the student's work. In these instances, the Principal and student's school counselor will evaluate the work and assign credit for it where the work indicates adequate learning appropriate for the student's grade level.

Credit for College Courses
Students who achieve passing grades at accredited colleges or universities prior to graduating from Westford Academy may be provided credit for these courses by Westford Public Schools for purposes of meeting the promotion and graduation requirements provided herein. Eligible courses may be either on-campus or online courses and must be worth three or more credits. Prior authorization from the administration at Westford Academy must be attained before any college or university credit will be accepted towards graduation requirements.

Westford Public Schools Policy References:
P6109 — Promotion and Retention of Students
Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks
Admissions Standards for the Massachusetts State University System and the University of Massachusetts, August 2013
Policy Adopted: April 9, 2001 WESTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Policy Revised: May 20, 2002
Policy Revised: March 28, 2016

STUDENT RECORDS
The Westford Public Schools complies with applicable federal and state laws and regulations pertaining to student records. Those laws and regulations are designed to ensure a caregiver/guardian and eligible student's rights to access, inspect, and to request amendment of the child's student record.

The Massachusetts Student Record Regulations and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) apply to all information kept by a school on a student in a manner such that the student may be individually identified. The regulations divide the record in the transcript and the temporary record. The transcript includes only the minimum information necessary to reflect the student's educational progress. This information includes name, address, course titles, grades, credits, and grade level completed. The transcript is kept by the school system for at least sixty (60) years after the student leaves the system.

The temporary record contains the majority of the information maintained by the school system about the student. This may include such things as standardized test results, class rank, school sponsored extracurricular activities, and evaluations and comments by teachers, counselors, and other persons. The temporary record is destroyed no later than seven (7) years after the student leaves the school system.
The following is a summary of major Caregiver/Parent and student rights regarding their student records:

Inspection of Record – A Caregiver/Parent, or a student who has entered the ninth grade or is at least fourteen (14) years old, has the right to inspect all portions of the student record upon request. The record must be made available to the Caregiver/Parent or eligible student within ten (10) days of the request, unless the Caregiver/Parent or eligible student consents to a delay. In the event the Caregiver/Parent or eligible student requests copies of a student record, the District may charge the Caregiver/Parent/eligible student for said copies at the District rate.

Confidentiality of Record – With a few exceptions, no individuals or organizations but the Caregiver/Parent, eligible student, and school personnel working directly with the student are allowed to have access to information in the student record without specific, informed, written consent of the Caregiver/Parent or the eligible student.

Amendment of Record – The Caregiver/Parent and eligible student have the right to add relevant comments, information, or other written materials to the student record. In addition, the Caregiver/Parent and eligible student have the right to request that information in the record be amended or deleted. The Caregiver/Parent and eligible student have a right to a conference with the school principal to make their objections known. Within a week after the conference, the principal must render a decision in writing. If the Caregiver/Parent or eligible student is not satisfied with the decision, the student record regulations contain provisions through which the decision may be appealed to higher authorities in the school system.

Directory Information – Federal law requires that the District release the names, addresses and telephone listings of students to military recruiters and institutions of higher education upon request for recruitment and scholarship purposes, without prior consent. In addition, the District may release the following directory information about a student without prior consent: a student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major fields of study, dates of attendance, weight and height of members of athletic teams, class participation in officially recognized activities and sports, degrees, honors and awards, post-high school plans and directory information such as homeroom assignments. However, in all instances listed above, Caregiver/Parent may request that such directory information not be released without prior consent by notifying the school in writing by the end of September of each school year. Homelessness status is confidential and shall not constitute directory information.

Destruction of Records – The regulations require that certain parts of the student record, such as the temporary record, be destroyed a certain period of time after the student leaves the school system. School authorities are also allowed to destroy misleading, outdated, or irrelevant information in the record from time to time while the student is enrolled in the school system. Before any such information may be destroyed, the Caregiver/Parent and eligible student must be notified, and have an opportunity to receive a copy of any of the information before its destruction.*Transfer of Records* - It is the practice of the Westford Public Schools to forward the student record of any student who transfers to another public school district upon request of the receiving district.

Non-Custodial Parents – Unless there is a court order to the contrary, a non-custodial Parent (*without physical custody of the child*) of any public school student has the right, subject to certain procedures, to receive information regarding the student's achievements, involvement, behavior, etc. A non-custodial Parent who wishes to have this information shall submit a written request annually to the child's school principal. Upon receipt of such a request, the principal shall send written notification to the custodial Parent by certified and first class mail that the records and information will be provided to the non-custodial Parent in twenty one (21) calendar days unless the custodial Parent provides documentation of the non-custodial guardian's ineligibility to access such information. In all cases where school records are provided to a non-custodial Parent, the electronic and postal address and any other contact information for the custodial Parent shall be removed from the records provided. Any such records provided to the non-custodial Parent shall be marked to indicate that they may not be used to enroll the student in another school. Upon receipt of a court order that prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, §34H, the school will notify the non-custodial Parent that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial Parent.

Third Party Access – Authorized school personnel, to include (a) school administrators, teachers, counselors, and other professionals who are employed by the school committee or who are providing services to the student under an agreement between the school committee and a service provider, and who are working directly with the student in an administrative, teaching, counseling, and/or diagnostic capacity; (b) administrative office staff and clerical personnel, employed by the school committee or under a school committee service contract, and whose duties require them to have access to student records for purposes of processing information for the student record; and (c) the Evaluation Team which evaluates a student, shall have access to the student record of students to whom they are providing services, when such access is required in the performance of their official duties. The consent of the Caregiver/Parent or eligible student shall not be necessary.

Complaints – A Caregiver/Parent or eligible student has the right to file a complaint with either agency:

Family Policy Compliance Office	Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

U.S. Department of Education 400 Maryland Avenue SW Washington, D.C. 20202-5920 (800) 872-5327	75 Pleasant Street Malden, Massachusetts 02148 (781) 338-3000

If you have any questions regarding this notice, or would like more information and/or a copy of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Student Record Regulations, please contact the building principal.

SPECIAL EDUCATION RECORDS

Special Education records will be destroyed seven (7) years after the date of graduation. These records are kept in, and may be picked up from, the Special Education Office in the Central Office Administration Building.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

The Westford Academy community believes in building/developing good citizens. Good citizenship begins with recognition of the fact that as members of the same community, the community is strengthened by the support that we provide to one another. Our goal is to encourage each student to develop good citizenship through community service. A standard community service form should be used to verify time engaged in community service activities. These forms are available through Advisors, Administration, and Counselors, and online at the Westford Academy website. Each student is encouraged to complete 40 hours of community service hours before graduating.

TEACHER DETENTION

A teacher may detain a student after school. A student must receive one (1) day's notice prior to staying for a teacher detention. During this time, there should be a positive exchange between teacher and student to explain what the expected behavior is and how the student can work to attain the expected level.

CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

Whenever a student is guilty of cheating or plagiarism, the teacher shall confiscate the student's paper, notify the Caregiver/Parent, the Dean of students, and the National Honor Society Advisor, if appropriate, as to the action taken. Examples of cheating or plagiarism may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- providing materials (tests, quizzes, projects or papers) to another student from a current or previously taken course;
- copying another student's work or working with other students to complete an assignment when not instructed to do so by the teacher;
- purposeful communication of information and/or use of unauthorized resources during a testing environment *(smart watches, cell phones, wearable technology); and*
- purposeful distribution of work/answers via printed, electronic, or verbal format to other students when such work will be considered for grading purposes.

The burden of proof that the student has written an original work lies with the student. The student may be requested to provide their teacher/administrator with a rough draft, a Works Cited page, a bibliography, parenthetical citations, copies of their sources, and will have to demonstrate through discussions their knowledge of said topic.

- ➔ **1st Offense**: Teacher notifies Caregiver/Parent and the Dean of Students. The student also receives a grade penalty at the discretion of the teacher with approval by the administration.
- ➔ **2nd Offense**: In-School Suspension and a grade of 0% on assignment/assessment
- ➔ **3rd Offense:** Out-of-School Suspension

WHAT IS PLAGIARISM?

Many people think of plagiarism as copying another's work or borrowing someone else's original ideas. But terms like "*copying*" and "*borrowing*" can disguise the seriousness of the offense. According to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, to "Plagiarize" means:

- to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own

- to use (another's production) without crediting the source
- to commit literary theft
- to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source

In other words, plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward.

BUT CAN WORDS AND IDEAS REALLY BE STOLEN?
According to U.S. law, the answer is YES. The expression of original ideas is considered intellectual property and is protected by copyright laws, just like original inventions. Almost all forms of expression fall under copyright protection as

ALL OF THE FOLLOWING ARE CONSIDERED PLAGIARISM:

- turning in someone else's work as your own
- copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
- giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not (see our section on "fair use" rules)

Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided by citing sources. Simply acknowledging that certain material has been borrowed and providing your audience with the information necessary to find that source is usually enough to prevent plagiarism.
For information and guidelines with respect to appropriate use of online resources (including translators in World Language classes), please refer to the individual class' syllabus and course expectations sheet. Such activities will also be subject to additional disciplinary action by Administration.

USE OF AI BASED GENERATORS
Students may not use AI-based generators to produce work unless permitted as part of a class assignment. AI-generated products should not be submitted as the student's original creation. Any act of plagiarism, including the use of AI, whether intentional or unintentional, may be subject to Westford Academy's academic integrity policies (Cheating and Plagiarism).

STUDENT CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE
The atmosphere of a school is a reflection of the attitude of its students and staff toward the school and toward each other. It is of equal concern that we achieve an atmosphere of order, self-discipline, safety, and mutual respect. We believe our students have the maturity and good judgment to regulate their own behavior. When these qualities need further development, we are ready to provide the necessary guidelines. The school belongs to all of us, and it can only be what we want to make it. Each teacher, within the policies set by the Westford School Committee for the Westford Public Schools, will establish behavioral expectations within their own classes. A teacher may detain a student whenever the student is not performing at that expectancy level. If there is a continuance of poor conduct displayed by the student, the teacher will request a Caregiver/Parent conference. Teachers may schedule time after school to discuss problems in scholastic areas as well as discipline.

OFFICE DETENTION
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 2:30 - 3:25
Office Detention (O.D.) will be held on scheduled days after school. Students must attend office detention unless excused by an Administrator. O.D. will be used at the Administrator's discretion to deal with student misconduct deserving of in-school discipline. (See Student Misconduct) The procedure will be:

1. Missing an Office Detention may result in one (1) day of in-school suspension
2. Students will be expected to work on school assignments and bring appropriate materials to O.D. Students not having work to be done may be assigned other work by the O.D. teacher or Administrator

Note: *Students who arrive late to Office Detention shall serve the time remaining and a full office detention on the next date it is held.*

STUDENT MISCONDUCT

Students are expected to give the maximum in courtesy and respect to all school personnel, all other students and to the policies of the school. While it is not possible to list everything which might be considered misconduct, the following may result in a detention(s), attentive measures and/or suspension.

1. Any act which disrupts a class or interferes with the proper activities of the teacher and other members of the class.
2. Insubordination. It is expected that the directions and orders of teachers and administrators will be obeyed immediately.
3. Profanity or obscenity cannot be tolerated in a safe and peaceable school environment and will be punishable.
4. Continuous (two or more) violations of Dress Code guidelines.
5. Discourtesy or disrespect to teachers, administrative assistants, custodial staff, cafeteria personnel, administrators or other students.
6. Card-playing, gambling, or other activities which are not appropriate in school or on the school grounds. Repeated instances of this problem will result in suspension. This includes computer games.
7. Littering.
8. Damage to school property or the property of any other person, i.e., vandalism.
9. Loitering in the halls or lavatories.
10. Harassment (refer to specific Harassment Policy)
11. Any occasion of a serious breach of school policy and / or school rules by a senior during the last quarter of their senior year may result in non-participation in the graduation ceremonies.
12. Excessive tardies. (See Attendance Policy)
13. Taunting - Taunting is prohibited during school and all school events. Taunting includes any actions or comments by students which are intended to bait, anger, embarrass, ridicule, or demean others, whether or not the deeds or words are vulgar or racist. Included is conduct that berates, needles, intimidates, or threatens, based on race, gender identity, ethnic origin or background, and conduct that attacks religious reliefs, size, economic status, speech, family, special needs or personal characteristics. Examples include, but are not limited to “trash talk”, “chirping”, defined as verbal communication of a personal nature directed at another person by ridiculing skills, efforts, sexual orientation, or lack of success, which is likely to provoke an altercation or response.
14. Any use of the Westford Academy logo, mascot, or simulation of without administrative permission.
15. Use of another student’s image, photo, likeness, or generated AI image without permission.
16. Any violation of school rules, policies, regulations or other provisions of the student handbook.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

For information on what electronic devices are (and aren’t) allowed, as well as descriptions of their acceptable use, please refer to Page 58 “Responsible Use of Technology at Westford Academy.”

