

# Davis Hill Elementary School

## Student Handbook

2017-2018

**PRIDE**

**RESPECT**

**RESPONSIBILITY**

**EXCELLENCE**



Jay C. Norton, Principal  
Robert Berthiaume, Assistant Principal  
80 Jamieson Road  
Holden, MA 01520  
Phone: ( 508) 829-1754  
Fax: ( 508) 829-2057

Wachusett Regional School District

# **Table of Contents**

## **Section**

### **A. Introduction**

#### **1. Wachusett Regional School District Committee**

#### **2. Mission Statement/ Core Values**

#### **3. Annual School Events**

### **4. Organizations**

4.1.1 School Improvement and Modernization Council (SIMCO)

4.1.2 Parent Teacher Association (P.T.A.)

### **5. Health Services**

5.1 Confidentiality (WRSDC P6650)

5.2 School Immunization Law

5.2.1 Immunizations

5.3 Physical Examinations

5.4 Mandated Screening Programs

5.5 Contagious Conditions

5.6 Temporary or Permanent Exclusion from School/Physical Education

5.7 Administration of Medication

5.8 Accident Insurance

### **6. No-School Announcements**

### **7. Attendance**

7.1 Late Arrival

7.2 Early Dismissal

7.3 Dismissal Time Parent Pick-up

7.4 Before School Drop-Off

7.5 Recreation Department's Before/After School Program Drop-off and Pick-up

7.6 Vacations during School Time

7.7 Makeup Work

### **8. General Information**

8.1 Pre-School Screening

8.2 Kindergarten Entrance

8.2.1. Registration

8.2.2. School Entrance

8.3 Media Center

8.4 Art

8.5 Music

8.6 Physical Education

8.7. Chapter 766

8.8 Student Assistance Team (SAT)

8.9 Special Education Staff

8.10 Speech and Language Therapy

8.11 Home Tutoring

- 8.12 Report Cards/Progress Reports
- 8.13 Parent/Teacher Communication
- 8.14 Audio. Video and/or Stenographic Recording of Meetings (WRSDC P3813)
- 8.15 Radios, Cell Phones, Messaging Devices, other electronic Devices, etc.
- 8.16 Homework
- 8.17 Disciplinary Action
- 8.18 Student Transfers
- 8.19 Assignment of Students to Classes

## **9. Miscellaneous Information**

- 9.1 Financial Assistance
- 9.2 Hot Lunch Program
- 9.3 Free/Reduced Hot Lunch
- 9.4 Birthday/ Holiday Snacks
- 9.5 Birthday Invitations
- 9.6 School Evacuation/Critical Incident Drills
- 9.7 School Bus Evacuation Drills
- 9.8 Personal Attire
- 9.9 Bicycle/Scooter Policy
- 9.10 Gift Giving
- 9.11 Lost Articles
- 9.12 Care of School Books
- 9.13 School Telephone
- 9.14 Student Photographs
- 9.15 School to Home Communication
- 9.16 Field Trips
- 9.17 Non-Smoking Policy

## **10. Code of Conduct**

- 10.1 Introduction of Davis Hill Code of Conduct/ Philosophy of Discipline
- 10.2 General Rules and Consequences
  - 10.2.1 Discipline at School Related Functions
  - 10.2.2 School Bus Safety and Security Procedures
  - 10.2.3 Wachusett Regional School District Bus Discipline Policy and Procedure
  - 10.2.4 Special Education Discipline
  - 10.2.5 In-School Suspension
  - 10.2.6 Out of School Suspension/Expulsion

## **11. Davis Hill School Safety and Security Plan**

- 11.1 Access to School Building
- 11.2 Safety in Classrooms
- 11.3 Safety in Hallways
- 11.4 Safety on School Grounds
- 11.5 Responsibilities of the Staff and the Plan Implementation

## Principal's Message:

Dear Davis Hill Community,

Welcome to Davis Hill School. It is a special place that has a strong bond to the community and a spirit where students, families and staff work together in order to create an atmosphere that is caring and nurturing. We embrace the belief that it takes a community effort in order to fulfill Davis Hill's mission and promote our values of Pride, Respect, Responsibility and Excellence. Our goal is to provide a safe and supportive environment where students are able to engage in a variety of purposeful and dynamic learning activities that advance the acquisition of knowledge, and further communication, social and problem solving skills.

Please keep this handbook as a reference guide to our school's policies and programs. The handbook is reviewed annually and updated as needed. Open communication is critical to the success of our school community. If you have any questions and/ or concerns related to the information contained in our handbook, please feel free to contact me at any time. I can be reached via email at [jay\\_norton@wrsd.net](mailto:jay_norton@wrsd.net) or by phone at 508.829.1754 Ext: 104. Thank you!

Sincerely,  
Jay C. Norton, Principal



Wachusett Regional School District Committee policies supersede the material contained in this handbook. A copy of the district policies are available in the Davis Hill Main Office, the WRSD central office and online at <http://www.wrsd.net/schoolcom.htm>. WRSD policies are formatted the same as this paragraph when referenced in part or in whole.

**The student code of conduct, grievance procedures, sexual harassment policies, special education discipline policies, restraint policies and any other section of the student handbook will be translated into the primary language of a parent/guardian upon request.**

**The Wachusett Regional School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, English Language Learner (ELL) status, housing status, or other protected status in the operation of the educational programs, activities, or employment policies, and no person will be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to its public schools, or in obtaining advantage and privileges in regards to courses of study and extracurricular programs of such public schools on account of race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, English Language Learner (ELL) status, housing status or other protected category.**

**The School District, in complying with the laws of the Federal Government and Massachusetts, notifies you of this action and informs you that the coordinator for compliance at the building level is the school principal.**

**At the District level, the ADA (disability pertaining to non-students), Title VI and Title IX (race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, and sexual orientation Coordinator is Jeff Carlson, Director of Human Resources, WRSD, 1745 Main St., Jefferson, MA 01522, 508-829-1670 ext. 224**

**At the District level, the ADA and Section 504 (disability pertaining to students) Coordinator is Catherine Knowles, Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Services, WRSD, 1745 Main St., Jefferson, MA 01522, 608-829-1670 ext. 237**

**Notice of Procedural Safeguards (formerly titled “Parent’s Rights Brochure”) can be accessed at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/prb/>.**

**If you need this booklet translated, please contact the main office of your child's school.**

**Portuguese/Português**

Se você necessitar este livreto traduzido, contate por favor o escritório principal da escola da sua criança.

**Spanish/ Español**

Si usted necesita este librete traducido, entre en contacto con por favor la oficina principal de la escuela de su niño.

**French/ Français**

Si vous avez besoin de ce livret traduit, entrez en contact avec svp le bureau principal de l'école de votre enfant.

**German/ Deutsch**

Wenn Sie diese übersetzte Broschüre benötigen, treten Sie bitte mit dem Hauptbüro der Schule Ihres Kindes in Verbindung.

**Russian/Русско**

Если вы этот переведенный буклет, то пожалуйста контактируйте главный офис школы вашего ребенка.

**Korean/한국어**

당신이 번역이 책자가 필요하면, 자녀의 학교의 주요 사무실에 문의하시기 바랍니다.

**Chinese/汉语**

如果您需要这本小册子被翻译，请与您的儿童的学校大会办公处联系。

**Japanese/日本語**

翻訳されるこの小冊子を必要とすれば あなたの子供の学校の主要なオフィスに連絡しなさい。

**Hindi/हिन्दी**

Agar Aapka yah puistka ki Anauvaaidt AavaSyakta ho tba kRpyaa Apnao baccao ko ivaValaya ka mau#ya kayaa-laya sampk- kiryaao .

**Polish/Polski**

Jeśli potrzebujesz tej broszury przetłumaczone, skontaktuj się z głównego urzędu Twoje dziecko w szkole.

**Greek**

Αν χρειάζεστε το φυλλάδιο αυτό μεταφράστηκε, παρακαλούμε επικοινωνήστε με την κύρια έδρα του σχολείου του παιδιού.

**Italian/Italia**

Se hai bisogno di questo opuscolo tradotto, si prega di contattare l'ufficio principale del vostro bambino scuola.

**Arabic**

المكتب الرئيسية من طفلك مدرسة. اتصل ب إن أنت تحتاج هذا كراس يترجم، رجاء

**Albanian**

Ne qofte se ju do te deshironit dokumentat te perkthyer ne gjuhen shqip. Ju mund ti kerkoni ne zyren qendrore te shkolle eshte femija juaj.

## **School Hours**



### **OFFICE HOURS:**

School office hours are 8:15 AM to 4:30 PM.

### **SCHOOL DAY HOURS:**

#### Grades 1-5:

8:50- 9:00 arrival. Students who arrive after 9:00 will be marked tardy and must receive a late pass from the office.

#### Kindergarten:

*Full-day kindergarten* students follow the same schedule as noted for Grades 1-5 above.

Drop off begins at 8:50am and students follow the regular school hours of 9:00am- 3:30pm.

*The half day kindergarten program* is scheduled for five half-day sessions per week. The half-day schedule for classes is as follows:

AM: 8:50- 9:00 arrival. Students who are late should report to the office for a late pass and will be escorted to their classrooms. Parents should accompany any tardy students into the office area until they have received their late pass.

9:00- 11:45 regular classes

11:45 dismissal

**NOTE:** Supervision of students by staff does not begin until 8:50. Therefore students must not be left off at school unattended by parent/ guardian prior to that time unless they are attending the Holden Recreational Department Before School Program.

## **1. Wachusett Regional School District Committee**

The Wachusett Regional School District Committee, elected by the citizens of Holden, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland and Sterling, is directly responsible to the Massachusetts Department of Education for the operation of the District's Schools in accordance with State Laws and Department Regulations, and to the citizens of the District for the quality of the educational program and responsible stewardship of the District's financial resources.

The Wachusett Regional School District Committee is the policy-making body and has the final authority in all matters relating to the schools. The School Committee determines policy and enacts business only when meeting as a committee in a legally called meeting.

The Wachusett Regional School District Committee recognizes that every child is entitled by law to a free public education designed to meet his or her needs and potential. The Committee recognizes its responsibility to provide an educational environment that will:

- Encourage equal opportunity for intellectual and creative growth for all children.
- Encourage opportunities for physical and emotional growth for all children.
- Encourage opportunities for independent and responsible thought and action on the part of all students.

## **2. Mission Statement/ Core Values**

The Mission of Davis Hill School is to inspire, encourage and celebrate learning and personal growth, with every student, every day.

\*(All funds deposited in the Student Activity Account of Davis Hill will be spent to improve the education of our students.)

Core Values:

Pride, Respect, Responsibility and Excellence.

## **3. Annual School Events**

Davis Hill School has several traditional activities that happen each year and are posted on the website. The Davis Hill PTA sponsors many of these activities. Please monitor the website and communication from the office for updates.

September-November: Open House, Curriculum Nights, Fall Festival, Spaghetti Supper, Fall/ Spring Book Fair, Dragon Dash (5K).

Winter: Project After School, Holiday Fair, Winter Sports Swap

Spring: Science and Art Night, Spring Book Fair

June: Family Picnic, Field Day, Fore! The Kids Golf Tournament

Some grade levels take field trips linked to their studies. Examples in recent years include: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Trip to the Ecology School in Saco, ME; Roger Williams Zoo; Boston Historical Sites; Holden Walking Field Trip. In addition, the PTA sponsors monthly food drives to support the Wachusett Food Pantry and the PTA Davis Hill School Store is open monthly on Fridays during lunch.



## 4. Organizations

### 4.1.1. School Improvement and Modernization Council (SIMCO)

The SIMCO is an organization providing an opportunity for teachers, parents, students, and members of the community to become informed and actively participate in the educational process at Davis Hill School. Included in this group are parent, teacher and community representatives. The council meets monthly to advise and assist the principal in:

- setting goals for the school;
- identifying students' educational needs;
- reviewing the school building's budget;
- assisting in the creation of the school improvement plan.

All meetings are open to the public and parental attendance is encouraged. Notices regarding times and locations of meetings are typically sent home via Principal 'Weekly Updates' through e-mail and posted on the Davis Hill website.

### 4.1.2. Parent-Teacher Association (P.T.A.)

The P.T.A. is a service organization whose main function is providing educational materials and social and cultural events, which will be of mutual benefit for parents, teachers and children. It promotes a closer working relationship between home and school by encouraging volunteers to participate at school and P.T.A. events.

One of its functions has been to raise funds for enrichment programs, field trips, equipment and family programs and events. Officers are elected annually and consist of president (or co-presidents), vice president (or co-vice presidents), secretary and treasurer. Members volunteer to coordinate or assist at events during meetings or through sign-up sheets.

Anyone who is interested in the Davis Hill School is cordially invited to join the P.T.A. meetings, which are held monthly. Notices regarding times and locations of meetings are typically sent home via Principal 'Weekly Updates' through e-mail and posted on the Davis Hill website

<http://davishillpta.com/>.

## 5. Health Services

Students who become ill or injured will be directed to the school nurse for assessment, evaluation, treatment and/or referral. If the nurse is not available, students are to report to the office. Parents will be notified when a child must be sent home. If the parent cannot be contacted, the person indicated on the Emergency Card will be called. **It is imperative that the Emergency Card be completed annually and updated as necessary.**

### 5.1 Confidentiality (WRSDC P6650)

The Wachusett Regional School District shall encourage communication between and among school personnel, students, and parents. The Committee recognizes that circumstances may arise when a student with a personal or medical problem may seek help from a member of the faculty or administration. In such instances, the Committee will respect the confidentiality of communications between student and a teacher, counselor, nurse, or administrator. However, it is not the intention of this statement of policy to encourage interference with parental or legal authority.

## **5.2 School Immunization Law**

In accordance with Chapter 76, Section 15 of the General Laws of Massachusetts, parents/guardians of students must provide documentation of immunizations or have on file a religious or medical exemption.

### **5.2.1 Immunizations**

All students must be compliant with immunizations required by Massachusetts regulations (102 CMR 7.09 and 105 CMR 220.00) and established by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. The only exemptions are for documented religious or medical reasons.

## **5.3 Physical Examinations**

Massachusetts requires that a physical examination by a healthcare provider be on file with the nurse for Kindergarten entry and every four years thereafter (grades 4 and 8). Students entering the District without records or recent physicals must have a physical examination within the first year. A physical exam is also required prior to tryouts for competitive athletics or cheerleading.

## **5.4 Mandated Screening Programs**

Students in grades K through 5 are tested for various parameters annually according to the chart below. The school nurse does postural screening for scoliosis. Parents will be notified if screening procedures identify possible problems.

Grade	Weight	Height	Vision	Hearing	Scoliosis
Kindergarten	X	X	X	X	
1	X	X	X	X	
2			X	X	
3			X	X	
4	X	X	X	X	
5			X	X	X

## **5.5 Contagious Conditions**

Parents are requested to report any incidence of contagious disease or condition to the school nurse. This includes incidence of head lice and scabies. When these conditions are identified, the student will be sent home.

Children having a fever should remain at home until their temperature is within normal range for 24 hours. It is suggested that if your child is placed on antibiotics, they remain at home for the first 24 hours and/or follow physician's orders.

