2026-2027

McAlister Intermediate School

Parent/Family Handbook

260 Mountain Road
Suffield, Connecticut 06078
860-668-3830

Kris Pryce

Principal

kpryce@suffield.org

Melissa Todd

Assistant Principal

mtodd@suffield.org

McAlister Intermediate School Family Handbook

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MISSION STATEMENT OF SUFFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Mission of the Suffield Public Schools is to prepare all students with the knowledge, skills and attributes required for success in a rapidly changing world.

In pursuit of this Mission, we believe that:

- when we address students' diverse academic, social, emotional and physical needs, all will learn;
- all students need equitable access to appropriate resources and opportunities to excel;
- multiple measures of student learning are required to drive continuous improvement;
- students and adults thrive in a safe and secure learning environment characterized by responsibility, fairness,
- respect, and civility;
- highly effective teachers and instructional leaders who engage students in rigorous and challenging
- experiences are the keys to student success;
- an excellent District staff supports success in every classroom, facility and setting;
- partnerships, collaboration and communication with families and the community are vital to our mission.

KINDNESS STATEMENT

At Suffield Public Schools, kindness, respect, and inclusion are essential values.
Every student and staff member deserves to feel safe, supported, and valued—at school, on the bus, at school events, and online. We are dedicated to creating a positive learning environment.

We do not accept:

- **Mean Behavior-** of any kind - including but not limited to: physical, verbal, social, written, gesture, or electronic act.
- **Unkind words or actions**—including disrespect, teasing, name-calling, or spreading rumors.
- **Discrimination or racism**—such as hate speech, slurs, or exclusion based on race, identity, culture, disability, or background.
- **Intentional hurtful behavior**, such as spreading rumors, harassment, physical aggression, threats, or excluding others.

How We Promote a Positive School Climate:
To support kindness and respect, we use proactive strategies that help students learn, connect, and grow. These include:

- Social-emotional learning programs and character education
- School-wide kindness campaigns and student-led initiatives
- Classroom conversations about empathy, inclusion, and responsible decision-making
- Ongoing staff training to ensure a safe, respectful learning environment

- Opportunities for student voice, leadership, and peer mentoring

You are expected to:

- Treat others with dignity—in class, at lunch, recess, on the bus, at events, and electronically
- Speak up if you witness mean behavior, bullying, hate speech, or unkind behavior
- Support your classmates and help create a culture where everyone feels welcome and safe

If Harmful Behavior Occurs:
We address all incidents of mean behavior, bullying, harassment, or disrespect seriously. Whether in person or electronic actions that harm our school community may result in appropriate and timely responses.

Disciplinary Measures May Include:

- Referral to administration and documentation in school records
- Loss of privileges during the school day, suspension from transportation, extracurricular activities, or school events
- Suspension for serious or repeated behaviors

Restorative Approaches May Include:

- Restorative conversations or meetings to repair harm and rebuild trust
- Reflective assignments or community service that promote accountability
- Peer mediation or conflict resolution when appropriate

Mean behavior that is severe, persistent, or pervasive will be subject to formal challenging behavior investigations. All expectations apply on campus, during school-sponsored events, on transportation, and in digital spaces.

SUFFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE

Suffield Public School Graduate

In 2022, the SPS Board of Education developed and adopted the Portrait of a Graduate. This was in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders including:

- Parents
- Families
- Community members
- Educators
- Students
- SPS leadership

The adoption of the Portrait of the Graduate acknowledges that in our rapidly changing world, education needs to evolve to fulfill our mission of supporting student success in school and in life. Portrait of a Graduate prioritizes the development of skills that will empower students to be productive citizens of a global community and successful in the workforce of the future.

Every graduate should be:

- A Clear Communicator who makes meaning and expresses thinking in a multiplicity of ways
    - To do so, the communicator demonstrates the following skills or attributes:
        - Listening
        - Empathy
        - Respect
        - Clarity
        - Fluency
        - Concision
        - Command of multiple modalities
        - Speaking and writing for multiple purposes and audiences
- A Creative and Critical Thinker who generates and assesses solutions for a wide variety of problems.
    - To do so, the thinker demonstrates the following skills or attributes:
        - Curiosity
        - Questioning
        - Reflection
        - Analysis
        - Research
        - Decision Making
        - Strategic and flexible thinking
        - Persistence in exploring options, generating hypotheses and revising and refining solutions
- A Collegial Collaborator who values partnership and works effectively with others.
    - To do so, the thinker demonstrates the following skills or attributes:
        - Adaptability
        - Self-awareness
        - Facilitative leadership
        - Empathy and respect for others
        - Ability to compromise and resolve conflicts
        - Tolerance and openness to people and ideas
- A Civic-Minded Contributor who is an active participant in the life and spirit of the home, the community, the society, and the world.
    - To do so, the thinker demonstrates the following skills or attributes:
        - Trustworthiness
        - Kindness
        - Compassion
        - Openness to feedback
        - Willingness to help others
        - An ethical orientation- honesty, integrity, impartiality and fairness
- A Conscientious Learner who has cognitive processes and skills that help them to plan, monitor, implement and achieve their goals.
    - To do so, the thinker demonstrates the following skills or attributes:
        - Adaptability
        - Self-efficacy
        - Organization
        - Self-advocacy
        - Independence
        - Self-regulation

- Self-knowledge
- Resourcefulness

PREFACE

The material covered within this student handbook is intended as a method of communicating to students and parents/guardians regarding general district information, rules and procedures and is not intended to either enlarge or diminish any Board policy, administrative regulation or negotiated agreement. Material contained herein may therefore be superseded by such Board policy, administrative regulation or negotiated agreement. Any information contained in this handbook is subject to unilateral revision or elimination from time-to-time without notice. Consult the district's website or the individual school's website for any significant changes.

This booklet is written for our students and their parents/guardians. It contains required and useful information. Because it cannot be as personal a communication as we would like, we address students not directly as "you" but rather as "the student," "students," or "children." Likewise, the term "the student's parent" may refer to the parent, legal guardian, or other person who has agreed to assume responsibility for the student. Both students and parents/guardians need to be familiar with the District's Student Code of Conduct and school safety and security plans which are intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere conducive for learning.

The Student Handbook is designed to be in harmony with Board policy. Please be aware that the handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. Changes in policy that affect portions of this Handbook will be made available to students and parents through newsletters, web pages, and other communications.

Our school will function if students, staff and parents follow the guidelines contained in this handbook. Our school personnel are dedicated to providing the best possible educational programs for your children. This can only be accomplished by fostering a positive home-school relationship. We stand ready to answer any questions you may have relative to the policies and procedures contained in this handbook, and we welcome your constructive comments as we work with you and your child during the 2022-2023 School Year.

For more information on the Board policies outlined or referenced in this handbook please visit www.suffield.org under the District tab. For your convenience, additional school/District information and forms can be found on the District website. Parents and students are encouraged to regularly consult the District website for the latest information and updates.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Each student is encouraged to develop and achieve individual educational goals. The District will provide every student with equal educational opportunities regardless of race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, religion, age, economic status, marital status, or disability. No student will be excluded on such a basis from participating in or having access to any course offerings, student athletics, counseling services, employment assistance, extracurricular activities, or other school resources. Programs and activities shall be accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities as prescribed by law.

Pupil Service Director, Diana Kelley is the District's designated compliance officer, who will handle inquiries and coordinate compliance with the District's nondiscrimination policies, including the

nondiscrimination requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. The following person is the District's designated compliance officer, who will handle inquiries and coordinate compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973:

Diana Kelley, Director of Pupil Services
Suffield Public Schools

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

District schools recognize and accept the need to prepare students to live and work productively in an increasingly diverse society. This is an integral part of the school system's commitment to offer an educational program of excellence, which includes teaching students awareness and understanding of the diverse cultures and heritages that form our society. The school will not tolerate student's behavior which insults, degrades or stereotypes any race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical or mental condition or ethnic group.

ADMISSION/PLACEMENT

A student seeking enrollment in the Suffield Public Schools for the first time or following attendance in another Connecticut public school district, out-of-state attendance, private school attendance or admission through a bona fide foreign exchange program should contact the principal. A student who is transferring from non-public schools or schools outside the district will be placed at his/her current grade level pending evaluation and observation of the student after such assessment and consultation with the parents, the principal will determine the grade placement of the child. Nonresidents may attend school on a tuition basis provided space is available. Nonresident students from other school districts within the state, (districts in the Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport and New London regions) who apply pursuant to Board of Education regulations, may enroll in particular programs or schools within the district on a space available basis, without payment of tuition, as part of the inter-district public school attendance program called Open Choice. The Regional Educational Service Centers will determine which school districts are close enough to make transportation feasible. The parent or person having control of a child seventeen years of age may consent to such child's withdrawal from school. The parent or person having control of a child seventeen years of age may exercise the option by personally appearing at the school district office to sign a withdrawal form. This form will include an attestation from the school's guidance counselor or a school administrator that the district has provided the parent or person with information on the educational options available in the school system and in the community. A student who has attained the age of seventeen and who has voluntary terminated enrollment in the district's schools and subsequently seeks admission may be denied readmission for up to ninety school days from the date of such termination unless such student seeks readmission to the District not later than ten school days after such termination in which school accommodation will be provided not later than three school days after such student seeks readmission. A student, nineteen years of age or older may be placed in an alternative school program or other suitable educational program if he/she cannot acquire a sufficient number of credits for graduation by age twenty-one. Students who are classified as homeless under federal law and do not have a fixed residence will be admitted pursuant to federal law.

Completion of immunization and health assessments are required prior to a child's attendance in school in order to enroll a child who resides in the District and is of appropriate age to attend school.

In order to determine a child's eligibility for ESL or bilingual programs, parents/guardians of all new students enrolling for the first term and all re-enrolling students who have not previously attended public school in Connecticut must complete a Home Language Survey. The student, after enrollment, may also take a screening exam.

Parents of students attending District schools have the option to enroll their child(ren) in a magnet school with which the District is a nonparticipating district, if the magnet school has unused student capacity. The District will pay any tuition charge. (Does not include tuition for a preschool magnet program.)

ARRIVALS AND DISMISSALS

With student safety first and foremost in our minds, we call your attention to our morning drop-off procedures. Information will be communicated at the start of each school year and at each school tour for new and incoming students.

Bus Drop Off

Our school buses enter school grounds using the east driveway that runs between McAlister and the Bright Horizons building and turn left into the front driveway of our school. Students riding the bus to school are dropped off right in front of school and directed by supervising staff members. Buses exit school grounds using the west McAlister driveway out to Mountain Road.

Dismissal

Children will be dismissed from their classrooms directly onto the buses. Children being picked up by parents, within minutes of the official dismissal time, create a burden in our office and hallways as we orchestrate our school-wide dismissal by calling vans and buses. Therefore, if you are picking up your child at dismissal, we ask that you follow these procedures.

- All children with notes being dismissed to a parent or another adult are called promptly at 3:15 p.m. to the arrival/dismissal area on the side of the school.
- Students have a designated area to wait for their parent/guardian in a coned off numbered space.
- Parents will be provided with a designated car tag to properly identify the adult to make for a quicker dismissal process.
- To assist with the organization of our dismissal process, and to help us maintain a secure school environment, we request all parents picking up their children to wait in the gym foyer.
- A**ll parents and other designated adults must present picture identification at dismissal.**
- Please exit the building using the back-gym door, just as you came in.

All dismissals during the school day will be from the office. For reasons of security, parents must report to the office to sign their children out of school. **Adults must wait in the school office for their child. No child or adult will be permitted to wait in any other area of the school (e.g., the hallway outside the office)**. We request that parents write a note to the teacher anytime a student is to be dismissed any way or anywhere other than home or the usual day care. Please be sure the note includes the teacher's name, your child's first and last name, and the name of the person picking up your child. In the case of an emergency or unexpected happening, we will accept changes in dismissal plans from parents by telephone. However, such telephone requests are discouraged as a matter of course. No child will be dismissed to any person other than the parents unless parents provide permission. Once children arrive at school, they will not be allowed to leave school grounds unless the person with whom they are leaving school has signed the student out from the main office.

Parent Drop Off

Parents dropping their children off in the morning must use the Suffield Middle School driveway and turn right to enter the side parking lot between McAlister and Suffield Middle School. Please do not attempt to enter McAlister Intermediate School grounds using either of our driveways between 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m., or between 3:00 – 4:00 p.m., as these are reserved for buses only during these times.

When entering the side parking lot from the Middle School driveway, please proceed to the far right-hand lane of the parking lot and, staying to the right, drive along the perimeter of our parking lot to the back (northwest) corner of the tennis courts. A designated drop-off area will be established along the west side of the school building and extending around the corner and parallel and adjacent to the tennis courts. Students should exit their cars from the right-hand (passenger) side only, where they will be greeted by a McAlister staff member. Students should never exit their car until the car is stopped in the designated drop-off area. Students will walk in the crosswalk adjacent to the tennis courts and along the side of the school. Once children are dropped off, all vehicles should continue in a line and, staying to the right, exit back out the Middle School driveway from which they came. Your cooperation in following these procedures and driving with caution in our parking lot is appreciated.

School Ground Safety

We provide some reminders and clarification relative to safety on our school grounds at school entry and dismissal times. First of all, we are concerned about student safety while buses are dropping off, or picking up children. On many occasions, we find cars entering the school driveway interfering with school vehicles and jeopardizing student safety. On many more occasions, we find cars passing buses on our school grounds despite flashing lights and stop signs. Please note that passing a school bus while lights are flashing and a stop sign is displayed is in violation of state law.

Each day, during the hours of 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 to 4:00 p.m., no vehicles will be allowed to enter or exit our school grounds via the short driveways located immediately at each side of the school. Instead, we ask parents dropping off or picking up students to use the Suffield Middle School entrance that connects to the McAlister Intermediate School parking lot. Your cooperation in this respect will help reduce traffic congestion and unsafe conditions on our school grounds.

Children being dropped off or getting out of cars should do so from the designated drop-off area parallel and adjacent to the tennis courts and along the west side of our school building. When walking to or from school, please use the white crosswalk that runs straight to the side doors and along the west side of the building. Do not walk through the parking lot.

Orange cones are also in place to help one distinguish between the parking lot and the playground area during school hours. Driving cars onto the playground area is prohibited during these times.