First Violation – device turned into dean; student can pick up at the end of the school day
Second Violation – device turned into dean; parent/guardian notified that they pick up at the end of the school day
Third Violation - device turned into dean; parent/guardian notified that they pick up at the end of the school day; appropriate staff and family can hold a meeting to determine a plan moving forward

Cell Phone Search

School officials do not have to obtain a warrant in order to conduct a search of student property. Westford Academy administration is authorized to seize the cell phone of a student based on reasonable suspicion that the possession or use of the cell phone was in violation of the law and/or school rules. Additionally, Westford Academy has the right to conduct a search of the contents of the cell phone when there is reasonable and individualized suspicion that the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated or is violating the law or the rules of the school. Examples of when a search is justified at its inception include, but are not limited to, when the school receives reliable information that a student has used his or her cell phone to:

1. text during a test (suspected of cheating);
2. take a picture which is suspected to harass or bully a classmate;

3. send a picture to others or post a picture online with the intention of harassing or bullying a classmate or staff member;
4. text a threat regarding a classmate or staff member;
5. and/or where there is reasonable suspicion to believe that a student's cell phone will contain evidence related to an immediate health or safety emergency.

Even if the search of the contents of the cell phone is justified at its inception, Westford Academy will limit the scope of the search to only the contents of the cell phone that are reasonably related to the objectives of the search. This means that the search will be limited to those areas of the cell phone that could contain the evidence sought. Additionally, the search of the contents of the cell phone will not be excessively intrusive in light of the age and sex of the student and the nature of the alleged infraction.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

Communication between staff and students must be appropriate. Both parties need to keep communication related to academic, athletic or co-curricular content. Make sure all communications are transparent and observable. Be sure to report anything that is inappropriate or suspicious.

ALCOHOL DETECTION TEST

When there is reasonable suspicion that a student has consumed alcohol in school, on school property, or during or prior to a school-sponsored activity, an Alcohol Detection Test may be administered by school administrators. Reasonable suspicion includes, but is not limited to:

- erratic behavior
- slurred speech
- strong foreign odor on clothing or breath
- glazed/glassy eyes
- unsteady gait
- angry agitated state
- information offered by students, faculty, staff, or anyone wishing to remain anonymous
- leaving school grounds or returning to school grounds during scheduled hours.

Although the alcohol breathalyzer testing device measures blood alcohol levels, our purpose is to use it as a deterrent and to determine if a student has used alcohol. The refusal to take the test raises the inference that the student had or has been using alcohol and may result in discipline as described in this Student Handbook.

STUDENT SUSPENSIONS

Suspension from school involves the denial of a student's privilege to attend school and its activities. All students should understand that an out of school suspension means that the suspended student may not be in school or on school grounds for any reason, attend any classes, take part in any athletic or other activity until after midnight of the last school day of the suspension without the express permission of the Principal. Offenses for which you will be suspended or excluded include, but are not limited to:

1. Repeated truancy and/or leaving the school building/grounds without permission. First offense will result in four (4) Office Detentions and alternative measures. Subsequent offenses may result in one day of in-school suspension. Repeated offenses could result in out of school suspensions. The make-up policy for work missed is the same as that for unexcused absences. Work missed on date or period of truancy may not be made up.
2. Use, possession or distribution to other student(s) of controlled substances, drugs or alcohol, CBD oil or possession of drug paraphernalia is strictly prohibited. In addition, those students suspended for drug and/or alcohol use may be required to get a doctor's physical examination report before returning to school. Possession of items that are considered to be drug paraphernalia is a suspendable offense. A student suspended for drug/alcohol use may be required to enter an approved substance abuse program that may also include parental involvement. The distribution of tobacco/vape products is also a suspendable offense.
3. Offenses involving assault of a student/teacher, or possession of drugs or weapons may result in expulsion by the Principal. Refer to this manual for Mass General Law (MGL) c. 71 Sect. 37H regarding potential expulsion for assault, drugs, or weapons.
4. Felony charge or conviction; see M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H1/2.
5. Disrespectful or threatening speech or actions toward teachers, administrative assistants, custodial staff, cafeteria personnel, administrators or other students.
6. Possession of dangerous weapons.
7. Hazing (M.G. L. Chapter 269)
8. Offenses for which you may be suspended with the length of suspension at the discretion of administration, include, but are not limited to:
    a. Repeated or multiple cutting of classes.
    b. Stealing; including but not limited cafeteria & locker rooms.
    c. Defacing or willfully damaging school property.
    d. Fighting/harassment/bullying other forms of violence directed at another person. Such actions may include police involvement. A counseling session/conflict mediation session should precede reinstatement to the class of the suspended student.
    e. Forgery.
    f. Snowballing - snowballs are not to be thrown on school property. Making snowballs is interpreted as throwing

them.

g. Setting off false alarms (such students will also be referred to the Police and Fire Chief).
h. Serious acts of insubordination.
i. Cutting Office Detention
j. Other extreme acts which infringe on the rights of others or detract from the learning atmosphere.
k. Violation of the Computer Environment Policy.
l. Present in an "unauthorized area"- Students are expected to follow their schedule and be in their appropriate classes during scheduled times. (Stairwells, unsupervised locker rooms / classrooms or offices are examples of unauthorized areas.)
m. Violation of the Honor Code
n. Continuous violation of school rules
o. Inappropriate behavior
p. Possession of prescription medicine without authorization from school nurse
q. Any acts of taunting toward students, opponents or staff during school or school sponsored events

In every case of student misconduct for which suspension may be imposed, the principal or designee shall exercise discretion in deciding the consequence for the offense; consider ways to re-engage the student in learning; and avoid using long-term suspension from school as a consequence until alternatives have been tried. Alternatives may include the use of evidence-based strategies and programs such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive behavioral interventions and supports.

Alternative Measures to Suspension
Out of School Suspensions under M.G.L c. 71, § 37H ¾: In accordance with the requirements of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H3/4, as amended through Chapter 177 of the Acts of 2022, all school principals and principal's designees and the Superintendent and Superintendent's designees when acting as a decision-maker at a disciplinary hearing or appeal to consider student discipline for violations of school rules other than offenses involving drugs, weapons, assaults on school staff and felony offenses, shall, when deciding the consequences for the student, consider ways to re-engage the student in the learning process. The principal or designee shall not suspend the student until alternative remedies have been employed, and their use and results documented unless specific reasons are documented as to why such alternative remedies would be unsuitable or counter-productive, or unless the student's continued presence in school would pose a specific, documentable concern about the infliction of serious bodily injury or other serious harm upon another person while in school. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H 3/4(b). Alternative remedies may include, but shall not be limited to: (i) mediation; (ii) conflict resolution; (iii) restorative justice; and (iv) collaborative problem solving.

Disciplinary Due Process
Suspensions and expulsions of students shall be imposed in compliance with constitutional, statutory, and regulatory requirements, including M.G.L. c. 76, §17; M.G.L. c. 76, §21; M.G.L. c. 71, §37H; M.G.L. c. 71, §37H 1/2; and M.G.L. c.71, §37H 3/4.

A student has the right to be heard prior to any imposition of suspension. Prior to the imposition of discipline, a student will be given an opportunity to receive notice of, and respond to, the allegations or charges against them (except in cases of extreme emergency). Before suspending a student from school, depending on the alleged conduct, the administrator will apply the appropriate level of disciplinary due process consistent with Massachusetts and federal law as described below.

Definitions:
Expulsion: the removal of a student from the school premises, regular classroom activities, and school activities for more than ninety (90) consecutive school days.

In-School Suspension: the removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises, for no more than (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions during the school year. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days.

Short-Term Suspension: the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten (10) consecutive school days or less. A principal may, in his or her discretion, allow a student to serve a short-term suspension in school. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days.

Long-Term Suspension: the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days. Except for students who are charged with a disciplinary offense in subsections (a) or (b) of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or 37H ½, no student may be placed on long-term suspension for one or more disciplinary offenses for more than ninety (90) school days in a school year beginning with the first day that the student is removed from school. No long-term suspension shall extend beyond the end of the school year in which such suspension is imposed.

Written Notice: Written correspondence sent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, or email to an address provided by the Caregiver/Parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the Caregiver/Parent.
Principal: The primary administrator of the school or the Principal's designee for disciplinary purposes. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H 3/4 Offenses (Any Offense other than Dangerous Weapons, Narcotics, Assaults on Staff or Felony Matters)

Emergency Removal, M.G.L c. 71, § 37H ¾
A principal may remove a student from school temporarily when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption. In such a case, the principal shall immediately notify the superintendent in writing of the removal and the reason for it, and describe the danger presented by the student. The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days following the day of the emergency removal, during which time the principal shall: (1) make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student's Caregiver/Parent of the emergency removal, (2) the reason for the need for emergency removal; (3) the disciplinary offense; (4) the basis for the charge; (5) the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension; (6) the opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the principal concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and for the Caregiver/Parent to attend the hearing; (7) the date, time, and location of the hearing; and (8) the right of the student and the student's Caregiver/Parent to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate. Before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for hearing is otherwise agreed to by the principal, student, and Caregiver/Parent, the Principal must provide the student an opportunity for a hearing with the principal that complies with either the short-term due process or long-term due process set forth below, as applicable, and the Caregiver/Parent an opportunity to attend the hearing. Additionally, the Principal is required to render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day, which meets the requirements of notice of the decision for short-term suspension or long-term suspension at set forth below, whichever is applicable. A principal may not remove a student from school on an emergency basis for a disciplinary offense until adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation.

In-School Suspension, M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ¾
Due Process for In-School Suspension, M.G.L c. 71, § 37H 3/4: Prior to the imposition of an In-School Suspension, the student will be informed of the disciplinary offense and provided with an opportunity to respond. If the principal determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the principal will provide oral notice to the student and parent of the length of the In-School Suspension and will make reasonable efforts to meet with the Caregiver/Parent.

Principal's Decision – In-School Suspension, M.G.L c. 71, § 37H ¾: – On or before the day of suspension, the principal shall send written notice to the student and Caregiver/Parent about the In-School Suspension, including the reason and the length of the In-School Suspension, and inviting the Caregiver/Parent to a meeting with the principal for the purpose set forth in 603 CMR 53.10(4), if such meeting has not already occurred. The principal shall deliver such notice on the day of the suspension by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the Caregiver/Parent for school communications, or by other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the Caregiver/Parent. Students have the right to appeal an In-School Suspension that will result in their In-School Suspension for more than ten (10) school days in a school year.

Short-Term Suspension, M.G.L c. 71, § 37H ¾
Due Process for Short-Term Suspension, M.G.L c. 71, § 37H 3/4: In the case of disciplinary offenses not involving: a) possession of a dangerous weapon; b) possession of a controlled substance; c) assault on a member of the educational staff; or d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, the student and Caregiver/Parent will be given oral and written notice of the disciplinary offense with which the student is charged and the opportunity to participate in a hearing prior to the imposition of an out-of-school suspension. Notice – Short-Term Suspension, M.G.L c. 71, § 37H 3/4: Except as provided in cases of In-School Suspension or Emergency Removal, a principal may not impose a suspension as a consequence for a disciplinary offense without first providing the student and the Caregiver/Parent oral and written notice, and providing the student an opportunity for a hearing on the charge and the Caregiver/Parent an opportunity to participate in such hearing. The principal shall provide oral and written notice to the student and the Caregiver/Parent in English and in the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate. The notice shall set forth in plain language: the disciplinary offense; the basis for the charge; the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension; the opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the principal concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and for the Caregiver/Parent to attend the hearing; the date, time, and location of the hearing; the right of the student and the student's Caregiver/Parent to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate; if the student may be placed on long-term suspension following the hearing with the principal; the rights set forth in 603 CMR 53.08 (3)(b); and the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent. The principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the Caregiver/Parent orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. To conduct a hearing without the Caregiver/Parent present, the principal must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the Caregiver/Parent. The principal is presumed to have made reasonable efforts if the principal has sent written notice and has documented at least two (2) attempts to contact the Caregiver/Parent in the manner specified by the Caregiver/Parent for emergency notification.

