



Watertown Public Schools

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Message from the Principals

Dear, Parents, Guardians and Students,

For a school community to fulfill its mission, implement its values and achieve its goals, there must be clear expectations and guidelines for all its members to follow. We hope that this handbook will help familiarize you with the practices and procedures of the Cunniff, Hosmer, and Lowell Elementary Schools.

The protocols in this document are ones that are common to all 3 schools. At the beginning of each school year, you will also receive a document from your child's individual school that outlines school specific protocols that differ between schools due to the uniqueness of each building.

Please refer to this handbook regularly and review the information presented in it with your child(ren). It is important that students, parents, staff and administration work together to achieve the standards we set for our community of learners.

We appreciate your cooperation and look forward to the coming school year.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Watertown Public Schools Vision Statement 2010 - 2013

The Watertown Public Schools promote high achievement through inquiry, problem solving, collaboration, creativity and hard work. We provide students with a robust education so they will acquire, apply, and practice the knowledge and skills needed for self-actualization and life-long learning. All programs support diverse learning styles, civic interaction, global awareness, and personal success.

WPS District Strategic Goals 2010 – 2013

- Support High Academic Achievement
- Foster the Capacity for Life-long Learning
- Promote Local and Global Citizenship

Support High Academic Achievement

The Watertown Public Schools will ensure that each student becomes an accomplished learner in the arts, humanities, mathematics, physical sciences and social sciences. The school system will provide all students with a learning environment that sets high expectations and stimulates thinking, problem-solving, inquiry, creativity, and hard work.

School Committee

The Watertown School Committee establishes goals, policies, and the budget for the Watertown Public Schools. The School Committee hires the Superintendent and works closely with that individual in developing policies and practices to improve the school system. The School Committee also is responsible for conducting collective bargaining with all employee organizations and has other responsibilities as outlined by Massachusetts General Laws.

The School Committee consists of seven members. Six are elected on a town-wide basis for four-year terms. The Town Council President serves as the seventh member and is elected to a two-year term. In January of each year the School Committee elects a chair, vice-chair, and secretary from among its members. The School Committee also organizes itself into subcommittees to conduct its business.

Members:

- Eileen Hsü-Balzer, Chair
- Michael Shepard, Vice-Chair
- Guido Guidotti, Secretary
- Julie McMahan
- John Portz
- Mark Sideris
- Elizabeth Yusem

School Arrival

Please refer to your individual school procedures for specific school arrival procedures.

School Hours

Lowell: Arrival at 8:15 a.m. and dismissal at 2:30 p.m.
Cunniff: Arrival at 8:15 a.m. and dismissal at 2:30 p.m.
Hosmer: Arrival at 8:20 a.m. and dismissal at 2:35 p.m.

Please notify the office if you will be late, as some children become stressed and upset when they are not picked up on time. Teachers will bring any child who has not been picked up back into the building. We will arrange for the child to be supervised by the after-school program. There is a fee for this service.

Late Arrivals

Parents are responsible for getting children to school on time each day. Attendance is taken 5 minutes after the scheduled arrival time. Students who arrive late must check in at the office and receive a tardy slip. In the case of students who live out-of-district, habitual tardiness may be cause for rescinding the out-of- district transfer approval.

Dismissals

Please refer to your individual schools procedures for specific school dismissal procedures.

Dismissal Plans

It is very important that we are aware of the plan you have made for your child at dismissal. We want to be sure we have the best information and that you sanction all plans. We know your contact information, but we need the actual plan, i.e. "My child may walk to our home independently." Read and fill out the dismissal form, sign that you are in agreement and return it to school. We will keep this plan on file should questions arise. In the event that your regular plan changes, please fill out a revised form for the file.

On days when your dismissal plan changes, for **that day only**, please send a signed note or email to your child's teacher. Phone calls are not acceptable. Thanks for your help in this important aspect of ensuring the children's safety.

Early Dismissal

If you need to have your child released from school early, please send a note to the classroom teacher or call the office. An authorized adult should report to the school office to pick up your child. No child will be allowed to leave the school grounds without the authorization of a parent or legal guardian. The adult responsible for the student must sign the child out in the log at the school office and wait for the child there.

Early Release Days

Early release days are scheduled on some Wednesdays during the year for staff professional development. Students are released at 12:15 p.m. following lunch. Additional full days of staff professional development occur during the school year. Children will not attend school on those days. Please consult your school calendar, newsletters, and local newspapers for these important dates.