If you are coming to pick up your child at dismissal time, you, or your adult designee, must sign your child out with a McAlister staff member. Please refer to the dismissal procedures in the —Arrivals and Dismissals section of this handbook. We will not dismiss a child to a parent or another adult waiting in the parking lot.

Finally, we suggest that you review these procedures with your child along with other members of your family or other persons who may, on occasion, be responsible for picking up your child at school. We realize that these procedures may create inconvenience on the part of all persons concerned. However, as we feel strongly about these safety issues, we look forward to your cooperation and support.

ASBESTOS

Legislation requires all school buildings to be reevaluated to determine if asbestos is present and if it poses a significant health hazard to the building's occupants. The District has on file plans showing the location of asbestos in each building and measures undertaken to comply with regulations to maintain a safe school environment. Requests to review these plans may be made in the school office.

ATTENDANCE

Connecticut state law requires parents to make sure that their children between the ages of 5 to 18 attend school regularly. * Daily attendance is a key factor in student success, thus any absence from school is an educational loss to the student. These rules are designed to minimize student absenteeism while providing students the opportunity to make up school work missed due to a legitimate absence.

Absence means an excused absence or an unexcused absence.

A student is considered to be "in attendance" if present at his/her assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school, such as a field trip, for at least half of the regular school day. A student serving an out-of-school suspension or an expulsion will always be considered absent.

The parent or person having control of a child shall have the option of waiting to send the child to school until the child is six or seven years of age, upon signing an option form at the school district offices.

A child whose total number of absences at any time during a school year is equal to or greater than 10 percent of the total number of days that the student has been enrolled at the school during the school year is considered a "chronically absent child." The child will be subject to review by the district and/or the school attendance team.

A student must remain in school until age 18, unless he/she graduates or gets written consent from a parent/guardian on a district provided form to leave school at age 17.

Absence

Every attempt should be made to confine necessary appointments to after school, weekends and vacation periods. When a parent determines that an absence is necessary, parents are requested to contact the school between 7:40 A.M. and 8:35 A.M. on the day of the absence by telephoning the school.

If it is not possible to telephone the school on the day of absence, the parent is requested to send a written excuse to the school on the date of the student's return. The student should submit the excuse directly to the office. Parents should contact the teacher in order to take advantage of special services such as the collection of homework assignments for the student who must be out several days.

Absences Due to Family Travel/Vacation

Parents are discouraged from taking students on vacation when school is in session. These absences are disruptive to the learning process and cannot be replicated by making up missed work. If such an absence is unavoidable, parents must notify the main office prior to the missed days. Students are expected to ascertain and make up for missed work. The time allowed to submit make-up work is one school day for each day of excused absence

Absences greater than a week need administrative approval. If the school is not made aware of the vacation ahead of time, teachers reserve the right to withhold credit from missing homework, assignments, and exams.

Chronic Absenteeism

Under Connecticut State Statute, articulated in Suffield Board of Education Policy 5113.2, a student whose total number of absences at any time during a school year is equal to or greater than ten percent of the total number of days that such student has been enrolled at such school during a given school year is deemed —chronically absent. This 10% absence rate includes both *excused* and *unexcused* absences. As a school, we are obligated by both state statute and Suffield Board of Education policy to communicate with families about attendance criteria each month, as well as to reach out to families with support and referrals to community resources. Such a student will be subject to review by the attendance review team and the chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan developed by the State Department of Education. The District will also collect and analyze data on student attendance, truancy and chronic absenteeism for students with disabilities.

Excused Absence

A student's absence from school shall be considered —excused if a written documentation of the reason for such absence has been submitted within ten (10) school days of the student's return to school and meets the following criteria:

A. For absences one through nine, a student's absences from school are considered —excused when the student's parent/guardian approves such absence and submits appropriate documentation to school officials.

B. Students receive an excused absence for the tenth absence and all absences thereafter, when they are absent from school for the following reasons:

1. Student illness, verified by a licensed medical professional, regardless of the length of the absence.
2. Student's observance of a religious holiday.
3. Death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family.
4. Court appearances which are mandated. (Documentation required)
5. The lack of transportation that is normally provided by the District other than the one the student attends.
6. Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by District administration and in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidelines.
7. Additional 10 days for children of service members.

Leaving School Grounds/Release of Students from School

Under no circumstances may a student leave the school or school grounds during school hours without permission from his/her parents or guardians and school administration. In the event it is necessary for a student to be dismissed early, a parent or guardian should send a written request to the office. Telephone requests for early dismissal of a student shall be honored only if the caller can be positively identified as the student's parent or guardian. Children of single-parent families will be released only upon the request of the parent whom the court holds directly responsible for the child and who is identified as such in the school records, unless prior arrangements have been made with the school. Arrangements should be made with the building administrator on the parent or guardian to pick up the student in the school office.

If someone other than a parent/guardian picks up the student, the person appearing in the school office should bring a note of identification from the parent or guardian.

Parents provide ample notice, preferably by noon of that day.

Rideshare and Third-Party Vehicles

The Board of Education understands that families may require the need for rideshares. If parents/guardians allow their child(ren) to be dropped off or picked up at school by a ridesharing service, it is with the express acknowledgment that the District and its employees have no responsibility for their decision to use such a service and have no responsibility of liability to such parents/guardians or their child(ren) related to the ridesharing service. If a parent/guardian is requesting that their child take a rideshare, they are required to provide the school with written communication prior to arrival/dismissal.

Tardiness

Students who are not in their classroom by 8:35 A.M. are considered tardy and must report directly to the office. A student discovered on school grounds who has not signed in at the office will also be considered tardy. A student who is repeatedly tardy may be considered truant.

Truancy

As defined by Connecticut State law: **—Sec. 10-198a. Policies and procedures concerning truants.** (a) For purposes of this section, —truant means a child aged five to eighteen, inclusive, who is enrolled in a public or private school has ***four unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten unexcused absences from school in any school year.*** When students accumulate more than nine absences, we will increase our efforts to partner with our families to ensure regular and punctual student attendance.

Parents have the responsibility to assist school officials in remedying and preventing truancy. If the parent fails to cooperate with the school in trying to solve the student's truancy problem, the school will assist to coordinate support from outside agencies. School staff are mandated by the state to report excessive absences or patterns of concern.

Unexcused Absence

Unexcused absences are those which do not fall under any of the excused absences. Students who have unexcused absences may be denied makeup privileges. Such absences may also be reflected in the student's final grade.

Absences which are the result of school or District disciplinary action are excluded from the definitions.

Although the school will maintain records and keep parents informed within the limit of its capability, parents and students are expected to keep accurate attendance records and compare them to report cards when issued. Parents are also encouraged to contact the teachers, counselors and administrators to get help in verifying attendance and attendance records at any time during the year.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Board members are unpaid elected public officials with the responsibility for governance of the school

District. The members of the Suffield Board of Education are:

Chair: Maureen Sattan	**Vice Chair: Debra Dudack**	**Secretary: Gianna Rossi**
Melissa Finnigan	**Brian Fry**	**Geert (James) Mol**
Dustin Rose	**Gregory Sparzo**	**Samuel Toskin**

In order to perform its duties in an open and public manner and in accordance with state law, the Suffield Board of Education holds regular business meetings which will be posted on the District's website, www.suffield.org. Parents, students and other community members are encouraged to attend.

BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY

For more information on the Board policies outlined or referenced in this handbook please visit www.suffield.org under the District tab. For your convenience, additional school/District information and forms can be found on the District website. Parents and students are encouraged to regularly consult the District website for the latest information and updates.

In order to perform its duties in an open and public manner and in accordance with state law, the Suffield Board of Education holds regular business meetings which will be posted on the District's website www.suffield.org. Parents, students and other community members are encouraged to attend.

BUS TRANSPORTATION RULES AND DISCIPLINE

We recognize that there is shared responsibility for bus safety between bus drivers, students, parents, teachers, and school administration. School transportation privileges are extended to students conditional upon their satisfactory behavior on the bus. Bus drivers enforce state law and rules adopted by the Suffield Board of Education for the safe transportation of all children.

Outlined below is the general plan for consequences if students demonstrate unexpected bus behavior:

1. The driver reminds the student of expected behavior and conferences with the student after other students have exited the bus or prior to the student exiting the bus at their home.

2. The driver completes a School Bus Conduct Notice which is sent to the appropriate school office. Upon receipt of the report the student will meet with an administrator for a conference and parents will be notified.

3. Repeated Bus Conduct Notices will lead to increased consequences and may ultimately lead to loss of bus privileges for a specific number of days under the discretion of administration.

4. If for any reason a majority of students riding a particular bus need additional support to make the bus ride safe, students will be assigned a seat by school administration in collaboration with the bus driver. These seats will be temporary until it is determined that students can safely return to choosing their own seats.

PLEASE NOTE: If bus privileges are suspended, families must arrange their own transportation to and

from school. Additional referrals may result in removal from the bus for the remainder of the school year.

Disciplinary sanctions and changes in transportation for a student with a disability shall be made in accordance with the provisions of the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Parents/guardians are reminded that prior to bus pick up and upon drop off, it is the parent's responsibility to ensure the safety of the child. We urge parents/guardians to please review with their children the following bus rules and the **Expected Bus Behavior**s listed below:

Waiting for the Bus	**Boarding the School Bus**	**Riding the School Bus**	**Exiting the School Bus**
-Be at the bus stop on time. -Wait on the sidewalk, in a driveway, or any safe area off the road. -Be considerate of others at the bus stop.	-Wait until the bus comes to a full stop before walking toward the bus to board. -Board the bus in an orderly manner (single line one behind the other; safe hands and feet). -Go directly to a seat and down. Remain seated.	-Remain seated -No changing seats -Keep aisles free of backpacks, instruments, feet. -Hands to self -Stay in assigned seat -No touching emergency doors or equipment. -Listen to all directions from the bus driver. -No food is allowed on the bus. -Chromebooks need to be in backpacks. Chromebook use is NOT permitted while students ride the school bus.	-Remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop. -Exit the bus in a safe and orderly manner. -Move away from the bus as quickly as possible. -If you cross the street, do so in front of the bus. Look both ways before crossing. -Do not leave the bus at any place except your regular stop unless you have a signed note from your parent/guardian that has been approved by the school office.

***In 3rd grade and beyond our transportation and school policy does not require an adult present for a student to get off the bus. We do require parents/families to notify the school administration in writing if your child does not require an adult present. The bus drivers will be informed.**

School transportation privileges are extended to students conditional upon their satisfactory behavior on the bus. Students may be suspended from transportation services for unsatisfactory conduct while awaiting or receiving transportation to and from school which endangers persons or property or violates a Board policy or administrative regulation.

CAFETERIA

All eating is to be done in the cafeteria. Food is not permitted elsewhere in the building unless authorized by school administration. Rules of cleanliness are to be observed at all times. Misconduct in the cafeteria may be cause for receiving an assigned seat or forfeiting the right to eat in that location or such other disciplinary action deemed appropriate for the misconduct.

Students are only permitted to purchase food items, snacks and/or ice cream for themselves. We do not allow students to purchase for one another. This reduces the risk for allergic reactions.

The District participates in the School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program and offers to students nutritionally balanced meals daily. Free and reduced-price lunches are available based on financial need. Information on this program can be obtained from Suffield Public Schools website.

The District complies with the professional standards for school nutrition personnel who manage and operate the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs.

It is the intent of the Board of Education that schools take a proactive effort to encourage students to make nutritious food choices. Food and beverages offered for sale to students, whether in the cafeteria will meet federal and state standards and guidelines. All sodas and sports drinks will not be available for sale.

Meals will no longer be free for the 2026-2027 school year. Families should be encouraged to apply for Free or Reduced Meals if they might qualify. Breakfast is free of charge to all students for the 2026-2027 school year. The menu contains several choices, and breakfast is eaten in classrooms.

Charging Policy

Charging lunch: All students should keep sufficient funds in their food service account to pay for meals or bring money to pay for lunch each day. However, when students do not have sufficient money in their account, they will be able to charge their lunch so that no student will go without lunch. The cashier will remind the students to ask their parents to replenish their account. In addition, insufficient funds notices will be sent home on a weekly basis when children have a negative balance of $8.00 or more.

Lunch:

Children have the option of bringing a bag lunch or purchasing a school lunch, which includes a choice of milk, two side items, and the featured entrée of the day. The cost of school lunch is $3.35. Children who bring lunch from home may purchase milk and snacks with money from a child's account or by cash/check. Milk is 60 cents. The choice of snacks varies from day to day, and children are limited to purchasing one snack per day, with sugary snacks such as cookies and ice cream only sold on Friday. If you do not wish to have your child purchase snacks with money from his/her account, please contact our Food Service Director, Jenna Janson at jjanson@suffield.org.

Balanced breakfast and lunch menus are planned in accordance with specifications established by the federal and state governments. Monthly breakfast and lunch menus can be found on the District website www.suffield.org; under the parent/student tab and the drop down of Food Service Program.

Payment:

Prepay to the student's account Prepayment is easy and convenient. It eliminates having to make sure

your child has lunch money every day. There are two ways to prepay:

1. **Send a check/cash** - Families may prepay using a check made out to —Suffield Food Service (please be sure to write your child's full name and school on the check). If you send in a check and have multiple students, you may use the same check as long as the students are in the same school. If your students are in different schools, please send in separate checks. If you choose to send cash please, send it in an envelope with the student's full name, student ID number, and room number.

2. Families may also prepay using a credit card at www.myschoolbucks.com. (Please note: a convenience fee of $1.95 is added each time a deposit is made to the account. This is a bank fee and does not profit Suffield Public Schools or Aramark.) You can distribute the payment among more than one child if you have multiple children in the District without paying an additional fee. Sending payments daily Checks/Cash are also accepted daily. If a child forgets or loses his/her lunch money, he/she may charge lunch for that day. Payment is expected on the following day. Students may charge lunch, milk and one snack item per day, with cookies and ice cream only available on Fridays.

Student Accounts:

All students in the Suffield Public Schools have a Food Service Account. This account must stay current with a zero or positive balance. We use student finger scans or student ID numbers at the cash register to access their lunch accounts.

Parents are strongly encouraged to set up a FREE account with www.myschoolbucks.com even if you do not use it to pay for meals so that you can track your child's account purchases and balance.