Principal's Hearing - Short-Term Suspension, M.G.L c. 71, § 37H 3/4
At the Principal's hearing, the student and Caregiver/Parent (if participating) may dispute the charge(s) against the student and present information, including mitigating facts, for the principal's consideration in determining consequences for the student.

Principal's Decision – Short-Term Suspension, M.G.L c. 71, § 37H 3/4
The principal shall notify the student and Caregiver/Parent of the determination and the reasons for it, and, if the student is suspended, the type and duration of suspension and the opportunity to make up assignments and such other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal, as provided in M.G.L. c. 76, 21. The determination shall be in writing and may be in the form of an update to the original written notice.

Long-Term Suspension, M.G.L c. 71, § 37H 3/4
Due Process for Long-Term Suspension, M.G.L c. 71, § 37H 3/4: In the case of disciplinary offenses not involving:
a) possession of a dangerous weapon; b) possession of a controlled substance; c) assault on a member of the educational staff; or d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, the student and parents will be given oral and written notice of the disciplinary offense with which the student is charged and the opportunity to participate in a hearing prior to the imposition of an out-of-school suspension.

Notice - Long-Term Suspension, M.G.L c. 71, § 37H 3/4: Written notice of the date and time for the hearing will be provided in English and in the primary language of the Student's home and will identify the disciplinary offense with which the student has been charged, the basis for the charge, the potential length of the student's suspension, and inform the parent and student of the right to interpreter services if necessary to participate in the hearing. Where a student may be subject to a Long-Term Suspension, the Principal will also notify the student and Caregiver/Parent of the following rights: (1) in advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not; (2) the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's/caregiver's/guardian's expense; (3) the right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so; (4) the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district; and (5) the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the principal, and to receive a copy of the audio recording upon request. If the student or Caregiver/Parent requests an audio recording, the principal shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made and a copy will be provided to the student and Caregiver/Parent upon request.

Principal's Hearing - Long-Term Suspension, M.G.L c. 71, § 37H 3/4: The student will have the rights identified in the written notice and the principal shall provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.

Principal's Decision – Long-Term Suspension: M.G.L c. 71, § 37H ¾: Based on the evidence, the principal shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension, what remedy or consequence will be imposed, in place of or in addition to a Long-Term Suspension. The principal shall send the written determination to the student and Caregiver/Parent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the Caregiver/Parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the Caregiver/Parent. If the principal decides to suspend the student, the written determination shall: (1) identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing; (2) set out the key facts and conclusions reached by the principal; (3) identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school; (4) include notice of the student's opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of removal from school as provided in M.G.L. c. 76, § 21; (5) inform the student of the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent or designee, but only if the principal has imposed a long-term suspension. Notice of the right of appeal shall be in English and the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate, and shall include the following information stated in plain language: (a) the process for appealing the decision, including that the student or Caregiver/Parent must file a written notice of appeal with the superintendent within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the Long-Term Suspension; provided that within the five (5) calendar days, the student or Caregiver/Parent may request and receive from the superintendent an extension of time for filing the written notice for up to seven (7) additional calendar days; and that (b) the Long-Term Suspension will remain in effect unless and until the superintendent decides to reverse the principal's determination on appeal.

Superintendent Appeals – Long-Term Suspension, M.G.L c. 71, § 37H ¾: A student who is placed on Long-Term Suspension under M.G.L c. 71, § 37H ¾ following a hearing with the principal shall have the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent. The student or Caregiver/Parent shall file a notice of appeal with the superintendent within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the Long-Term Suspension; provided that within the five (5) calendar days, the student or Caregiver/Parent may request and receive from the superintendent an extension of time for filing the written notice for up to seven (7) additional calendar. If the appeal is not timely filed, the superintendent may deny the appeal, or may allow the appeal in his or her discretion, for good cause.

Superintendent Appeal Hearing, M.G.L c. 71, § 37H 3/4: The superintendent shall hold the hearing within three (3) school days of the student's request, unless the student or Caregiver/Parent requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days, in which case the superintendent shall grant the extension. The superintendent shall make a good faith effort to include the Caregiver/Parent in the hearing. The superintendent shall be presumed to have made a good faith effort if they

have made efforts to find a day and time for the hearing that would allow the Caregiver/Parent and superintendent to participate. The superintendent shall send written notice to the Caregiver/Parent of the date, time, and location of the hearing. The superintendent shall conduct a hearing to determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense of which the student is accused, and if so, what the consequence shall be. The superintendent shall arrange for an audio recording of the hearing, a copy of which shall be provided to the student or Caregiver/Parent upon request. The superintendent shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made of the hearing and a copy will be provided to the student and Caregiver/Parent upon request. The student shall have all the rights afforded the student at the principal's hearing for long-term suspension as identified above.

Superintendent's Decision, M.G.L c. 71, § 37H 3/4: The superintendent shall issue a written decision within five (5) calendar days of the hearing which: (1) identifies the disciplinary offense and the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing; (2) sets out the key facts and conclusions reached by the Superintendent; (3) identifies the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school; (4) includes notice of the student's opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of removal from school as provided in M.G.L. c. 76, § 21; and (5) notice of the right of appeal shall be in English and the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate. If the superintendent determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than the principal, but shall not impose a suspension greater than that imposed by the principal's decision. The decision of the superintendent shall be the final decision of the school district, with regard to the suspension.

M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H and 37H 1/2 Offenses (Dangerous Weapons, Drugs, Assaults on Staff and Felony Matters)

Short-Term Suspension, M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H and 37H ½: For disciplinary offenses involving a) possession of a dangerous weapon; b) possession of a controlled substance; c) assault on a member of the educational staff; or d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, the student will be given oral notice of the violation with which the student is charged and an opportunity to respond thereto, prior to the Principal's imposition of a short-term suspension or an interim suspension of less than ten (10) consecutive days pending formal proceedings. Upon imposition of a short term or interim suspension of ten (10) consecutive days or less pending further disciplinary proceedings, the student and Caregiver/Parent will be provided with written notice of the suspension and the date and time of the formal disciplinary hearing.

Long-Term Exclusion/Expulsion, M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H and 37H ½: Unlike M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H 3/4, for offenses that fall within M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H and 37H 1/2, a principal may long-term suspend a student for more than ninety (90) days or permanently expel a student for means the removal of a student from the school premises, regular classroom activities, and school activities for (1) possession of a dangerous weapon; (2) possession of a controlled substance; (3) assault on a member of the educational staff; or (4) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, or adjudication or admission of guilt with respect to such felony, if a principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school, as provided in G.L. c. 71, §§37H or 37H½. The Principal's Hearing and appeals process identified below apply to suspensions under M.G.L. c. §§ 37H and 37H 1/2 in cases of suspension for more than ten (10) consecutive days.

Dangerous Weapons, Drugs or Assaults on Staff - M.G.L. c. 71, §37H

Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the Principal. Any student who assaults a Principal, Assistant Principal, teacher, teacher's aide, or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the Principal.

Principal's Hearing, Long-Term Exclusion – 37H - Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraphs 1 or 2 shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the Principal. After said hearing, the Principal may, in his discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the Principal to have violated either paragraphs 1 or 2 above.

Appeal to the Superintendent – Long-Term Exclusion – 37H - Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the Superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the Superintendent of his appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the Superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.
Building Principals or designees are required to report to the police department the presence of any weapon on school premises.

Felony Complaints - M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ½
Issuance of a Felony Criminal Complaint - Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony or upon the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may suspend such student for a period of time determined appropriate by said principal or headmaster if said principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

Notice of Principal's Hearing – Long-Term Exclusion – 37H ½: The student shall receive written notification of the charges and the reasons for such suspension prior to such suspension taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such suspension; provided, however, that such suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

Appeal to the Superintendent- Long-Term Exclusion - 37H ½: The student shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the superintendent in writing of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the suspension. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's Caregiver/Parent within three calendar days of the student's request for an appeal. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to be represented by counsel at the student's own expense. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such a decision shall be the final decision with regard to the suspension.

Adjudication of Delinquency, Admission of Guilt or Conviction
Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony delinquency, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may expel said student if such principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

Notice of Principal's Hearing – Long-Term Exclusion - 37H ½: The student shall receive written notification of the charges and reasons for such expulsion prior to such expulsion taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such expulsion; provided, however, that the expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

Superintendent's Appeal, Long-Term Exclusion - 37H ½: The student shall have the right to appeal the expulsion to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent, in writing, of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's Caregiver/Parent within three calendar days of the expulsion. The hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to be represented by counsel at the student's own expense. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the

principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such a decision shall be the final decision with regard to the expulsion.

Opportunity to Make Academic Progress

The Westford Public Schools shall continue to provide educational services to the student during the period of suspension or expulsion in a manner consistent with M.G.L. c. 76, § 21. If the student moves to another school district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new school district shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student in an education service plan under M.G.L. c. 76, § 21. For all suspensions, students will be entitled to the following in terms of the opportunity to make academic progress: Less Than 10 Consecutive Days - Any student who is serving an in-school suspension, short-term suspension, long term suspension, or expulsion shall have the opportunity to earn credits, as applicable, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of his or her removal from the classroom or school. More than 10 Consecutive Days - Any student who is expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days, whether in school or out of school, shall have an opportunity to receive education services and make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, in accordance with the school's education service plan.

Discipline and Students with Disabilities

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in this handbook. In addition to those due process protections afforded to all students, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and related regulations require that additional provisions be made for students who have been found eligible for special education services or who the school district knows or has reason to know might be eligible for such services. Students who have been found to have a disability that impacts upon a major life activity, as defined under §504 of the Rehabilitation Act are, generally, also entitled to increased procedural protections prior to imposing discipline that will result in the student's removal for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or where there is a pattern of short term removals exceeding ten (10) school days in a given year. The following additional requirements apply to the discipline of students with disabilities:

1. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) for every student eligible for special education or related services shall indicate whether the student can be expected to meet the regular discipline code of the school or whether the code should be modified to address the student's individual needs.
2. Students with disabilities may be excluded from their programs for up to ten (10) school days to the extent that such sanctions would be applied to all students. Before a student with a disability can be excluded from their program for more than ten (10) consecutive school days in a given school year or subjected to a pattern of removal constituting a "*change in placement*", building administrators, the Caregiver/Parent, and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team will meet to determine the relationship between the student's disability and behavior (Manifestation Determination). In most instances, during disciplinary exclusions exceeding ten (10) school days in a single school year, the student shall have the right to receive the services identified as necessary by the Team to provide him/her with a free appropriate public education during the period of exclusion.
3. If building administrators, the Caregiver/Parent, and relevant members of the IEP or 504 Team determine that the student's conduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, the school may discipline the student in accordance with the procedures and penalties applicable to all students but will continue to provide a free appropriate public education to those students with IEPS. The student's IEP TEAM will identify the services necessary to provide a free appropriate public education during the period of exclusion, review any existing behavior intervention plan or, where appropriate, conduct a functional behavioral assessment.
4. If building administrators, the Caregiver/Parent, and relevant members of the IEP or 504 Team determine that the conduct giving rise to the disciplinary action was a manifestation of the student's disability, the student will not be subjected to further disciplinary removal or exclusion from the student's current educational program based on that conduct (except for conduct involving weapons, drugs, or resulting in serious bodily injury to others) until the IEP or 504 Team develops, and the Caregiver/Parent consent to a new placement, or until the District obtains an order

from court or from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA) authorizing a change in the student's placement. The student's Team shall also review, and modify as appropriate, any existing behavior intervention plan or arrange for a functional behavioral assessment.

5. If a student with a disability possesses or uses illegal drugs, sells or solicits a controlled substance, possesses a weapon, or causes serious bodily injury to another on school grounds (including transportation) or at a school function, the District may place the student in an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) for up to forty-five (45) school days. A court or BSEA Hearing Officer may also order the placement of a student who presents a substantial likelihood of injury to self or others in an appropriate interim setting for up to forty-five (45) school days.