District policies regarding other health conditions can be found on the District website ([www.wrsd.net](http://www.wrsd.net)).

## **5.6 Temporary or Permanent Exclusion from School Activities/ Physical Education**

Students are expected to participate in all activities of the school program including recess and physical education. If, for health reasons, a child must be excluded for a temporary time from any

activity, we request written verification from a doctor. It is expected that children will go out for recess; subsequently, please ensure that your children are dressed appropriately for the conditions.

## **5.7 Administration of Medication**

The policy for the administration of medication in school is designed to protect the health of the child and the rights of the staff. The following policy and procedure will be followed for administering any medication during school hours. This includes both prescription and over-the-counter drugs. If the medication to be administered falls under the classification of "psychotropic drugs", Guidelines of Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 71 Section 54B, will be followed.

For ALL medications (prescription and non-prescription), medication shall be administered by the school nurse provided below:

- The school nurse must have on file the "**Physician Medication Order/Parent Consent Form**" properly completed by the physician. This form states the type of medication and the frequency with which to give it. This form must also be signed by the parent/guardian. Parental permission alone is not acceptable.
- The "Physician Medication Order/Parent Consent Form" must be updated by the physician and parent whenever the medication is changed.
- All medication should be properly safeguarded in the nurse's office.
- The nurse shall have the right, with just and reasonable cause, to refuse the administration of medication.
- No child is to transport medication to or from school. All medication must be brought to and from school via the parent or other responsible adult. However, in the case of self-medicating students, students may transport and self-administer upon completion of a written agreement between the parent and the nurse.
- All medication must be submitted in the original pharmacy container with the label intact.
- Cough drops and lozenges are prohibited in Elementary and Middle Schools by WRSD Policy.

### **Medical Emergencies**

- In the event of a life-threatening or serious injury or illness, an attempt will be made to contact the parent or guardian. Emergency Medical Services will be contacted for their assistance, and the student will be transported to the appropriate medical facility for treatment.

## **5.8 Accident Insurance**

The Wachusett Regional School District sponsors a student-participation insurance plan. Brochures describing the plans available are available to all students during the first week of school.

(WRSDC P6616) The Wachusett Regional School District shall require each student participating in intramural programs to provide evidence of an active accident or health insurance policy covering the student.

## 6. No-School Announcements

A School Messenger call will be made to all parents to notify them of a school cancellation. In addition to the School Messenger call, no-school announcements will be aired on the following radio/television stations:

WTAG 580 AM	WFTW 1440 AM	Channel 4
WNEB 1230 AM	WSRS 96.1 FM	Channel 5
WEIM 1280 AM	WAAF 107.3 FM	Channel 7
WORC 1310 AM		

During the winter months, bad weather occasionally makes it necessary to delay the opening of school. Delayed openings will be announced on the radio, television stations, and through School Messenger.

If the announcement is for a **delayed opening**:

- students or their parents should continue listening to these radio stations for further announcements, in case we change to **no school** all day.
- Delays could be up to two hours.
- Delayed openings do not affect dismissal times.
- When a two-hour delayed opening is called, there will be no A.M. kindergarten. PM kindergarten will be in session.

In an emergency such as a loss of water, boiler breakdown, or extreme weather conditions school may be dismissed earlier than the regular closing time. Additionally, the Holden Recreation After-School Program is sometimes cancelled due to weather conditions. **Parents should be certain that all Unanticipated Early Dismissal/Cancellation of After School Program Forms are kept up to date, and should inform their children as to what they should do in case of early dismissal.** These forms are distributed for completion at the beginning of the school year; if changes need to be made during the school year, parents should contact the school secretary.

Afternoon kindergarten classes are sometimes cancelled due to storms. Should this be necessary you will be contacted through School Messenger. Information will also be announced on the radio and TV. Occasionally, the high school and some middle schools are dismissed early to assure that the buses arrive on time for dismissal at Davis Hill to take place at the usual time.

Because of requests from the radio stations, we strongly emphasize that no one call the stations or town officials for school cancellations. There will be announcements aired at the times mentioned above if school is cancelled, delayed in opening, or dismissed early.

## 7. Attendance

Education requires strong attendance in order to reap its fullest reward. **It is imperative that your child is in attendance when school is in session.** Any time/ day missed interrupts the educational sequence, which affects school attitudes and overall progress. It is understood that children who are ill or are recovering from an illness should be kept at home.

**If your child is going to be out of school for the day, it is important that you call school first thing in the morning. This is informational as well as a safety check. A message can be left at (508) 829-1754.**

### **7.1 Late Arrival Policy**

If a pupil arrives at school after 9:00 A.M., they must be accompanied by a parent/guardian to the Main Office where a tardy slip (which is to be presented to the teacher by the pupil) is issued. It is important to have your child arrive for school on time. When a child is late it causes a disruption in their classroom routine and he/she may miss specific instructional opportunities.

### **7.2 Early Dismissal Policy**

Early dismissal (before 3:30 P.M.) of pupils can be arranged through the office. Please see that your child brings a note stating reason for dismissal and the time he/she is to be dismissed. The child should then be picked up at the office at the early dismissal time.

### **7.3 Dismissal Time Parent Pick-Up**

If a parent wishes to pick up a child at the regular dismissal time, please send a note with the child in the morning. In order to facilitate end of the day dismissal for the entire school, students who are parent pick-ups will be dismissed from the cafeteria door and wait outside of the East wing. Parents are to use the main entrance and wait along the East wing of the building for pick-up. If you arrive early and are waiting for your child to be dismissed please do not leave your car idling as the exhaust from the cars is drawn into the building.

### **7.4 Before School Drop off**

- Students should not be dropped off prior to 8:50 A.M.
- Vehicles should enter school property via the main entrance of the school and proceed to the East wing side of the building.
- Faculty members on duty will arrive on the sidewalk at 8:50 A.M. and students may begin to disembark from any cars that are parked along the sidewalk.
- Staff members will direct traffic out of the Main Entrance.

### **7.5 Holden Recreation Department's Before/After School Program Drop off and Pickup**

- Drop off: Park in front drive; turn off vehicle. Parents must accompany children to the side cafeteria door.
- Pick up: Park in front drive; turn off vehicle. Using the main entrance parents should proceed through the building to the cafeteria and pick up children. Exit either via the cafeteria door that leads out to the front of the building or back through the main entrance.

### **7.6 Vacations during School Time**

Parents and students are reminded that Massachusetts Law requires compulsory attendance for students. We strongly discourage family vacations when school is in session. In addition to compromising the attendance law, family vacations interrupt the educational process of each course in ways that make-up work cannot reverse. Teachers are not required to give out homework/classwork assignments prior to a family vacation.

### **7.7 Make Up Work**

Students who have been absent must assume the responsibility for making up work. If a student is absent for a prolonged period of time, he/ she will be given an adequate amount of time to make up the work missed. A parent may request class assignments for a child who is ill if absence exceeds more than two days. A note/ call to the teacher must be received in the morning in order for a teacher to get work ready to be sent home or picked up at the school office at the end of the day.

## **8. General Information**

### **8.1. Preschool Screening**

Parents may request pre-school screening for their child (age 3 and above) if they believe there may be a possible learning problem. This evaluation could detect problems that may hinder the child's ability to learn. Parents should call the Special Education Office at the Superintendent's Office. All children who will be entering the Kindergarten Program are screened in the spring for vision, hearing, gross and fine motor skills, language delays and speech.

### **8.2. Kindergarten Entrance**

#### **8.2.1. Registration**

- Registration begins in early February. Kindergarten Orientation occurs prior to the end of the school year.

#### **8.2.2. School Entrance**

- Any child entering Kindergarten shall have attained the age of five (5) years on or before August 31st.
- Any child entering first grade shall have attained the age of six (6) years on or before August 31st.
- The parent seeking entrance of a child to first grade who does not meet the age requirements
- but who has completed an accredited Kindergarten program in a public or private school, and
- whose records indicate that the child is ready for first grade, may be allowed to enter first grade
- at the discretion of the principal.
- To be eligible for entrance, the following must be brought or sent to the school with the completed registration papers.
- Birth Certificate (if an original it is copied and later returned to the parents),
- Record of all immunizations.
- Parents should inform the school of any disabilities, health concerns and of any information that they feel might affect their child's ability to function in school.

### **8.3. Media Center- Library**

The library has reading and reference materials and is used for story hours and library instruction. Children are allowed to take out books for a period of up to two weeks. Students are responsible for any materials that are checked out of the library. There is a charge for lost or damaged books.

### **8.4. Art**

There is a dual philosophy to the art program: (1) that art stands alone as an important basic educational area in its own right, and (2) it is an important integrating force with respect to other subject areas such as, reading, math, science and social studies. Emphasis is placed on one or both objectives at a time. Experience in materials, techniques and concepts are presented.

## **8.5. Music**

As with art, music has a dual philosophy to its approach: (1) that a comprehensive and sequential music education stands alone in its own right and (2) that music is one of the ways children are known to learn; it helps to develop multicultural understanding and to develop the skills needed for reading, writing and listening. Experience in listening to a wide variety of music is provided along with musical programs as scheduling allows and recorder lessons are taught in grade three.

## **8.6. Physical Education**

Classes are scheduled outdoors in good weather and in the gym during the colder months and inclement weather. The program provides a range of activities allowing for all the children to participate, both as individuals and as part of a team.

**Sneakers are required for physical education class.** As for other dress, the children wear their regular school clothes. It is recommended that clothing be able to provide full freedom of motion without exposing skin. Wear a belt if necessary. Low hanging pants, tank tops and shirts that expose skin when arms are raised overhead should be avoided. A sweatshirt or jacket is recommended for outdoor physical education. Students are allowed to bring a water bottle to class.

## **8.7. Chapter 766**

This is a Massachusetts Law that became effective in September 1974. It is designed to assist individuals with identified disabilities between the ages of three and twenty-one who require specialized instruction.

For further information, please contact the Davis Hill Team Chairperson/ Assistant Principal.

## **8.8. Student Intervention Team (SIT)**

The purpose of the Student Intervention Team (SIT) is to assist students when challenges arise with either academic learning or social/ emotional needs. The Team makes recommendations for classroom accommodations or additional assessment. The Student Intervention Team is comprised of an administrator, the school psychologist and the referring teacher. Other staff may sometimes be asked to participate as well. If accommodations are recommended, it reconvenes at a later date to assess the effectiveness of those recommendations. Referral to SIT does not mean an automatic referral for special education evaluation. Parents will be notified about the recommendation to SIT, but at this level of intervention their involvement is not required.

## **8.9. Special Education Staff**

This staff provides support services for children with identified disabilities who require support services in order to make effective educational progress. Special Education Staff members coordinate the evaluation of students who are experiencing learning problems. Davis Hill special education teachers also conduct small group classes. They often prescribe specific learning approaches to be used by classroom teachers and co-plan and co-teach classes with the regular classroom teachers.

### **8.10. Speech and Language Therapy**

Students with speech, voice and language difficulties may receive services as indicated by an Individual Educational Plan (IEP). A speech and language therapist is available to work primarily with children who have been evaluated under Chapter 766 (see Chapter 766 above).

### **8.11. Home Tutoring**

Home Tutoring is available for extended student absence due to illness and/or serious injury, or for children with a Chronic Illness Plan. Parents needing this service should contact the School Administration.

### **8.12. Report Cards/Progress Reports**

Report cards are issued for grades 3- 5 four times a year - November, January, April and June. Report cards are issued for grades K - 2 three times a year-January, April and June. In lieu of a report card for the first term, parent/teacher conferences for students in K-2 will be held in November. Final report cards (Grades K - 5) will not be issued until the last day of school. Parents may view Report Cards through the PowerSchool Parent Portal. Progress reports are provided to parents of students receiving special education services four times a year, November, January, April, and June.

### **8.13. Parent/Teacher Communication**

Parents and teachers may communicate effectively in a number of ways (e.g., phone, letter, e-mail, etc.). However, as a result of a need/concern/issue, a parent or teacher may request a conference to discuss the issue. Parents and teachers should arrange for such a meeting at a mutually convenient time contingent to the school day. Voicemail may be left for individual teachers by calling the main number (508-829-1754).

### **8.14. Audio, Video and/or Stenographic Recording of Meetings (WRSDC P3813)**

The Wachusett Regional School Committee prohibits the audio, video and/or stenographic recording of parent/teacher conferences and/or Team meetings conducted in Wachusett Regional School District facilities. Exceptions to this policy will be made only where a parent/guardian or student is able to demonstrate that either the audio, video and/or stenographic recording of the meeting or conference is necessary to ensure the parent's/guardian's or student's full understanding of the proceedings or to otherwise accommodate a parent's/guardian's or student's documented disability. Requests by a parent/guardian or student for authorization to audio, video and/or stenographic record a meeting or conference shall be submitted in writing to the Superintendent of the Wachusett Regional School District no less than three (3) business days prior to said meeting/conference. The Superintendent's decision on any such request shall be final.

### **8.15. Radios, Cell Phones, Messaging Devices, other Electronic Devices, etc.**

Students **may not** bring cell phones, IPODs, or other similar items to school because they disrupt the educational process. Exceptions to the rule may be made only when items in question are used for classroom activities and when administrative approval is obtained. Portable games or other



electronic devices such as those listed above are NOT permitted on field trips. Laser pointers are not allowed at school and will be confiscated. Inappropriate use of laser pointers will be considered a violation of the weapons policy **P6433**.

### **8.16. Homework**

Children are encouraged to continue their school learning at home and in the community. Teachers may decide to assign homework for this extended learning, for needed practice or for enrichment. If you wish to provide valuable assistance to the education of your child, you can do so by encouraging your child to take pride in passing in neat and carefully completed assignments.

The following is an approximate amount of time your child should be spending on homework daily. It is expected that your child's teacher will inform you of their homework policy at the beginning of the school year. Some children will need more time to complete certain assignments; and from time-to-time assignments will be more extensive. If you have any questions, contact your child's teacher.

Kindergarten	Teacher discretion
Grade 1	Teacher discretion
Grade 2	20-30 minutes
Grades 3 and 4	30-45 minutes
Grade 5	45-60 minutes

If the homework is incomplete after a serious attempt has been made over this period of time, the parent should **write a note** to the teacher stating the amount of time spent and that the homework was seriously attempted although incomplete. If any emergency arises, and your child is unable to complete his/her homework, please write a note to the teacher. However, this does not excuse the student from completing the assignment the following evening. Other out of school activities do not constitute a reason for a student being excused from completion of homework.

### **8.17. Disciplinary Action**

Disciplinary action for homework not completed may include:

- Verbal warning
- Loss of recess privileges
- Notification to parents/ Conference scheduled

### **8.18. Student Transfers**

Please inform us if you are moving and let us know the last day (date) that your child will attend Davis Hill School. We will also need your new address and the name of the next school your child will attend.

The parents must sign certain release forms so that school records may be forwarded to your new school. Records will not be given to parents for transit, but will be sent to the school upon request.