This account helps you keep track of your children's lunch account, offering several wonderful features, including the ability to:

- Check account balances
- Monitor daily purchases
- Receive email notification of low account balances to set up an account through the

Myschoolbucks.com website, simply log on to the Suffield Public Schools website (www.suffield.org), click on —Food Services, then click on —Myschoolbucks.com. All you need is your child's name, student ID number and school zip code. If you don't know your child's 5-digit ID number please contact our main office. There is **no fee** to set up an account.

CALENDAR AND SCHOOL HOURS

The Suffield Public Schools calendar is available via the district website.

Late Openings, School Cancellations or Early Closings

Late openings, cancellations or early closings of school due to inclement weather are communicated in real time through our automated messaging system. Up-to-the-minute emails, text messages and phone calls are sent to all parents as soon as a decision has been made by our superintendent of schools.

If it becomes necessary to close school early, an automated message will be sent as soon as this decision is made. We suggest you check your email or text messages when a dramatic weather change occurs during the school day. We request that parents do not try to contact the main office or central administration unless this is absolutely necessary, as we must keep our telephone lines free so we have the ability to communicate as needed. If it becomes necessary to close school early, all after-school activities, including the Spaulding After-School Program, are canceled. Please discuss with your child a plan of what to do in the event of an unscheduled early release day.

Office Hours

7:40 AM – 4:00 PM

School Telephone Number: (860) 668-3830

School Fax Number: (860) 668-3809

School Hours:

8:35 AM – 3:15 PM (Students may be dropped off beginning at 8:20 a.m., when school personnel are scheduled to begin supervising children.)

Half Days/Early Dismissal: 8:35 AM – 11:50 AM

Delayed Openings: 10:35 AM – 3:15 PM

(Students may be dropped off beginning at 10:20 a.m., when school personnel are scheduled to begin supervising children.)

CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATIONS

If there is a question about a student's classes or work in school, it is best to first contact the person who is closest to the situation. In most cases, this is the teacher. The proper channeling of complaints regarding instruction, discipline or learning materials is (1) teacher, (2) administration, (3) superintendent, (4) board of education.

CHEATING/PLAGIARISM (Academic Dishonesty)

Students are expected to pursue their school work with integrity and honesty. Cheating and plagiarism demonstrates a lack of integrity and character. That is inconsistent with District goals and values. All forms of cheating and plagiarism are not acceptable. The misrepresentation by students of homework, class work, tests, reports, or other assignments as if they were entirely their own work shall be considered forms of cheating and/or plagiarism. Consequences of cheating and/or plagiarism shall be academic in nature unless repeated incidents require disciplinary action. Consequences for cheating will consider the grade level of the student and the severity of the misrepresentation.

As a result of recent technologies related to AI, the district will be handling violations in alignment with our cheating/plagiarism/academic dishonesty policy as outlined above.

CHILD ABUSE, NEGLECT AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

All school employees, including teachers, superintendents, administrators, coaches of intramural or interscholastic athletics, paraprofessionals and other professional school staff including guidance

counselors, social workers, psychologists, and licensed nurses are obligated by law (C.G.S. 17a-101) to report suspected child abuse, neglect, or if a child is placed in imminent danger of serious harm to the Connecticut State Department of Children and Families Services. Specific procedures governing the reporting of abuse and neglect are in effect, and staff receive yearly training in their use, as required by state law.

Reporting of child abuse, neglect and sexual assault by a school employee is a responsibility which is taken seriously. If there is any doubt about reporting suspected abuse, neglect or a sex-conduct while awaiting or receiving transportation to and from school which endangers persons or property or violates a Board policy or administrative regulation.

Child abuse is defined as any physical injury inflicted by other than accidental means or injuries which are not in keeping with the explanation given for their cause. Improper treatment such as malnutrition, sexual molestation, deprivation of necessities, emotional abuse, cruel punishment or neglect is also considered child abuse.

CLASS PLACEMENT

At the close of each school year, our school staff formulates class groups for the coming school year. The placement process begins with a student's present teacher, who reflects on each student's learning needs, school performance and educational progress. Concurrently, the principal receives the input of other faculty members, such as art, music, physical education, world language, special education, and reading and math intervention specialists, as well as our school psychologists, speech/language pathologist and students' past teachers, relative to the learning needs of individuals and groups of students.

To further enhance the process outlined above, we welcome parent input with regard to what you feel are your child's learning needs, your child's learning style, and the type of learning environment within which you believe he/she can be successful. If you feel that your input is necessary or appropriate, we ask that you share this with us at a time that we will relay in writing to you annually each spring. Any information you provided for your child's previous class placement will not automatically be considered in developing the next year's placement.

In offering your input, we ask that you refrain from requesting specific teachers, and that you rely on the professional expertise and judgment of our school staff to place your child in an educational setting that they feel will most appropriately provide for optimal learning and growth based upon all information to be considered. We are sorry that specific requests for individual teachers cannot be honored, and we thank you for your understanding of this. As we obtain your cooperation and support, we appreciate both your input and your understanding that final decisions must reflect class placements that are beneficial to all students. Through further consultation between each teacher, the principal and the assistant principal, class groups are finalized so that they are as balanced as possible based upon the following: heterogeneity, social interaction, academic performance, special education needs, gender, and class size. As you can imagine, the entire process is a very complex, thoughtful and deliberate one.

CODE OF CONDUCT- (Restorative Practices Response)

Students are responsible for conducting themselves properly in a responsible manner appropriate to their age and level of maturity. They must accept responsibility for misbehavior and engage with school staff to identify how a different choice of action could result in a better outcome. The district has

authority over students during the regular school day and while going to and from school on district transportation. This jurisdiction includes any school-related activity, regardless of time or location, and any off campus school-related misconduct, regardless of time or location. Student responsibilities for achieving a positive learning environment in school or school related activities include:

1. Attending all classes, regularly and on time.

2. Being prepared for each class with appropriate materials and assignments.

3. Being dressed appropriately.*

4. Showing respect toward others, engaging in civil discourse.

5. Behaving in a responsible manner.

6. Paying required fees and fines.

7. Abiding by the code of conduct.

8. Obeying all school rules, including safety rules, and rules pertaining to Internet safety.

9. Seeking change in school policies and regulations in an orderly and responsible manner, through appropriate channels.

10. Cooperating with staff investigations of disciplinary cases and volunteering information relating to a serious offense. Students who violate these rules will be subject to disciplinary action and shall be referred when appropriate to legal authorities for violation of the law.

Students at school or school-related activities are prohibited from:

1. Engaging in academic dishonesty, including cheating, intentionally plagiarizing, wrong-fully giving or receiving help during an academic examination and wrongfully obtaining test copies or scores.

2. Throwing objects that can cause bodily injury or damage property.

3. Leaving school grounds or school-sponsored events without permission.

4. Directing profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures toward other students or staff.

5. Disobeying directives from school personnel or school policies, rules, and regulations.

6. Being disrespectful or directing profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures toward teachers or other school employees.

7. Playing with matches, fire, or committing arson.

8. Committing robbery or theft.

9. Damaging or vandalizing property owned by the school, other students, or school employees.

10. Disobeying school rules on school buses.

11. Fighting, committing physical abuse, or threatening physical abuse.

12. Name-calling, making ethnic or racial slurs or derogatory statements that may substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence.

14. Engaging in inappropriate physical or sexual contact disruptive to the school environment or disturbing to other students.

15. Assaulting a teacher, staff member or other individual.

16. Selling, giving, delivering, possessing, using, or being under the influence of drugs such as: marijuana; a controlled substance or drug; or an alcoholic beverage.

17. Possessing a deadly weapon, dangerous instrument, firearm, martial arts weapon, or weapon facsimile.

18. Possessing prescription drugs which are given to a person other than to whom the drug is prescribed.

19. Smoking or using tobacco products, including electronic nicotine delivery systems (e-cigarettes) and vapor products.

20. Hazing, bullying

21. Behaving in any way that disrupts the school environment or educational process.

22. Using electronic devices during the school day in school buildings, without prior approval of the principal.

23. Violating the district's Internet Safety policy and/or Online Social Networking Policy.

24. Cheating, plagiarizing, including by electronic means.

25. Threatening in any manner, including orally, in writing, or via electronic communication, a member of the school including any teacher, a member of the school administration or another employee, or a fellow student.

26. Taking, storing, disseminating, transferring, viewing or sharing of obscene, pornographic, lewd or otherwise illegal images or photographs, whether by electronic data transfer or other means, including but not limited to texting and emailing.

27. Violating any state or federal law which would indicate that the student presents a danger to any person in the school or to school property.

28. Damaging in a willful manner school electronic equipment and/or software. Students are urged to participate in efforts to build a positive school climate as well as alternatives to exclusionary discipline such as restorative circles or peer monitoring.

Additional School Rules

In addition to McAlister Behavior Expectations, Board of Education policy on bullying, threatening behavior and harassment, and rules and procedures for safe bus behavior, students should act according to the following:

• The chewing of gum is not allowed.

• Students are not allowed to sell or buy any item on school property unless approved by the school administration under the supervision of a teacher.

• Fidget spinners, toys, games, trading cards, etc. are not allowed, as these present a distraction to the educational process and we cannot take responsibility for missing items.

• Students are not allowed to use their devices to take pictures of others, make phone calls, send text messages, Instagram, tweet, etc. during the school day. Students must demonstrate **safe** and **responsible** use to maintain these privileges.

• Carrying or selling prescription or over-the-counter drugs at school is prohibited. Our school nurse or a certified teacher administers only drugs received through the parent and with the written permission of a physician to students. Do not send prescription medications with a child or in their belongings. These need to be transferred from parent to school nurse directly.

Dangerous Weapons

No guns, knives or any other objects, including martial arts weapons and facsimiles of weapons, capable of threatening or causing injury or death may be brought onto school grounds. Any object used to cause injury will be considered a weapon. Violators will be subject to arrest and prosecution, as well as, appropriate disciplinary action. Any student found to possess a weapon on school grounds or during a school-activity will be expelled from school. An expelled student may apply for early readmission to school. Such readmission is at the discretion of the Board of Education (unless the Board has delegated authority for readmission decisions to the Superintendent.) The Board or Superintendent, as appropriate, may condition such readmission on specified criteria.

Detention

A student may be assigned detention outside of school hours for not more than 1.5 hours on one or more days for violation of the code of conduct. The detention will occur once a parent has been notified and only on days where transportation has been arranged with the parent.

Discipline

We understand children sometimes make mistakes, and these mistakes are an important part of the learning process. When students demonstrate unexpected, problem behaviors, a range of consequences is considered and rendered reflecting the seriousness and/or frequency of the misbehavior. All consequences are intended to be opportunities for students to learn and to address any harm caused by their unexpected behavior. One or more of the following actions may be taken by school personnel: verbal/nonverbal reminder or redirection, reteaching of the behavior expectation, student/teacher conference, written communication home, parent/teacher/student conference, reflection time and/or

time out, written apology, loss of privilege, modification in schedule, written behavior plan, referral to the principal or assistant principal. When a student chooses to participate in repeated or extreme misbehavior, he or she will be referred to the principal or assistant principal. These consequences may occur: parent/administrator/student conference, written problem-solving exercise or written apology, detention, before school, during lunch or after school, loss of privilege, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension. Suspension procedures, both in-school and out-of-school, will follow Suffield Board of Education Policy on Student Discipline (5144). Please see the Suffield Public Schools Website for more information.

It is important to note that the goal of any consequence is to help the student understand why the behavior was a poor choice, and we will work with the child to develop strategies so that s/he is prepared to make better choices in the future.

The goal of any consequence is to assist the student to understand why the behavior was a poor choice, and we will work with the student to develop strategies so that he/she is prepared to make better choices in the future and/or restoring relationships or repairing harm caused.

Suspension procedures, both in-school and out-of-school, will follow Suffield Board of Education Policy on Student Discipline (5144) **http://www.suffield.org**

Dress Code

Students' overall appearance should fall within the generally accepted definitions of neatness and cleanliness. Generally, the students are expected to dress and groom themselves for the business of school so as to neither distract other students or teachers, disrupt the education process, or pose a health or safety threat to anyone.

1. The wearing of hats or bandanas inside the school building is not allowed except in the case of special events or activities.

2. Students should not wear t-shirts to school that advertise tobacco or alcohol. T-shirts with otherwise inappropriate messages or disruptive content are also not allowed to be worn at school. This is at the discretion of administration.

3. Sneaker skates (Heelys) are not allowed to be worn in school.

4. Slippers, cleats, and tap shoes may only be worn for special events (e.g., —Pajama Day).

In the interest of students' safety, such footwear is not permitted on the bus and should not be worn to school. On special event days, children should carry their slippers, etc. to school and change in the classroom.

5. Clothing should be free of slogans, names, titles or the like, which are defamatory toward person(s), group(s), the school or other organizations or which are likely to incite or inflame.

6. Students participate in physical education regularly and are expected to wear sneakers. Students also play outdoors at recess in all seasons of the year and are expected to have appropriate footwear for seasonal conditions.

Firearms, Deadly Weapons and Dangerous Instruments

No guns, knives, martial arts weapons, deadly weapons or facsimiles of weapons or knives or any other objects capable of threatening or causing injury or death may be brought onto school grounds. Any

object used to cause injury will be considered a weapon under Board policy. Violators may be subject to arrest and prosecution, as well as, appropriate disciplinary action. Any student found to possess a firearm, deadly weapon, dangerous instrument, martial arts weapon or other weapon on school grounds or during a school-activity will be recommended for expulsion from school.

An expelled student may apply for early readmission to school. Such readmission is at the discretion of the Board of Education (unless the Board has delegated authority for readmission decisions to the Superintendent.) The Board or Superintendent, as appropriate, may condition such readmission on specified criteria.

Playscape Rules and Procedures

All McAlister students will receive instruction from our physical education teachers regarding the rules and use of the playscape at the start of the school year. Third grade students may not use the playscape until all classes have received this instruction. Students in grades four and five will review playscape rules and procedures with their classroom teachers. They may use the playscape beginning the first day of school.

The following general rules apply to the use of our playscape:

- Play safe!
- Be courteous!
- Walk. Don't run.
- Slides are for riding down, not climbing up.
- Descend all slides and poles one person at a time.
- Climbing is only allowed on the ladders and stairs.
- Leave wood chips on the ground. They make the ground safe.