CRISIS INTERVENTION

In the event of imminent moral harm or extreme emergencies, school personnel will take any and all steps to ensure the safety of the student and the school community. If, in the opinion of Administration, school counselor(s), or the Student Assistance Team, a student is judged to be at-risk of harming himself/herself or others, the following will occur:

1. The student's Caregiver/Parent will be notified of the concern.
2. The Caregiver/Parent will be asked to pick up their son/daughter from school.
3. The student will not be readmitted to school until the Principal has received a written statement from an outside licensed mental health professional indicating that they have evaluated the student and find that the student is safe to return to school.
4. Upon their return, school personnel will continue to monitor and work with the student.

NOTE: *During the period that the student is being evaluated, the student's daily absences will be excused.*

TOBACCO USE/POSSESSION POLICY

State law has created a Smoke-Free Environment for all schools. The use of tobacco products and/or electronic cigarettes is prohibited at all times by students, staff, and visitors in all school buildings and grounds and at all school-sponsored activities. Penalties for student violation of this policy are spelled out below in accordance with the Tobacco Regulations as noted below. In accordance with The Westford Public Schools Policy #5306 and according to Federal Regulation, Massachusetts General Laws, and Town of Westford By-Laws, the **use/possession of any** tobacco, electronic cigarettes (juuls/vapes) products within the school buildings, the school facilities, on school grounds or school buses, or on school-sponsored field trips, by any individual, including school personnel, is strictly prohibited. Violations are cumulative and enforced by the Westford Board of Health. **Tobacco products will be confiscated.**

Discipline Procedures for Violation of Tobacco Policy:

First Violation = Fined $100, successful completion of iDecide Program. Program must be completed within 60 days of violation. Caregiver/Parent notification
Second Violation = Fined $200, Two (2) Days-In-school suspension, Caregiver/Parent notification.
Third Violation = Fined $300, and for any subsequent violation. Two (2) days out-of-school suspension, Caregiver/Parent notification. Re-entry meeting required with Caregiver/Parent and administrator.

POLICE QUESTIONING AND APPREHENSION

In accordance with The Westford Public Schools Policy #1401:

CUSTODY

A duly authorized police officer may require that a student be released to their custody provided a written notice from the local police department is presented to the school official in charge. The notice for custody should be made only when one (1) or more of the following conditions exist:

- There are clear indications that the student to be questioned is directly involved in a violation of a local ordinance, state or federal statute.
- The individual involved is a known fugitive from either their caregiver/legal guardian or justice.
- It appears in the best interest of the student that they are taken into protective custody.
- The notice must be signed by the local police chief or official representative. Both the police and school officials have a responsibility to notify the caregiver/legal guardian of the student regarding the action taken.

When circumstances dictate the immediate questioning of a student, the officer will take the student into custody in accordance with the provisions of the above statement. It is clear that a police officer has the right to take a student into custody; however, it is important for law enforcement agencies and school authorities to recognize the caregiver/legal guardian-student-school relationship.

QUESTIONING

If the police department needs to question a student, school officials will have the responsibility to notify the student's caregiver/legal guardian regarding the questioning. The presence of the student's caregiver/legal guardian at the time of questioning is desirable to safeguard the self-incrimination rights of the student. Whenever possible, the questioning should be conducted away from school to avoid any display of law enforcement activities which can lead to unfortunate misunderstandings on the part of other students and members of the faculty.

It is recognized that the above conditions can easily be arranged. It is therefore expected that in such instances the police department notify the school and request a message be passed on to a student, which instructs the student to present himself/herself at the police station or some other location preferably after close of classes. Both agencies are expected to contact the student's caregiver/legal guardian and apprise them of the situation.

Note: Students at the age of 17 are considered adults in Massachusetts, and may be questioned without a Caregiver/Legal guardian present.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

Students have a legitimate right to privacy; however, this right must be balanced against the State's right to maintain a school environment that is conducive to learning. School officials are not required to obtain a warrant before searching a student under their authority. *Provided there is reasonable suspicion that the student has violated or is violating the rules of the school*, the administration of Westford Academy reserves the right to search students, students' possessions, and/or students' automobiles on school property for articles of contraband. Any illegal articles found will be confiscated and law enforcement officials notified. In addition, caregivers/legal guardians will be contacted and students will be suspended in accordance with the school discipline code. At various times throughout the school year the Westford Academy Administration reserves the right to conduct unannounced dog searches in cooperation with the Westford Police Department or other state or federal agencies.

All measures adopted in conducting searches of students, their possessions, their vehicles on school property, while under school supervision or in attendance at a school function will be limited in scope by the objectives of the search in light of the age and sex of the student and the nature of the infraction being investigated. Search of a student may extend to articles of clothing which includes pockets; and to the removal and search of outer garments such as hats, caps, headgear, jackets, coats, sweaters, sweatshirts, or shoes; and to items such as pocketbooks, lunch bags, book bags, athletic bags, or backpacks. *When reasonably possible, search of a student's belongings will be conducted in the presence of a second school official.* Use of

canines on the exterior of vehicles or other items to detect odors do not constitute a search. Should a student refuse to voluntarily comply with a request for a search, the student will remain under adult supervision until caregiver/legal guardian, and, if necessary, police, can arrive at the school to assist, as appropriate, in the investigation. Students are hereby given notice that student lockers are accessible to school officials and may be subject to search at the discretion of school officials. Students have no expectation of privacy in their school lockers. As a condition of entry into any school event, for student safety, all belongings and vehicles are subject to search for contraband. Contraband seized as a result of routine locker inspection will be turned over to the police if the material seized is of an illegal or dangerous nature. Caregiver/legal guardian will be notified of the seizure as soon as possible after the seizure. Vehicles parked on school grounds or at school functions are subject to search. Search of a student or his/her belongings in accordance with the above policy may take place at school or at any school sponsored event on or off school property or during the transportation to such event.

WESTFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT – MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING - NEW MOU

This agreement formalizes the partnership between the parties and facilitates a clear understanding of the roles, duties, and responsibilities of the parties in the implementation of a School Resource Officer ("SRO") Program in the Westford Public Schools. This agreement is entered into pursuant to the Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and is to be read in conjunction with any and all policies, procedures, and reporting requirements set forth in the Westford Public Schools student handbook and Westford Police Department regulations.

The SRO Program is based upon the fundamental premise that when schools, police, prosecutors, and other service agencies work collaboratively and proactively, the safety, mental health, and well-being of children and youth are best served. By working together to educate the school community, coordinate efforts, and share information, the Westford Public Schools and the Westford Police Department through the SRO Program strive to: (1) prevent violence involving the students of the Westford Public Schools; (2) prevent the use, abuse, and distribution of alcohol and other controlled substances involving students of Westford Public Schools, and (3) provide a safe, secure, violence-free, and nurturing school environment.

OTHER INFORMATION & REGULATIONS

AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Students who remain in the building after school must be under the supervision of a faculty/staff member. Students in any other area of the building and not supervised may be considered to be in an unassigned area and sent to office detention.

ASSEMBLIES

Throughout the year, students will be gathered together for any number of reasons, usually for athletic/club recognition days, spirit week, guest speakers, or to observe holidays. Students who do not wish to take part in an assembly will be assigned to an alternative site. School clubs, classes and department areas are encouraged to sponsor assemblies throughout the year.

SCHOOL HEALTH

The Clinic is open during the school day. Students should report to the nurse for health emergencies, illness assessment, first aid/injuries, emotional support, medication administration, health screenings and physicals, health record updates, and any health-related concerns. A student must receive a pass from the supervising teacher before going to the Clinic. If the nurse is not in the Clinic, the student should report to the Main Office. Approval from a caregiver/legal guardian or adult designated on the emergency card is necessary before a student will be dismissed.

MEDICATION INFORMATION - According to WPS Policy 5503, the school nurse is the only person allowed to administer medication to students in the Westford Public Schools

- If a prescription medication is to be given at school, it must be in the original pharmacy bottle with the prescription label attached and the Medication Administration Plan must be completed. The pharmacy will provide you with a 'school bottle'
- Medications are kept in the Nurses' Clinic with the exception of emergency medications (e.g. inhalers, EpiPens and glucagon) that students carry.
- If your child takes regular medication outside of school, it is suggested you contact the school nurse.
- If your child has an allergy requiring an EpiPen, please contact the nurse to develop an Emergency Health Care Plan (these can be found on the WPS website).
- Parent/legal guardians should retrieve medications at the end of the school year because all medications will be destroyed on the last day of school.
- Students are not allowed to carry any prescription medicine unless granted permission by the school nurse.

PHYSICALS AND IMMUNIZATIONS

Physicals - Westford Public School regulations require that students have up-to-date physical examinations in the 11th grade. According to MIAA rules, any student participating in school sports must provide documentation of an up-to-date physical examination before tryouts - a physical examination done no more than thirteen (13) months prior to the completion of the designated sports season by a licensed healthcare provider. Documentation of the physical (Including height, weight and blood pressure) should be given/mailed to the school nurses at Westford Academy.

Immunizations - Students must meet current Massachusetts Department of Public Health immunization requirements. School health records are reviewed periodically to determine the immunization status of each student. Verification of immunizations should be submitted to the school nurse to update the student's health record.

MANDATORY REPORTING

All professional staff are informed annually of their obligations to report cases of child abuse and neglect as specified in M.G.L. Chapter 119, §51A-51F and M.G.L. Chapter 71, §37L.

MANDATED SCREENINGS

School Health Services Staff conduct Postural screening for students in grade 9 as well as vision & hearing and height & weight screenings for 10th grade students. Caregiver/legal guardian will be notified of screening results by letter or telephone only if the student has failed a screening exam or requires further care from their health care provider. Findings of these referrals for follow-up should be returned to school to update a student's health record. caregiver/legal guardian will also receive advance written notification of verbal screenings conducted pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, § 97. These evidence-based screenings, called Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT), have been developed by the Department of Public Health in an effort to provide early intervention and referrals to individuals who may be at risk for alcohol or drug dependency.

MEDICAL EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOL

A student may be dismissed or excluded from school for any of the following:

• Temperature over 100.4° (oral temperature) • Disruptive cough • Suspected infection of eye, ears, nose, throat, skin, scalp • Severe abdominal pain or headache • Suspected communicable disease • Suspected pediculosis (head lice)	• Suspected fractures or any severe or disabling injury • Questionable need for sutures • Vomiting or diarrhea • Head injury • Antibiotic therapy started less than twenty four (24) hours before returning to school • Immunizations which are not up-to-date

EMERGENCY CARDS

Emergency cards are distributed to all students on the first day of school. These cards should be completed by the caregiver/legal guardian. Complete information is necessary to ensure your child's health and safety while at school. All information is confidential and must be updated if there are any changes.

SCHOOL HEALTH RECORDS

All 12th grade students will receive their entire Massachusetts School Health Record at graduation practice. Please safely store these important documents, as they will be needed for college, military service and/or employment.

Westford Academy School Nurses: *Kathy Bourdeau, BSN, RN, CWOCN*
Julianne Pepin, BSN, RN

INJURIES

Any injury to a student should be reported IMMEDIATELY to the school nurse and the Administrative Office. If the injury occurs in Physical Education, it should be reported immediately to the Physical Education instructor. An incident report must be completed for every student injury by the supervising faculty member and given to the nurse.

CHANGE PROCEDURE FOR SCHOOL RULES

1. Write a proposal and have it endorsed by 10% of the student body.
2. Submit proposal in writing to:
   a. Administration
   b. Student Council
   c. Student Advisors to the School Committee
3. Delegates to be at the meeting:
   a. One Administrator
   b. Two Faculty Members
   c. Student Council Officers
   d. One Student Advisory Member
   e. A Student Council Member Representing Each Class
   f. No More than Five Sponsors of the Proposal
4. Set a Meeting Date - Agree on a date within five (5) days of delegate selection. The meeting should be held within ten (10) days of the proposal date.
5. Meeting is held.
6. Reports:
   a. Minutes of the meeting written by the Vice-President of Student Council.
   b. Administrators - written opinions.
   c. Student Council and Student Advisory - written opinions.
7. Reports (a.b.c.) are to be presented to the initiators of the proposal within five (5) days after the meeting.
8. Right of initiators to reply no more than five (5) days after the meeting.
9. Final decision by the Principal.
10. Appealing the Final Decision - An appeal is presented to the Student Advisory Committee, which will present the appeal to the School Committee.

MAKING THE PROPOSAL

1. State the problem as is:
   a. If a rule, state the exact wording of the rule as stated in the Student Manual.
   b. If a problem, state the problem.
2. Why a change is needed - state how it is affecting others, not just yourself.
3. What do you feel the change should be:
   a. Other rationale - changes you feel are workable.
   b. Include where possible, any form of problem that one could anticipate from the proposed change.
   c. Before a proposal can be submitted, the proposal has to be accepted by ten (10) percent of the student body.