## **8.19. Assignment of Students to Classes**

Classroom placement is an important, complex and time-consuming process that our staff takes very seriously. Per School Committee Policy, our ultimate goal is to "establish classes that will enhance the dynamics of the classroom by bringing students together who will work as a learning team, and challenge and complement one another".

A volunteer parent questionnaire is sent home in April in order to provide parents an opportunity to offer input related to their child's learning style and provide any pertinent information that may support Davis Hill staff in the placement process. Per School Committee Policy, requests for specific teachers will not be considered in the placement process. The principal approves all final placement decisions provided the recommendation of the sending grade level teaching team, special education staff and any available parent input.

## **9. Miscellaneous Information**

### **9.1. Financial Assistance**

Occasionally, money is collected from students to cover expenses related to field trips, special programs, etc. Financial constraints should never prevent participation of students in educational programs of the school. Any family needing assistance in this regard should contact the principal. All such contact will remain confidential.

### **9.2. Hot Lunch Program**

Hot lunches, including milk, are available during the lunch period throughout the year. For those wishing to bring a cold lunch, milk is available. Alternate sandwiches and salads are also available. Annual lunch and milk fees shall be provided at the start of the school year. Hot lunches begin the first day of school.

We have a computerized lunch system. Every student is given a unique pass code that they enter to access their account to pay for their lunch. Parents are encouraged to pre-pay for their child's lunch. This money is placed in an account that a child may use to purchase lunch or milk, but not snacks. Parents can pay by the week, month or year. This system is an effective means of purchasing lunch and students no longer have to worry about losing their lunch money. Information is available at <https://sites.google.com/a/wrsd.net/food-services/>

### **9.3. Free/Reduced Hot Lunch**

Free hot lunch or partial payment is considered by request. Forms for this will be sent home to parents the first week of school. The forms must be filled out completely in order to be processed. As financial situations do change, these forms are always available online at <http://www.wrsd.net/parentinformation/FreeReducedLunch.pdf>

### **9.4. Birthday/ Holiday Snacks**

Due to the many food allergies, medical conditions, and other food related issues, birthday/ Holiday snacks for sharing are not permitted. If you feel that you still want to send something in, birthday pencils, colored pencils, erasers, or other school supplies are alternatives to snacks. Although we do not celebrate with a snack, your child's birthday will be recognized by their teacher.

### 9.5. Birthday Invitations

We do not distribute birthday invitations for parents.

### 9.6. School Evacuation/Critical Incident Drills

Drills are held regularly to ensure the safety of all persons in the event of fire, disaster or critical incident. Students are instructed in understanding signals, exits used, procedures for leaving the building, areas in which to assemble, and procedures for returning to the building.

### 9.7. School Bus Evacuation Drills

School Bus Evacuation Drills are held twice annually in conjunction with the school bus contractor.

### 9.8. Personal Attire

We take pride in the appearance of our students and students are expected to dress and groom themselves neatly in attire suitable for each school day.

- Hoods, bandannas covering the full head, and hats/caps, except those worn in relation to required religious practice or with prior administrative approval, are not acceptable attire within the school building.
- Clothing or footwear that presents a safety hazard, such as in time of evacuation and on the playground, will be strictly prohibited. Shoes or sandals should have either a strap around the heel or a large strap across the instep; the child must be able to wear them safely. **Flip-flops and high heels are not acceptable.**
- Any apparel that makes reference to drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sex, profanity or violence or apparel with offensive words or pictures is not considered appropriate school attire.
- Any item that may cause injury or do bodily harm.
- Items that are distracting, revealing, or educationally disruptive (including sunglasses, mesh, see-through clothing, bare midriffs, running shorts, short-shorts tank tops, spaghetti straps [a two-inch strap width is a good rule of thumb], "low rider" slacks, and muscle shirts). **A good rule of thumb for shorts or skirts is that when a student extends their arms at their sides, the shorts should approximate the tips of the fingers.**

The administration reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of clothing. Students who dress in a manner which is not appropriate to the school setting, may have parents called and appropriate clothing brought to school before the student can rejoin the academic setting.

### 9.9. Bicycle/Scooter Policy

Children in Grades 4 and 5 are allowed to ride their bicycles or scooters to and from school, but are not allowed to ride or play with them on school grounds during school hours. **A note from home giving permission to ride to and from school is required.** The students should walk the bicycle or scooter to and from the proper area (i.e., bicycle rack). The privilege of riding bicycles to school may be rescinded if a child does not follow safety procedures or is being harmful to other students. State law requires all children below the age of sixteen wear a helmet while riding. Students will not be allowed to ride a bicycle or scooter home if they are not wearing a helmet. Bike/scooter riders will be dismissed after traffic has cleared. Bikes and scooters must be walked off school property. For safety reasons, children should refrain from riding bikes or scooters during inclement weather.

### **9.10. Gift Giving**

Students/ families may donate gifts that enhance the classroom or school such as markers, glue sticks, books, etc. in lieu of personal gifts to mark any occasion. Books may also be donated to the school library.

### **9.11. Lost Articles**

The school will not assume responsibility for any items (brought to school by students), which are lost or stolen. A Lost and Found Table is maintained in the cafeteria. On a monthly basis, unclaimed clothing will be donated to Good Will.

Pupils are encouraged to turn in any article found to the Lost and Found Table. Items coming to school, including lunch boxes, book bags, coats, hats, boots, and mittens should be clearly labeled with the student's first and last name.

### **9.12. Care of School Books**

Schoolbooks, textbooks, library books, etc. are loaned to students. The student is responsible for the care of these books and must pay for any which are lost or damaged.

Books that are lost or damaged must be paid for in total, including shipping costs.

### **9.13. School Phone**

Students will be permitted to use the telephone with permission of the teacher, the school secretary, and/or the administration.

Students will not be called to the telephone except in a case of an emergency. Similarly, messages to students will be delivered in an emergency.

### **9.14. Student Photographs**

As a service to parents, school photographs are taken in the fall and spring at all grade levels. Information regarding fees and packages available is typically sent home prior to photographs being taken.

### **9.15. School to Home Communication**

School-related, PTA and group-sponsored notices are periodically sent home with the students. School-related information is generally provided via School Messenger emails that are provided on a weekly basis. The Davis Hill website <http://www.wrsd.net/davishill/> is also maintained and provides current information. If you do not have access to a computer, and require a paper copy of notices, please contact the Main Office.

### **9.16. Field Trips**

There are two types of field trips:

- Classroom - These are planned in conjunction with an area of study and may be walking or bus trips.
- General - These field trips are planned to include more than one class and are generally bus trips.

All field trips are chaperoned by classroom teachers, parents and sometimes-other staff. In order to participate in a field trip all adults **MUST** have a valid **CORI** badge.

### **9.17. Non-Smoking Policy**

As required by Massachusetts Education Reform legislation, smoking is not permitted by any person at any time, anywhere on school property (building or grounds).

## **10. Code of Conduct**

The Wachusett Regional School District shall help students learn behavior patterns which will enable them to be responsible, contributing members of society. Students will be expected to conduct themselves in keeping with their level of maturity and act with due regard for their fellow students and supervisory authority. Students shall have a right to reasonable treatment from the school and its employees and, in turn, the school and its employees shall have a right to expect reasonable behavior from students. The principal will be responsible for administering behavior and discipline procedures at the school in accordance with District policy and school procedures. In order to assure that all students and staff are made aware of their specific rights and responsibilities, a student handbook shall be developed by each school, which defines the rights and responsibilities of students and others whose actions affect student behavior. References to all School Committee policies relating to student discipline will be included in the student handbook.

Corrective actions for misbehaviors outlined in the handbook shall be commensurate with the severity of the misbehavior. Consideration shall be given to the following:

1. age of the student;
2. mitigating circumstances;
3. previous behavior of the student; and
4. attitude of the student.

### **10.1. Philosophy Of Discipline**

At Davis Hill School, we attempt to utilize Positive Behavioral Interventions when disciplining students for their choices and actions. Effective behavioral interventions help to ensure the safety and dignity of students and staff, and address the causes of a student's misbehavior in order to improve positive behavioral skills and long-term outcomes. Our goal is to provide students with discipline that is both fair and corrective. In addition, it is understood that interventions may require individualization, and should ideally result in a student taking responsibility for their actions, helping to 'correct' or apologize for their choice/ behavior, and learn from their experience.

### **10.2. General Rules and Consequences**

Students attending Davis Hill School are expected to adhere to our CORE VALUES and conduct themselves in a manner that is safe, kind and respectful at all times.

Students attending Davis Hill School are forbidden to engage in the following activities during school time or during school sponsored activities:

- Display aggressive behavior or exhibit any verbal or nonverbal behaviors that interfere with or threaten the safety or well-being of another person;

- Possess drugs, alcohol, or tobacco;
- Carry or wear dangerous weapons (i.e., sharp objects, firearms, knives, laser pointers, or any devices or objects that could be used to inflict or threaten bodily harm);
- Possess matches or fireworks;
- Deface, damage, destroy, or steal school or personal property;
- Disrupt or instigate behavior that interferes with the operation of the school, classroom, auditorium, cafeteria or school buses;
- Possess indecent literature;
- Distribute any literature in class without permission from the teacher;
- Intentionally cause or attempt to cause physical injury to another person, except in self-defense;
- Leave school grounds without permission;
- Use profane, offensive or vulgar language;

Failure to comply with established discipline practices and procedures may result in:

- Verbal reprimand
- Parent notification
- Loss of recess
- In-school suspension
- Out of school suspension or expulsion
- Any combination of the above

### **10.2.1 Discipline at School Related Functions**

The school has the authority to discipline students for inappropriate behavior at Davis Hill School or Davis Hill School Activities.

### **10.2.2 School Bus Safety**

#### **While waiting for the bus, students should:**

- Stay out of the road except when they must cross the street.
- Wait in an orderly manner. Rough behavior or running is inappropriate.
- Not throw stones, snowballs or other objects.
- Avoid trespassing on private property.
- Obey all school rules.
- Line up off the road and approach the bus only when the driver has opened the door.

#### **While riding the bus, students should:**

- Listen carefully to the driver's instructions.
- Get on the bus quickly and be seated. Pupils may be expected to sit three in a seat.
- Help keep the bus clean. Eating on the bus is not allowed.

- Be aware of the danger of protruding arms, etc. All parts of the child's body should be kept inside the bus.
- Remain in his/her seat when the bus is moving.
- Restrict his/her talking to those children who are sitting next to him/her. Shouting will distract the bus driver.
- Not use inappropriate language.
- Not fight-bully-tease on the bus.

### **10.2.3. Wachusett Regional School District Bus Discipline Policy and Procedure**

#### **BUS DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES AND CONSEQUENCES**

The code below classifies unacceptable behavior into three levels. The examples are not exhaustive but illustrative. Additionally, all consequences are dependent upon the severity and frequency of the misbehavior. The administration reserves the right to consider extenuating circumstances in determining disciplinary action.

##### **LEVEL 1**

<b><u>Misbehaviors</u></b> Misbehaviors that interfere with the orderly transportation of students. Some examples are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talking too loudly</li> <li>• Failure to stay seated</li> <li>• Littering on the bus</li> <li>• Tampering with the possessions of other passengers</li> </ul>	<b><u>Consequences</u></b> The bus driver may address the misbehavior: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verbal warning issued to student</li> <li>• Assign seats</li> </ul>
--	--

##### **LEVEL 2**

<b><u>Misbehaviors</u></b> More severe misbehaviors that interfere with the orderly transportation of students. Some examples are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeated occurrences of Level 1 behaviors</li> <li>• Annoying and/or bullying other passengers</li> <li>• Use of profanity</li> <li>• Damage to the bus</li> </ul>	<b><u>Consequences</u></b> The bus driver reports misbehaviors on the bus. The principal or designee administers consequences. This action may include any or all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conference with principal or designee</li> <li>• Contact with parents</li> <li>• Assigned seats</li> <li>• Loss of bus privileges for up to five days</li> <li>• Suspension from school for up to five days</li> </ul>
---	--

##### **LEVEL 3**

<b><u>Misbehaviors</u></b> Behavior that endangers the safety of the driver or students and which impairs the driver's ability to drive safely. Some examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeated occurrences of Level 1 or 2 behaviors</li> <li>• Refusal to remain in seats</li> <li>• Throwing objects, spitting, or spit balls</li> <li>• Distracting the driver</li> <li>• Refusal to obey driver</li> <li>• Fighting, including pushing and/or wrestling</li> <li>• Lighting matches/lighters</li> <li>• Possession of knives or other dangerous objects</li> <li>• Possession or use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or controlled substances</li> </ul>	<b><u>Consequences</u></b> The bus driver reports misbehaviors on the bus. The principal or designee administers consequences. At more severe levels, the superintendent or designee may be involved. This action may include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of bus privileges for six to ten days</li> <li>• Suspension for 6 or more days or exclusion from school</li> <li>• Repeated incidents of Level 2 behavior or egregious acts may result in a child being permanently suspended from bus privileges</li> <li>• Illegal activity will be referred to the Police Department</li> </ul>
---	--

## **Procedures for reporting passenger misconduct**

1. The bus driver will report misconduct occurring on the school bus to the school administration. If a student shares information pertaining to student misconduct on the bus with a teacher or other staff member, the administration will be notified and speak with the bus driver.
2. A School Bus Conduct Report will be completed and submitted to the school administration and the bus company.
3. The principal or designee and the bus company will retain copies of the signed report.

### **10.2.4 Special Education Discipline**

All students are expected to meet the standards for behavior as set by the Wachusett community. Chapter 71B of the Massachusetts General Laws and I.D.E.A. 1997 requires that additional provisions be made for students who have been found by an evaluation team to have special needs and whose program is described in an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The following additional requirements apply to the discipline of special needs students:

1. The IEP for every special needs student will indicate if they can meet student management policies or if modifications are needed.
2. The principal (or designees) will notify the Special Education Office of any special needs student who has been suspended. The Director of Special Education will keep these suspensions on record.
3. When it becomes known that a special needs student will be suspended for more than ten days in a school year:
  - 3.1. services will be provided in order to ensure that the student receives FAPE (Free and Appropriate Education), and
  - 3.2. a functional behavioral assessment will be conducted and a behavioral intervention plan will be implemented, and
  - 3.3. the team will conduct a manifestation determination in order to decide whether the infraction related to the student's disability, and if the team finds that the behavior is a manifestation of the disability, the District may not suspend the student.

### **10.2.5 In-School Suspension**

The student will be isolated from the student body under the supervision of the administration. Students will be expected to complete assignments given by the classroom teachers. The amount of suspension time may range from one class to five days and may include recess and lunch.

### **10.2.6 Out-of-School Suspension/Exclusion/Expulsion - Due Process**

Out-of-School Suspension/Exclusion/Expulsion - In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to suspend students from attending school. These instances involve serious disruptions of the school community, or when other forms of discipline do not appear to be effective.

#### **DISCIPLINARY DUE PROCESS**

1. **SHORT TERM DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS:** A student will be given oral notice of the offense with which he/she is charged and an opportunity to respond prior to the imposition of any disciplinary



sanction that might result in the student's suspension from school for ten (10) consecutive school days or less. In the event that the Principal determines that the student will be suspended from school, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified by telephone and in writing.