Rules specific to the safe and appropriate use of components of the playscape are listed below. Children should be made aware that failure to abide by these rules would result in taking a break from playing on our playscape. Appropriate footwear should be worn when playing on the playscape. Only properly secured, rubber-sole shoes are allowed in the playscape. Open-toe shoes, clogs, sandals and flip flops should not be worn, as these present a potential risk to students' safety.

Removal From Class

A student may be removed from class by a teacher or administrator if he/she deliberately causes a serious disruption of the educational process. When a student is removed, the teacher must send him/her to a designated area and notify the principal or his/her designee at once.

A student may not be removed from class more than six (6) times in one school year nor more than twice in one week unless the student is referred to the building principal or designee and granted an informal hearing at which the student should be informed of the reasons for the disciplinary action and given an opportunity to explain the situation.

The parents or guardian of any minor student removed from class shall be given notice of such disciplinary action within twenty-four (24) hours of the time of the institution of such removal from

Smoking

Students shall not possess nor smoke or use tobacco products or e-cigarettes or vapor product devices on all school property both inside and outside, or at any school-related or school-sanctioned activity, on or off school property as provided by state and federal law.

Substance Abuse

As stated in the CONDUCT section of this handbook, the school prohibits the manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of alcohol or controlled substances on school grounds or during school activities. Any student in violation of this will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:*

In addition to the prohibition pertaining to alcohol, drugs, tobacco and inhalants, the Board of Education prohibits the use of performance-enhancing drugs, including anabolic steroids and food supplements, including Creatine, by students involved in school-related athletics or any co-curricular or extracurricular school activity or program, other than use for a valid medical purpose as documented by a physician.

Substance abuse or distribution of drugs and/or drug paraphernalia including alcohol may indicate serious, underlying problems. Every effort will be made to offer student assistance, including early identification, referral for treatment to private or community agencies and aftercare support.

Students are prohibited from possessing, using, selling, delivering, manufacturing, or being under the influence of any substance containing cannabidiol (CBD) or tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), regardless of whether it constitutes a controlled substance under federal laws.

Disciplinary procedures will be administered with the best interests of the student, school population and community in mind and with due consideration of the rights of students. However, consideration must be given to the fact that substance abuse is illegal and subject to criminal prosecution. Unauthorized possession, distribution, sale or consumption of dangerous drugs, narcotics or alcoholic beverages may result in a recommendation for expulsion.

Students are encouraged to consult with teachers, administrators and other professional staff on substance abuse problems. A staff member who is contacted by a student regarding a drug or alcohol problem may elect to keep that information confidential and not disclose it to any other person in accordance with state law. However, the student will be encouraged at the earliest appropriate time to seek help from parents or guardians.

In such cases, the decision to involve the parents/guardians will be arrived at jointly by the student and educator unless, in the judgment of the educator, the mental or physical health of the student is immediately and dangerously threatened by drug/alcohol use. If such danger is imminent, the parents/guardians and health officials will be notified so that appropriate action can be taken.

As required by statute, instruction will be provided regarding the “knowledge, skills and attitudes required to understand and avoid the effects of alcohol, of nicotine, of tobacco, and of drugs.”

Suspension

A teacher may remove a student from a class when the student deliberately causes serious disruption of the teaching and learning process within the classroom. School administrators will determine, using state guidelines, whether the suspension will be in-school or out-of-school.

The administration may suspend a student for infraction of school rules. Suspension is defined as an exclusion from school privileges for not more than ten (10) consecutive days, provided such exclusion shall not extend beyond the end of the school year in which suspension was imposed. Students in preschool through grade 2, inclusive, may only receive in-school suspensions, unless, after an informal hearing, the administration determines that an out-of-school suspension is appropriate based on evidence that the students conduct on school grounds is of a violent or sexual nature that endangers persons.

However, no student shall be suspended without an informal hearing before the building principal or his/her designee at which time the student shall be informed of the reasons for the disciplinary action and given an opportunity to explain the situation, unless circumstances surrounding the incident require immediate removal. In such instances the informal hearing will be held during the suspension.

Suspension from school will result in loss of extracurricular and social privileges during the period of suspension.

For any student suspended for the first time and who has never been expelled, the administration may shorten the length of or waive the suspension period if the student successfully completes an administration-specified program and meets any other administration-required conditions, which shall not incur an expense to the student of his/her parents.

CONNECTICUT SCHOOL CLIMATE

Bullying of a student by another student is prohibited. Such behavior is defined as unwanted and aggressive behavior among children in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, that involves a real or perceived power imbalance.

Challenging behavior means behavior that negatively impacts school climate or interferes, or is at risk of interfering, with the learning or safety of a student or the safety of a school employee.

The School Climate Specialist is responsible for taking a report of "challenging" behaviors and investigating the complaint, implementing interventions including restorative practices, leading the school climate committee, and leading the implementation of the school improvement plan.

The Connecticut School Climate Standards promote a restorative school environment focused on overcoming barriers to teaching and learning by building and supporting meaningful school-wide relationships. ***Restorative practices*** means evidence and research-based system-level practices that focus on (A) building high-quality, constructive relationships among the school community, (B) holding each student accountable for any challenging behavior and (C) ensuring each such student has a role in repairing relationships and reintegrating into the school community.

The School Climate Coordinator for this District is:	**The School Climate Specialist for McAlister Intermediate School is:**
Dr. Laura Norbut Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction Suffield Public Schools 350 Mountain Road Suffield, CT 06078 (860) 668-3800	Melissa Todd, Assistant Principal McAlister Intermediate School 260 Mountain Road Suffield, CT 06078 (860) 668-3830

School Climate

School climate means the quality and character of school life, with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community, and which is based on patterns of people's experiences of school life and that reflects the norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning, leadership practices and organizational structures within the school community.

In order for teaching and learning to occur there must be a positive climate in which students appreciate and accept individual differences and behave responsibly toward others. Students are encouraged to report challenging behavior, bullying, discrimination or harassment to any faculty member or administrator and may request anonymity. Please refer to the **Board Policy #5131.911 School Climate** for details.

Reporting Challenging Behavior and Bullying

All school employees are required to report any alleged challenging behavior or bullying incident. Students and parents or guardians of students enrolled in school may also report such incidents using the **Challenging Behavior Reporting Form**, available electronically or in hard copy. Reports should include details such as the date, location, a description of the incident, and any known witnesses. Please refer to the **Board Policy #5131.911 School Climate** for details.

Hazing Activities

Students are prohibited from participating in any hazing activities. Hazing is any activity that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purposes of initiation or admission into or affiliation with any student organization.

Hazing, bullying or abuse of students or staff will not be tolerated . Any student who engages in an act that injures, degrades or disgraces another student or staff member, disrupts the educational process, or interfere with a student's opportunity to obtain an education
shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

CONTACTING TEACHERS

Teachers may be contacted either through voicemail or email. A staff directory is available on the school's website. Please allow teachers 24 hours, during the school week, to respond to your email /voicemail. Please be aware that District policy prevents teachers from discussing confidential information in an email correspondence. All calls to classroom teachers should be done by first contacting the main office during the school day. We limit calls into rooms so that instruction is not interrupted.

DEFIBRILLATORS IN SCHOOLS (AED's)

McAlister School will have (1) one automatic external defibrillator (AED), all school personnel are required to be trained in AED operation. All schools have a school nurse that is trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). AED trained personnel will be available during the school's normal operational hours, at school-sponsored athletic events and practices on school grounds and at school-sponsored events not taking place during normal school operational hours. The school also has an emergency action response plan addressing the use of trained school personnel to respond to individuals experiencing sudden cardiac arrest or similar life-threatening emergencies.

DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS AND POSTING ON WEBSITE

Printed materials may be distributed to parents by students as a means of communication. All requests from groups or individuals to have students distribute materials to the community, with the exception of school-connected organizations; will be referred to the office of the superintendent to determine whether the request complies with school policy.

Administration or his/her designee may approve such distribution providing:

1. The material is related to the school, community, local recreational or civic activity.
2. The material does not relate to any religious belief or activity, or promote private gain.
3. The material does not promote any outside governmental political party, candidate or position.
4. Does not promote profit making organizations.
5. Does not advocate a position regarding a referendum question.

Materials that have a religious content may be made available to students during non- instructional time. The District has the right to impose neutral time, place and manner restrictions on the dissemination of religious materials to ensure that students are aware that the materials are not endorsed or sponsored by the District.

Publications prepared by or for the school may be posted or distributed, with prior approval by administration, sponsor or teacher. Such items include school posters, brochures, school newspapers and yearbooks.

Distribution of Literature

Students have a right to distribute literature on school grounds and in school buildings provided such distribution does not interfere with or disrupt the educational process. No literature may be distributed unless a copy is submitted in advance to the Superintendent of Schools and/or the Building Administration.

Posters

Signs and posters that students wish to display must be approved by administration. Posters displayed without authorization will be removed. Any student who posts such material without authorization shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Website

Any information posted on the website will follow the same guidelines as stated in —Distribution of Materials. In addition, we limit our posts to information relevant to the school and our students that is either sponsored by Suffield Public Schools, Parks and Recreation or another non-profit organization. Even with these parameters, the decision to post information on the website is up to the discretion of administration.

DISTRICT-PROVIDED PERSONAL LEARNING DEVICES

All students will be provided with a DISTRICT DEVICE, unless they choose to use their own device. Parents and students must sign and agree to the student device sign-out sheet and guidelines provided by their school. Parents are financially responsible for damages, loss or theft of the device. Students

leaving Suffield Public Schools must return their devices, with accessories, on the day of departure. Device insurance is offered by the District during the month of August only.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING INFORMATION

In the event school is closed because of bad weather phone, text, and email communications will be made using Suffield's automated calling system. Emergency closings will also be posted on the Districts website, https://www.suffield.org.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

Parents of English Learners participating in a language instructional program will be notified within 30 days of their child's placement in the program. The notification will include an explanation of why, a description of the program, and the parent's rights to remove their child from the English Learners program. In addition, the notification will explain how the program will help the child to develop academically, learn English and achieve the standards necessary for promotion.

Students not meeting the English mastery standard or demonstrating limited progress will be provided with additional language support services, which may include, but are not limited to, English as a Second Language program, sheltered English programs, English Immersion programs, summer school, after-school assistance, homework assistance and tutoring. Students after 30 months in a bilingual program will not be offered additional bilingual education.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The strength of human resources we possess as a school community is exemplified in the number of diverse, extracurricular activities we offer at McAlister Intermediate School. Designed to enrich the academic curriculum, these activities promote student choice in learning. Recent extracurricular activities facilitated by school staff members, parents or community resources include *Math Olympiads*, *Student Council, Unified Sports, Funky Foot, Various Connections Clubs*, which promote our students' efficient problem solving and critical thinking skills as they engage in complex problem-solving activities. *Funky Foot* promotes students' healthy lifestyles and social skills as they start their mornings exercising with peers, parents and staff members who walk around the perimeter of our back field. We offer a wide variety of programs that will meet the diverse interests of our student population.

Activities are scheduled on different days of the week, before, during and after school to encourage students' participation in one or more offerings. Some extracurricular activities may only last a few weeks in duration, while others may run for an entire school year. When an extracurricular activity is scheduled, information is sent home to all students in the grade level(s) to which the activity is being offered. Through an assortment of offerings, yearly additions and varied schedules, all children are encouraged to pursue their interests and extend their academic learning.

Families are expected to be timely in picking up their child(ren) from both school and school events. Staff are not available prior to the start time of a before school program or after the end time of an after school program. If you are going to be late, please call and notify the main office.

FACILITIES

Certain areas of the school will be accessible to students before and after school for specific purposes. Students are expected to remain in the area their activity is scheduled to take place.

After dismissal and unless involved in a teacher/staff supervised activity, students are expected to leave

the campus immediately.

All school facilities, including athletic fields, are scheduled with priority given to McAlister Intermediate School and Suffield Public Schools above all other groups. All groups (both school-related and non-school–related) wishing to reserve part of the facility (e.g. cafeteria, gym, etc.) MUST submit an electronic request to reserve the desired area from the community use calendar which can be accessed on the school website.

FEES

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided without charge to students. A student is expected, however, to provide his or her own supplies of pencils, erasers, and notebooks. A list of school supplies is provided with our annual summer newsletter. Student may be asked to pay certain other fees, including:

1. The materials for a class project that the student will keep.
2. Voluntary purchases of t-shirts, pictures, etc.
3. Insurance on school-owned instruments or instrument rental
4. Fees for damaged library books and school-owned equipment.
5. Course fees for Expanding Horizons offerings or other extracurricular activities.
6. School lunch balances.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips may be scheduled for educational, cultural, or extracurricular purposes. While on a trip, all students are considered to be —in school and must demonstrate expected —McAlister Way behavior. The Board of Education strongly encourages all transportation of students to be on buses or other transportation vehicles which conform to the requirements of law and regulations of the State Department of Education. The Board realizes that, on limited occasions, it may be more cost effective and/or responsive for school employees to transport small numbers of students in private automobiles.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Students will not be denied the opportunity to participate in any class or school sponsored activity because of inability to pay for material fees, transportation costs, admission prices, or any other related expenses. Any student who needs financial assistance for school activities should contact a guidance counselor, advisor or administrator to request confidential help.

FIRE DRILLS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Fire drills are held at regular intervals as required by state law. Students must follow the exit directions posted in each classroom. A crisis response drill will be substituted for one of the required monthly school fires drills every three months. Such a crisis response drill will be planned and conducted with the local law enforcement agency. Such crisis response drills will incorporate the basic protocols of lockdown, evacuation, and shelter-in-place responses. Students are expected to follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly and in an orderly manner

FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS

The Suffield Public Schools recognize that students have a right to bring into our schools, in a judicious manner governed by regulations, items for posting that are not considered obscene, libelous, disruptive, vulgar, and are deemed by the Administration to be consistent with community standards.

Further, no expressed idea will be suppressed because it is not shared by the majority. However, expressions which involve false statements, disruptive or potentially dangerous content, the use of obscenities, and advocacy of violation of law or school regulations are unacceptable.

FOOD ALLERGIES

The school is committed to providing a safe environment for students with food allergies and to support parents regarding food allergy management.