School Closings and Delayed Openings

State law requires 180 days of instruction, and also requires that any snow days be made up before June 30th. Snow days and delayed openings are announced through an automated phone message and listed on the website, www.watertown.k12.ma.us.

No school announcements are also made on the following radio and television stations:

WCVB Television (Channel 5)

WHDH Television (Channel 7)

WBZ Television (Channel 4) and Radio (AM 1030)

Cable Television Service - If available, check the local community channel

WBUR Web site - part of National Public Broadcasting (Radio - FM 90.9)

No School

Announcements usually begin between 6:00 and 6:30 a.m.

All parents and students are urged to refer to the above communication services.

PLEASE DO NOT CALL the School Department, Police Department, or Fire Department for school cancellation information. These lines must remain open for emergency situations.

Delayed Openings

When a delayed school opening is announced, school will open **up to two hours** after the regularly scheduled time. Lunch will be served at the regular time, and school will close at the regularly scheduled time.

**Please do not call the police, fire, or school departments*

Attendance

Student attendance is a critical component of learning. Research studies show that higher attendance is related to higher achievement. To focus attention on the importance of attendance the federal No Child Left Behind Act allows states to use attendance as an academic indicator of quality. To reach the No Child Left Behind academic indicator for attendance in Massachusetts 95% of the students in a school must attend each day.

Massachusetts state law (M.G.L 76 Sections 2 and 4: School Attendance) requires parents/guardians to have their children attend school.

To support attendance Watertown Public Schools have a process to monitor and encourage school attendance. The protocol would apply to elementary school students.

The Middle School and High School have their own policy.

Step 1: The school principal will send home a letter after 10 absences or after the student is tardy* 10 times within a school year notifying the parents the school is concerned about the student's attendance and asking parents to return a form documenting they received the letter.

Step 2: After 15 absences or after the student is tardy* 15 times in a school year a second letter will go home and parents will be required to come to a meeting to discuss the student's attendance and to develop a plan for improving attendance.

Next Steps: The plan developed in Step 2 will specify what actions will be taken by the school district if the student's attendance does not improve. Next steps may include the district sending a letter notifying other agencies of the problem.

Definition of Tardy:

An elementary student is considered tardy if he or she is not in their classroom 5 minutes after the start of school.

Absences

Your child's safety is very important to us. After attendance is taken in the classroom, an automated phone call will be made to the home of each student who is recorded as absent. If you receive an absent phone message, and your child is home on that day, no further action is necessary. Please call the school immediately and only if you believe that your child is in school and has been reported as absent.

If your child is going to be very late or absent for the day, you may choose to email your child's teacher directly. Please do not call the office, as our message system is also electronic.

If your child is going to be absent for an extended period of time please notify the classroom teacher or Guidance Counselor.

It is very important that we have accurate emergency contact information for every child. Please update any changes in emergency contact information immediately.

Medical and Health Services

School Medical Services are designated to protect the student's health and to enable each student to reach and maintain the highest possible state of well being for effective learning. A school nurse is assigned to each elementary school.

School Health Records

Physical Examinations, including proof of immunizations, are required for students entering kindergarten, fourth grade, and new students entering the school. The physical must be dated within 6 months of entry to the grade or within the six months following entry.

Medication Policy

The nurse will administer medications to students as indicated during school hours according to the following procedures.

1. All prescription medication must be delivered to the school nurse by a parent or Guardian.
2. Medications are in the original bottle with a prescription label showing the student's name, medication, doctor's name and instructions.
3. The parent or guardian must provide written permission from parent and doctor, in order for the nurse to give the medication to the student.
4. Parent permission is needed for the nurse to administer over the counter medications such as Tylenol, Advil or Tums.

All orders or permission for medications must be renewed at the beginning of each school year.

Emergency Illness or Injury protocol

In case of an accident or illness during school hours, a parent or guardian will be notified. When indicated, the student will be dismissed to the parents or another adult designated by the parent. The school is responsible for providing appropriate care to the student until the parent arrives.

If emergency medical attention is needed, the school will contact you and an emergency response team.

For your child's protection, it is essential for the school to maintain accurate emergency contact information. Please notify the office immediately when emergency contact information is changed.

When to keep your child home from school

Please keep your child home from school if he or she has:

Fever – Fevers are generally signs of infection. Any child with a fever of 100 degrees or above must stay home from school. No child should be sent to school with a fever. Do not treat fever with medication and then send child to school. If your child gets a fever at school of 100o F or higher, they will be sent home from school.