2. **LONG TERM DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS:** Prior to the imposition of any disciplinary sanction that might result in a student's suspension for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or expulsion, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be given written notice of a hearing at which they may be represented by an attorney at their expense and may examine and present witnesses and documentary evidence. Following this hearing, the decision maker (Principal/School Committee) will issue a written decision. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will have the right to appeal any decision imposing a long-term exclusion from school. Where the student is excluded in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71 §37H, the student shall have ten (10) days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the Superintendent of Schools. For exclusions imposed pursuant to M.G.L. c.71 §37H1/2, the student shall have five (5) days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the Superintendent. For exclusions imposed by the School Committee in accordance with M.G.L. c.76 §17, the student shall have the right to file a written request for reconsideration by the Committee within ten (10) days of the effective date of the exclusion. Pending the outcome of any such appeal, the disciplinary sanction imposed shall remain in effect. M.G.L. c. 76 §17, M.G.L. c. 71 §37H, M.G.L. c. 71 §37H1/2

3. **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** Students who have been identified as students with disabilities in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or who the school has reason to believe might be eligible for special education services are entitled to additional procedural protections when a disciplinary exclusion is considered. In many cases, a student with a disability will be entitled to services identified by the student's Team as necessary to provide the student with a free appropriate public education during periods of disciplinary exclusion exceeding ten (10) school days in a given year. For additional information regarding the rights of students with disabilities in the context of school discipline, please contact the Principal or the Director of Special Education.

## **11. Davis Hill School Safety and Security Plan**

### **11.1. Access to School Building**

- All doors will be locked during the school day. All visitors will be allowed entry by office personnel.
- All visitors must report to the office upon entry. Signs will be located at all entrances to alert visitors to this request.
- School volunteers will report to the office, sign in and wear an identification badge.
- Unscheduled visits to classrooms will be discouraged without authorization from school administration.

### **11.2. Safety in Classrooms**

- Fire doors will be kept closed at all times.
- Evacuation plans will be clearly marked and routes to egress will be clear and accessible.
- Each classroom will have an individual monitoring system for students entering and leaving the room.

- Student daily attendance will be monitored at the start of each school day and parents of absent children will be notified.

### **11.3. Safety in Hallways**

- Students are expected to **walk** at all times in the hallways. Running and “speed walking” are not allowed in order to maintain maximum safety.
- Teachers will be located in classroom doorways at arrival and dismissal to supervise hallway and classroom conduct.
- Groups of students (physical education, art, and music classes) will be supervised by an adult when moving between classes.
- An adult will supervise all bus lines through the building, outside and on to the bus to insure safe loading.

### **11.4. Safety on School Grounds**

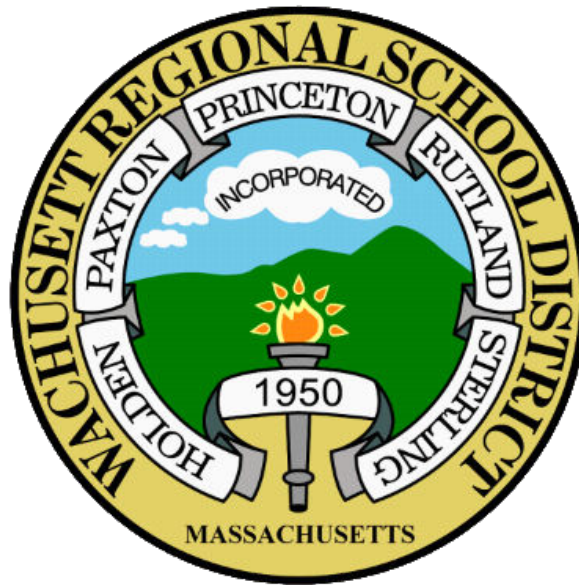
- Rules will be defined and published for safe use of the playground.
- The school will provide adequate adult supervision at each recess break.
- An adult will accompany walkers until they leave school property.
- In accordance with state law, any child sixteen years of age or younger must wear a helmet while on a bicycle path or public way.

### **11.5. Responsibilities of the Staff and the Plan Implementation**

#### Staff will:

- Be alert to student welfare at all times.
- Exercise good judgment in planning and implementing any instructional or other activity.
- Notify the office should any strangers be observed in or around the building.
- Review the rules for school evacuation procedures with aides and volunteers.
- Annually review with the school nurse the rules for proper precaution when dealing with bodily fluids.
- Inspect interior and exterior grounds regularly to insure safe conditions.

## WRSD Student Handbook Addendum



Nondiscrimination Statement	A-1
Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan	A-2
School Committee Policies	A-15

### **WRSD Nondiscrimination Statement**

The Wachusett Regional School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, ELL status, housing status, or other protected status in the operation of the educational programs, activities, or employment policies, and no person will be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to its public schools, or in obtaining advantage and privileges in regards to courses of study and extracurricular programs of such public schools on account of race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, ELL status, housing status or other protected category.

## **Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan**

**Updated December 2016**

***You must be the change you wish to see in the world.***

Mohandas Gandhi

Evidence-based research gleaned from respected institutions, media reports, and the hallways of our nation's schools all point to the same truth: Bullying has devastating effects. Just a quick look at statistics reveals the depth of the problem:

- Analysis of high-profile school shootings such as Santana, Columbine, and Virginia Tech reveals that that up to 71 percent involved attacker(s) who felt bullied, persecuted, attacked, or injured.
- Around 160,000 school children stay home from school each day out of fear, often without telling their parents why.
- Children targeted by bullies experience higher than normal levels of insecurity, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and physical and mental symptoms.
- Adults who were bullies as children have higher rates of substance abuse, domestic violence, and other violent crimes.
- The percentage of students who report being bullied rose 50% from 1983 to 2003.
- Approximately 1 in 5 students experience bullying at school, and approximately 7% of students experience cyberbullying a school year.

In short, bullying is an act that cannot be ignored if we are to safeguard our nation's schools and young people.

## **WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT CORE VALUES**

### **Commitment to Excellence**

- Modeling effective teaching that engages and meets the needs of all students
- Providing a rigorous curriculum with expanding options and opportunities for all
- Recruiting and retaining excellent staff

### **Perseverance**

- Tenacity and hard work
- Persisting in the face of obstacles
- Focusing on goals

### **Critical Thinking**

- Analyzing, evaluating, and problem solving
- Thinking creatively
- Being adaptive

### **Collaboration**

- Listening and communicating effectively
- Maximizing strengths and respecting differences
- Cooperating to reach common ground

### **Global Citizenship and Responsibility**

- Celebrating diversity while recognizing commonalities
- Demonstrating civic respect by giving back to the communities
- Developing student's leadership skills for success in a global society

### **Creativity and Innovation**

- Respecting the diversity of thoughts and ideas
- Embedding the arts into content areas
- Thinking freely, not fearing mistakes

### **Acceptance and Respect of Others**

- Demonstrating tolerance
- Fostering a community of teamwork and collaboration
- Creating an atmosphere of safety and acceptance

## OUR BELIEFS

### THE WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT:

- seeks to ensure meaningful student growth and promote social emotional well-being in a safe and nurturing environment.
- is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation.
- recognizes that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming a target of bullying or harassment based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics.
- expects every member of the extended school community to take all forms of bullying seriously, to work to prevent it, and to report it when it is thought to have occurred.
- in a manner consistent with laws and regulations, will investigate all reported incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation in a timely, fair and discreet manner while being respectful of individual rights.
- when resolving verified incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, will proceed in a manner that stresses education and skill building.

### DEFINITIONS:

**Bullying** -The repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that:

- (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his/her property;
- (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim;
- (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or
- (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

**Cyber-bullying:** Bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying shall also include (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

**Hostile Environment:** A situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the target's education.

**Target / Victim:** A student who has been subject to bullying or retaliation by another student or group of students.

**Aggressor/ Perpetrator:** A student or a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional who engages, either individually, or as part of a group, in bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation.

**Local law enforcement agency:** local police department

**Principal:** The administrative leader of a school in the Wachusett Regional School District or his/her designee for the purposes of investigating and responding to reports of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation.

**Retaliation:** Intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying. Retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

## **LEADERSHIP:**

### **A. District Bullying and Cyberbullying Statement**

The WRSD Leadership is committed to implementing the district's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and in conjunction with community efforts, to promote and ensure a safe and positive teaching and learning environment. District leaders, community leaders, teachers, parents, guardians and student leaders, have a primary role in teaching students to regard one another in a respectful, civil, and dignified manner to create an environment that improves and sustains the behavioral health of all students. These stakeholders will promote understanding and respect for diversity and differences in all venues through modeling respectful behavior and promoting and sustaining a commitment to programs that are focused on supporting social-emotional development at all grade levels. The WRSD will provide age-appropriate anti-bullying educational experiences for all students in the district. As a school district, WRSD will enhance student achievement by creating and maintaining an educational environment where all students feel safe and in the unlikely event that a student feels uncomfortable, he or she will not be reluctant to communicate his/her concerns to teachers, staff, administrators, parents or guardians.

### **B. Public Involvement in Developing the Plan**

As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the WRSD Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan was developed by a committee consisting of district and building based administrators, teachers, and a school psychologist. Prior to the presentation of this plan to the School Committee, a final draft of the plan was made available on the WRSD website for Public Comment. A schedule will be set up to review the Plan by a committee on an annual basis. This will ensure that the plan is always updated and that behavioral health initiatives that support anti-bullying are instituted throughout the district in an effective, deliberate and sustaining manner.

### **C. Implementation**

Consistent with applicable laws and regulations, all Principals will be implementing (with the support of the Superintendent and/or the School



Committee), the following documents/ action plans:

- Create narrative and graphic documents showing end-to-end process and procedures for all types of bullying/cyberbullying incidents
- Receive and investigate reports on Bullying
- Plan intervention support strategies that meet the needs of the targets, aggressors and retaliators involved in the reported incidents
- Choose and implement a Bully Prevention Curricula that each school will use
- Review, and where necessary, update District student and staff handbooks, and code of conduct
- Lead parent, guardian and family engagement efforts by providing appropriate informational materials for this group
- Collect and analyze building and district-wide data on past bullying incidents to understand trends and patterns, define the present problem, and create a baseline from which to measure improved outcomes
- Create a Records Retention Plan for incidents

## **POLICY JURISDICTION**

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

1. on school grounds, on property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school sponsored or school-related activity, at a function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a school district or bullying school, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school district or a school; and
2. at a location, activity, function or program that is not school related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the school district or school, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. As stated in M.G.L. c.71 Sec.370 nothing contained herein shall require schools to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION**

WRSD will investigate bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation incidents in a fair, timely, and thorough manner while being mindful of personal privacy rights and the stigma that a student may occur from being labeled in some way or another. Verified incidents of bullying, in all of its forms will be dealt with firmly. Dispositions will begin with education and, when deemed necessary, will move to progressively sterner measures.

### **A. Reporting Bullying or Retaliation Requirements:**

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member will be recorded in writing. A school or district staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee or to the superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor or to the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor, any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously. When reporting in writing, administrators, teachers, parents, school bus drivers, cafeteria workers, playground monitors, and any and all other staff and community members can access the "Bullying, Cyber-bullying, Retaliation

Incident Referral Form” in the Main Office of the school, guidance/school psychologist’s office, the nurse’s office, the Wachusett Regional School District

### **1. Reporting by Staff:**

A staff member will promptly report to the principal or designee any instances of bullying or retaliation witnessed by the staff member or that is reported to the staff member by a student, parent, or other individual and then follow up with an Incident Referral Form. The requirement to notify the principal shall not, however, limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school or district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline. (see Appendix A for reporting form)

### **2. Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others:**

In an effort to keep its students safe, the Wachusett Regional School District believes that it is the responsibility of students, parents, guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or designee. Any individual who wishes to file such a complaint may request, and shall be provided with, assistance from a school staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the principal. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. The filing of a false or fabricated complaint of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation is strictly prohibited and shall result in disciplinary action. (see Appendix A for reporting forms)

## **B. Responding to Report of Bullying, Cyberbullying or Retaliation- Allegations of Bullying by a Student**

### **1. Safety**

Once an initial report of bullying or retaliation has been brought to the attention of school personnel, the designated school personnel will take appropriate action(s) to maintain a sense of safety for all parties involved in the report, including the target, the aggressor and the reporting party (if it is a student). Once designated school personnel have made a determination regarding the validity of the report, additional steps and modifications will be made to keep students safe. In creating a safety plan appropriate accommodations may be indicated to limit the interaction between the target and the aggressor throughout the course of the school day. This would include but is not limited to, the classroom setting, the cafeteria, recess and school bus seating assignment. The Principal or his/her designee will implement safeguards to Ensure that all students involved in the incident are protected during the course of the investigation process. All students will be reminded by the Principal or his/her designee that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

### **2. Investigation**

- The Principal or his/her designee will promptly investigate all reports of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all

available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.

- The Principal or his/her designee will determine if police interaction is deemed necessary.
- During the investigation, the Principal or his/her designee will interview students, staff, witnesses and parents or guardians.
- The Principal or his/her designee will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.
- Interviews will be conducted by the Principal or his/her designee, in consultation with the school counselor as necessary.
- To the extent practicable, the Principal or his/her designee will maintain confidentiality throughout the investigative process and will maintain a written record of the investigation.
- Procedures for investigating reports of bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation will be consistent with school or district policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the Principal or his/her designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

### **3. Determinations**

If the incident is verified to be bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation, a meeting will be arranged by the school official with the aggressor and the aggressor's parents or guardians. In the meeting, it will be made clear to both the aggressor and the parents or guardians that bullying, cyberbullying and/or retaliation will not be tolerated in the Wachusett Regional School District. A meeting may also take with the target and the target's parents or guardians. Depending on the level of the incident, local authorities may be informed of such incident(s) and the school will follow the recommendation from local authorities in resolving the continued behavior of the aggressor.

### **4. Responses to Bullying / Consequences from Findings**

Bullying behavior can take many forms and can vary dramatically in its level of seriousness and what impact it has on the target and other students. Accordingly, there is no one prescribed response to verified acts of bullying. While conduct that rises to the level of "bullying," as defined in this Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, will generally warrant disciplinary action against the aggressor, whether and to what extent disciplinary actions are imposed (e.g., detention, suspension, etc.) is a matter for the professional discretion of the building Principal or his/her designee. No disciplinary action will be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous complaint. District administrators will integrate a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. The needs and safety of the target will also be considered as part of restoring resolution to the bullying matter. Verified acts of bullying shall result in intervention by the building Principal or his/her designee and will address the acts of the aggressor and the needs of the target, and assure the sanction against bullying behavior is enforced with the goal that the bullying behavior will cease and desist.

Consequences should consider these specific issues:

- a. Nature, severity, and chronicity of the behavioral impact on the target
- b. Degree of physical, psychological, social harm on the target
- c. Student's age, development and degree of maturity
- d. Surrounding circumstances and context in which the incident(s) occurred
- e. Prior disciplinary history and continuing patterns of behavior
- f. Relationship between and among the parties involved
- g. Context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred
- h. The need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior.