The focus of a District-wide Food Allergy Management Plan shall be prevention, education, awareness, communication, and emergency response. The management plan shall strike a balance between the health, social normalcy and safety needs of the individual student with life threatening food allergies and the education, health and safety needs of all students. The District Food Allergy Management Plan shall be the basis for the development of the procedural guidelines that will be implemented at the school level and provide for consistency across all schools within the District.

The goals for the District-wide plan include:

1. To maintain the health and protect the safety of children who have life-threatening food allergies in ways that are developmentally appropriate, promote self-advocacy and competence in self-care and provide appropriate educational opportunities. 2. To ensure that interventions and individual health care plans for students with life- threatening food allergies are based on medically accurate information and evidence- based practices. 3. To define a formal process for identifying, managing, and ensuring continuity of care for students with life-threatening food allergies across all transitions. (Pre-K-Grade 12).

It is the policy of the Board of Education to follow the guidelines developed and promulgated by the Connecticut Department of Public Health and Department of Education for students within the District with life-threatening food allergies. Such guidelines include (1) education and training for school personnel on the management of students with life-threatening food allergies, including training related to the administration of medication with a cartridge injector, (2) procedures for responding to life threatening allergic reactions to food, (3) a process for the development of individualized health care and food allergy action plans for every student with a life-threatening food allergy, and (4) protocols to prevent exposure to food allergens.

It is the Board's expectation that specific building-based guidelines/actions will consider the health needs and well-being of all children without discrimination or isolation of any child. It is the Board's belief that education and open and informative communication are vital for the creation of an environment with reduced risks for all students and their families. In order to assist children with life-threatening allergies to assume more individual responsibility for maintaining their safety as they grow, it is the policy of the Board that guidelines shift as children advance through the primary grades and through secondary school.

A student with glycogen storage disease is permitted to have a parent/guardian or a person they so designate to provide food or dietary supplements on school grounds during the school day.

FUND-RAISING

Student clubs or classes, outside organizations, and/or parent groups occasionally may be permitted to conduct fund-raising drives for approved school purposes.

Any food items sold as part of any fund-raising activity must meet the nutritional standards published by the Connecticut Department of Education. Beverage or foods not allowed for sale during regular school hours may be sold provided (1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend, (2) the sale is at the location of such event, and (3) the food or beverage are not sold from a vending machine or school store.

GREEN CLEANING PROGRAMS

A green cleaning program to clean and maintain the school will be implemented by July 1, 2011. The program provides for the procurement and proper use of environmentally preferable cleaning products in the school. The cleaning products used meet standards approved by the Department of Administrative Services and minimize potential harmful effects on human health and the environment. Parents/Guardians may request a written copy of the District's policy pertaining to the green cleaning program and a written statement which includes the names and types of environmentally preferable cleaning products used in the school and where in the building they are applied; the schedule for applying the products; and the names of the school administrator or designee whom the parent/guardian or student may contact for more information.

No parent, guardian, teacher, or staff member may bring into the school facility any consumer product which is intended to clean, deodorize, sanitize or disinfect.

HARASSMENT STATEMENT

Every student has the right to feel safe, valued and comfortable in school. No one else's behavior should ever make students feel afraid or embarrassed because of their race, color, religion, national origin, sex, or any disability they may have. The District has zero tolerance for harassment of any kind. Students are expected to treat other students and District employees with courtesy and respect; to avoid any behaviors known to be offensive; and to stop those behaviors when asked or told to stop.

Parents are urged to reinforce with their child(ren) that if he/she is harassed or sees harassment happening to someone else that he/she should report the behavior to a teacher or administration. To maintain a productive and positive learning environment, the District and the Board of Education will make every attempt to halt any harassment of which they become aware by calling attention to this policy or by direct disciplinary action, if necessary.

A student who believes he/she has been harassed is encouraged to report the incident to a teacher or administration. The allegations will be investigated and addressed and appropriate disciplinary action taken, where necessary. Retaliation is prohibited against anyone who cooperates with a harassment investigation.

HEALTH SERVICES

The school nurse's primary objectives are to service the ill or disabled student and to encourage good health practices. It should be emphasized that an ill child does not do his/her best in school, and should be kept home. Upon return, a note of explanation for the absence is requested.

A cumulative health file is maintained for each student. This file includes notations of past illnesses, results of physical examinations, and other pertinent health information. Throughout the school year, students are screened for vision, hearing and in grade five, scoliosis. Should any deviations from the accepted norms be discovered, parents will be informed. It is likewise important that parents notify the (school nurse) in case of a student's illness. If a student is to be excused or limited for an extended period from participation in school activities, he/she is required to bring a statement signed by a physician.

In the interest of your child's health and the health of all children, please observe the following guidelines:

- If your child has been running a fever or has been sick during the night or before school, it is advisable to keep him/her home, since they usually do not do well in school and risk infecting other children. If your child has a fever of 100 or above, please keep him/her home for 24 hours after the fever has subsided. Although good attendance is desirable, a sick child should never be sent to school.
- As a licensed medical professional, our school nurse is responsible for assessing students who are feeling unwell and determining whether they are well enough to remain in school. If the nurse determines that a student should be sent home due to illness, we ask that families respect and follow this guidance promptly.
    - To help ensure the health and safety of all students and staff, it is essential that children who are ill be picked up as quickly as possible—ideally within 20–30 minutes of the call from the nurse. Prompt pick-up helps minimize the potential spread of illness to others.
    - We understand that emergencies happen. If you are unable to pick up your child within that timeframe, it is critical to have an emergency contact listed who is able to do so on your behalf. Please ensure that your child's emergency contact information is current and accurate in our records.
    - Your partnership helps us maintain a healthy school environment for all.
- If your child has a contagious disease or is likely to be absent for three or more days, please notify the school nurse. The school nurse is required to report all contagious diseases.
- The student absent four consecutive days or more may be requested to see the school nurse upon returning to school.
- A written excuse should be sent to school for any absence. A note from your physician is required for prolonged or frequent absence. • Any child well enough to come to school is expected to participate in all activities, including recess and physical education, unless a signed physician's note indicates otherwise. A parent may send a note to extend the excuse up to two days after the doctor's excuse ends.

Necessary health practices such as proper rest, diet, personal hygiene and hand washing must be constantly encouraged at home as well as at school. Since we encourage children to be outdoors when it is not actually snowing or raining, it is important for them to be dressed warmly with boots, hats, coats and gloves. Other appropriate clothing, such as sweaters, may be needed on chilly days. Shoes can get wet in early morning physical education classes. Extra footwear might be needed.

Our grade four students participate in human growth and development (puberty) sessions, which include a video and a discussion period. Parents receive information about this program and have an opportunity to preview the video prior to the student program.

As part of our state-mandated health curriculum, children in grade five are taught about AIDS and the

HIV virus. This program is age-appropriate in both topical content and instructional approach, and as a result, has proven very effective in helping to relieve fears associated with this sensitive topic. The main goal of AIDS instruction at the elementary level is to teach children skills to protect themselves against this life-threatening disease. Parents of students in grade five are provided an advance copy of the syllabus used for instruction and the topics to be covered each year. It is helpful if parents discuss this issue with their children prior to, and after, the class presentations. Through such discussion, parents will be able to check for their children's understanding, open lines of communication, and relay their ongoing support.

Any parent or guardian may request their child's release from the human growth and development program or the AIDS education program by writing to the school administration. Additional information is available upon request in the main office.

Administration of Medication

Parents of students requiring medication during school should contact the school nurse. Special forms are required to permit the administration of medicine in school. They are available from the school nurse. All medication must be in the original container with proper labels.

In cases in which a student is able to self-administer medication, the parents or guardians must submit a signed statement that the medication must be taken during the school day and the student is capable of administering the medication. The statement must be accompanied by a physician's, dentist's or advanced practice registered nurse's statement indicating the necessity and naming the medication, the strength, and the prescribed dosage. It must specify the schedule on which it is to be taken and the details of administration. Such statements must be renewed at the beginning of each school year.

A student with asthma or an allergic condition may carry an inhaler or an EpiPen or similar device in school at all times if he/she is under the care of a physician, physician assistant or advanced practical nurse and such practitioner certifies in writing that the child needs to keep an asthmatic inhaler or EpiPen at all times to ensure prompt treatment of the child's asthma or allergic condition and to protect the child against serious harm or death. A written authorization of the parent/guardian is required.

A school nurse, or in the absence of the nurse, a qualified school employee may administer epinephrine in a cartridge injector for the purpose of emergency first aid to students who experience allergic reactions but were not previously known to have serious allergies and therefore do not have prior written authorization of a parent/guardian or qualified medical professional for the administration of epinephrine. Parents/guardians may submit in writing to the school nurse and school medical advisor that epinephrine shall not be administered to his/her child.

A student with diabetes may test his/her own blood glucose levels if the student has written permission from his/her parents/guardian and a written order from a Connecticut licensed physician. The time or place of such testing shall not be restricted.

A school nurse or administration will select a qualified school employee to, under certain conditions; give a glycogen injection to a student with diabetes who may require prompt treatment to protect him/her from serious harm or death. Written parental permission and written order from a physical are required.

School bus drivers are trained to administer epinephrine in a life-threatening anaphylactic reaction to a

student who needs emergency care due to a medically diagnosed allergic reaction.

The District does not allow the ingestion of marijuana for palliative (medical) use in any school, on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities, on or off school grounds.

Communicable/Infectious Diseases

Students with any medical condition which within the school setting may expose others to disease or contagious and infectious conditions may be excluded from school and referred for medical diagnosis and treatment. Additional information concerning this may be obtained from the school nurse.

Before a child may return to school after an absence due to such conditions, parents and students may be required to submit medical evidence that their child has recovered sufficiently to prevent exposing others.

Disabilities

Suffield Public Schools will not discriminate on the basis of disability as required under ADA, IDEA and Section 504 and C.G.S. 10-76a and any similar law or provision.

Emergency Medical Treatment

Each year you are asked to supply or update the main office with your work and home phone numbers, doctor's name and hospital, and an emergency contact person if you are not at home should your child have a medical emergency. Please be sure to submit this information by going to the District website, https://www.suffield.org/, and clicking on —Parent Portal under the —Parents and Students. For the safety and comfort of your child, be sure to update this information as needed during the course of the school year.

Please keep in mind when you are choosing your emergency contact person that this person must be available to come to school when you cannot.

Head Lice (Pediculosis)

The District is committed to maximizing students' academic performance and physical well- being in a healthy and safe environment. The District recognizes that head lice infestations do not pose a health hazard, are not a sign of uncleanliness, and are not responsible for the spread of any disease. Misinformation about head lice causes anxiety for parents/guardians and school staff. The goals of providing a healthy and safe environment for students with head lice are to (1) maximize academic performance; and (2) minimize absences due to unnecessary exclusion from school of students with head lice. The school nurse can be contacted for treatment guidelines.

Health Records

School nurses maintain health records using the Connecticut —Health Assessment and Record Form. These records are accessible to certified staff working with the child and to school health aides if permission is granted by the nurse or building administrator. Parents may request to inspect the health records of their child. Copies may be provided if requested. Original copies of the record are sent where a

student transfers to another school in the state. If moving out-of-state, a copy will be forwarded. Health records are maintained for at least six years after the student graduates. The District will comply with the requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) to maintain the privacy of protected health information.

Homebound Instruction

Home instruction is available to students who are unable to attend school for medical and/or mental health reasons for a period of ten (10) school days or longer as diagnosed by a physician, psychiatrist or the Planning and Placement Team. Home instruction may also be provided for those students who have been excluded from regular school attendance for disciplinary reasons.

Homeless Students

Homeless students, as defined by federal and state legislation, will have all programs, services, and transportation that other students enjoy and may continue to attend the school of origin. The local liaison for homeless children is Diana Kelley, Pupil Services Director. The District has reviewed its existing policies and regulations to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth. Homeless children and youths are defined as "individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate night time residence." Homeless children have the right to attend the school of origin "to the extent feasible," unless doing so is contrary to the request of such student's parent/ guardian or unaccompanied youth.

Any homeless child or youth denied school accommodations shall continue in attendance or will be immediately enrolled in the school selected by the child in the school district. A written explanation of the reasons for denial of school accommodations in a manner understandable to such homeless children or youth, or parent/guardian, will be provided. Information will also be provided regarding the right to appeal the decision of the denial of accommodations. The homeless child or youth is entitled to continue in attendance during all available appeals.

A homeless student who is not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian, shall have full access to his/her educational and medical records in the Board's possession.

Immunizations

All students must be immunized against certain diseases and must present a certificate from a physical or local health agency. If the student should not be immunized due to medical reasons, a statement from a physician or the parent as appropriate must be provided. The required immunizations are: Diphtheria, Tetanus, Polio, Pertussis, Measles, Mumps, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Varicella (Chickenpox), Meningococcal, Pneumococcal, Rubella, Influenza and Hemophilus Influenza Type B.* Parents or guardians of any children unable to have the mandated immunizations prior to initial school entry and the boosters as required in the later grades may have the immunizations, on the recommendation of the Board of Education, be paid by the town.

In addition to the required immunizations for initial entry into school for kindergarten, regular and special education preschool programs, additional immunizations are required for entry into seventh grade and for entry into eighth grade and ninth or tenth grade. The school must enroll any homeless student even if the student is unable to produce the required medical and immunization records.

For further information regarding Immunizations, please contact Rebecca Spencer, Suffield Middle School Nurse and District Lead Nurse.

Physical Examinations

All students must present evidence of a physical examination upon enrollment to the District. (C.G.S. 10-204a). Health assessments shall also be required in grade 6 (or prior to entering grade 7). All students in grade 6 will undergo vision screening by the school nurse or school health aide. Hearing screening will be conducted for all students in grade 8. Postural screening will be conducted for all female students in grade 7 and male students in grade 8. If a homeless student, as defined by federal statute, lacks immunization/medical records, the school will enroll the child and refer the parent/guardian to the District's homeless liaison.

HOMEWORK

Education is a life-long process, which extends beyond the school. It is important that students recognize that learning occurs in the home and community. Homework is one means of promoting self-directed, independent learning.

Homework assignments:

- Strengthen basic skills
- Apply classroom learning
- Stimulate the student's interest through further exploration
- Reinforce independent study skills
- Develop qualities of initiative and responsibility

The manner in which and the degree to which homework is used vary from grade to grade. This is consistent with developmentally appropriate practice. Homework practices at McAlister Intermediate School reflect a natural progression in grades three through five. At the third-grade level, content-related homework activities are used to assist in facilitating students' successful transitions to grades four and five. Homework assigned in grades four and five further emphasizes the mastery of content-related information. In these grades, students are expected to complete a greater amount of independent work. The development of good study habits increases in importance in grades three through five.