DANCE REGULATIONS

A school dance is a school-sponsored event and all school rules apply. Alcoholic beverages or the use of a controlled substance is not allowed at school functions. If it is determined that students have been drinking or suspected of using drugs prior to the dance, admission will be denied and students will be detained while Caregivers/Parents are contacted. Disciplinary consequences will be imposed in accordance with the Student Handbook.

Grind dancing is not permitted. If observed to be dancing inappropriately, an administrator/chaperone will approach the student(s) and take your name(s) and provide a warning. A second offense in the same dance will result in a Caregiver/Parent being notified, and the student(s) being asked to leave the dance.

A building 'Use Contract' shall be submitted and approved by an Administrator. The contract shall be submitted at least one (1) month in advance. Administration and Class Advisors will determine the number of chaperones and police details necessary. Items which will not be allowed into Westford Academy school dances include, but are not limited to: backpacks, bookbags, water bottles and commercial drinks. Once a student leaves the dance, they will not be allowed re-admittance.

DRESS CODE - STUDENT

Students are expected to meet reasonable standards with regards to health, safety, and cleanliness, and to dress in a way that is appropriate for the learning environment. Students shall have the right to express themselves through their dress and appearance choices, and should also respect the school district's intent to sustain an inclusive learning community that supports a diverse range of identities.

The district is responsible for ensuring that student dress choices do not interfere with the health and safety of any student, do not create a hostile or intimidating atmosphere for any student, and do not cause any disruption or disorder within the school. School staff shall enforce the dress code consistently and equitably, and in a manner that respects the privacy, comfort, and well-being of the student. *Dress code enforcement should not reinforce or increase marginalization of any group based on race, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, household income, body maturity, or body type/size*. Conversations about dress choice should be a collaborative discussion with the student to achieve an appropriate and satisfactory solution. If necessary, the student's Caregivers/Parents may be contacted to help address the issue. Should a satisfactory solution not be reached, decisions regarding the safety, respect, or disruption of the learning environment will be made by the building principal. Individual accommodations may be made based on medical, religious, or sensory needs.

Students Shall Not Wear:

- clothing depicting hate speech, profanity, pornography, violent images or language
- clothing with images or language depicting drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or other controlled substances
- clothing or accessories that could be considered dangerous, used as weapons, or could cause damage to school property
- hats or hoods of any type in school during school hours *
- outdoor clothing, such as winter coats, should be removed in school*

** Individual accommodations may be made based on medical, religious or sensory needs*

Students Shall Wear:
Clothing and footwear appropriate for the learning environment or activity. More specific student dress guidelines, which shall be inclusive, gender neutral and accessible to all students may be provided for certain school activities, including but not limited to:

- Wellness classes
- School-sponsored special events, performances, and ceremonies
- Field trips
- Extra-curricular activities and clubs
- Athletics
- Science labs
- Recess/playgrounds

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)/MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS
All students, as they enroll in Westford Public Schools, are required to complete a Home Language Survey. If a language in addition to English is spoken at home, or if a student's first language is not English, the student will be assessed for English Language Proficiency. Students scoring below expectations on the English language proficiency testing and recommended for ELL services will receive ELL support services during the school day. Students receiving ELL support are required to participate in state-wide assessments. If parents elect to exclude their child from ELL services, they must check the box marked "No" on the Permission for Services form or contact the principal in person, via telephone or email. Students will exit the ELL Program after passing statewide testing, and based on the results of standardized testing, classroom performance and teacher recommendation.

FIELD TRIPS
Subject matter field trips should be considered as an extension of the classroom and, as such, all students should attend. Students may be denied participation due to extenuating circumstances agreed upon prior to the trip. Students not attending a trip must be left with an alternative assignment in the class that is involved in the trip and are expected to attend all other classes that day. Prior to the field trip, students must communicate with their teachers to coordinate the submission of work missed/assigned. Students are expected to turn in to teachers any long-term (defined as assigned two weeks before departure of field trip) assignment, project, and/or essay BEFORE they leave Westford Academy on their trip. It is the responsibility of the student to communicate with their other teachers as to their pending absence due to a field trip and coordinate the plan both for turning in work that is due, as well as for gathering assignments that are made in their absence. Exemptions to be made at the discretion of the teacher.

Field trips require permission slips for all students, signed and approved by a Caregiver/Parent. Additionally, all medical information and/or life threatening allergy/medication pertaining to the student must be current in the Nurses' Clinic.
If a student is absent two (2) to three (3) days prior to a field trip, that student may be denied permission to participate in the field trip. In a case of denial, final decisions will be made by the Dean of Students. Students may be denied permission to attend any field trip due to excessive absences, behavioral issues or failing grades. If a student misses three (3) classes in a quarter due to a documented field trip, the teacher can speak with the appropriate administrator regarding a meeting to determine whether or not the student (because of grades, overall attendance, general concerns) can miss an additional class for a field trip. All school rules apply during field trips. Students are ambassadors of Westford Academy and their community and thereby should demonstrate exemplary deportment. All activities during a field trip should be approved by the chaperone in charge.

FIRE ALARMS
A fire alarm is a serious matter of student safety. All must follow the directions which are posted in each room. Students must leave the building immediately in an orderly fashion**.** Students will return to class once cleared to enter the building. All students will walk beyond the driveways and wait. All fire drills are timed to assess the evacuation of the building.

LOCKERS

In accordance with The Westford Public Schools Policy # 5310

Each student is assigned a locker and is responsible for its maintenance and condition. Students must use school assigned locks unless otherwise approved by administration. The school cannot be responsible for lost or stolen articles in view of the fact that each student has an individually assigned locker. Students have no expectation of privacy in their school lockers. School lockers are school property and may be searched by school authorities at any time. The Caregiver/Parent of any student involved in a locker search will be notified of the locker search.

Writing is not permitted on or inside lockers!!!

LUNCH AREA

The cafeteria and the area adjacent to the cafeteria may be used by students during lunch time. All students are responsible for cleaning their table area as soon as they are finished eating

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MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS EDUCATION ASSISTANCE ACT

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act requires that schools immediately enroll homeless students in school, even if they do not have the documents usually required for enrollment, such as school records, medical records or proof of residency, as long as the student has been properly immunized. Information on lead screenings as well as immunization records may be transferred over the phone. Caregivers/Parents intending to register students who are homeless should be aware of the following guidelines:

1. Homeless students have a right to either remain in their school of origin or to attend school where they are temporarily residing.
2. Children who move from a homeless situation into a permanent residence during the course of a school year have the right to stay in the school they were attending while they were temporarily homeless. If the child or youth continues his or her education in the school of origin but begins living in an area served by another school district, the school district of origin and the school district in which the homeless child or youth is living must agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child or youth with transportation to and from the school of origin. If the school districts cannot agree upon a method, the responsibility and costs for transportation are to be shared equally.
3. Students who choose to enroll in school where they are temporarily residing must be enrolled immediately, even if they do not bring the records usually required for enrollment with them.
4. If a homeless student arrives without records, the school district's designated Homeless Education Liaison will assist the family and contact the previously attended school system to obtain the required records.

A child who is homeless and attending any school served by the local educational agency is eligible for Title I services and the Free and Reduced Lunch Program. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines “homeless children and youths” as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes:

- Children and youths who are:
  - sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as “doubled-up”);
  - living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
  - living in emergency or transitional shelters; or abandoned in hospitals;
- Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

Additional information is available at: MA DEPT OF EDUCATION

MOTOR VEHICLE IDLING
Operators of any bus or motor vehicle are prohibited from and may be fined for prolonged idling of said vehicle on school grounds pursuant to M.G.L. c. 90, § 16B.

NO SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENTS
The following radio stations carry our no school announcements:

WBZ-Boston 1030 WBZ-TV (Channel 4) Boston
WCAP-Lowell 980 WCVB-TV (Channel 5) Boston
WRKO 680 WHDH (Channel 7) Boston
Cable TV (Channel 8) Westford

Please do not call the Police or Fire Departments

It is the policy of the School Committee to keep schools in session on all days during which it is safe for buses to be operated. Caregivers/Parents are urged to use their judgment as to the advisability of sending their children during inclement weather.

Caregiver/Parent NOTICES

Notification of Rights under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)
PPRA affords Caregivers/Parents certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

1. *Consent* before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (DOE): political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's Caregivers/Parents; mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family; sex behavior or attitudes; illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior; critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships; legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers; religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or Caregivers/Parents; or income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.
2. *Receive notice* and an opportunity to opt a student out of the following: any other protected information survey, regardless of funding; any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law; and activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.
3. *Inspect,* upon request and before administration or use: protected information surveys of students; instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum. These rights transfer from the Caregivers/Parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under state law.

The Westford Public Schools will/has develop(ed) and adopt(ed) policies, in consultation with Caregivers/Parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The District will directly notify Caregivers/Parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. The District will also directly notify, such as through U.S. Mail or email, Caregivers/Parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the Caregivers/Parents to opt his or her child out of participation in the specific activity or survey. The District will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the District has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, Caregivers/Parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and be provided an opportunity to opt their

child out of such activities and surveys. Caregivers/Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. Specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement include: the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution; the administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by DOE; and any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above. Caregivers/Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-5901

Caregiver/Parent "Opt Out" Procedure

Caregivers/Parents Notification Regarding Sexual Education and Human Sexuality Issues

M.G.L. c. 71, § 32A notes that parents [Caregivers/Parents] must be provided an "opt-out" provision for courses (typically sex education or sciences) school assemblies, or other instructional activities and programs that focus on human sexual education, the biological mechanics of human reproduction and sexual development, or human sexuality issues. Caregivers/Parents wishing to review curricula and/or exempt their child/children from instruction of these topics must contact the building Principal in writing.

PARKING

SENIORS: Parking at Westford Academy is a privilege not a right. Senior students who purchase a parking pass must adhere to the rules and regulations as outlined on the forms provided prior to the commission of a parking pass. ***Any student violating the parking rules and regulations WILL BE subject to disciplinary action including having their vehicle towed at their expense.*** Student parking passes are **$200** and must be paid in full before an official Westford Academy Parking Tag will be issued. ***Handicapped parking is free.***

> ***Attention:*** *All operators and passengers of motor vehicles are encouraged to wear safety belts when driving in a motor vehicle. Wearing a safety belt is a state law in Massachusetts. All operators of motor vehicles should follow all Massachusetts State Motor Vehicle Laws when operating a car.*

UNDERCLASSMEN: Unless given administrative approval at least a day in advance, underclassmen are not permitted to park at Westford Academy. Failure to comply may result in loss of senior parking privileges. Additionally, copying and/or forging a parking pass may result in immediate disciplinary sanctions in addition to the loss of parking privileges as a senior.

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

Physical restraint is defined as direct physical contact that prevents or significantly restricts a student's freedom of movement. Physical restraint shall be considered an emergency procedure of last resort, and shall be prohibited except when a student's behavior poses a threat of assault, or imminent, serious physical harm to self or others, and the student is not responsive to verbal directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions, or such interventions are deemed to be inappropriate under the circumstances. The Westford Public Schools complies with the requirements of Massachusetts regulations governing the use and reporting of physical restraint in schools. *603 CMR 46.00*. Physical restraint shall not be used:

a. as a means of discipline or punishment;
b. when the student cannot be safely restrained because it is medically contraindicated for reasons including, but not limited to, asthma, seizures, a cardiac condition, obesity, bronchitis, communication-related disabilities, or risk of vomiting;
c. as a response to property destruction, disruption of school order, a student's refusal to comply with a public education program rule or staff directive, or verbal threats when those actions do not constitute a threat of assault, or imminent, serious, physical harm; or

d. as a standard response for any individual student. *No written individual behavior plan or individualized education program (IEP) may include use of physical restraint as a standard response to any behavior.* Physical restraint is an emergency procedure of last resort.
e. Physical restraint in a public education program shall be limited to the use of such reasonable force as is necessary to protect a student or another member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

Nothing in Westford Public Schools policy, or the applicable regulations, prohibits: (a) the right of any individual to report to appropriate authorities a crime committed by a student or other individual; (b) law enforcement, judicial authorities or school security personnel from exercising their responsibilities, including the physical detainment of a student or other person alleged to have committed a crime or posing a security risk; or (c) the exercise of an individual's responsibilities as a mandated reporter pursuant to MGL c. 119, § 51A.