The appropriate range of consequences, subject to due process where appropriate, may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Report to law enforcement
- b. Expulsion
- c. Referral to outside agency
- d. Reassignment of classes
- e. Reassignment of seats in lunch, bus, class, etc.
- f. Out-of-school suspension
- g. In-school suspension
- h. Detention
- i. Loss of privileges (including before and after school activities)
- j. Temporary removal from the classroom
- k. Verbal reprimand

In addition, instructional activities designed to develop the skills and proficiencies necessary to avoid engaging in further bullying and/or retaliatory behaviors will be given, which may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Reparation to the target
- b. Completion of curricular based assignment(s)
- c. Meeting with Civil Rights Coordinator
- d. Completion of community service designed to help the aggressor understand and respect differences; written report required by the aggressor
- e. Therapeutic support for both aggressor and targets

## **5. Notification Obligation**

- **Notice to Parents or Guardians**  
Once an assessment of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation has been made and been deemed valid, the Principal or his/her designee will immediately inform the parent(s) or guardian of the target and the aggressor of the incident. At this time, parents/guardians will also be informed of the investigation and disciplinary procedures that may follow. There may be incidents where parents are notified prior to the Investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.
- **Notice to Another School or District**  
If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special

education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the Principal or his/her designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the Principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

- **Notice to Law Enforcement**

At any point after receiving and/or investigating a report of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation, if the Principal or his/her designee has determined that the incident has elevated to a level that is believed to be criminal in nature, charges may be pursued against the aggressor. The Principal will notify the local law enforcement agency of said incident. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the Principal or his/her designee will contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has reasonable evidence to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor. In making this determination, the Principal will, (consistent with the Plan and with applicable school or district policies and procedures), consult with the School Resource officer, or other individuals he/she deems appropriate.

## **ACADEMIC AND NON ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES**

Wachusett Regional School District seeks to create a safe, respectful and caring school and classroom environment for all students regardless of their race, color, national origin, creed, religion, gender or gender identity, sex or sexual orientation, age, physical appearance, socioeconomic status, family situation or disability. WRSD will lay the foundation for a positive school climate in pre-school and will continue to teach, nurture, and positively reinforce pro-social behavior throughout students' academic experiences.

- Each grade level will be provided developmentally appropriate and evidenced-based curriculum and instruction to teach pro-social skills such as conflict resolution, cooperation, assertiveness, communication, expressing feelings, problem solving, cyber safety, and appreciation for diversity.
- The entire school community (e.g. students, teachers, parents, bus drivers, lunchroom staff, janitorial staff, etc.) will work collaboratively to promote a caring and supportive school environment among all of its staff and students.

## **Non-Academic Bullying Prevention Efforts:**

- Administration will review student behavioral expectations during grade level assemblies during the first week of school.
- The definition of bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation and the protocol for handling incidents of bullying will be emphasized.
- Staff presence will be increased in areas where bullying is most likely to occur; (i.e.) bus arrival and departure locations, hallways, lunchrooms, recess, and near restrooms.
- A variety of evidence - based prevention programs to promote diversity awareness and respect for self and others will be explored and offered. District schools currently use the following programs: Second

Step, Responsive Classroom, MARC (Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center), and PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) (See Appendix B for full descriptions of these programs)

- Schools will encourage student involvement in school events and extra-curricular activities to reduce isolation and the likelihood of becoming a target of bullying (i.e. Student Council)

#### **Academic Bullying Prevention Efforts:**

- Educating students on the life skills and competences for Social and Emotional Learning (Domain 5, Wachusett Regional School District Strategic Plan)
- Meaningful relationships between staff and students will be fostered so that every student will have at least one supportive adult to share concerns with, enhancing their feeling of safety in the school.

### **ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES**

*A key aspect of promoting a positive school climate is ensuring that the underlying emotional needs of targets, aggressors, families, and others are addressed. Below is a summary of strategies aimed to provide supports and services necessary to meet these needs. In order to enhance the district's capacity to prevent, intervene early, and respond effectively to bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation, these services will be available to reflect an understanding of the dynamics of bullying and to provide approaches to address the needs of targets and aggressors. School-based counselors are available to all students for counseling. The Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Services will regularly update a list of mental health resources available in the community and provide this list to all schools. School administrators, staff, and parents will collaborate in determining appropriate referral services.*

#### **A. Identifying resources.**

WRSD will annually review its capacity to provide counseling and other services for targets, aggressors, and their families. This will include a review of current staffing and programs that foster positive school culture as well as identifying any gaps in services and resources that need to be addressed. Principals will respond to the needs of their individual schools in order to assess existing and needed resources.

#### **B. Counseling and other services**

The District will work collaboratively with school mental health staff and outside agencies to maintain a list of providers that will support schools in developing safety plans for students who have been targets of bullying or retaliation, providing social skills programs to prevent bullying, and offering education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors. Schools may consider current tools including, but not limited to, behavioral intervention plans, restorative justice practices, social skills groups, and individually focused curricula.

#### **C. Students with disabilities**

As required by M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or that he/she may be vulnerable to bullying or harassment because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

#### **D. Referral to outside services**

Clear protocols that are part of the the WRSD Wellness Plan will help students and families access appropriate and timely services.

### **COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES**

Wachusett Regional School District recognizes the importance of collaboration with families in order to optimize the school's ability to prevent and respond to bullying. Our goal is to provide useful information and resources to parents/guardians of students, and to ensure sufficient channels of communication between the families and schools.

- Parent education and resources
- Notification requirements At the beginning of each school year, WRSD will inform parents/guardians of enrolled students of the policies and procedures for prevention and intervention of bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation in its annual publication of the Student/Parent Handbook.
- Each school will inform parents and guardians about the anti-bullying curricula being used.
- In order to continually gain feedback from parents/guardians, a survey will be administered on an annual basis. This information will be very important to us as we continue to assess the effectiveness of our bullying policies/procedures.

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND STAFF TRAINING**

Under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O the Wachusett Regional School District must provide ongoing professional development for all staff, including but not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, and paraprofessionals as well as providing opportunities for parent, guardians, and community members to participate in this anti-bullying/ cyber-bullying initiative.

All stakeholders in the Wachusett Regional School District must be made aware of the new state anti-bullying law and how it changes the definitions, reporting, investigation and punishment of bullying incidents. Our School Committee, administrators, and faculty will be responsible for disseminating this information and for projecting how these changes will

reflect on cultural changes in our schools as the implementation of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O moves forward.

Through training and professional development, the WRSD will seek to raise the overall level of mental health services in our district schools to decrease the number of bullying incidents that may take place. The district will focus on training and development programs that give staff the skills and understanding to create safer schools, not only to respond to the state mandate under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, but also to benefit our children and our community.

#### **A. Annual staff training on the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.**

School- based annual training for all school staff by the building Principal or designee will include:

- Staff responsibilities under the new law
- An overview of the steps that the Principal or his/her designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation
- An overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grade levels throughout the district. Staff members hired after the start of the school year will be required to participate in this school-based training during the school year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years.

## **B. Ongoing district- wide professional development.**

The goal of professional development is to establish a common understanding of the tools available for staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences. Professional development will build upon the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying incidents. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the content of school-wide and district-wide professional development, will be informed by research and will include information on:

- Effective and developmentally or age-appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- Developmentally or age-appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- Information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to bullying;
- Current research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
- Current information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and
- Internet safety curriculum with reference to cyber-bullying as “unacceptable” behavior.

Professional development will also continue to address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students’ Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disability affects their social skills development.

Additional areas identified by the Wachusett Regional School District for professional development may include:

- Increasing the overall level of mental health services in our schools so that all students will experience kindness and compassion
- Making sure our classrooms and schools are psychologically safe for all students and staff
- Promoting a deeper understanding of respect so that our language and behavior reflects respect for everyone (modeling)
- Teaching tolerance and respect for the diversity and differences that exists in people
- Building rapport with the families of our community so that we all see the value of safe schools and are willing to support this new anti-bullying initiative
- Managing classroom behaviors so that we can break the cycle of nonproductive behavior
- Using intervention strategies which will allow all participants to refrain from aggressive behavior and see the real benefits of tolerance and respect
- Proactively teaching our students that actions come from the contents of our thoughts and that a big part of growing up is learning that we don’t have to act on all of our thoughts

## **C. Written notice to staff.**

The school district will provide all staff with an annual written notice of The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. Sections related to staff



responsibilities will be included in the district employee handbook.

### **PROBLEM RESOLUTION**

Under Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014 amended Section 37O of chapter 71 of the General Laws, any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seek assistance outside of the district may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Resolution System (PRS). That information can be found at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa>, emails can be sent to [compliance@doe.mass.edu](mailto:compliance@doe.mass.edu) or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information is also available at the Superintendent's office.

### **RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS**

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies. In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H½, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

## **School Committee Policies**

### **POLICY RELATING TO SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPERATION**

#### ***Policy 1523 DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE PUBLICATIONS***

The Wachusett Regional School District shall, in accordance with the Massachusetts General Laws and Department of Education regulations, provide all publications as approved by the School Committee and required by the State Department of Education.

The School Committee Policy Book shall be made available for review to any person, upon request to the Superintendent's Office. Copies of said publications shall be placed in each of the five (5) Town Libraries and all school libraries. A nominal fee, not to exceed the cost of production, shall be charged to any person requesting a copy of one of the publications.

This policy shall be included in all Student Handbooks.

### **POLICY RELATING TO EDUCATION**

#### ***Policy 3611.4 ENRICHMENT***

The Wachusett Regional School Committee is committed to providing a high quality education for all students with the goal of maximizing the performance and achievement of every individual. Staff is encouraged and expected to use innovative teaching implementing the District curriculum in creative and flexible ways.

It is recognized that students possess a broad range of intellectual skills and creative talents that can be challenged by diverse and stimulating activities.

Wachusett Regional School District shall:

- provide opportunities for enriching activities appropriately accessible to all students;
- encourage and support staff attendance at professional development programs designed to promote the implementation of gifted and talented instructional strategies;
- promote the use of alternative strategies which may include, but are not limited to, cluster grouping, curriculum compacting, interest-based projects, independent studies, and teacher-pupil contracting, supported by appropriate classroom resources; and
- inform parents of the enriching activities available in the area of gifted education and promote parent/community involvement and participation.

This policy shall be referenced in each school's student handbook. In addition, school councils shall annually review the needs of gifted and talented students.

## **POLICY RELATING TO PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT**

### ***Policy 5252 PHYSICAL RESTRAINT***

Maintaining an orderly, safe environment conducive to learning is an expectation of all staff members in the Wachusett Regional School District. While ensuring safety in District schools, staff must recognize that students are protected by law from the unreasonable use of physical restraint. Physical restraint is an emergency measure of last resort and should be utilized only when necessary to protect a student and/or school community member from assault or imminent, serious physical harm. Restraint, including mechanical restraint, medication restraint, physical escort, physical restraint, prone restraint, seclusion and time-out are defined under 603 CMR 46.00. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) defined inclusionary and exclusionary time-out in its Technical Assistance Advisory, SPED 2016-1, on 31 July 2015.

Chemical restraint, mechanical restraint, and seclusion are prohibited in all public school education programs. The District will follow the requirements for restraint outlined in 603 CMR 46.00, including requirements for safety, duration, follow-up, prone/floor restraints, reporting, administrative review and training. The District will adhere to the guidelines for time-out as outlined the DESE Technical Assistance Advisory, SPED 2016-1.

Neither 603 C.M.R. 46.00 nor this policy prohibits: (1) any teacher, employee or agent of the District from using reasonable force to protect students, others or themselves from imminent, serious, physical harm; (2) any individual from reporting to appropriate authorities a crime committed by a student or other individual; (3) law enforcement, judicial authorities or school security personnel from exercising their responsibilities, including the physical detainment of a student or person alleged to have committed a crime or posing a security risk; or (4) an individual from reporting neglect or abuse to the appropriate state agency, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 119 § 51A.

The District will develop and implement specific written procedures that include: appropriate responses to student behavior that may require immediate intervention, including methods to prevent student violence, self-injurious behavior, and suicide; alternatives to physical restraint; description of physical restraints used in emergency situations; restraint complaint procedure; restraint training and reporting requirements; restraint follow-up procedures; periodic review of restraint data procedures; procedures on the use of time-out as a behavioral support strategy; and methods to engage parents in discussion about restraint prevention and the use of restraint solely as an emergency measure.

The District will annually review its Restraint Prevention and Behavior Support Policy and Procedures, provide it to all District staff, and make it available to parents of enrolled students.

## **POLICIES RELATING TO PUPIL SERVICES**

### ***Policy 6312 REGULAR ATTENDANCE***

Regular and punctual attendance is essential to the achievement of students in the Wachusett Regional School District. In accordance with Massachusetts State Law (MGL), parent/guardian has the responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

If the school does not receive a message from the parent/guardian by the designated time established by the school, then the school shall call to inquire about the student's absence. Parents will be contacted within three (3) days of the student's absence if the parent/guardian has not contacted the school regarding the absence.

The parent/guardian will also be notified when a student has at least five days in which the student has missed two or more classes/periods (unexcused) or who has five or more unexcused absences in the school year. A meeting will be scheduled with the building principal (or his/her designee), the parent/guardian and the student to develop an action plan to improve the student's attendance.

Legal Refs: Chapter 222 of the Acts of 2012, Chapter 76, Section 1B

### ***Policy 6400 BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE***

The Wachusett Regional School District shall help students learn behavior patterns which will enable them to be responsible, contributing members of society. Students will be expected to conduct themselves in keeping with their level of maturity and act with due regard for their fellow students and supervisory authority. Students shall have a right to reasonable treatment from the school and its employees and, in turn, the school and its employees shall have a right to expect reasonable behavior from students.

The principal will be responsible for administering behavior and discipline procedures at the school in accordance with District policy and school procedures. In order to assure that all students and staff are made aware of their specific rights and responsibilities, a student handbook shall be developed by each school, which defines the rights and responsibilities of students and others whose actions affect student behavior. References to all School Committee policies relating to student discipline will be included in the student handbook.

Corrective actions for misbehaviors outlined in the handbook shall be commensurate with the severity of the misbehavior. Consideration shall be given to the following:

1. age of the student;
2. mitigating circumstances;
3. previous behavior of the student; and
4. attitude of the student.

Student Handbook. The student handbook shall be reviewed annually with input sought from the school council. The student handbook shall be printed and distributed to all enrolled students and all staff

members at the start of each school year. The student handbook shall include, but not be limited to, sections dealing with:

1. student rights and responsibilities;
2. student behavior and discipline; and
3. glossary of terms.

Each building principal shall be responsible for providing orientation to the handbook to all enrolled students and all staff members at the start of the school year. The provisions of the student handbook shall be applied to students in a standardized, nondiscriminatory and non-arbitrary manner.

Liability for Damages. The Wachusett Regional School District shall seek compensation for District property willfully damaged by a minor or student age 18 years or older. Civil action may be brought against the minor or his/her parents, or the individual if 18 years of age or older. All incidents shall be investigated, liabilities fixed, and all costs assessed in a nondiscriminatory and non-arbitrary manner. Schools shall be monitored to ensure that findings of liability are in accordance with District procedures in affording due process guarantees.