Typically, homework should not exceed the following total amounts per day for an average student working at an average speed:

- Grade 3: 10-30 minutes daily
- Grades 4/5: 30-50 minutes daily

There may be situations when classroom instruction may not warrant homework assignments. The above time allotment is to be considered as a guideline only. Children should be encouraged to read for the suggested time when no specific homework is assigned. This encourages good study habits.

Specific expectations related to homework, and parents' involvement toward the completion of homework, are communicated by teachers to parents during the Annual Open House for parents, and as

part of individual assignments as appropriate. The degree to which parental assistance with homework is desirable varies from grade to grade and from assignment to assignment. Parents are encouraged to contact their children's teachers if clarification with regard to homework is needed. In general, however, parents promote positive attitudes toward homework through regular exchanges with children and teachers, and by providing the time and a place for their children to complete homework.

INSURANCE

School insurance is made available to families through a specific program. Brochures are available in the office at the beginning of each academic year, if you are interested. The program is not mandatory, but is an opportunity to provide additional protection for your children while in school. Any such arrangement is contractual between the parent and insurance carriers and the Suffield Public Schools assume no liability from disputes arising from such contract.

LOST AND FOUND

The first-floor hallway across the gym and just outside the main office maintains a collection of lost and found articles to be claimed by students. Students should feel free to check the lost and found in the hallway or inquire in the office about lost items as necessary. Whenever practical, any items brought to school should have a child's name placed on them to ensure return to the rightful owner. Unclaimed items will be displayed during parent-teacher conferences in December and March. Lost and found items that remain after each conference period and at the end of the school year are given to *Goodwill*, as we do not have the space to maintain these over time. Parents are notified in advance of this, and their prompt response is appreciated.

MANDATED REPORTERS/MANDATED REPORTING

The District complies with all laws and regulations regarding the reporting of actual or suspected child abuse and neglect. For additional information, refer to the portion of this handbook under the heading "Child Abuse and Neglect" and to Board Policy and Regulation 5141.4.

MAGNET SCHOOLS

It is recognized that some students may benefit from attendance at a magnet school not limited by school district boundaries. District students may enroll directly into a magnet school, with which the District does not have a participation agreement, on a space available basis. The District will be responsible for any tuition for such enrollment, but not for transportation, unless the magnet school is within the boundaries of the school district. Tuition will not be paid by the district for students placed by their parents/guardians in a pre-school (PK) magnet program. Parents/Guardians are required, not later than two weeks following an enrollment lottery for an inter-district magnet school, to notify the district of their child's enrollment or placement on a waiting list for enrollment in the coming school year.

MIGRANT STUDENTS

The District has a program to address the needs of migrant students. A full range of services will be provided to migrant students, including applicable Title I programs, special education, gifted education, vocational education, language programs, counseling programs and elective classes. Parents/guardians of migrant students will be involved in and regularly consulted about the development, implementation, operation and evaluation of the migrant program.

NAEP

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS (NAEP) Federal legislation requires schools selected to participate in this national testing program to notify parents of children who will be taking the test of their right to exclude their child. Parents also have the right to inspect all NAEP data, questions and assessment instruments.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Parents are encouraged to partner with the school to ensure their child's educational successes. Conferences with teachers may be held at any time during the school year. Parents and students as well as teachers, counselors or administrators may initiate a conference.

A parent or student may arrange a conference with an individual member of the school staff or a group conference with school staff members. Conferences are held during school hours but every effort will be made to accommodate parent schedules.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT/COMMUNICATIONS

Education succeeds best when there is a strong partnership between home and school based on open communication and interactions grounded in mutual respect and trust. Parents/guardians are urged to encourage their children to put a high priority on education and to make the most of their educational opportunities available. Parents/guardians should become familiar with all of the child's school activities and with the District's academic programs, including special programs. Attendance at parent-teacher conferences, participation in parent organizations, attendance at board of education meetings and being a school volunteer are strongly encouraged.

Parent Requested Observations

The Suffield Public Schools has as its highest priority, the safety and the welfare of its students and staff. The Suffield Board of Education welcomes purposeful observations of classes by parents and other interested members of the community. The Board recognizes its responsibility to ensure that students may learn in an educational environment free of unnecessary disruption and distractions and to provide a school environment that is safe for staff and students alike. In the interest of protecting the welfare of students and staff, preserving the privacy rights of students, minimizing disruptions to the learning process and maintaining order and security on its premises, the following guidelines have been established for observations:

1. All observers will be governed by visitation expectations of Policy #1250.

2. Anyone wishing to observe a class must contact the administration of the school prior to the observation and provide the name of the observer and purpose of the observation. Outside evaluators are required to provide their phone number, address and professional credentials. Whenever possible, a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours' notice should be provided.

3. In addressing requests for classroom observation, the administration will consider its responsibility to avoid disruption to the learning environment and learning benefit of students and minimizing distractions and disruptions to the learning process.

4. Requests to observe a class shall not be unreasonably withheld; however, administration may deny or place limitations on observations to ensure the integrity and benefit of the educational process for teachers and students. If an observation is denied, alternate avenues to achieve the purpose, if available, should be suggested and/or arranged.

PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION

Board Members Contact the Board at the following: suffieldpto19@gmail.com	
Title	**Name**
Co-President	**Nicole Thorogood**
Co-President & Grants	**Anna-Kristin Daub-Murphy**
Co-Vice President/Fundraising Chair	**Paige Barber**
Co-Vice President/Fundraising Chair	**Melissa Bard**
Secretary	**Erica Boucher**
Treasurer	**Chad Lemmens**
Accounts Receivable	**Kayla Nadeau**
Accounts Payable	**Liz Couchon**

PESTICIDE APPLICATION

Only certified pesticide applicators shall be used in schools for any non-emergency pesticide use in school buildings or on school grounds. Pesticide applications are limited to non-school hours and when activities are not taking place. Areas to receive pesticide application will be posted and a written record of all pesticide applications will be maintained for five years. Parents/guardians and staff who want to receive advance notice of all pesticide use will be listed on a registry and such notice will be provided as required by law. Parents/guardians who want to be notified prior to pesticide applications inside their child(ren)'s school assignment area may contact the Director of Facilities, Larry Plano. Note: If the District is implementing the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) concept, similar requirements as above must be met. Notice will be provided at least 24 hours in advance of the application of a pesticide either on the school's homepage or on the school or district's primary social media account.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Suffield Public Schools uses an Integrated Pest Management system. Notice will be provided at least 24 hours in advance of the application of a pesticide either on the school's homepage or on the school or district's primary social media account.

PETS AND ANIMALS IN SCHOOL

Children should not bring pets and animals to school unless their parent or guardian has spoken with their teacher, and the teacher has secured permission from the school principal or assistant principal. This policy is implemented in light of precautions received by us relative to communicable animal diseases.

PHOTOGRAPHS

From time-to-time during the school year, school personnel and/or media take photographs. If a parent/guardian does not want their child to be photographed for school use, school website or for media purposes, they must indicate within our Infosnap system. Photos of individual and classroom groups are taken annually, which may be purchased by parents/guardians, but they are not obligated to do so.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

All students enrolled in elementary school shall have included in the regular school day, time devoted to physical exercise, of not less than 20 minutes in total. This requirement may be altered by a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) for a child requiring special education and related services or if the board of education permits an additional amount of time. This daily period of physical activity for elementary school students can be a combination of planned physical education classes, recess, and/or teacher-directed classroom activities. Students may not be required by school employees to engage in physical activity as a form of discipline during the school day. This restriction does not apply to brief periods of respite/timeouts, referrals to a building administrator, or for safety reasons. Students in elementary school may not be denied participating in recess or in other sustained opportunities for physical activity during classroom learning as a form of discipline. Loss of recess or other physically active learning opportunities may be permitted on an administratively approved case-by-case basis.

PHYSICAL EXERCISE

All students in elementary school shall have in the regular school day, time devoted to physical exercise, of not less than twenty minutes in total, unless altered for a student by a Planning and Placement Team for a child requiring special education. Such physical exercise can be a combination of planned physical education classes, recess, and/or teacher-directed classroom activities. The period of physical activity will not be taken away from an elementary student as a form of punishment. In addition, students in all grades, K-12, cannot be assigned physical activity as a form of punishment.

School employees may not prevent a student in elementary school from participating in recess or in other sustained opportunities for physical activity during classroom learning as a form of discipline.

PROMOTION, RETENTION AND PLACEMENT

Student promotion is dependent on each student's mastery and acquisition of basic learning objectives. Normally, students will progress annually from grade to grade. Students who master objectives at an exceptional rate may be considered for acceleration to another grade or class. Students who fail to master basic learning objectives at a normal rate will be considered for retention. Retention and acceleration decisions are the responsibility of the teaching staff and principal, after prior notification and discussion with parents. The final decision rests with the school principal.

Students must demonstrate attainment of the basic skills needed for graduation based on the district's assessment program. A failure to attain these skills may necessitate involvement in additional courses, special help programs, summer school, retesting, etc.

PROPERTY, LOCKERS, AND EQUIPMENT

It is the policy of the Board to hold students responsible for any loss of or damage to the property of the school under the jurisdiction of the Board when the loss or damage occurs through fault of the student.

Any student damaging or defacing school property will be financially liable for restoring the property regardless of the condition of the property at the time of the destructive act, in addition to any other discipline up to and including arrest or civil prosecution as deemed appropriate. In addition, anyone who witnesses such an act and fails to report it to the proper authorities will be considered as having contributed to that action. Such charges for damaged property will be exactly those which the school must incur to repair the damage.

Each student is assigned a locker. These items are the property of the school, loaned to students for their convenience during the school year, and should be kept in good order and not abused. Students are expected to keep their lockers closed at all times. The school is not responsible for any valuables or other various items taken from a locker.

Searches of desks or lockers may be conducted at any time there is reasonable cause to believe that they contain articles or materials prohibited by District policy. Parents will be notified if any prohibited items are found in the student's desk or locker.

Students should not attempt to repair school equipment but should notify the main office immediately if it isn't functioning properly. Any damage done will be the responsibility of the person to whom it was loaned for the current year. Students may not bring in locks from home and attach to assigned lockers. Students are warned not to bring large sums of money or valuables to school, liability for these items remains with the student.

PSYCHOTROPIC DRUG USE

School personnel are prohibited from recommending the use of psychotropic drugs for any student enrolled within the school system. School nurses, nurse practitioners, District medical advisors, school psychologists, school social workers and school counselors, may recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner. Further, the District is prohibited from requiring a child to get a prescription before he/she may attend school, be evaluated to determine eligibility for special education or receive special education.

RECORDING OF CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

The District prohibits the covert recording of classroom activities. The recording of teachers or students in class is inherently disruptive to the educational process. Students violating this rule will be subject to discipline and confiscation of the electronic device.

REPORT CARDS AND PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Report cards are issued three times each year in grades 3-5 (December, March, and June). Formal parent-teacher conferences coincide with the distribution of report cards in November and March. Students' final report cards are distributed at the end of the school year in June.

We strongly believe in the power of forging productive, working relationships between home and school. We welcome parents' interest and desire in discussing their children's educational growth and development and stand ready to respond to questions whenever they may arise. For these reasons, both parents and teachers may request a conference, by phone or in person, at any time during the school year.

SAFETY/ACCIDENT PREVENTION

Student safety on campus and at school-related events is a high priority of the District. Although the District has implemented safety procedures, the cooperation of students is essential to ensure school safety. A student should:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or other students at risk.
- Follow the school's code of discipline
- Remain alert to and promptly report safety hazards, such as intruders on campus.
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of staff who are over-seeing the welfare of students.

SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES

The school District recognizes the value of certain ceremonies and observances in promoting patriotism and good citizenship among the students. Therefore, activities in schools commemorating national holidays such as Martin Luther King Day, Veterans Day, Memorial Day, Thanksgiving and President's Day are encouraged. McAlister reminds students, faculty and administration of the variety of religious beliefs, and all are urged to be conscious of and respect the sensitivities of others.

Activities related to a religious holiday or theme will be planned to ensure that the activity is not devotional, and that students of all faiths can join without feeling that they are betraying their own beliefs. Therefore,

1. school and class plays shall not be overly religious, and church-like scenery will be avoided;

2. religious music shall not entirely dominate the selection of music; and

3. program notes and illustrations shall not be religious or sectarian.

Students shall be given the option to be excused from participating in those parts of a program or curriculum involving a religious theme which conflicts with their own religious beliefs. If a parent or student has any questions regarding the use of religious music, artwork and/or symbols in a particular course/activity, the Building Administration should be contacted.

An opportunity will be provided, at the beginning of each school day, for students to observe an appropriate period of silent meditation and to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Participation in these activities is voluntary. Nonparticipants are expected to maintain order and decorum appropriate to the school environment.

SCHOOL DISTRICT RECORDS

Interested persons may inspect —public district records which are maintained at the office of the Superintendent of Schools, during normal hours of business. Copies of records, permitted by law to be disclosed, may also be attained. Please note that there may be a fee charged for the cost of the copying materials.

SCHOOL SECURITY AND SAFETY

Each school in the District (beginning July 1, 2014) will develop and implement a school security and safety plan based upon the standards issued by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection. Each school, as required by law, shall establish a school security and safety committee which will assist in the development and administration of the school's security and safety plan. Each District school will conduct a security and vulnerability assessment every two years.

For the school year commencing July 1, 2014, and each school year thereafter, the District will develop, maintain and implement an emergency disaster preparedness and response plan.

(School Security and Safety Plan). The plan is based upon the standards promulgated by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection Development and implementation of the plan includes collaboration with local and state emergency responders, (law enforcement, fire department, emergency rescue squads and local public health administrators). The plan, representing an all hazards approach, utilizes the four recognized phases of crisis management: (1) mitigation/prevention, (2) preparedness, (3) response, (4) recovery.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

When a reasonable suspicion arises that use or possession of a student's property is illegal, illicit, disruptive, or a danger to the general welfare of students and staff, a search may be made of the student's person or personal property.