SCHOOL POSTINGS

Any advertisement or sign must be pre-approved and initiated by the Westford Academy Administration prior to it being posted. Items not pre-approved or initialized will be discarded.

SERVICES AND ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Some students with disabilities require specialized instruction and/or supportive services to help them make effective progress in school. These services can include, but are not limited to, speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, specialized instruction, or placement in special classrooms. Caregivers/Parents or teachers may refer students they are concerned about to the Pupil Services Office. Within five (5) school days of such a referral, a consent form authorizing an evaluation of the student will be forwarded to the Caregivers/Parents(s). Upon receipt of the Caregivers'/Guardians' consent, an evaluation will be conducted and a Team meeting will be held to determine if the student is eligible for special education services. If the student is found eligible for special education services, the Team will develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) identifying the necessary services.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504") is a federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education. Section 504 provides: "No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States . . . shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance . . . ." Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title II) is a federal law that applies to public entities, including the conforming amendment to Section 504 that affects the meaning of a disability under Section 504. The Section 504 regulations require a school district to provide a "free appropriate public education" (FAPE) to each qualified student with a disability who is in the school district's jurisdiction, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability. Under Section 504, a FAPE consists of the provision of regular or special education and related aids and services designed to meet the student's individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of nondisabled students are met. Individuals who have complaints regarding the District's compliance with Section 504 can bring suit in federal district court against the District or persons in their individual capacity. Caregivers/Parents and employees can also file complaints with the:

U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Right JFK Federal Building 15 New Sudbury Street Room 475 Boston, MA 02203-0506	*In regard to concerns related to the identification, evaluation, and placement of students with disabilities, Caregivers/Parents can make a hearing request with the:* Massachusetts Bureau of Special Education Appeals 14 Summer Street, 4 th Floor Malden, MA 02148	*Employees can also file a complaint with the:* Equal Employment Opportunity Commission John F. Kennedy Federal Building 25 Sudbury St. Boston, MA 02222

TEXTBOOKS & EQUIPMENT
Students will be responsible for all textbooks and equipment issued by Westford Academy. Students will be charged with a replacement fee for all lost or damaged books or equipment. A replacement for a lost and/or stolen textbook or piece of equipment will be issued upon full payment for the original.

THEFT
If a student believes that a personal item may have been stolen they should immediately report to the administration. Administration will complete the following checklist:

- speak to the student and obtain a statement
- complete a theft report
- issue copies of theft report to department(s) and custodial staff
- notify student of lost and found areas
- notify student if item is recovered
- notify police if appropriate

VISITORS
Westford Academy welcomes student visits, but the guest's visit must serve a purpose relating to the school. The student is the responsibility of the Westford students and they must remain with him/her for the duration of their visit. Any visitor who is a guest of a student must be approved by Administration at least twenty four (24) hours prior to the guest's arrival. A form must be filled out by the Westford Academy student, which grants permission from the visitor's school and the Caregiver/Parent of the Westford Academy student. This form must be returned and approved by the Administration before the visit can occur.

WORKING PAPERS
In order for a student, age fourteen (14) to seventeen (17), to be employed in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, they must have an employment permit. This form is available at the Principal's Office. A student between fourteen (14) and sixteen (16) must be accompanied by a Caregiver/Parent to sign the form along with the Principal. Those students aged sixteen (16) to seventeen (17) need only to sign their own names along with the Principal.

BUS STOP POLICY
The Director of Finance and Administration is responsible for establishing proper standards of safety in the operation of buses and shall ensure their enforcement by the bus contractor. The Director of Finance and Administration is responsible for establishing bus schedules, routes, and stops in cooperation with the bus contractor. Authorized bus stops shall be located in places where students may be loaded and unloaded, cross streets and roads, and safely await arrival of the buses.

CRITERIA USED TO EVALUATE BUS STOP SAFETY
Evaluation of bus stop safety is done by the Director of Finance, safety officers from the police and fire departments, and the bus company. When a Caregiver/Parent requests a change in the assigned bus stop, the following safety review criteria is used to evaluate the safety of a bus stop:

1. Site lines of the traffic from both directions in approaching the stop.
2. Speed limit and traffic conditions at the location of the bus stop.
3. Hills and turns that impeded traffic visibility of the stop and proximity to the bus stop.
4. Ability of a school bus to navigate in an area.
5. Width of a road
6. Grade level (age) of students.
7. Ability of the school bus to safely pull out of a side street onto a main road.
8. Time constraints.
9. Number of students involved at a bus stop.
10. Any other unique conditions.

All requests to change a bus stop must be in writing and must include the reason for making the request. Send this written request to the Director of Finance who will make the final decision after consultation with safety officers and the bus company.

BUS DISCIPLINE POLICY

- **1st Offense:** Referral for misbehavior on the school bus will result in a student conference with the building administrator. At that time, appropriate disciplinary action will be administered and Caregiver/Parent will be notified regarding each written report from the diver.
- **2nd Offense:** May result in a bus suspension of up to three (3) days
- **3rd Offense:** May result in a bus suspension of up to five (5) days
- **4th Offense:** Chronic or severe behavior may result in permanent bus suspension or loss of bus privileges for the remainder of the school year. The Superintendent of Schools will be notified.

ATHLETICS AND CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students are encouraged to participate in school clubs and activities, a list of which is included below. Clubs operate on a voluntary basis after school. A new club may be formed at any time by interested students by submitting a list of names of the proposed membership to the administration. *A leader of an activity would forfeit their leadership role for an academic year for a Drug/Alcohol Violation, in addition to any other consequences imposed in accordance with the Discipline provisions of the Student Handbook.* For all students

- *First violation* of a drug/alcohol offense (in addition to other disciplinary consequences) will result in the student being ineligible to participate in the club/activity for a period of 25% of season
- *Second violation* of a drug/alcohol offense (in addition to other disciplinary consequences) will result in the student being ineligible to participate in the club/activity for a period of 60% of season

A student serving a suspension (out-of-school or in-school) is ineligible to participate in any co-curricular activities of the school on the day or days of the suspension. Attendance at a weekend activity is a privilege and may be revoked by Administration.

CO-CURRICULAR/ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY

ELIGIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATION

We believe that all students should strive for excellence in all courses. In order to meet eligibility guidelines for athletic and/or co-curricular involvement/participation, students will be eligible if they fail no more than one (1) class, have no Incompletes, and receive credit for their classes. This does not mean that we encourage students to fail a class, but students are eligible for participation in our athletic and co-curricular programs if they fail one (1) course. *If a student fails two (2) or more classes, the student is ineligible for such participation.*

The Westford Public Schools provides nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities in such a manner as is necessary to afford students with disabilities an equal opportunity for participation. The Westford Public Schools is permitted to establish and utilize skill-based eligibility criteria for participation in extracurricular programs and activities (e.g., school-sponsored athletics) as long as the criteria are rationally related to the purposes and goals of the specific program or activity. The Westford Public Schools' administrators, in their discretion, may deny or limit a student's access to co-curricular activities as a disciplinary sanction.

MEANING OF PARTICIPATION IF NON-ELIGIBLE

Athletics: If determined to be non-eligible because the student, through any combination of two courses, has failed, received Incompletes, or not received credit due to attendance-related issues, the student is not permitted to practice or participate with their team in any way. Upon the issuance of the next grade update, should it be demonstrated that the student is passing all classes, they may practice and participate in the sport (at the discretion of the coach) but *are not permitted to "suit up" or participate in any competition, including scrimmages, against another school's team until the issuance of the next report card when eligibility will be re-determined*. If the student has received more than two (2) *failing grades, the student is ineligible*

for the duration of the quarter (until the issuance of the next Report Card) and may not try out, practice or participate with the team in any way.

Co-curricular Activities: *If determined to be non-eligible because the student, through any combination of two courses, has failed, received Incompletes, or not received credit due to attendance-related issues, the student is not permitted to practice or participate with their team in any way.* Upon the issuance of the next grade update, should it be demonstrated that the student is passing all classes, they may attend and participate in club/activity meetings (at the discretion of the advisor) but are not permitted to compete or perform in any event associated with that club/activity. If the student has received more than two (2) failing grades, the student is ineligible for the duration of the quarter (until the issuance of the next Report Card) and may not participate with the club/activity in any way.

1. To help illustrate this policy, please reference this table below:

Grade/s	Eligibility	Grade Update/s
1 Failing Grade	Student is eligible to try out, practice and compete in athletics and co-curricular events	Not needed
2 Failing Grades	Student may not participate in any way with team/club/activity. Students are not eligible for any competition for the duration of the quarter, until issuance of the next report card.	If passing all classes at next grade update, student is permitted to practice with team or attend club activities but is still ineligible to compete or perform with that team, club/activity until issuance of next report card
3 Failing Grades	Student may not participate in any way with team/club/activity. Students are not eligible and may not try out, participate or compete with any team/club for the duration of the quarter, until issuance of the next report card.	Cannot be used to reinstate permission to try out, practice and/or compete with any club or team.

2. A student must be present for 3 full blocks on the day of an activity of a sport, club, or organization to be eligible to participate on that day. Exceptions must be cleared through an Administrative Team decision. Suspension / detention will be a reason for not being able to participate in a practice, game, or after-school activities. Exceptions must be cleared through an Administrative Team decision. Suspension / detention will be a reason for not being able to participate in a practice, game, or after-school activities.
3. A student must be in school on the Friday before a weekend activity or contest. Exceptions must be cleared through the appropriate Administrative Team.
4. THIS ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT APPLIES TO ALL SPORTS, CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, THOSE LISTED BELOW:

Co- Curricular (Subject to Eligibility)		
ACSL- Computer Science	Debate Team	Outing Club
AFS	D.E.C.A.	Peer Counselor
AirSoft	Drama Club	Peer Mediation
Amnesty International	French Club	Photography
Animal Rights	Future Educators of America	Philosophy Club
Art Club	German Club	Political Forum
Athletics	Gay / Straight Alliance	S.A.D.D.
Beyond Words Literary Magazine	Latin Club	School Newspaper
Cheerleading	Intramural	School Store
Chess Club	Jazz Band	Ski Club
Choir	WA Best Friend Book Club	Spanish Club
Cirrus	Math Team	Student Council’
Class Officers	Marching Band	WABC (Broadcast Club)
Computer Society	Mock Trial	Yearbook
Community Service	National Honors Society (NHS)	Science Olympiad
Community Service Team	Orchestra	

CONCUSSIONS

Managing Student Head Injuries: In the event of a student head injury during any school-related activity or event, WPS personnel will:

1. Remove the student from the activity immediately. When a head injury occurs, or is suspected, the student cannot be returned to the activity on the day of injury.
2. Notify appropriate emergency medical personnel.
3. Complete a student *accident form* and report the head injury to the school nurse or athletic trainer.
4. Notify the Caregiver/Parent of the real or suspected injury and recommend a medical evaluation of the injury.
5. Enter the actual or suspected head injury information into the WPS Student Information System database.
6. Require written medical clearance and authorization before the student can return to activity.
7. Create a written re-entry plan for each student removed from the activity and subsequently diagnosed with a concussion, to be shared with appropriate school staff for a graduated return to full academic and extracurricular activities.

STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Student Advisory is a committee of not more than six (6) students elected annually, who act as representatives to the School Committee. The members are expected to attend the meetings. It is a very important position as these members are to respond to matters pertaining to the students of the school directly to the School Committee. Any grievances or comments about change are brought to the School Committee by way of the Student Advisory members after having been properly channeled through and discussed with the Principal. Two (2) members of the SAC will be elected to attend the Regional Advisory Council meetings.

NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY (NHS)

The object of the Tadmuck Hill Chapter of the National Honor Society is to create an enthusiasm for scholarship, to stimulate a desire to give service, to promote able leadership, and to encourage the development of character in Westford Academy students. Candidates shall have spent at least one (1) semester in Westford Academy and shall be members of the sophomore, junior, or senior class. To be scholastically eligible, students must have a *GPA of 3.6 or higher (without rounding up)*. Those sophomores and juniors who meet this standard will receive notice of their eligibility in March. Seniors who meet this criterion will be notified in mid-October. In addition to the minimum scholarship average, a student must have demonstrated the following:

1. *Leadership*: All elected or appointed leadership positions held in school, community, or work activities in which the candidate is directly responsible for directing or motivating their peers will be considered. (Peer = students in teenage years)
2. *Service*: Any service done for school, community, or religious organizations will be considered.
3. *Character*: The candidate should have displayed outstanding character traits such as honesty, integrity, respect for others, etc. Any previous suspendable disciplinary offense, infraction of school rules and/or improper conduct may be cause for rejection of a candidate. **Please communicate with your advisor if you have questions regarding leadership, service, or character - DO NOT ASSUME.**

These students must then fill out a fact sheet which clarifies qualities of leadership, service and character. Students who submit these fact sheets by an established deadline should understand that review of this information by the Faculty Advisory Committee does not guarantee election. Any active member who falls below the academic standard or violates any of the four (4) standards of membership (*character, leadership, scholarship, service*) or is suspended from school or is found guilty of

cheating or plagiarizing may be dismissed from the NHS by a majority vote of the faculty council of the NHS. The National Honor Student Review Board will review the status of members when appropriate and recommend to the faculty council decisions regarding continued membership in the Westford Academy National Honor Society. *(See Article IV of the NHS Constitution)*.

INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC PROGRAM

The purpose of the Westford Academy athletic programs is to provide an opportunity for student-athletes to participate and share in a positive environment of spirited competition. Our goal is to instill basic values that build character, self-discipline, and self-esteem as an individual and member of a team through involvement in an interscholastic athletic program.
Information regarding the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association and Program can be found on the Westford Academy Athletics website.

It is the responsibility of students and Caregiver/Parent to become familiar with the information contained therein. In particular, students and Caregiver/Parent should review the MIAA Handbook Rules and Regulations

Please contact the school officials below if you have questions.

Name	Position	Phone/Extension
Jeff Bunyon	Director of Athletics	978-692-5570 x7408
Dan Twomey	Principal	978-692-5570 x7404
Bill Bombaci	Athletic Trainer	978-692-5570
Erin Auger	Administrative Assistant	978-692-5570 x7421

FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL POLICIES

CH. 622/TITLE IX (EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY)

In accordance with the regulation of Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, all courses of study, extracurricular activities, services, and facilities offered by the school are available without regard to race, color, sex, religion or national origin. Furthermore in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, United States of America, no person shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Under both Chapter 622 and Title IX provision for grievance procedures is made. Any student, caregiver, guardian or other person or group who believes that these regulations have been or are being violated, may so notify the Principal, Superintendent of Schools, and Chapter 622/Title IX Coordinator. The School Department will respond promptly, but no later than 30 days, in writing to the party filing the grievance. Should a non-compliance be found, procedures for making changes will be immediately initiated both to correct the non-compliance and to provide particular remedies to the person or group affected.

At any stage in the complaint process, the complainant has the right to file formal complaints with the: U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights JFK Federal Building 15 New Sudbury Street Room 475 Boston, MA 02203-0506 ***Or with the:*** Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination One Ashburton Place, Sixth Floor, Room 60 Boston, MA 02108 (617) 727-3990.	*For complaints of discrimination on the basis of disability the complainant may also file a complaint with the:* Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education 75 Pleasant Street Malden, MA 02148 (617) 338-3300 Massachusetts Bureau of Special Education Appeals 14 Summer Street, 4 th Floor Malden, MA 02148	*Complaints of discrimination in employment practices may also be filed with the:* Equal Employment Opportunity Commission John F. Kennedy Federal Building 25 Sudbury St. Boston, MA 02222 (617) 565-3200

MGL CHAPTER 269 (HAZING)

In accordance with Westford Public Schools Policy # 5305.

Hazing is strictly prohibited in the Westford Public Schools. Pursuant to school committee policy and MGL Chapter 269 sections 17, 18 and 19, hazing shall include 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.

Anyone associated with the Westford Public Schools who knows that another person is the victim of hazing as described above and is at the scene of such conduct shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such conduct to an appropriate law enforcement official and the office of the Superintendent of Schools, as soon as reasonably practicable.

Every Westford School which has been designated or approved as a secondary school shall issue to every student group, student team or student organization which is part of such institution or is recognized by the institution or permitted by the institution to use its name or facilities or is known by the institution to exist as an unaffiliated student group, student team or student organization, a copy of M.G.L. Chapter 269, Sections 17, 18 and 19.

Each such group, team or organization shall distribute a copy of M.G.L. Chapter 269, Sections 17, 18 and 19 to each of its members, plebes, pledges or applicants for membership. It shall be the duty of each such group, team or organization, acting through its designated officer, to deliver annually, to the principal of the school an attested acknowledgment stating that such group, team or organization has received a copy of M.G.L. Chapter 269, Sections 17, 18 and 19, that each of its members, plebes, pledges, or applicants has received a copy of M.G.L. Chapter 269, Sections 17, 18 and 19, and that such group, team or organization understands and agrees to comply with the provisions M.G.L. Chapter 269, Sections 17, 18 and 19.

Each Westford secondary school shall, at least annually, before or at the start of enrollment, deliver to each person who enrolls as a full time student in such institution a copy of. M.G.L. Chapter 269, Sections 17, 18 and 19.

The principal or headmaster of each institution of each Westford Secondary School shall file, at least annually, on or before

October 1 of each year, a report with the Bureau of Student Services of the Board of Education, certifying that such institution has complied with its responsibility to inform student groups, teams or organizations and to notify each full time student enrolled by it of the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 269, Sections 17, 18 and 19 and also certifying that said institution has adopted a disciplinary policy with regard to the organizers and participants of hazing, and that such policy has been set forth with appropriate emphasis in the student handbook or similar means of communicating the institution's policies to its students and containing such further information as may be required.

The text of M.G.L. Chapter 269, Sections 17, 18 and 19 is as follows:

17. Hazing, organizing or participating; hazing defined - 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 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 the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.*
18. Failure 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.
19. Copy of secs 17-19; issuance to students and student groups, teams and organizations; report Each institution of secondary education and each public and private institution of postsecondary education shall issue to every student group, student team or student organization which is part of such institution or is recognized by the institution or permitted by the institution to use its name or facilities or is known by the institution to exist as an unaffiliated student group, student team or student organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen; provided, however, that an institution's compliance with this section's requirements that an institution issue copies of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations shall not constitute evidence of the institution's recognition or endorsement of said unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations.

    Each such group, team or organization shall distribute a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to each of its members, plebes, pledges or applicants for membership. It shall be the duty of each such group, team or organization, acting through its designated officer, to deliver annually, to the institution an attested acknowledgement stating that such group, team or organization has received a copy of this section and said sections seventeen and eighteen, that each of its members, plebes, pledges, or applicants has received a copy of sections seventeen and eighteen, and that such group, team or organization understands and agrees to comply with the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen. Each such institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of postsecondary education shall, at least annually, before or at the start of enrollment, deliver to each person who enrolls as a full time student in such institution a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

    Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of postsecondary education shall file, at least annually, a report with the board of higher education and in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education, certifying that such institution has complied with its responsibility to inform student groups, teams or organizations and to notify each full time student enrolled by it of the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen and also certifying that said institution has adopted a disciplinary policy with regard to the organizers and participants of hazing, and that such policy has been set forth with appropriate emphasis in the student handbook or similar means of communicating the institution's policies to its students. The board of higher education and, in the case of secondary institutions, 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 report.

MGL CHAPTER 269, SEC. 10 (WEAPONS POLICY)

It is illegal to have a weapon in school or on school property. Students who are in possession of a weapon or a look alike weapon risk expulsion from school. In all cases authorities will be notified, the student will be immediately suspended from school, and an expulsion hearing will be held. Weapons are defined as guns, knives, bows, arrows, darts, or any other objects, which in the opinion of the administration may cause harm to you or others.

Whoever not being a law enforcement officer, and notwithstanding any license obtained by him under the provisions of Chapter 140, carries on his person a firearm as hereinafter defined, loaded or unloaded, in any building or on the grounds of any secondary school, college, or university without the written authorization of the Board or Officer in charge of such secondary school, college, or university shall be punished by a fine of not more than $1,000 or by imprisonment for not more than one year, or both. For the purpose of this paragraph, "firearm" shall mean any pistol, revolver, rifle, or smoothbore arm from which a shot, bullet, or pellet can be discharged by whatever means.

HARASSMENT POLICY

In accordance with The Westford Public Schools Policy #5303:

The School Committee is committed to maintaining a work and educational environment free from all forms of harassing conduct. Harassment including but not limited to, race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sex, gender identity, creed, marital status, sexual orientation or disability will not be tolerated in the Westford Public Schools. All employees, students, contracted vendors, and other members of the school community will conduct themselves in an appropriate manner with respect, dignity, courtesy, and fair treatment fore all individuals while on school grounds, school property, or property within the jurisdiction of the school district, school busses, or attending or engaging in school activities.

Harassment means conduct of a verbal or physical nature which is designed to embarrass, distress, agitate, disturb, or trouble any person when: 1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's work or education or of an individual's participation in school programs or activities. 2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for decisions affecting the individual. 3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or creating an intimidating or hostile learning or working environment. Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

1. Verbal, physical or written harassment or abuse
2. Unsolicited remarks or remarks of a demeaning nature
3. Gestures or physical contact
4. Displays or circulation of written materials or pictures derogatory to either gender or derogatory to racial, ethnic, religious, sexual orientation or disability groups.
5. Implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievement, or other school matters.
6. Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at an individual.

Gender Harassment (Sexual Harassment) includes, but is not limited to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other physical or verbal conduct of a sexual nature as listed below:

1. Submission is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's participation in school programs or activities.
2. Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for work or educational decisions affecting such individual/s.
3. 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/educational environment.

Each administrator shall be responsible within their school or office for promoting an understanding of harassment and assuring compliance with state and federal laws, and with School Committee policy and regulations governing harassment.

Violations will be cause for disciplinary action up to termination or expulsion.
Retaliation in any form against any person who has filed a complaint relating to harassment will not be tolerated. No individual will be subject to any form of coercion, intimidation, retaliation or discrimination for filing a report of harassment. The consequences for retaliation will be the same as for harassment. False accusations made in bad faith will be subject to the same disciplinary action as the harassment itself.

Following disclosure by a student of an incident involving student-to-student harassment, **one or more** of the following may occur after investigation by an appropriate responder.

- A letter identifying the offending behavior may be written and given to the offender. This is not a disciplinary action. The letter is not kept on file in the Principal's Office. However, it is retained by the Director of School Counseling. If harassment described by the student involves extreme physical assault, a letter response would not be appropriate, and the matter would be turned over to an administrator for more direct attention and disciplinary action.
- Notification of Caregiver/Parent when disciplinary action is not required may vary depending on the school level.
- Student/s may be disciplined.

At any stage in the complaint process, the complainant has the right to file formal complaints with the: U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights JFK Federal Building 15 New Sudbury Street Room 475 Boston, MA 02203-0506 ***Or with the:*** Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination One Ashburton Place, Sixth Floor, Room 60 Boston, MA 02108 (617) 727-3990.	*For complaints of discrimination on the basis of disability the complainant may also file a complaint with the:* Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education 75 Pleasant Street Malden, MA 02148 (617) 338-3300 Massachusetts Bureau of Special Education Appeals 14 Summer Street, 4 th Floor Malden, MA 02148	*Complaints of discrimination in employment practices may also be filed with the:* Equal Employment Opportunity Commission John F. Kennedy Federal Building 25 Sudbury St. Boston, MA 02222 (617) 565-3200

If students feel that they are being harassed by adult personnel, they are encouraged to report the incident to a counselor and/or administrator. Appropriate action will be taken in all instances.

Discipline: The following disciplinary actions for a substantiated charge against students that requires action beyond the "letter writing level" may result in the following:

- Student(s) may be suspended.
- Student(s) may be referred to the Superintendent or School Committee
- Police or court action may be initiated.

BULLYING

In accordance with The Westford Public Schools Policy #5304:

Bullying is defined as the repeated use by one or more students **or by a member of a 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** *of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii)places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.*
Examples of bullying include physical aggression, verbal aggression, malicious rumors/gossip; social exclusions and/or threats of harm or exclusion.

Bullying that happens outside of school can lead to disciplinary action at school if a target feels unsafe at school or if school is disrupted as a result of the bullying behaviors.

Westford Public Schools
Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

The Westford Public Schools (WPS) created the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (the Plan) required under M.G.L. c.71, §37O in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, Caregivers/Parents. The Plan is posted on the district website HERE

The Westford Public Schools' Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan ("the Plan") is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyber-bullying. The district is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. In consultation with these constituencies, we have established this Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. The principal or their designee is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan.