Corporal Punishment. Corporal punishment is prohibited. Staff shall develop alternative techniques for managing student discipline in accordance with District policy.

Searches. Wachusett Regional School District authorities may exercise their rights to conduct an inspection of student lockers and/or desks. A student shall not misuse lockers and desks assigned by school authorities. Lockers and desks remain, at all times, the property of the District.

A warrant-less search (non-emergency) of a student's school locker or articles carried upon the student's person, may be conducted if there is a reasonable suspicion that the search is necessary to protect the health and/or safety of students and staff, or to detect a violation of school rules. Such a search may be conducted if school authorities suspect that a student possesses such items as, but not limited to, weapons, dangerous instruments, stolen goods, narcotics, hallucinogenics, amphetamines, barbiturates, marijuana, unregistered drugs, controlled substances, alcoholic beverages, or evidence of cheating or other academic misconduct.

Student Suspensions. The Wachusett Regional School District shall ensure that each pupil has an atmosphere and an environment which is conducive to teaching and learning. To that end, schools shall maintain programs which maximize opportunities for learning and minimize disruptions to the educational process. The District's first concern shall be to help maintain pupils in school so that their learning process is not interrupted.

Students who create discipline problems which cannot be resolved through less severe means shall be suspended. As a last resort, the District shall, at the discretion of the school principal, and following the required due process, deny a pupil the right to attend school for a period not to exceed ten (10) days. The principal's decision is final.

Students will have the right and the responsibility to complete all assignments and make up all tests missed during the suspension. It will be the student's responsibility to confer with teachers and to

complete make-up work within a reasonable time but in no instance exceeding three weeks after the suspension expires.

Expulsion. Expulsion shall be considered an action of last resort when the behavior of the student warrants such action at the discretion of the school principal. The expulsion shall be governed by Massachusetts General Laws Ch. 71, sections 37h and 37h1/2, and Ch. 76 section 17

### ***Policy 6433 SUBSTANCE ABUSE***

The Wachusett Regional School District prohibits the use of alcohol, illegal substances, and the improper use of harmful substances.

The possession, use, transmittal, serving, or consumption of any alcoholic beverage, illegal/harmful substance on school property, and/or at any school-sponsored activity is prohibited. Violations of this policy shall result in appropriate action as set forth in the Student Discipline Code.

Further, any student may be barred from a school-sponsored activity if there is reason to believe he/she has been drinking alcoholic beverages or using illegal substances prior to his/her attendance at or participation in said school-sponsored activity. Students may be required to submit to a Breathalyzer test prior to participation in school-sponsored events. Any staff member with knowledge of alcohol or harmful drug use or the carrying of harmful substances on school grounds or at school-related events shall notify the principal or the superintendent and the appropriate legal authorities.

The District shall provide full cooperation with legal authorities.

### ***Policy 6434 SEXUAL HARASSMENT***

It is the policy of the Wachusett Regional School Committee to provide an educational environment free of sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct or communications constituting sexual harassment as defined by this policy and law. Sexual harassment violates the policies of the District and also violates federal and state law, specifically Title IX and Massachusetts General Laws, C. 151C.

It will be a violation of this policy for any student to be sexually harassed by or to sexually harass another student, any employee or volunteer or other person connected with the District through conduct or communication of a sexual nature as defined by this policy. Retaliation against a student for filing a complaint, under this policy or for assisting in an investigation of sexual harassment is in violation of this policy.

#### **DEFINITION:**

The legal definition of sexual harassment is:

Unwelcome advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's success as a student;
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis of educational decisions affecting such individual(s); or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's educational performance, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.

Sexual harassment may include the following types of activities, but is not limited to these examples:

- Touching (arm, breast, buttocks, shoulders, etc.)
- Verbal comments (about parts of the body, what type of sex the victim would "be good at," clothing, looks, etc.)
- Name calling (from "honey" to "bitch" and worse)
- Starting and repeating sexual rumors
- Leers and stares
- Sexual or "dirty" jokes
- Cartoons, pictures, and pornography
- Using the computer to leave sexual messages or graffiti, or to play sexually offensive computer games
- Gestures
- Pressure for sexual activity
- Cornering, blocking, standing too close, following
- Conversations that are too personal
- "Rating" an individual – for example, on a scale from 1 to 10
- Obscene t-shirts, hats, or pins
- Showing inappropriate videos and other materials during class
- Sexual assault and attempted sexual assault
- Massaging the neck, massaging the shoulders
- Touching oneself sexually in front of others
- Graffiti
- Making kissing sounds or smacking sounds, licking the lips suggestively
- Howling, catcalls, whistles
- Repeatedly asking someone out when he/she is not interested
- Pulling down someone's pants or forcibly removing other articles of clothing
- Facial expressions (winking, kissing, etc.)
- "Slam books" (lists of students' names with derogatory sexual comments written about them by other students)

#### Complaint Procedure:

If you feel that someone has sexually harassed or is sexually harassing you, you should file a complaint by following the steps outlined below:

1. Speak or send a note to any employee of the school district whom you trust, (i.e., nurse, psychologist/counselor, teacher, principal, assistant principal, superintendent, etc.). You can also speak to your parents who can then notify the superintendent, principal or assistant principal.

Remember that the complaint procedure does not start until school/District personnel receive the complaint.

2. Within two school days of receipt of the verbal complaint, the employee will notify the principal/superintendent, and your parent/guardian will be notified of the pending complaint.
3. If you have not or do not want to put the complaint in writing, the employee will do so. This should be done no later than two (2) school days after you have talked, or given the note, to the employee. The complaint has to be put in writing to make sure that the employee fully and correctly understands the issue(s). A copy of the complaint, in writing, will be reviewed with you and your parent/guardian to ensure accuracy, before it is shared with the subject of the complaint.
4. The employee will refer the written complaint to the principal/superintendent. The principal/superintendent or his/her designee may speak with you to get more information. In any case, the principal/superintendent or his/her designee will speak to the person who is alleged to have sexually harassed you (called the “respondent”) to obtain information as well.
  - a. If the principal/superintendent feels that the complaint can be resolved without a formal investigation, he/she may use the informal procedure.<sup>1</sup> The informal procedure simply attempts to resolve the situation and can be done in many ways. Examples are:
    - The principal/superintendent or his/her designee may have a conversation between you and the respondent where you can tell the respondent that the behavior bothers you and must stop.
    - The principal/superintendent or his/her designee may have you write a letter to the respondent saying that the behavior bothers you and must stop.
    - The principal/superintendent or his/her designee may have separate conversations with you and the respondent

Examples of possible resolutions are as follows:

- Verbal statements of apology;
- Letters of apology;
- Assurances that the offensive behavior will end;
- Disciplinary action.

The informal procedure will be completed within five (5) school days from the date the principal/superintendent receives the complaint. The principal/superintendent or his/her designee will notify you, your parent/guardian, and the respondent of the results of the informal procedure. Resolution of the situation may or may not occur as a result of the informal procedure. If all the parties involved in this informal procedure feel that a resolution has been achieved, this discussion will remain confidential and no further action will be taken. If any of the parties feel that resolution has not been achieved, the following formal procedure will be used.

Investigative deadlines may be extended under extenuating circumstances such as illness.

#### Formal Procedure:

1. The formal procedure is used when any one of the following occurs:

---

<sup>1</sup> Even if the principal/superintendent thinks that the informal procedure is acceptable, you or the respondent may ask that the formal procedure be used, rather than, or after, the informal procedure.



- a. You, your parent/guardian, or the respondent ask that the formal procedure be used;
  - b. The principal/superintendent or his/her designee decides that the formal procedure should be used; or
  - c. You, your parent/guardian, or the respondent feels that the informal procedure was not helpful or adequate and one of the parties request, within five (5) school days, that the formal procedure be used.
2. The formal procedure will be completed within twenty (20) school days of the complaint being filed with the principal/superintendent, or if the informal procedure was used, within twenty (20) school days of the request to start the formal procedure.
  3. The principal/superintendent or his/her designee shall investigate the complaint and complete a written report, which will include:
    - All facts and circumstances of the incident;
    - A summary of the investigation, which will include interviews with anyone reasonably believed to have relevant information, namely, the individual filing the complaint, the respondent, and, if either party is under the age of 18, their parents (if appropriate), witnesses, and anyone else who may have experienced similar conduct;
    - A description of any actions already taken and/or proposed by the principal/superintendent or his/her designee.

Copies of the written report, including the principal/superintendent's findings, and the rationale and documentation of it will be forwarded to each of the parties involved within five (5) school days of completion of the investigation. All documentation of sexual harassment will be kept on file at the office of the superintendent.

If the principal/superintendent or his/her designee finds that sexually harassing conduct has occurred, then he/she may discipline the respondent, require the respondent to apologize to the complainant, suggest that the respondent go to counseling, or require the respondent to attend training, refer the matter for review by state or local law enforcement authorities, or any combination of the above.

Either party may appeal the decision of the principal in writing to the superintendent, within fifteen (15) school days of receipt of the findings of the formal procedure. The decision will be reviewed to ensure adequacy of the investigation and conclusions. Parties will be given an opportunity to submit additional information. The superintendent or his/her designee will make a decision and provide it in writing to both parties within thirty (30) days. The decision of the superintendent shall be final.

#### Other Resources:

Individuals also have the right to seek a remedy from the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD), One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108, (617) 727-3990, and/or the Regional Office of Civil Rights for the United States Department of Education, 222 John W. McCormack Building, Boston, MA 02109, (617) 223-9662.

#### Retaliation:

No one may retaliate against you for filing a complaint. Further, no one may retaliate against any student, employee, or any other person because they provided information or helped in the investigation.

If any person feels that he/she has been subjected to retaliation, he/she should file a complaint with the principal/superintendent.

Considerations To Remember:

- A. A man/boy, as well as a woman/girl, may be the victim of sexual harassment, and a woman/girl, as well as a man/boy, may be the harasser.
- B. The victim may be the same or opposite sex as the harasser.
- C. The victim does not have to be the person at whom the unwelcome sexual conduct is directed. The victim may also be someone who is affected by such conduct when it is directed toward another person. For example, inappropriate attempts at humor or the sexual harassment of one girl (or boy) may create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment for another girl (or boy) or may unreasonably interfere with an individual's educational performance.

Reference to this policy shall be included in all student handbooks.

***Policy 6435 WEAPONS***

The Wachusett Regional School District shall prohibit possession and/or use of any kind of weapon; weapons will not be tolerated on school premises or at school-related or school-sponsored activities and events.

For the purpose of this policy, "weapon" includes, but is not limited to, firearms, knives, or any other devices, or objects used to inflict or to threaten bodily harm.

- 1. Any weapon found in a locker or other storage space which is assigned to a student and which has a lock or other security device may be considered to be the property of the student assigned to the locker or other storage space for the purpose of disciplinary action under the Student Discipline Code. Any student found to be in possession of a weapon on school premises or at a school-sponsored event may be subject to expulsion from school by the principal.
- 2. Violations of this policy may lead to expulsion under the provisions of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71 Section 37H. Procedures for enforcement shall be contained in the Student Discipline Code.
- 3. In addition to the school discipline indicated in the Student Discipline Code, provided in paragraph B., appropriate criminal action shall be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 269, Section 10.
- 4. The weapons policy and regulations shall be implemented in accordance with the due process provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws and the Code of Massachusetts Regulations of the Department of Education, and the Student Discipline code.

***Policy 6437 PROMOTING CIVIL RIGHTS AND PROHIBITING HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION AND HATE CRIMES***

The Wachusett Regional School District is committed to providing our students equal educational opportunities and a safe learning environment free from harassment, discrimination and hate crimes. The District will not tolerate unlawful or disruptive behaviors at school or school-related activities

including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities and parent involvement. The District will promptly investigate all reports and complaints of harassment, discrimination and hate crimes and will take prompt, effective action to end such behaviors including, when appropriate, referral to law enforcement agencies.

The Wachusett Regional School District prohibits all forms of harassment, discrimination and hate crimes related or unrelated to race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, age or disability. The District will not tolerate retaliation against those taking action consistent with this policy. Threats or acts of retaliation, regardless of how they are expressed, are serious offenses that will subject the violator to significant disciplinary or other corrective actions.

#### Harassment:

Harassment is oral, written, graphic, electronic, or physical conduct on school property or at school-related activities relating to an individual's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability that is sufficiently severe, pervasive or persistent so as to interfere with or limit a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the District's programs or activities by creating a hostile, humiliating, intimidating, or offensive educational or work environment. For purposes of this policy, harassment shall also mean conduct that, if it persists, will likely create such a hostile, humiliating, intimidating, or offensive educational environment. A single incident may, depending upon its severity, create a hostile environment.

#### Student and Staff Responsibilities

All students and staff members, as members of the WRSD community, are responsible for complying with this policy and ensuring that he/she does not harass, discriminate or perpetuate a hate crime against another person on school grounds or at a school-related activity. Further, each student and staff member is responsible to make sure that he/she does not retaliate against any person who reports or files a complaint, or who helps someone report or file a complaint, or for cooperating in the investigation of a report of complaint.

#### Reporting Harassment, Discrimination or Hate Crimes

Students can report any case of harassment, discrimination or hate crimes to any adult in the school who is then responsible to inform the building principal or designee. The school principal or designee is responsible for receiving reports and complaints of violations at the school level. At the District level, the District Equity Coordinator is responsible for receiving and addressing reports or complaints of violations of this policy.

Any member of the school community who is informed of or believes that harassment, discrimination, retaliation or a hate crime has occurred or may have occurred at school or in a school-related activity must promptly report the incidents to the building principal or designee, or the Title VI Coordinator, Title IX Coordinator, Equity Coordinator or Superintendent. In situations where a student or other person is uncomfortable reporting the incident to a designated official, he/she may report it to a trusted school employee who must promptly inform a designated official.

Upon receipt of a written or oral report or complaint, the principal (or designee) and the Equity Coordinator will promptly notify each other of the facts alleged and any initial action taken. If and when a report or complaint involves physical injury, the principal or designee will promptly report the

incident to the Superintendent. All complaints or reports must be documented on the District's "Reporting/Complaint Form". If the complainant or reporter is unwilling or unable to complete the form, the designated official who receives the oral complaint or report will promptly prepare the written report using the reporter's or complainant's own words. The designated official will also summarize any initial action taken. If the complaint occurs at the school level, the designated official will promptly provide the principal with the completed Reporting/Complaint Form with a copy to the District Equity Coordinator.

A report or complaint involving a principal should be filed with the District Equity Coordinator or Superintendent. A report or complaint involving the Equity Coordinator should be filed with the Superintendent. A report or complaint involving the Superintendent should be filed with the School Committee.

### Reporting Other Incidences

Under General Laws Chapter 119, Section 51A for purposes of reporting child abuse and neglect to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Under MGL119, Sec. 51A, a school staff member who has reasonable cause to believe that a student under the age of 18 is suffering physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect by a parent, guardian, school staff member or other caretaker must immediately report the abuse or neglect either directly to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) or to the person designated by the school to accept those reports, who than promptly reports to DCF.