Desks and school lockers are the property of the schools. The right to inspect desks and lockers assigned to students may be exercised by school officials to safeguard students, their property and school property with reasonable care for the Fourth Amendment rights of students.

The exercise of the right to inspect also requires protection of each student's personal privacy and protection from coercion. An authorized school administrator may search a student's locker or desk under three (3) conditions:

1. There is reason to believe that the student's desk or locker contains the probable presence of contraband material.
2. The probable presence of contraband material poses a serious threat to the maintenance of discipline, order, safety and health in the school.
3. The student(s) have been informed in advance that school board policy allows desks and lockers to be inspected if the administration has reason to believe that materials injurious to the best interests of the students and the school are contained therein.

Use of drug-detection dogs and metal detectors or similar detective devices may be used only on the express authorization of the Board of Education.

District officials may seize any item which is evidence of a violation of law, Board policy, administrative regulation or school rule, or which the possession or use of is prohibited by such law, policy, regulation or rule.

A student may be searched if there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school. The scope of the search must be reasonably related to the objectives of the search and the nature of the infraction.

Students may be searched by law enforcement officials on school property or when the student is under the jurisdiction of the District upon the request of the law enforcement official. Such requests, ordinarily, shall be based on warrant. The school principal or designee will attempt to notify the student's parents in advance and will be present for all such searches.

SECLUSION AND RESTRAINT, USE OF

Teachers and staff of the Suffield Public Schools comply with all State laws and Board of Education policies with respect to the use of seclusion and restraint of students in their care during the school day and during extra-curricular activities. Use of Physical Restraint/Seclusion is governed by Board policy 5144.1 and the administrative regulations associated with the policy, both of which are available on the District's website. Life-threatening physical restraint will never be used on a student at school or under the care of staff at a school-sponsored activity. In the unlikely event that seclusion or restraint is required, it will be performed only by trained staff, under constant supervision, and used only in case of emergency.

If a seclusion or restraint occurs, every attempt will be made to notify the parent or guardian immediately, and no later than 24 hours following the event. The District is required to keep detailed written records of all incidents of seclusion and restraint, and such records are available for inspection by the student's parent or guardian. A written report will be sent home promptly following any such incident. Reports concerning all incidents of seclusion and restraint are made to the State Department of Education, and de-identified data concerning the District's statistics are available to anyone upon request. State law also permits a teacher or other staff to use —reasonable physical force if necessary to protect someone from immediate physical injury, to obtain possession of a dangerous instrument or controlled substance, to protect property from physical damage, or to restrain a child or remove the child to another area to maintain order. Briefly making physical contact with a student to comfort a child, to keep the child from being injured, to break up a fight, or escort the child to a safe area is considered neither —seclusion or —restraint. Such actions are rare and used only in case of exigent circumstances as defined by law. Any questions concerning the District's policies on seclusion and restraint should be directed to the Director of Special Services at 860-668-3803.

SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION AND EDUCATION PROGRAM

Students in grades K-12 will be involved in a prevention-oriented child sexual abuse program which teaches students age-appropriate techniques to recognize child sexual abuse and how to report it. Parents/guardians may permit their child to opt out of the awareness program or any part of it by notifying the school in writing of such a request.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The district wants all students to learn in an environment free from all forms of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is against state and federal laws. It is unwelcome sexual attention from peers, teachers, staff or anyone with whom the victim may interact. Sexual harassment, whether verbal or physical, includes, but is not limited to the following: (Give examples which are age appropriate.) Any

student who believes that he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment should report the alleged misconduct immediately to the Title IX Coordinator, Nondiscrimination Coordinator, his/her teacher, social worker, guidance counselor, administrator, school nurse, or any responsible individual with whom the student feels comfortable, either informally or through the filing of a formal complaint. The administration will act to investigate the allegations.

The district will notify the parents of all students involved in sexual harassment by student(s) and will notify parents of any incident of sexual harassment or sexual abuse by an employee. A complaint alleging sexual harassment by a student or staff member may be presented by a student and/or parent in a conference with the principal or designee or with the Title IX Coordinator, Dr. Diana Kelley.

SNACKS

Students may bring a daily snack from home that they will be allowed to eat at the teacher's discretion. We do recommend that snacks be nutritious, i.e., fruit, cheese, popcorn, etc. Furthermore, we kindly request your cooperation in providing simple snacks requiring minimal preparation that students may eat independently and clean up easily. In keeping with our District's Wellness Policy and working to promote students' healthy lifestyles and well-being, we do not allow cupcakes or other food treats for birthday celebrations. Ideas for food-free birthday celebrations are provided in Appendix 2 of our District's Wellness Policy, which can be accessed through the Suffield Public Schools Website.

STAFF DIRECTORY

The staff directory can be found on the District website under the **About Us** tab.

STUDENT RECORDS

The Suffield Board of Education will comply with applicable regulations regarding confidentiality and access to all student records. The Board shall implement procedures that ensure strict confidentiality of student records while providing proper parental and/or student access to records. The Assistant Superintendent is considered as the custodian of records and will ensure that student's records are kept confidential. Records may be reviewed during regular school hours upon completion of the written request form. The record's custodian or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records.

A student's school records are confidential and are protected by federal and state law from unauthorized inspection or use. A cumulative record is maintained for each student from the time the student enters the District until the student withdraws or graduates. This record moves with the student from school to school.

By law, both parents, whether married, separated, or divorced, have access to the records of a student who is under 18 or a dependent for tax purposes. A parent whose rights have been legally terminated will be denied access to the records if the school is given a copy of the court order terminating these rights.

Parents of a minor or of a student who is a dependent for tax purposes, the student (if 18 or older), and school officials with legitimate educational interests are the only persons who have general access to a student's records. —School officials with legitimate educational interests include any employee such as an administrator, teacher, support staff, Board of Education member, attorney, agents, or facilities with

which the District contracts for the placement of students with disabilities, as well as their attorneys and consultants, who are:

1. Working with the student;

2. Considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for a student with disabilities under IDEA or an individually designed program for a student with disabilities under Section 504;

3. Compiling statistical data; or

4. Investigating or evaluating programs. Certain other officials from various governmental agencies may have limited access to the records. Parental consent is required to release the records to anyone else. When the student reaches 18 years of age, only the student has the right to consent to release of records.

The parent's or student's right of access to and copies of student records does not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records, such as teachers' personal notes on a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher and records pertaining to former students after they are no longer students in the District, do not have to be made available to the parents or student.

A student over 18 and parents of minor students may inspect the student's records and request a correction if the records are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. If the District refuses the request to amend the records, the requestor has the right to a hearing. If the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the requester has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information in the student's record. Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, parents and the student are not allowed to contest a student's grade in a course through this process. Parents or the student have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education if they believe the District is not in compliance with the law regarding student records. The District's policy regarding student records is available from the administration's or superintendent's office.

Please note that there may be a fee charged for the cost of the copying materials. Parents may be denied copies of a student's records

(1) after the student reaches age 18 and is no longer a dependent for tax purposes;

(2) when the student is attending an institution of post-secondary education;

(3) if the parent fails to follow proper procedures and pay the copying charge; or

(4) when the District is given a copy of a court order terminating the parental rights. If the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals and the parents are unable to view the records during regular school hours, upon written request of the parent, one copy of the record will be provided at no charge.

Certain information about District students is considered directory information and will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it, unless the parent objects to the release of any or all directory information about the child. This objection must be made in writing to the administration within ten school days after the issuance of this handbook. Directory information includes a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major field of study, grade levels, photograph,

e-mail address, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, awards received in school, and most recent previous school attended.

Military recruiters or institutions of higher learning shall have access to secondary school students' names, addresses and telephone listings, unless a parent/guardian or secondary student aged 18 or over requests in writing that such information not be released.

The District will release to the Parent Teacher Organization the names, addresses, telephone number and grade levels of students (unless the District is informed by September 15 of the school year that designation of such directory information has been refused as to a particular student) provided such information is to be used by the PTO for its own school activities or school business.

The District, when a student moves to a new school system or charter school, will send the student's records to the new District or charter school within ten business days of receiving written notice of the move from the new District. Unless the parents/guardians of the student authorize the record transfer in writing, the sending District is required to send a notice when the records are sent to the new District.

Parents and eligible students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of education concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the Requirements of FERPA. Complaints may be addressed to: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 5400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20202-4605.

The District's FERPA Privacy Officer is: Director of Special Services for Suffield Public Schools, Dr. Diana Kelley.

STUDENT SAFETY

At Suffield Public Schools the safety and well-being of our students, staff, and school community is our highest priority. As part of our commitment to maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment, we want to inform you of our district's processes in responding to student threats of harm to either themselves or others.

Threats of Harm to Others

In response to a student threat of harm the district utilizes the Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines (CSTAG) model for assessing and responding to these threats.

What is CSTAG?

CSTAG is a research-based threat assessment model developed by Dr. Dewey Cornell at the University of Virginia. It is designed to help schools identify, assess, and respond appropriately to student threats in a fair, objective, and effective manner. The model emphasizes early intervention, problem-solving, and providing support for students who may be struggling—while maintaining a strong focus on school safety.

Key Principles of CSTAG:

- Not all threats are serious; CSTAG helps distinguish between transient (non-serious) and substantive (serious) threats.
- The focus is on resolving conflicts, reducing risk, and supporting student development.
- The process involves collaboration among educators, parents, mental health professionals and when necessary, law enforcement.

Why CSTAG?

CSTAG is nationally recognized and supported by extensive research. It provides a consistent and evidence-based framework for our schools to follow when managing threat-related situations. This approach helps ensure that all students are treated with fairness and that threats are addressed quickly and appropriately to prevent harm.

Statements of Self Harm

If a student expresses thoughts of suicide or self-harm, makes statements that raise concern, or exhibits behaviors that suggest they may be at risk, a trained school mental health professional will meet with the student as soon as possible to complete a suicide risk assessment. As part of this process trained staff may use the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS). This evidence-based screening tool helps staff better understand a student's level of risk and determine the most appropriate next steps.

The assessment is conducted in a private, supportive, and nonjudgmental manner. Students are asked questions about their thoughts, feelings, and current level of safety. Research shows that asking these questions does not increase the risk of suicide; rather, it helps identify students who may need support and intervention.

Parents or guardians will be contacted promptly whenever a suicide risk assessment is completed. School staff will review the assessment findings, discuss recommendations, and work collaboratively with families to develop a plan that supports the student's safety and well-being. Depending on the level of risk, next steps may include creating a school-based safety plan, connecting the family with community mental health resources, recommending an immediate mental health evaluation, or contacting emergency services if a student is determined to be at imminent risk.

Suffield Public Schools is committed to working in partnership with families to ensure that students receive timely, compassionate, and appropriate support. Our goal is to promote student safety, connect families with needed resources, and help every student return to learning in a safe and supportive environment.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Our response to our students' diverse needs reflects both our ongoing belief that all children can learn and our commitment to the growth and development of the whole child. Students' academic, behavioral, social, and emotional needs are identified through the knowledgeable and collaborative efforts of a caring school staff and an involved parent community. Driven by individual student needs and situations, a continuum of services, educational programs, resources, and interventions are creatively designed and flexibly provided.

The District utilizes a process of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), which combines systematic assessment, decision-making and a multi-tiered delivery model to improve educational and behavioral outcomes for all students. Academic and behavioral support and targeted interventions will be provided for students who are not making academic progress at expected levels in the general curriculum. Three tiers of support (or intervention) are developed to support student learning. The progress that students make at each stage of intervention is monitored closely. Results of this monitoring are used to make decisions about further need for research-based instruction.

Tier 1: All children receive high-quality curriculum and best practice instruction in the general education classroom or program. Eighty percent of students are expected to achieve within the range of grade-level expectations without additional tiers of support.

Tier 2: Students may need extra help in addition to the high-quality instruction they receive in Tier I. Students may receive additional teaching strategies or methods that are proven to be effective in helping children learn. These teaching methods can occur in large or small groups, as well as in or outside the classroom. Ten to fifteen percent of students in a school may need this level of support.

Tier 3: When a high level of support is needed, children are given individualized or small group instruction with more frequency. Up to five percent of students in a school may need this level of support.

Sometimes a student does not make enough progress through the intervention used in MTSS. The teacher knows this from monitoring the student's progress. Revised intervention plans may be developed that will be instructed by other building specialists or support staff.

For students who may need Special Education programs, a planning and placement team (PPT) is designed to provide communication and decision-making at the school level concerning the effective use of available resources. The team is also responsible for follow-up and periodic review of all students presently in Special Education and special services programs.

Any child identified as possibly needing special education and/or related services must be referred to a special education Planning & Placement Team for evaluation (PPT). The PPT will determine whether special education services are required. Parents must give their consent before any evaluation can be done or any services can begin. An Individualized Education Plan (IEP), based upon the diagnostic findings of the evaluation study will be developed by the PPT, with parental involvement. Parents will be informed regarding the use of scientific, research-based interventions.

Paraeducator Support and Duty Clerks

We are fortunate to have a number of talented and dedicated paraeducators within our school who are assigned to specific students identified in need, and who assist with the supervision of students during lunch and recess periods. Non-special education students in need of —extra help with a particular skill or concept on a given day, as determined by the classroom teacher, sometimes receive such assistance from a paraeducator.

Duty Clerks provide invaluable assistance in supervising children in our school cafeteria and on the school playground. It is important that children give the same respect and consideration to paraeducators as they would to a certified teacher, the assistant principal or principal. We appreciate parental support in reinforcing this with children.

American with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ensures support for individuals with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities are provided a free and appropriate education (FAPE), and are accommodated and employed without discrimination related to their disabilities.

It is the intent of the District to provide a free and appropriate public education to each Section 504/ADA qualified and eligible student with a disability within its jurisdiction, as defined in 28 CFR, Parts 35 and 36, of the Amendments to Americans with Disabilities Act, Title II and Title III.

Section 504 prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities (both students and staff members) by school districts receiving federal assistance of any kind for any program or activity. Districts may not discriminate against any person with a disability, regardless of whether the program or activity after enrollment, may also take a screening exam.

All individuals who are disabled or "handicapped" are protected under Section 504. However, individuals who have been determined to be "handicapped" under Section 504 may not be considered disabled under IDEA. IDEA, which can be viewed as a subcategory of Section 504, provides for special programming or placement, while Section 504 protects the rights of individuals with handicaps. Under IDEA, students are qualified for services under 13 IDEA disabling conditions; specially designed individual education programs are planned for each student by Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams. Under Section 504, students with "handicaps" are entitled to special accommodations to ensure that they can participate in and benefit from public education and programs, and a 504 accommodation plan is designed for each student according to individual needs.