Cold, Sore Throat, Cough – Children average 6-8 colds per year. If your child has a cold and cough with a fever or they do not seem to get better, call your doctor. A sore throat, along with a fever and swollen glands, may be signs of strep throat. Children diagnosed with strep throat are still contagious the first 24 hours on antibiotics and must remain home.

Stomachache, Vomiting, Diarrhea – A child with vomiting and/or diarrhea should be kept home until symptoms have resolved for approximately 24 hours and the child is able to keep down liquids and food. Consult your doctor if fever and stomach pains do not go away or your child is not eating well and appears dehydrated (dry mouth, no tears, sunken eyes, urinates less than 4 times in 24 hours).

Pain – Earaches – Consult your doctor. If there is no fever with an ear infection they may attend school.

Headache – A child should be kept at home if headache is severe and is not relieved with medication. Call your doctor if the headache continues.

Red Eyes – When the white part of the eye looks red and there is a yellow or green discharge, call your doctor. Your child may have conjunctivitis, a common but troublesome condition that may be a contagious infection. Your child may need an antibiotic eye ointment. Children are still contagious the first 24 hours on antibiotic ointment and must remain at home.

Rash – A rash is usually a sign of an illness. It also may be a reaction to a medication or chemical (plants, detergents). If your child has an unusual rash, contact your doctor. Do not send your child to school with a rash. Consult your doctor for clearance to attend school.

Head Lice/ Nits – Children may not return to school until all hair has been treated and all eggs/nits have been removed. If your child has head lice please contact the school nurse so that she can check classmates.

Hand washing is the single most effective way to prevent illness.

Food Services

Breakfast Program

Breakfast may be purchased between 7:45 a.m. and 8:15 a.m. in the school cafeteria.

Lunch

Children may purchase a full school lunch daily. Milk and fruit juices are available to supplement a bag lunch. Upon entering the Watertown Public Schools, each student is given a personal identification number (PIN) to use for prepaid purchases in the school cafeteria only. Parents are encouraged to pre-pay for lunches, milk, or snack to limit the need for students to carry money to school. If a student does not have money they will be served lunch and payment collected the next day.

Monthly lunch menus are posted in local newspaper and online. Prices are published at the beginning of each school year.

Free or reduced meals

Parents need to complete a free and reduced meal form yearly. Forms are reviewed by administration to determine eligibility.

Snack

You may send a mid-morning snack with your child each day. Healthy snack options are encouraged.

Visitors

For the safety of all children, the school doors are locked 5 minutes after designated arrival time.

- ❖ Visitors may use the intercom at the front door to speak to the main office and gain admittance.
- ❖ All visitors, including parents and volunteers, must sign in at the reception desk or main office during school hours.
- ❖ Visitors are given a visitor badge at the sign in location and are asked to wear a visitor badge throughout their visit.
- ❖ All visitors are required to sign out when they leave the school building.

These procedures are in effect for the safety of the children, staff and the visitors. It is imperative that the front office be aware of all persons in the building should an emergency situation arise.

* Please refer to individual school procedures for further information.

Homework

Homework is an integral part of a child's educational program. There are a number of different goals and purposes for assigning homework, including the following:

- ❖ Provide a link between home and school
- ❖ Help children take personal responsibility for their learning
- ❖ Foster confidence and self-discipline
- ❖ Promote the understanding that learning happens outside of school.
- ❖ Expand and/or enrich classroom work
- ❖ Reinforce learning by providing additional practice
- ❖ Help teachers monitor student understanding
- ❖ Promote high expectations for students

The School Committee Policy Manual states the following recommendations that parents provide an environment conducive to studying and working independently. They may help students organize time, space and materials so children can complete their homework effectively. Parents are encouraged to help clarify directions and ask questions that may help students to organize their thinking and recall information from class lessons. Because teachers carefully select assignments, parents should encourage their children to work independently.

Teachers assign homework to support student learning. Assignments reflect ongoing studies and provide a review of previously learned materials. In some cases assignments may be long term. Homework will vary in intensity and degree at different grade levels. While we recognize that students work at different paces and have different learning styles, general guidelines established by School Committee policy indicate that first grade students receive 10 minutes of homework per night, and then 10 additional minutes are to be assigned each successive year.

Since homework supports daily classroom instruction, we do not assign specific homework to be completed while a student is absent from school due to a family vacation. We do suggest that students read daily and write in a journal during their vacation. As previously indicated, we always encourage families to schedule vacations in accordance with the district school vacation calendar to avoid disruption in the educational process.