The principal and/or Superintendent will report to local police certain forms of sexual harassment and conduct that may constitute a crime.

The principal and/or Superintendent may report physical injury, destruction of public property, potential hate crimes and other acts of a serious criminal nature to local police for investigation.

### Protection Against Retaliation

The District will take appropriate steps to protect from retaliation persons who take action consistent with this policy, or who report, file a complaint of, or cooperate in an investigation of a violation of this policy. Threats or acts of retaliation, whether person-to-person, by electronic means, or through third parties, are serious offenses that will subject the violator to significant disciplinary and other corrective action.

### Ensuring Safety During Investigation

The designated official, in consultation with the District Equity Coordinator, will take any step he/she determines is necessary and/or advisable to protect, to the extent practicable, the complainant, witnesses, and other individuals from further incidents or from retaliation pending the outcome of the investigation.

### Determination of Proceedings

Upon receipt of a complaint or report, the District must determine whether to undertake formal or informal proceedings to resolve the complaint or report. Upon receipt of a complaint or report, a designated official will attempt to identify and obtain cooperation from the victim(s). Where the designated official does not obtain the identity or cooperation of the alleged victim(s), the District will proceed with an investigation and then proceed to formal or informal proceedings to the extent possible.

*Informal proceedings* will commence when criteria for Formal Proceedings are not met. In these cases, a designated official, in consultation with the Equity Coordinator, may apply either the Student Code of Conduct or initiate an Informal Proceeding, which strives to resolve the report or complaint through non-disciplinary corrective action, although the designated official may also determine that disciplinary action is appropriate and necessary.

*Formal proceedings* will commence when the designated official, in consultation with the District Equity Coordinator determines that:

- the allegation is serious enough that it appears to place the complainant or any other person at physical risk;
- the incident has resulted in a criminal charge;
- the incident involves a referral to the Department of Children and Families (DCF);
- the allegation involves a serious form of harassment, discrimination or retaliation;
- there is a pending Formal Proceeding against the subject of the complaint;
- the subject of the complaint has previously been found to have violated this policy after Formal Proceedings, or
- that a formal proceeding is otherwise appropriate under the circumstances,

the designated official must then commence a Formal Proceeding.

#### *Formal Proceedings-Investigation*

The designated official will separately meet in a timely manner with the complainant and the subject of the complaint, and, if a student, with their parent(s) or guardian(s), to tell them about the formal process, explain the prohibition against retaliation, and determine the remedy the complainant seeks. The designated official will also explain that the investigation will be kept as confidential as possible, but that the District cannot promise absolute confidentiality, and may not be able to withhold the complainant's identity from the subject of the complaint, since such a promise could interfere with the District's ability to enforce its policy, conduct a fair and thorough investigation, or impose disciplinary or corrective action.

Following a prompt and thorough investigation, the designated official, in consultation with the District Equity Coordinator, will determine whether the allegations have been substantiated, and whether the policy, or, if the subject of the complaint is a student, the Student Code of Conduct has been violated. The designated official, in consultation with the District Equity Coordinator, will prepare a written report that includes the investigative findings, the investigative steps taken, and the reasons for those findings. These findings will specify whether the allegations have been substantiated, whether the policy, or if the subject of the complaint is a student, the Student Code of Conduct, has been violated, and any decision or recommendation for disciplinary and corrective action.

The designated official will promptly notify the complainant and the subject of the complaint in writing to let them know whether the complaint has been substantiated. If the complaint is substantiated, the designated official will also promptly notify the complainant of any non-disciplinary corrective action imposed to protect him/her from future policy violations. If the complaint is substantiated and the offender remains a student in the school, the designated official will meet with the offender and his/her parent or guardian, to describe the disciplinary and/or corrective action imposed, the school's

expectations for future behavior and the potential consequences for retaliation or future violation of the policy. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the investigation or outcome thereof, the designated official shall inform the complainant of his/her right to file a complaint with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and/or the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.

If the District's investigation results from a third party report, the designated official will inform that person that the District has taken steps consistent with the policy, while not providing information about any disciplinary action imposed or any other information that would violate applicable state and federal confidentiality laws or student record regulations.

### Violations

Where a violation of the policy has been reported by a third party, and an alleged victim fails to cooperate with the investigation, or denies the incident occurred, disciplinary and corrective action may be precluded or limited, depending upon circumstances and availability of information from other sources.

### False Reports

Any person making false charges of harassment, discrimination or the occurrence of a hate crime is subject to disciplinary action.

### Discipline

If a student has been found in violation of this policy, the District will impose disciplinary measures and/or corrective action to end and prevent further occurrences of the complained of action(s). The District will take into account harm suffered by the victim(s) as well as any damage to school or District property. The nature of any action taken must comply with District and school disciplinary policies. Any disciplinary or corrective action shall conform to the due process requirements of federal and state law.

Action concerning students may include a written warning; classroom or school transfer; suspension (short or long-term); exclusion from school-sponsored functions, after-school programs and/or extra-curricular activities; limited or denied access to parts or areas of the building; exclusion, expulsion or discharge from school; adult supervision on school premises; parent conferences; an apology to the victim; awareness training; empathy development awareness programs; counseling or any other action authorized by and consistent with the Student Code of Conduct and/or school disciplinary code. The District complies with federal and state laws and regulations pertaining to the discipline of students with disabilities.

### Oversight

The District has designated the Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Services as the District Equity Coordinator. The Equity Coordinator will, under the supervision of the Superintendent of Schools, ensure the successful administration of and compliance with this policy. Information including the name of the Equity Coordinator, his/her mailing address, telephone number and email address will be posted prominently in the District office as well as all school buildings within the District.

*\*\*Information from Attorney General Thomas Reilly's Safe Schools Initiative Sample Policy for Promoting Civil Rights and Prohibiting Harassment, Bullying, Discrimination and Hate Crimes, June 24, 2005, was used in drafting this document.*

The District has a policy (P6438 Anti-Bullying Policy) that meets the legal requirements of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O *Act Relative to Bullying in Schools*

### ***Policy 6438 – ANTI-BULLYING POLICY***

The Wachusett Regional School District fosters and strives to maintain educational environments that are free from bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. No student or school staff member, including, but not limited to, educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity and paraprofessionals in the Wachusett Regional School District shall be permitted to bully a student through conduct or communication or to retaliate against any individual for reporting bullying or cooperating with an investigation of bullying. A student or school staff member, including but not limited to, educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors, to an extracurricular activity and paraprofessionals, who engages in bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation will be subject to a range of disciplinary sanctions including, but not limited to, reprimand, detention, suspension, expulsion, or other sanctions as determined by administration. In addition to being subject to school or employment related disciplinary sanctions, individuals who engage in bullying and/or retaliation shall be required to participate in instructional activities designed to develop the skills and proficiencies necessary to avoid engaging in further bullying and/or retaliatory behavior(s).

The Wachusett Regional School District has established separate discrimination and harassment policies that provide protections to specific categories and groups of students and staff. Nothing in this policy shall prevent the Wachusett Regional School District from responding to discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state and/or federal law.

#### **A. Definitions**

***Bullying:*** *The repeated use by one or more students or by a school staff member, including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity, or paraprofessional, of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his/her property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. For the purposes of this policy, bullying shall include cyber-bullying.*

***Cyber-bullying:*** *Bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic,*

*photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications.*

*Cyber-bullying shall also include (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.*

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

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

**Aggressor/Perpetrator:** A student or school staff member including but not limited to who engaged, either individually, or as part of a group, in bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation.

**Hostile Environment:** A situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the target's education.

**Local law enforcement agency:** Local police department(s).

**Principal:** The administrative leader of a school in the Wachusett Regional School District or his/her designee for the purposes of investigating and responding to reports of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation.

**Retaliation:** Intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, witnesses a bullying incident, or has reliable information about bullying.

**Target/Victim:** A student against whom bullying or retaliation has been perpetrated.

## B. Policy Jurisdiction

For purposes of this policy, bullying is prohibited:

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



2) *at a location, activity, function or program that is not school related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the school district or school, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Nothing contained herein shall require schools to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.*

#### C. Reporting Requirements

In furtherance of this policy and in accordance with M.G.L. c.71, §37O, a school staff member, including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity, or paraprofessional, will immediately report to the school principal or their designee any instance of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation that the staff member has witnessed or has become aware of.

#### D. Investigation / Procedures

##### 1. Investigative Procedures for Potential Bullying or Retaliation:

Each school is required to investigate in a timely manner and determine whether or not bullying and /or retaliation has occurred. This requires a determination as to the nature of the incident (bullying v. peer conflict). Once determined, outreach to the target and family shall occur concurrently with a commitment to addressing the needs of the target, identifying and educating bystanders, and providing consequences for aggressors.

Steps to be taken will include:

- a. Determine the nature, chronicity, and severity of the presenting situation.
- b. Identify aggressor(s), target(s), and bystanders
- c. Provide a safety and comfort plan for the target(s)
- d. Identify whether or not the bullying has occurred on or off campus
- e. Immediately remind the alleged student aggressor, target, and witnesses of the importance of the investigation, their obligation to be truthful and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action
- f. Have timely conversations with all individuals involved
- g. Establish a timetable for following up with parents, especially parents of target(s)
- h. Inform parents, guardians and all relevant adults of initial investigation following confidentiality requirements
- i. Collect and document data

#### E. Consequences from Findings:

Upon the principal or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the district use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior M.G.L. c. 71 § 370(d)(v). Skill building approaches include offering individualized skill-building sessions based on our district's anti-bullying curricula, providing relevant educational

activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with our counselors and psychologists, implementing a range of academic and non-academic positive behavioral support to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals, meeting with parents and guardians to engage parent support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home, adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills, and making a referral for evaluation. If the principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance the plan and with the school's or district's code of conduct.

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504, which should be read in cooperation with the state laws regarding student discipline, govern discipline procedures for eligible students with disabilities protected by these laws.

If the principal or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, the student shall be subject to disciplinary action. Consequences for bullying or retaliation should be immediately and consistently applied and must be delivered in a non-hostile manner. Consequences may be disagreeable or uncomfortable but should not involve revenge or hostile punishment.

Consequences should consider these specific issues:

- a. Nature, severity, and chronicity of the behavioral impact on the target
- b. Degree of physical, psychological, social harm on the target
- c. Student's age, development and degree of maturity
- d. Surrounding circumstances and context in which the incident(s) occurred
- e. Prior disciplinary history and continuing patterns of behavior
- f. Relationship between and among the parties involved
- g. Context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred
- h. The need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior.

The appropriate range of consequences, subject to due process where appropriate, may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Report to law enforcement
- b. Expulsion
- c. Referral to outside agency
- d. Reassignment of classes
- e. Reassignment of seats in lunch, bus, class, etc.
- f. Out-of-school suspension
- g. In-school suspension
- h. Detention
- i. Loss of privileges (including before and after school activities)
- j. Temporary removal from the classroom
- k. Verbal reprimand

In addition, instructional activities designed to develop the skills and proficiencies necessary to avoid engaging in further bullying and/or retaliatory behaviors will be given, which may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Reparation to the target
- b. Completion of curricular based assignment(s)
- c. Meeting with Civil Rights Coordinator
- d. Completion of community service designed to help the aggressor understand and respect differences; written report required by the aggressor
- e. Therapeutic support for both aggressor and targets

F. Notification Obligations:

Notice to another school or district: If an incident of bullying or retaliation involves students from more than one school district, commonwealth charter school, or non-public school, a school administrator shall promptly notify the appropriate administrator of the other school or district so that both may take appropriate action.

Notice to parents or guardians: Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the student aggressor of this, and the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations of 603 CMR 49.00, including 49.05 paragraph 4:

“A principal's notification to a parent about an incident or a report of bullying or retaliation must comply with confidentiality requirements of the Massachusetts Student Records Regulations, 603 CMR 23.00, and the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Regulations, 34 CFR Part 99, as set forth in 603 CMR 49.07.”

The principal or designees will notify the parents/guardians of the acts the district has taken to prevent further acts of bullying and retaliation through consequences and instructional activities, as discussed above. Moreover, the school will notify the parents/guardians about the range of services, including, but not limited to, counseling both individually and in group settings, that are specifically designed to address issues of bullying and retaliation.

Notice to law enforcement: At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the student aggressor, the principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirement of 603 CMR 49.00.

G. Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

The superintendent will be responsible for the development, implementation, and evaluation of a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan to address bullying prevention and intervention in district schools.

(i) Development of the Plan

The plan shall be developed in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians. The consultation shall include notice and a public comment period.

The plan shall recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming a target of bullying or harassment based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have any one (1) of the above characteristics.

The plan shall be reviewed and updated biennially.

School-wide Bullying Prevention and Intervention Program

All Wachusett Regional schools will include a District-wide bullying prevention and intervention plan that is proactive and educational, in keeping with the guidelines published by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The district is committed to supporting each school in their adoption of a district-wide bullying prevention and intervention program.

(ii) Contents of the Plan

The District-wide Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan shall include:

- (a) descriptions of and statements prohibiting bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation;
- (b) procedures for students, staff, parents, guardians, and others to report bullying or retaliation;
- (c) a provision that reports of bullying or retaliation may be made anonymously but that no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report;
- (d) a provision that any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action;
- (e) procedures for promptly responding to and investigating reports of bullying or retaliation;
- (f) procedures for collecting, maintaining and reporting bullying incident data;
- (g) the range of disciplinary actions that may be taken against a perpetrator for bullying or retaliation; provided, however, that the disciplinary actions shall balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior.
- (h) clear procedures for restoring a sense of safety for a victim and assessing that victim's needs for protection
- (i) strategy for providing counseling or referral to appropriate services for aggressors, targets and appropriate family members;
- (j) procedures consistent with state and federal law for promptly notifying the parents or guardians of a victim and a perpetrator; provided, that the parents or guardians of a victim shall also be notified of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation

- (k) provision for the notification of local law enforcement agencies if the principal reasonably believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor;
- (l) provision for annual and ongoing professional development to build the skills of all staff to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. The content of such professional development training shall be in accordance with the requirements of M.G.L. c.71, §37O;
- (m) provision for the implementation of a research-based anti-bullying curriculum in grades PK-12 and for informing parents regarding the curriculum contents, the dynamics of bullying, and online safety and cyber-bullying and strategies for reinforcing the curriculum at home; and
- (n) the specific steps that the District shall take to support vulnerable students and to provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies needed to prevent or respond to bullying or harassment.

(iii) Implementation of the Plan

The school principal shall be responsible for implementing and oversight of the District's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan within his/her school.

(iv) Public Notice

The Wachusett Regional School District shall provide to all school staff annual written notice of the plan. The faculty and staff at each school shall be trained annually on the plan applicable to the school. Relevant sections of the plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff shall be included in a school district or school employee handbook. The plan shall be posted on the website of each school in the District.

Legal Refs: M.G.L. c.71, §37O; 603 CMR 49.00

***Policy 6515 STUDENT PUBLICATIONS***

The Wachusett Regional School Committee recognizes and supports student publications and other literary activities that give students an experience in journalism.