The district is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyber-bullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process.

We understand that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming a target of bullying or harassment based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have 1 or more of these characteristics. The district will take specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

We will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. We will promptly investigate all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target's sense of safety. We will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent or guardian involvement.

DEFINITIONS
Several of the following definitions are copied directly from M.G.L. c.71, §37O, as noted below.

Aggressor is a student or a staff member who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.
Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c.71, §37O, is the repeated use by one or more students **or by a member of a 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** 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 herself or of damage to his or her 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.

Cyberbullying - bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. See M.G.L. c.71, §37O for the legal definition of cyberbullying.
Hostile environment - as defined in M.G.L. c.71, §37O, 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.
Perpetrator - a student or member of a 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
Retaliation - any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student or staff person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.
Staff - includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.
Target - a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION
Acts of bullying, which include cyber-bullying, are prohibited:

1. on school grounds and 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 a school district or school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by a school district or school
2. at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt 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 is also prohibited.

As stated in M.G.L. c.71, §37O, nothing in the Plan requires the district or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

Reporting bullying or retaliation - The district expects students, caretakers or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of suspected bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or associate/assistant principal. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Reports may be made orally or in writing. The "WPS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form" has been developed for students, caretakers/guardians or other non-school or district staff to report

incidents of suspected bullying. This form can be obtained in every school office. Use of the "WPS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form" is not required as a condition of making a report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the principal or associate/assistant principal.

Determinations - With the principal's receipt of the complaint of bullying or retaliation, the principal or their designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or their designee will determine what remedial action may be required, if any, and determine what responsive and/or disciplinary actions will be taken. The principal's finding and determinations shall be documented in writing.

All notices to caretakers/guardians must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal or their designee cannot report specific information to the target's caretaker or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

Taking Disciplinary Action - If the principal or their designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or their designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the Plan and with the school's or district's code of conduct. Disciplinary sanctions may include, but are not limited to, suspension or expulsion from school.

Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which should be read in cooperation with state laws regarding student discipline.

If the principal or their designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action.

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the principal or their designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the principal or their designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately. The principal or their designee will monitor the effectiveness of any such interventions employed and, where appropriate, recommend alternative or supplemental interventions.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, gender identity, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c.71, §37H or 37H½, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION
In accordance with The Westford Public Schools Policy #6201:

Program Definition
The homebound instruction program is designed for students who cannot attend school for a variety of medical or emotional factors substantiated by a qualified healthcare provider. The program duration may be short or long term.

The program designed for each student is determined by their educational plan and consists primarily of academic tasks which are coordinated by the regular / special education teacher(s) and the home instruction teacher.

Program Goals
The goals of the program are to:

1. Provide instructional support for students assigned to the Homebound Instruction Program.
2. Provide the schools and the classroom teacher(s) with periodic reports of student progress.
3. Implement the designed educational plan with the intent of returning to the regular school program at the earliest possible time.

STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

STUDENT RELEASE FOR PRINT AND ELECTRONIC PUBLICATION
During the course of the school year, members of the school staff may photograph or videotape students participating in school activities as a way of assessing learning or documenting learning activities. News photographers and cameramen may also visit our schools to take photos or videos of students engaged in school-related activities. These photos and videos may be selected to appear in school publications such as caregiver newsletters or student literary journals, in local newspapers, or on cable or commercial TV. In addition, written work or art work produced by students may be selected to appear in school publications or released to the media

Occasionally student work or photographs of students participating in school activities, or highlights of their school achievements may be displayed on the Westford Public Schools website. Only the student's first name and last initial will be published on school department pages. Westford Public Schools will not publish student work or photographs in print or on the Internet without the Caregiver/Parent written permission. The School Committee recognizes three levels of publishing audiences as defined in *The Westford Public Schools Policy #6302 and 6115*.

Classroom/School Publishing: All student work and images may be used, displayed, or published in the classroom/school setting unless caregiver notification to the contrary is received by the school.

*Community Publishin*g – upon caregiver approval student work may be used in community publications (e.g., *Eagle, Sun)*. The student work may be credited with the student's first name and last initial unless caregiver notification to the contrary is received by the school.

World Publishing – upon written caregiver approval, student work may be displayed on the school district website unless caregiver notification to the contrary is received by the school.

BLOCKSI
Blocksi is dedicated to providing content filtering and classroom management systems to our IT directors, building principal, and to the education technology department.

Blocksi Manager features a dashboard to help filter students that are in school, as well as those signing in remotely, track their device and detect signs of cyberbullying and/or any type of harm within their WPS Google Domain. Additionally, Blocksi uses AI scanning to activate alerts that are sent directly to the school principal.

When student searches are deemed inappropriate or having concern for students physical and mental health, a notification is printed out and discussed by the students school counselor, Dean of Students and also may involve parental / caregiver communication based on the content of the inquiry.

DISTRICT ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Acceptable Use of District-wide Computing Environment P6302
Westford Public Schools believes the teaching of cybersafety and responsible online behavior is essential in the lives of students. Therefore, safe and responsible behavior shall be explicitly taught at our schools and parents/caregivers are requested to reinforce this behavior at home.

Responsible use of technology helps students to achieve their personal and academic potential and become successful citizens. The district believes that cybersafety and responsible online behavior should be taught in a partnership between home and school. To encourage that joint commitment of responsible behavior, the district schools will include the following paragraphs of this Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) in all the student handbooks for grades 6-12.

School Support for the Safe and Responsible Use of Digital Technologies
Westford Public Schools uses the internet and various other digital technologies as teaching and learning tools. The district views these technologies as valuable resources, but acknowledges they must be used responsibly. While the nature of the internet is such that full protection from inappropriate content can never be guaranteed, students using computers in the school must cooperate with the staff members supervising computer areas and follow the instructions for computer use in each area. The use of the Internet and district technology resources is a privilege, not a right. Violation of district rules will result in loss of network/computer privileges for a period of time commensurate with the offense. Users will also be held responsible for damage they cause and will be subject to school rules regarding damage to property. The superintendent will refer any potential illegal activities to the appropriate local authority.

Copyright Law: Users shall observe copyright law in using material obtained from network sources; including the citing of sources and also by refraining from using pictures or other images without permission from the owner.

Etiquette: Users communicating via any school digital technology shall avoid profane or other potentially offensive language. Additionally, users shall never use school computers or any other technology to convey intentionally hurtful messages.

Online Safety: To be safe online, students must act with caution, both at school and at home, particularly in unsupervised situations. Students shall never give out personal information, such as full name, home phone number, home address, or credit card information over the school's network. Additionally, any password issued to a user is for the personal use of the recipient ***only.***

Tampering: Unauthorized tampering with computers or peripherals is forbidden, and may be dealt with as vandalism, if damage occurs.

Publishing: WPS recognizes the need to restrict the publication of personal information for safety reasons. To ensure security and safety of our children, the published work of K-8 students will be identified by first name and last initial, and student photos and audio recording may only be used with parental permission. There is no restriction at the high school level.

Massachusetts General Law References:
M.G.L. 71:34D – Student Records: Regulations
M.G.L. 71:34E – Inspection of Records by Parent
M.G.L. 71:34H – Publication of School Committee Rules and Regulations Relative to the Conduct of Teachers and Students
M.G.L. 76:5 – Place of Attendance: Discrimination

Other References:
Massachusetts Department of Education Regulations 603 CMR 23:00 Student Records

Federal Law References:
Fair Use Doctrine of Copyright Law 17 U.S.C. Section 107 1988 e. and Sup. IV. Title VII of 1964 Civil Rights Act

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Westford Public Schools Policy References:
P4203 – Harassment
P5301 – Student Conduct P5302 - Student Handbooks P5303 – Harassment
P5304 – Bullying P5502 – Safety
P6115 – Student Publications/Photos, Images, Audiotapes and Exhibits P6118 – Library Materials Selection and Adoption
P6301 – District Computing Environment
Policy Adopted: April 9, 2001
Policy Reviewed: January 31, 2011
Policy Revised: February 14, 2011

RESPONSIBLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY AT WESTFORD ACADEMY

The use of technology resources at Westford Academy, Westford Public Schools owned devices, and the freedom and responsibility to utilize personally owned electronic devices at Westford Academy is a privilege, not a right.

Students are prohibited from using personal electronic devices in school (cellphones, tablets, laptops, smart watches/glasses/devices, airpods etc...). Students are expected to follow all school, state, and federal guidelines regarding technology.

Personal Devices, WPS Owned Devices and WPS Login credentials

- Students are expected to use WPS devices assigned to them for the purpose of academic activities. Gaming is limited to online interactive tools for learning. (*Gimkit, Kahoot, Blooket, etc.*)
- Students are expected to use their WPS login credentials (00flastname@westfordk12.us) for the purpose of academic activities. Gaming, shopping or other non-academic use is considered inappropriate use of WPS technology.
- Students should not under any circumstances photograph, film, or audio record other students or faculty on campus during the school day with a personal or school-owned device unless it is for a school sanctioned, class assignment and with consent.
- Mobile electronic devices are prohibited from use in bathrooms and locker rooms for the safety of all students.
- Students are responsible for the use of a device assigned to them even if they let someone else use it.
- Students may use personal cell phones, tablets, **wearable technology,** and laptops in class at teacher discretion.

Network Security - Any user of a network provided by Westford Public Schools is expected to abide by the rules of conduct set forth by the District.

- Students must use the network in a way that would not disrupt the use of the network by others, including downloading, storing, distributing, or sharing any software or digital file (such as movies, music, or text) in violation of copyright laws.
- Students must respect bandwidth limits. Streaming audio or video (**Spotify**, itunes radio, netflix, etc.) **and video games on WPS owned Chromebooks** impacts network speeds and should be limited to academic use.
- Students must not attempt to connect unauthorized wifi networks or gain access to unauthorized accounts or files.
- Students must not attempt to learn or use network passwords on personal devices and must notify IT of any misuse of the network.
- Students must not attempt to bypass the district's web-filtering

Personal Safety - All students agree to utilize technology including **social media** tools, being mindful of their own personal safety and of that of all members of the Westford Academy community.

- Students must keep all personal information private, including passwords, user ID's, home address, and phone numbers.
- Students are expected to change their westfordk12.us login password regularly.

- Students may access only appropriate academic documents and media.
- Students should not photograph or make audio or video recordings without the consent of all those being recorded.
- Students may not harass, bully, cyber-bully, or threaten others in any way.
- Students must use appropriate language in all communications.

Email - Students at Westford Academy are assigned an email account for academic purposes.

- Students are encouraged to check email at least once per day.
- Teachers may send email to other students within WPS to collaborate on group projects and assist with school classes.
- Students may send and receive email *outside* the WPS domain for the purpose of school related and post-secondary education communication.
- May send email to Westford Academy students to communicate reminders, course content, pose questions related to class work, and such.
- Students may send email to their teachers with questions or comments regarding class and co-curricular activities.
- Students may send email

I understand and will abide by the above terms and conditions of District Harassment Policy #5303 and District Bullying Policy #5304, as well as this Responsible Use Policy, and will use computer and electronic resources for curricular purposes only. I further understand that any violation of this agreement is unethical and may constitute a criminal offense and may result in civil liability to me and my caregiver or guardians, if I am under age 18. Should I commit any violation, I am subject to consequences of the school and district disciplinary code and of state and federal law and furthermore, may result in the suspension of my computer privileges; suspension from school; and/or legal action and prosecution by the authorities.

USER NAME (PRINT): _____ USER SIGNATURE (SIGN): _____

SENIOR PRIVILEGE 2025-2026

Senior Privilege is earned; it is not a right. Senior Privilege is permission for a senior to leave the building during DLT for students in good academic and social standing. This privilege does not apply to a class sent to DLT for a teacher absence. Any violation of school rules could result in the removal of senior privileges at the discretion of the senior Dean.

ALMA MATER

To Thee, our Alma Mater dear,
We raise our voices high in cheer,
Our gratitude we would express
And pledge to thee our faithfulness.

Built high on Tadmuck Hill so fair,
By those whose mem'ry we revere,
She stands a beacon light for youth
To Guide them in the way of truth.

On field of battle and in peace,
We strive thy glory to increase,
That ever shall dear Westford be
An emblem of fraternity.

Written by Pauline Ferguson Cartford ’45

SCHOOL COLORS: Maroon and Gray
SCHOOL MASCOT: Ghost