Code of Conduct

The Caring School Community Program is implemented at the Cunniff, Hosmer and Lowell Elementary schools to promote a school community where everyone is respectful, responsible, fair and helpful.

Each elementary school has established a clear code of conduct to foster a respectful and safe learning environment to ensure that all students can be successful.

*Please refer to your individual school procedures for specific information regarding your school's guidelines.

Anti-Bullying Procedures

The Watertown School Committee policy and procedures are compliant with MGL c 71, Section 370, An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools, which was enacted May 3, 2010.

All schools under the direction of the principal and the guidance department, provide ongoing professional development and training to the staff throughout the school year. Additionally, faculty meetings and other professional time will be devoted to ensure that our schools are bully free zones and that they optimize learning in a safe and caring environment.

A quick response and investigation of any alleged bullying incident will be conducted. This will include notification, resolution, consequences and other necessary steps depending on the exact nature of the situation. It is important that our children and staff work to create a school where all children are respected, cared for and encouraged, and capable of achieving their fullest potential.

The complete text of the Watertown Bullying Prevention and Intervention plan may be found on the District's website.

Definition and Prohibition of Bullying

Bullying is defined as **repeated** use of written, verbal, or electronic communication, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, by one or more students directed at another student that has the effect of:

- causing physical or emotional harm to the other student or damage to his or her property;
- placing the other student in reasonable fear of harm to him or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- creating a hostile environment at school for the bullied student;
- infringing on the rights of the other student at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupting the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

This law further specifies a prohibition against bullying:

- At school and at all school facilities;
- At school-sponsored or school-related functions, whether on or off school grounds;
- On school buses and school bus stops;
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device;
- At non-school-related locations if the bullying affects the school environment.

Cyber-bullying is defined as bullying through the use of technology or any electronic means.

Procedures for reporting

Teachers and staff are now **required** by law to report incidences of bullying to the principal in their building. The principal will establish a procedure which will include the following steps:

- Completion of an Incident Report Form;**
- Determination by the Principal that this is an incident of bullying;**
- An interview with the target of peer aggression;**
- An interview with the child accused of some type of aggression,**
- Plan for intervention and notification of parent(s) or guardian(s).**

The law specifically prohibits retaliation for reporting an incident of bullying.

Whenever an incident of bullying is determined to have taken place, the parents of all students involved will be notified of the incident and of the actions being taken by the school to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plans

A Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will be developed to help both the target and aggressor. These will be individualized to the students with the goal of preventing further bullying.

Communication with Parents

Educational programs will be offered to parents about MGL c. 71, Section 370, “An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools” during the school year. Information on these programs will be posted on the district’s website and in school newsletters.

Personal Electronic Devices

To better protect students from misuse of handheld devices the following guidelines have been established:

In the school building, personal electronic devices (PED) should be off, unless specified otherwise by the teacher. PEDs may be used during school hours under the supervision of the teacher only.

Any use of these PEDs outside of teacher supervision is strictly **prohibited**. Faculty/staff have the right to confiscate a PED and turn it into the principal’s office. The student may pick up the device at the office at the end of the school day. Repeated offenses may require the parent to pick up the device.

PEDs should not be used during the school day for communication between students and parents. Urgent messages between parents and students must be communicated via the main office.

The school is not responsible for the maintenance, loss, theft or damage of any personal electronic device.

All use of personal electronic devices is commensurate with the District’s Acceptable Use Policy.

Dress Code

Students should wear clothing that allows them to participate in the learning environment at school. Clothing should not distract them or others in the environment. Please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Appropriate footwear for physical activity during school hours should be worn at all times (i.e. No Roller Sneakers).
- Hats are not to be worn in school without approval from school administration.
- No underwear should be visible.
- Shirts must reach the top of pants, shorts, or skirts.
- No clothing or accessories with inappropriate or offensive references to alcohol, tobacco, drugs, gender, national origin, sexual connotations, or violence.

We appreciate your help and cooperation.

APPENDICES

These Appendices are included in each school's handbook, for all grade levels.