The School Committee recognizes that the District must maintain a level of objectivity deemed to be in the best interest of the community and, to this end, the following procedures are in effect:

1. No school publication will accept advertising that is political, religious, or discriminatory in nature.
2. All advertising is subject to review and approval by the principal or a designee relative to content and appropriateness.
3. Final editorial control and approval of all materials intended for publication are the responsibility of, and may be subject to the approval of, the school administration.
4. This policy shall be referenced in the "Student Handbook".
5. A statement indicating the editorial control by the school administration regarding all advertising will be included on order forms or other similar correspondence.

## ***Policy 6531.1 SOCIAL MEDIA***

### **Section I: Introduction**

The Wachusett Regional School District recognizes that our students must learn to utilize modern online tools for social and educational collaboration. These tools, include, but are not limited to:

- Social networks (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- Email, chat, and other messaging technologies
- Message boards and forums
- Blogs and collaborative websites

### **Section II: Goals of the Policy**

The Wachusett Regional School District Committee permits the use of social media platforms that support instructional opportunities and the social/emotional development of students. The District promotes educational uses of technology, including social media tools, along with appropriate training for students and staff on safety, proper use, and management of innovative learning tools.

Social media platforms will be used in District schools to achieve the following goals:

- Educate students, staff, and parents/guardians about the concerns and benefits of social media
- Access social media during and beyond the school day for educational purposes, social/emotional development, and other acceptable school-related uses
- Explore ways to integrate social media with classroom teaching and learning
- Integrate student publication with authentic social media environments
- Encourage the use of technology-based interventions to support student learning
- Allow for ongoing interaction between students and teachers for appropriate school-related use
- Promote student interaction with peers, outside organizations, and professionals in a global community
- Offer and encourage student use of online resources to communicate and seek support for bullying and safety concerns
- Encourage parent/guardian interaction with teachers and schools through the use of digital communications and social media environments

### **Section III: Guidelines for Use of Social Media Platforms**

Any use of social media platforms, whether in District schools or related to District programming, will adhere to the following guidelines:

- All use of social media tools must comply with District acceptable use policies, inclusive of but not limited to Policy 6532 Videotaping and Photographing of District Students and Policy 6531.2 BYOD (Bring Your Own Device).
- All staff and student online communication is subject to state and federal laws, such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and District policies governing communication

- All staff and student online communication is subject to policies ensuring safe environments for students and staff free from bullying, harassment, and other forms of unwanted communication that threaten well-being and productivity
- Staff and District administration are encouraged to collaborate in developing social media tools
- Staff social media accounts used to communicate with current WRSD students will be established using District email accounts and will remain separate from any personal staff social media accounts
- Educational social media accounts maintained by staff members shall not contain personal information
- District staff shall not subscribe to students' personal postings in social media platforms not controlled or monitored by District staff

### ***Policy 6531.2 BYOD (Bring Your Own Device)***

The Wachusett Regional School District is committed to providing opportunities for students to utilize technology in order to:

- Gather and evaluate internet resources
- Create and share digital content
- Develop digital literacy
- Participate in a productive and respectful online environment

As part of this commitment, school administrators and teachers may allow students to use personally-owned devices and access school wireless networks to enhance instruction and learning. Permission to use such devices will be granted only when sufficient network resources are present. School administrators and teachers shall determine the extent to which the use of personal devices is permitted. However, such personal devices shall not be required by the District. Should students not have access to personal devices, or should they choose not to bring in their own devices, access will be made available by the District to complete assignments.

Access to District networks is a privilege which may be revoked at any time. Students must have explicit permission to use personal devices each time they are used. Students should assume that personal devices may not be used unless told otherwise. When explicit approval has NOT been granted, all devices must be turned off and put away. Recording audio, video or photographic images without the subjects' permission is not allowed in school at any time. (reference Policy 6532 *Videotaping and Photographing of District Students*). The use of personal devices in school is subject to the District's acceptable use policy regarding computers. This policy is outlined in each school's student handbook. In accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), the District will filter all internet content available to students. Any attempt to access inappropriate material will result in disciplinary action.

### **Student Responsibilities**

- Device Security - As with any personal property, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that any personally-owned device is safe and secure. The District is not liable or responsible for damage, theft, or loss of any student-owned device or any information stored on a student-owned device.
- Network Security – Student devices shall have up-to-date antivirus protection. Computers or

other devices infected with malicious software or lacking proper virus protection will not be allowed on school networks.

- Technical Support - The District does not have the resources to provide technical support for privately owned devices. Accordingly, District technology personnel will NOT attempt to troubleshoot or repair student-owned computers or other devices.
- Cellular Data Charges - Cellular devices may incur usage fees from cellular providers for texting or when accessing the internet without being properly connected to the school's internal wireless network. The District is not responsible for any charges related to texting or internet usage on student-owned devices.

Legal Refs: Title XVII – Children's Internet Protection Act

### ***Policy 6562 ALTERNATE STUDENT TRANSPORTATION***

It shall be expected that bus students will go to and from school by the same means on a daily basis. A parent or high school student may choose an alternate mode of transportation over which the school system has no authority. Therefore, a choice to use an alternative form of transportation other than the school bus shall be at the risk of the parent and the student.

Procedures for requesting alternate transportation to and from school shall be contained in the student handbook. The high school student will be responsible to inform parent/guardian on taking a late bus or alternate means of transportation

K-8 students will be required to present written permission notice to the school from parent/guardian when using alternate means of transportation.

In case of emergencies, oral notification will be an acceptable alternative with the administration making a written record of the notification.

All high school students applying for a parking sticker and using a personal vehicle to transport other students will be required to carry personal liability insurance on the vehicle in the amount of \$100,000 - \$300,000.

### ***Policy 6611 STUDENT IMMUNIZATIONS***

The Wachusett Regional School District is required, pursuant to MGL c.76 section 15 and its associated regulations, 105 CMR 220.000, to keep an immunization record on file for each student enrolled in the school or system. The record must contain, at a minimum, the month and year of each immunization, and be signed by the healthcare provider. Immunization histories must be up to date for each child according to Immunization Guidelines published by the Commonwealth.

The Massachusetts School Immunization Law, M.G.L. c. 76 Section 15 provides that: *“no child shall, except as hereinafter provided, be admitted to school except upon presentation of a physician's certificate that the child has been successfully immunized against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, measles, and poliomyelitis and such other communicable diseases as may be specified from time to time by the Department of Public Health.”*



*Pursuant to the Massachusetts School Immunization Law quoted immediately above:*

No unimmunized student shall be admitted to, or be allowed to remain in school, unless they can satisfy these requirements:

- A. A medical exemption is allowed if a healthcare provider submits documentation to school that an immunization is medically contraindicated; or
- B. A religious exception is allowed if a parent submits a signed statement to the school stating immunizations are contrary to his/her sincere religious beliefs.
- C. Students who fall under McKenney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001.

Do note: Unimmunized students (including those with medical, religious exemptions, and those who fall under McKenney-Vento) who are otherwise exempt from the immunization law may be subject to exclusion from school if there is exposure to certain communicable childhood diseases, as specified in 105 CMR 300.200.

Do note: Philosophical exemptions are not allowed in Massachusetts *even if* signed by a physician. The documentation regarding the above qualified exemptions will be kept in the students' files at school.

### ***Policy 6613.2 ATHLETIC HEAD INJURY AND CONCUSSION POLICY***

The safety of students is a high priority for the Wachusett Regional School District. Students who sustain head injuries while in extracurricular athletic activities and those involved in their treatment must follow the protocols based on 105 C.M.R 201.000

(<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/com-health/injury/105-cmr-201.pdf>) found online on the high school and middle schools' websites as well as in the student handbooks.

Students who have sustained a head injury must be appropriately evaluated according to the protocol. In order to resume athletic activity, a medical clearance and authorization form must be submitted indicating that the student is sufficiently recovered. Return to academics will be consistent with the protocol.

District administration, athletic staff, and nursing staff will review the protocols annually to ensure that it is current and reflects best practice. The School Committee will review and revise this policy as needed, but at least bi-annually.

### ***Policy 6616 INSURANCE***

The Wachusett Regional School District shall require each student participating in intramural programs and/or athletic teams to provide evidence of an active accident or health insurance policy covering the student.

### ***Policy 6619 LIFE-THREATENING ALLERGIES***

The Wachusett Regional School District is committed to providing a safe and healthy school environment for all students that is inclusive of school-wide practices that will minimize the risk of exposure to allergens that pose a threat to students while participating in all elements of the school day. School-wide practices along with identified accommodations, as deemed necessary by school personnel, parents/guardians and/or the student's physician, will provide all students the opportunity to participate fully in all school programs and activities. The successful management of this policy will require a partnership among the parents/guardians, the student, and all school personnel involved with the education, extra-curricular activities and the transportation of the student.

When it is determined by a physician that a student from the Wachusett Regional School District has a life threatening allergy and must have an Epinephrine Auto Injector, a 504 meeting will be convened to determine eligibility and the student's ability to successfully access all facets of the curriculum including extra-curricular activities. In the event that eligibility is determined, the 504 Plan will be communicated to professional staff of the building and all other school personnel who will have responsibility for the student throughout the course of the school day including but not limited to: teachers, bus drivers, playground monitors, cafeteria workers, substitute teachers and/or substitute nurse, and before and after school program monitors. In keeping with the 504 guidelines, this plan will be reviewed and revised annually.

At the start of every school year, the District health offices will provide allergy awareness training to staff in each building. All staff will learn how to minimize exposure to food and environmental allergens and to recognize the symptoms of anaphylaxis, the life threatening reaction that may occur with allergen exposure. Whenever it is possible to do so safely, the administration of the Epinephrine Auto Injector will be done by the certified school nursing staff or health care staff. Because a certified nurse or health care person may not be available to respond, staff will be trained on the administration of an Epinephrine Auto Injector. Whenever a new teacher or staff member is hired, the school nurse at his or her assigned school will provide that individual with Epinephrine training within five (5) days of beginning work. All staff and teachers must timely complete the Epinephrine administration training. The Superintendent will ensure that the District physician provides each school health office with the medical orders necessary to maintain a supply of all medications, including epinephrine as well as the ability to administer the epinephrine as necessary.

At the start of each school year, the health office will provide a list of all students who have life-threatening allergies to building administration, the main office secretary, the teachers, coaches, cafeteria staff, playground monitors, before and after school monitors, and the bus company. In an ongoing basis, the health office will maintain, update, and distribute a revised list of students with life threatening allergies. All coaches and paid co-curricular personnel must provide evidence that they have received their yearly training to administer an Epinephrine Auto Injector immediately upon the start of their employment or when requested by the District. If such personnel have not been trained to administer an Epinephrine Auto Injector, they must immediately request training through the District health offices. Volunteers leading co-curricular activities are encouraged to receive training.

In response to the presence of food-based allergies, parents/guardians may not send outside food/candy/drink to share in the classroom. As part of a District-wide initiative to discourage the use of food as a reward, both teachers and parents/guardians are encouraged to recognize and celebrate students by methods that do not involve food. For this same reason, any projects or classroom activities

should also avoid the use of food items. Traditional school-based celebrations (i.e. the 8th grade cookout, etc) may be permitted with the permission of the Superintendent's office. Precautions will be taken to ensure the safety and well-being of all students.

The District's Policy for Bullying Prevention and Intervention, as well as all Student Handbook policies pertaining to the support of a safe and healthy school environment, should make reference to the safety and well being of those students with food and life threatening allergies.

### ***Policy 6621 TRANSPORTATION SAFETY AND SECURITY PROCEDURES***

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

To ensure the safety of all students who ride in buses, it may occasionally be necessary to revoke the privilege of transportation from a student who abuses this privilege. Parents of children whose behavior and misconduct on school buses endangers the health, safety, and welfare of other riders or damages properties will be notified that their children face the loss of transportation privileges. Notification of this policy shall be contained in the Student Handbook.

1. Children will be instructed as to the proper procedure for boarding and exiting from a school bus and in proper and safe conduct while aboard.
2. Emergency evacuation drills will be conducted at least twice a year to acquaint student riders with procedures in emergency situations.
3. All vehicles used to transport children will be inspected periodically for conformance with state and federal safety requirements.
4. Classroom instruction on school bus safety will be provided.

### ***Policy 6631 NON-DISCRIMINATION***

The Wachusett Regional School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, English Language Learner (ELL) status, housing status, or other protected status in the operation of the educational programs, activities, or employment policies, and no person will be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to its public schools, or in obtaining advantage and privileges in regards to courses of study and extracurricular programs of such public schools on account of race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, English Language Learner (ELL) status, housing status or other protected category.

### ***Policy 6910 STUDENT RECORDS***

The Wachusett Regional School District shall:

1. Take all reasonable precautions to preserve the confidentiality of a student's records.
2. Make available for inspection all school records of a student upon request of the parent or legal guardian.
3. Make available for inspection all school records of a student upon his or her request provided that the student is fourteen (14) years of age or older or upon entering the ninth grade.
4. Disseminate, to parents and students, State Regulations on Student Records and this policy annually.

### **Regulations:**

The State Board of Education has adopted regulations pertaining to student records that are designed to ensure parents' rights of confidentiality, inspection, amendment, and destruction of student records, and to assist school authorities in their responsibilities for the maintenance of student records.

The regulations apply to all information kept by the District on a student in a manner such that he or she may be individually identified. The regulations divide the record into the transcript and the temporary record. The transcript includes only the minimum information necessary to reflect the student's educational progress. This information includes name, address, course titles, grades, credits, and grade level completed. The transcript is kept by the school system for at least sixty years after the student leaves the system.

The temporary record contains the majority of the information maintained by the school system about the student. This may include such things as standardized test results, class rank, school sponsored extra-curricular activities, and evaluations and comments by teachers, counselors, and other persons. The temporary record is destroyed seven years after the student leaves the school system.

The following is a summary of major parent and student rights regarding their student records:

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

*Confidentiality of Records* - No individuals or organizations are allowed to have access to information in the student record without specific, informed, written consent of the parent, legal guardian, or student of legal age. Exceptions include only those state agencies that specifically are authorized to request student information.

According to federal law, the District is required to release the names, addresses, and telephone listings of students to military recruiters and institutions of higher learning upon request for recruitment and

scholarship purposes without prior consent. Parents and eligible students have the right to request that this information not be released without their consent by notifying their school building office in writing. At the beginning of each school year, parents of incoming freshmen and parents of students new to Wachusett Regional High School will be mailed a form to complete, indicating their choice to give or withhold their consent to release information.

The District Administration shall not release a student's social security number or date and place of birth to anyone except as required by law.

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

*Destruction of Records* - The regulations require that certain parts of the student record, such as the temporary record, be destroyed a certain period of time after the student leaves the school system. School authorities are also allowed to destroy misleading, outdated, or irrelevant information in the record from time to time while the student is enrolled in the school system. Before any such information may be destroyed, the parent and student must be notified, and have an opportunity to receive a copy of any of the information before its destruction.

Consistent with the Education Reform Act, the District will transfer a student's record to a new school outside the Wachusett Regional School District without prior consent required from the parent or eligible student.