Section 504 is not an aspect of special education, but is, rather, a responsibility of the comprehensive general public education system. Unlike an eligibility system based on clinic categories of disabilities, Section 504 works on a more functional premise. Under 504 [29 U.S.C. & § 706(8)] a person is considered to have a disability if that person:

1. has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities;

2. has a record of such an impairment; or

3. is regarded as having such an impairment

While Section 504 provides a means for preventing discrimination against students with disabilities, this does not mean that 504 plans must focus on the disabling condition or on addressing the disability directly. Rather, 504 plans offer a means for focusing on students' strengths, for capitalizing on what students bring to the instruction process - not on what they lack.

Students with disabilities, pursuant to Section 504 and/or ADA will be provided a free appropriate public education which may include, but is not limited to, providing a structured learning environment; repeating and simplifying instructions about in-class and homework assignments; supplemented verbal instructions with visual instructions; adjusting class schedules, modifying

test delivery; computer-assisted instructions; using modified textbooks and tailoring homework assignments.

Should you have any questions regarding Section 504, please call either your child's school principal or

the Civil Rights Coordinator, Dr. Diana Kelley for the Suffield School District at dkelley@suffield.org.

Any eligible person, including any student, parent/guardian, staff member or other employee who feels that he/she has been discriminated against on the basis of disability may submit a written complaint to the district's designated Section 504 Coordinator (name) within 30 days of the alleged occurrence.

STUDENT/TEACHER CONTACT DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

We work diligently to limit class interruptions to achieve the most effective and efficient instructional time for all students. Your cooperation in refraining from interruptions during class time is greatly appreciated. If you find it necessary to bring something to your child during the school day because he/she forgot an item needed for school, we request that you first sign in at the main office, or simply drop the item off at the main office.

Children are not permitted to make or receive calls except in an emergency as determined by the main office. We understand that parents may want their children to carry a cellphone to and from school to improve communication and student safety. However, current Board of Education policy advises us that during the school day, student cellphones should be stowed and turned off, as these devices can serve as a distraction and can lead to both unwelcomed and unsafe activities. We will appreciate parents' support in reinforcing this policy with their children.

Also, if you find the need to contact a teacher during the school day, we request that you do so by telephone, email or in writing. Classrooms cannot be unsupervised, and therefore, teachers may not be called to the office to respond to a telephone call when class is in session, the school office will gladly take a message. When the teacher is available, your call will be returned.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

The district maintains procedural guidelines for suicide prevention and intervention in response to at risk behaviors by students, (i.e. Suicidal ideation, commentary or self-injurious behavior). The school faculty receives information and in-service on suicide prevention annually. Please refer to Board policy and regulation 5141.5 for additional information.

SURVEYS/STUDENT PRIVACY

Your child will not be required to participate without parental consent in any survey, analysis, or evaluation that concerns:

1. political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent;

2. mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family;

3. sex attitudes or behaviors;

4. illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior;

5. critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;

6. legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians and ministers;

7. income; or

8. religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student's parents.

In addition, parents have the right to inspect, upon request, a survey that is to be administered by a school to a student, prior to its use. Parents will be notified at least two weeks in advance of any survey that will be given to their children.

Parents will be notified of any non-emergency, invasive physical examination that is required as a condition of attendance administered by the school and which is not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of students.

TEACHER AND PARAEDUCATOR QUALIFICATIONS

Parents have the right to request information about the professional qualifications of their child's teacher(s). The response will indicate whether the teacher is certified for the subject matter and grade taught; the teacher's undergraduate major and any graduate degrees or certifications a teacher may have. Parents will also be advised, if requested, as to whether the child is provided service by paraeducators and their qualifications.

TECHNOLOGY

Computer Resources

Each classroom at McAlister Intermediate School is equipped with a class set of Chromebooks, thus providing a 1:1 digital environment in which every student has access to a school-issued Chromebook or a District-approved device. District resources have been invested in computer technology to broaden instruction and to prepare students for an increasingly computerized society. Use of these resources is restricted to students working under a teacher's supervision and for approved purposes only. Students and parents will be asked to sign a user agreement regarding appropriate use of these resources. Violations of this agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

Students and parents should be aware that e-mail communications, using District computers, are not private and may be monitored by staff. Students may not access social media sites using District equipment, while on District property, or at a District sponsored activity unless the posting is approved by a teacher. The District will not be liable for information posted by students on social media websites, such as Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, etc., when the student is not engaged in District activities and not using District equipment.

The District reserves the right to monitor, inspect, copy, review and store at any time and without prior notice any and all usage of the computer network and Internet access and any and all information transmitted or received in connection with such usage. All such information files shall be and remain the property of the School District and no user shall have any expectation of privacy regarding such material.

Federal law requires the District to place filtering devices on school computers to block entry to visual depictions that are obscene, pornographic, harmful or inappropriate for students as defined in the Children's Internet Protection Act and as determined by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

The Board of Education is committed to aiding students and staff in creating a 21st Century learning environment. Therefore students (plus staff) will be permitted to access the District's wireless network with their personal devices during the school day. With teacher approval, students may use their own devices to access the Internet and collaborate with other students.

Students using their own personal devices or school-issued technology resources must follow The McAlister Way, demonstrating digital citizenship that is kind, respectful, responsible and safe, as well as all applicable Board policies, particularly the District's Responsible Use policy.

Students are responsible for keeping personal technology secure. If personal technology is stolen, lost, or damaged, it will be handled through the administrative office similar to how other stolen, lost, or damaged personal artifacts are handled. Students and families should be aware that the District is not liable for any personal technology that is stolen, lost, or damaged. Students should not share their personal technology with other students at any time.

A student's personal technology (smartphones or cellular telephones) brought to school may be searched by District personnel if there are "reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school."

Electronic Devices (Cell phones, smart phones, etc.)

The use of electronic devices, such as but not limited to, cell phones and smart watches are prohibited during the regular school day. Students are allowed to bring technology devices to school and use them only at the discretion of their teacher as tools for learning. These items will be collected by teachers at the start of the day and stored in the classroom. Smart watches and cell phones are prohibited during the school day.

Students are not allowed to use their devices to take pictures of others, make phone calls, send text messages, Instagram, tweet, etc. during the school day. Headphones (i.e. or ear-buds, etc.) shall not be used at all. This is to encourage appropriate social interactions between students and avoid the safety hazard caused by students unable to hear instructions, announcements, etc.

Students found to be using any electronic communication devices in violation of Board policy and school rules shall be subject to disciplinary action. Further, a student may be disciplined for creating and/or distributing written or electronic material, including internet material and blogs, that cause substantial disruption to school operations or interfere with the rights of other students or staff members.

The sending, sharing, viewing or possessing pictures, emails or other material of a sexual nature in electronic or any other form on cell phones or other electronic devices is prohibited in the school setting and subject to serious disciplinary action.

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A student's personal technology (smartphones or cellular telephones) brought to school may be searched by District personnel if there are "reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school."

Responsible Use Policy

The computer technology is present to support the educational mission of the District to promote educational excellence in the District by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication. Use of this equipment provides great opportunity, but places a responsibility on all students. All students have the responsibility to use the equipment in a considerate, ethical and lawful manner. The right to use this equipment may be revoked at any time by the administration if deemed necessary.

Students must accept the Responsible Use Procedure (RUP) form before the student is allowed to use the school computers. The use of the Internet must be in support of education, research, and school sanctioned projects. We expect students to afford each other the same respect on the Internet that they do while interacting in person and to respect Suffield Public Schools and its property. The school reserves the right to examine any files on the school computers. **Students should not trade or try to thwart passwords or represent themselves as anyone else in any form of electronic communication.** Students may not participate in chat sessions of any kind. Students are provided with Suffield Public Schools accounts.

NO PERSONAL ACCOUNTS (including but not limited to AOL, Hot Mail, MSN, Yahoo, Gmail, etc.) are to be accessed on school computers. Students and parents should be aware that e-mail communications, using District computers, are not private and may be monitored by staff. Federal law requires the District to place filtering devices on school computers to block entry to visual depictions that are obscene, pornographic, harmful or inappropriate for students as defined in the Children's Internet Protection Act and as determined by the Superintendent or his/her designee. The failure of any student to follow the terms of the authorization form, or our RUP, will result in the loss of privileges, disciplinary action, and/or appropriate legal action.

We expect students to respect copyright laws and academic honesty. The RUP will further clarify these guidelines. **It should be noted that technology is continually changing and the policy in this handbook reflects the Board of Education Policy at the time of printing. Please refer to the District website for the most current information.**

TESTING

All students in grades 3 through 5 inclusive shall annually take a mastery examination in reading, language arts and mathematics (Smarter Balanced Assessment). Students in grades five, eight and ten, shall take a state- wide mastery examination in Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Students with special needs or a 504-accommodation plan may take an alternative or modified test if it is decided upon in their Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting or Section 504 accommodation team meeting and noted on their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 accommodation plans.

We often receive inquiries about whether students and parents can —opt out of mandatory State testing such as the Smarter Balanced, NGSS, or Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT). As these are mandatory tests, there is no —opt out provision under State law. Each student must be tested in accordance with State mandates. Each student appearing at school on the test day will be required to report to the testing room to which they have been assigned and will be presented with the test to be completed. In the event that a student is absent on test day, make-up sessions are available on separate designated make-up dates. Students with special needs may be accommodated through their Planning and Placement Team (PPT) or Section 504 Accommodation Team, and in rare cases, alternative assessments are available for the students with the most significant disabilities. The information

gathered from the tests is used for a variety of purposes, most significantly, assessing and adjusting instruction needed for students to be successful in school.

TEXTBOOK/DEVICE CARE AND OBLIGATIONS

Students are responsible for the care of books, supplies and technological devices entrusted to their use. Textbooks, technological devices and other materials will be assessed for damages upon their return at the conclusion of the school year. In accordance with state law, the school reserves the right to withhold report cards, determine a loss of privileges, or refrain from reissuing school materials or devices until the student pays for or returns the textbooks, library book, device or other educational materials.

TITLE I COMPARABILITY OF SERVICES

All District schools, regardless of whether they receive Federal Title I funds, provide services that, taken as a whole, are substantially comparable. Staff, curriculum materials and instructional supplies are provided in a manner to ensure equivalency among District schools.

TITLE I PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Parents of a child in a Title 1 funded program will receive a copy of the district's parental and family engagement involvement policy, including provisions of an annual meeting and involvement of parents in the planning, review and implementation of Title 1 programs and opportunities for parents and family members to participate in the education of their children.

TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT

It is the policy of the Suffield Board of Education that any form of sex discrimination or sexual harassment is prohibited, whether by students, District employees, board members, parents, vendors, contracted individuals, volunteers, or the public. The aforementioned parties are expected to adhere to a standard of conduct that is respectful of the rights of students. Those who engage in conduct prohibited by this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action.

The Superintendent or his/her designee shall develop Administrative Regulations implementing this Policy.

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal or physical, including, but not limited to:

1. insulting or degrading sexual remarks or conduct;

2. threats or suggestions that a student's submission to, or rejection of, unwelcome conduct

will in any way influence a decision regarding that student;

3. conduct of a sexual nature which substantially interferes with the student's learning or

creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning environment — such as the display in the educational setting of sexually suggestive objects or pictures.

1. Sexual assault or rape.

2. Distribution of any sexually explicit images and/or videos

It is the express policy of the Board of Education to encourage victims of sex discrimination or sexual harassment to report such claims. Students are encouraged to promptly report complaints of sex discrimination or sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator.

Title IX Coordinator for this District is:	Title IX Officer for McAlister Intermediate School is:
Dr. Diana Kelley, Director of Special Services	Kris Pryce, Principal McAlister Intermediate School
350 Mountain Road Suffield, CT 06078 (860) 668-3803	260 Mountain Road Suffield, CT 06078 (860) 668-3830

TRANSFERS AND WITHDRAWALS

Parents or guardians withdrawing their child from school must notify the school office one week in advance of their last day. At that time, they will be given forms to complete, which include a formal written statement of withdrawal and a release of records form.

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COMPLAINTS/PROCEDURES

All complaints concerning school transportation safety are to be made to the District Business Manager who may be reached at Central Office. A written record of all safety complaints/procedures will be maintained and an investigation of the allegations will take place.

VIDEO RECORDING ON SCHOOL BUS

The District has installed video recording equipment on school buses and in common areas of the school building to monitor safety. Tapes will be viewed by the school administration when necessary. Students violating bus or school conduct rules will be notified and disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the school's discipline policy. Videotapes shall be treated as protected student records under the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)*.

VISITORS

Parents/guardians and other visitors are welcome to McAlister School. All doors that open to the outside of any school remain locked in order to preserve the safety and security of students and staff. Upon arrival, visitors are expected to check in at the main lobby/foyer. If they choose to enter the building beyond that point, they must enter their Driver's license into our security machine to receive a visitor badge. The visitor badge expires daily and must be reissued each time you visit the school. We appreciate the support of all visitors as we focus our efforts on ensuring the safety of everyone during the school day.

Unauthorized persons shall not be permitted in school buildings or on school grounds. School administration is authorized to take appropriate action to prevent such persons from entering the building or from loitering on the grounds. Such persons will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

All visitors who intend to observe a child's instructional day must schedule this through the teacher with school administration's approval. A notification must be given five days in advance and cannot exceed one hour of time every other month. Visitors will be expected to sign a confidentiality agreement and must be accompanied by a staff member for the duration of the observation.

All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct. Disruptive behavior will not be permitted. Visits cannot interfere with the educational program of the school nor interrupt teaching activities.

WELLNESS

In advancing student achievement, the Board of Education recognizes the strong connection between academic performance, health and wellness. The Board embraces a district-wide culture aimed at enhancing student outcomes and decreasing childhood obesity by promoting health and wellness in schools for students and staff. Student wellness, including good nutrition and physical activity, is promoted through the Board's Wellness Policy, the District's educational program, school activities, and meal programs. Federal and state standards will be met pertaining to all foods and beverages available for sale to students. A sequential program of physical education is provided, in addition to time in the elementary school day for supervised recess.