1. District Policies
2. Federal and State Regulations
3. Summaries and Signature Page
4. Gender Identity
5. Harassment and Discrimination

APPENDIX 1 – District Policies

Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Policy – Technology

Purpose

The Watertown Public Schools shall provide access for employees and students to the system/network, including access to external networks, for limited educational purposes. *Educational purposes* shall be defined as classroom activities, career and professional development, and high quality self-discovery activities of an educational nature. The purpose of the system/network is to assist in preparing students for success in life and work by providing access to a wide range of information and the ability to communicate with others. The system/network will be used to increase communication (staff, parent, and student), enhance productivity, and assist staff in upgrading existing skills and acquiring new skills through a broader exchange of information. The system/network will also be utilized to provide information to the community, including parents, governmental agencies, and businesses.

Availability

The Superintendent or designee shall implement, monitor, and evaluate the District's system/network for instructional and administrative purposes.

Access to the system/network, including external networks, shall be made available to employees and students for instructional and administrative purposes and in accordance with administrative regulations and procedures.

Access to the system/network is a privilege, not a right. All users shall be required to acknowledge receipt and understanding of all administrative regulations and procedures governing use of the system and shall agree in writing to comply with such regulations and procedures. Noncompliance with applicable regulations and procedures may result in suspension or termination of user privileges and other disciplinary actions consistent with the policies of the Watertown Public Schools. Violations of law may result in criminal prosecution as well as disciplinary action by the Watertown Public Schools.

Acceptable Use

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement administrative regulations, procedures, and user agreements, consistent with the purposes and mission of the Watertown Public Schools as well as with law and policy governing copyright.

Monitored Use

Electronic mail transmissions and other use of electronic resources by students and employees shall not be considered confidential and may be monitored at any time by designated staff to ensure appropriate use for instructional and administrative purposes.

Education of Students and Staff

The Watertown Public Schools recognizes its obligation to provide education for students and staff regarding appropriate online behavior including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms, and regarding cyberbullying awareness and response.

The Watertown Public Schools has developed guidelines to be followed in accordance with the requirements of Federal and state statutes. These guidelines will be maintained and updated regularly.

Liability

The Watertown Public Schools shall not be liable for users' inappropriate use of electronic resources or violations of copyright restrictions, users' mistakes or negligence, or costs incurred by users. The Watertown Public Schools shall not be responsible for ensuring the accuracy or usability of any information found on external networks.

LEGAL REFS.: CIPA Public Law 110-385
M.G.L. c. 71, § 370
M.G.L. c. 66, § 10; G.L. c. 4, § 7(26)

REF.: Massachusetts Association of School Committees, Massachusetts
Association of School Superintendents

Administering Medications to Students

Prescription medication may not be administered to students while at school unless such medication is administered by the school nurse acting under specific written request of the parent or guardian and under the written directive and/or medication order of the student's personal licensed prescriber, as authorized by Ch 94C. When the school nurse is not present, a student who needs prescription medication during the school day may be called to the office at the scheduled hour and reminded by the designated school employee to take the appropriate medication and dosage. This provision only applies when the nurse, physician and parent and guardian agree in the "Student Care Plan" or medication order that the student can self-administer. The student must be able to recognize the prescription medication that he /she is taking. No one but the school nurse, and those others listed in the medical administration plan acting within the above restrictions, may give any medications to any student.

Over the Counter Medication (non prescription medication) may be administered only by the school nurse with written parental permission consistent with the standing orders signed by the school physician. Students may carry over the counter medications and self-administer them with the written permission of the school nurse, personal licensed prescriber, and parent.

The school district shall, through the district nurse leader, register with the Dept. of Public Health and train personnel in the use of Epi-pens.

Following consultation with the school nurse, and submission of the “Student Care Plan” students who fall into the following exceptions may self-administer medications:

1. Students with asthma or other respiratory diseases may possess and administer prescription inhalers.
2. Students with cystic fibrosis may possess and administer enzyme supplements.
3. Students with diabetes may possess and administer glucose monitoring tests and insulin delivery systems.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:54B

Department of Public Health Regulations: 105 CMR 210.00

Asbestos Management

In compliance with the regulations of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency the Watertown Public Schools has an ongoing Operations and Management Program for monitoring the condition of asbestos in the school buildings.

Gang Activity

The goal of the School Committee is to keep District schools and students free from the threats or harmful influence of any gang. For purposes of this policy, gang is defined as any group, secret society, organization or association that advocates drug use, violence, ethnic intimidation, or disruptive or illegal behavior. The Principal or his/her designee shall maintain supervision of school premises to deter intimidation of students and confrontations between members of different gangs.

The Superintendent shall establish open lines of communication with local law enforcement agencies so as to share information and provide mutual support in this effort within appropriate legal guidelines.

The Superintendent shall provide in-service training to help staff members identify gangs and gang symbols, recognize early manifestations of disruptive activities, and respond appropriately.

Staff members shall be informed about conflict management techniques and alerted to intervention measures and community resources that may help students.

Symbols: The School Committee finds that gang symbols are inherently disruptive to the educational process, and therefore prohibits the presence of any insignia, apparel, jewelry, accessory, notebook or other school supply, or manner of grooming which by virtue of its color, arrangement, trademark, or any other attribute denotes membership in gangs. The School Committee further prohibits any demonstration of gang membership through the use of hand gestures, graffiti, or printed materials. This policy shall be applied by the Principal or his/her designee as the need for it arises at individual school sites. A student may be suspended or expelled for failure to comply with the provisions of this policy.

Prevention Education: The School Committee realizes that students may become involved in gangs without understanding the consequences of such membership. Early intervention is a key component of efforts to break the cycle of such memberships. Therefore, gang violence prevention information shall be made available in the elementary, middle, and high schools as appropriate.

Secret Societies: Fraternities, sororities and/or secret societies shall not receive District or building recognition in any manner. A student may be suspended or expelled for failure to comply with the provisions of this policy.

Grievance Procedure for Students, Parents and Guardians

The aggrieved party should attempt remediation through a conference with the teacher involved. The aggrieved party, if dissatisfied, may present his/her grievances to the Principle who, after hearing the facts and after consultation with the teacher, takes any action he/she thinks is indicated. If the aggrieved party feels that the solution or decision is not agreeable to him/her, he/she may appeal to the Superintendent. The Superintendent, after consultation with the Principal, takes action.

Interrogations by Police

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

Therefore, when law enforcement officials find it necessary to question students during the school day or periods of extracurricular activities, the school Principal or his/her designee will be present when possible. An effort will be made to contact the student's parent or guardian so that the responsible individual may be notified of the situation.

If custody and/or arrest are involved, the Principal will request that all procedural safeguards, as prescribed by law, be observed by the law enforcement officials.

Pregnant Students

Pregnant students are permitted to remain in regular classes and participate in extracurricular activities with non-pregnant students throughout their pregnancy, and after giving birth are permitted to return to the same academic and extracurricular program as before the leave.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:84

Searches

The Watertown Public Schools recognizes and respects the privacy of its students in their persons and belongings. However, the school administration and staff must maintain a proper, safe, and secure educational environment where learning can take place. Possession of contraband in violation of the law or of school rules is prohibited on school premises. Such items include, but are not limited to, cigarettes, drugs (without proper prescription), weapons, and other items that pose a danger to the safety of the school community or which would disturb or disrupt the process of education.

In certain circumstances it may be necessary to search an individual student or group of students and to seize contraband items. Where the school principal, or his/her designee, has reasonable grounds for suspecting that a student has violated, or is violating, either the law or rules of the school, the suspected student or students may be searched for evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or rules of the school.

Searches of students, book bags, purses, clothing, and other containers, and of student lockers may be conducted when appropriate.

When the Principal, or his/her designee, has reason to believe that contraband items are present on school premises, locker inspections may take place without notice to students. A student's right to possession of a locker, or lockers, is nonexclusive as against the school and its officials. Students are hereby put on notice that they should not keep personal items in their lockers if they do not wish them to be discovered by school personnel during a locker inspection conducted in accordance with the provisions of this section. Contraband items discovered during any such inspection will be seized.

In addition, at various times throughout the school year, school administrators may use dogs trained to detect contraband to conduct random searches for contraband in student lockers, other common areas of school buildings, and vehicles parked on school grounds. A qualified and authorized trainer and a school administrator or designee shall accompany each dog. If a dog indicates that contraband is present on school property, school administrators can conduct a further search.

Any contraband items discovered and seized during an inspection or search conducted under the provisions of this section may be turned over to the police when the possession of such items may constitute a violation of any state or federal law. In all cases where illicit drugs or weapons are discovered as a result of inspections or searches conducted in accordance with the provisions of this section, the police will be contacted and any and all items will be turned over to the police department.

If there are any questions regarding whether a particular item may be brought to school, please ask the Principal.

Sexual Harassment

The Watertown School Committee affirms the policy of maintaining within the Watertown Public Schools a learning and working environment free of sexual harassment and intimidation. If you feel that you have been physically or verbally harassed you have a right to take action. There are established procedures for making complaints that are published in two booklets (one for faculty/staff, and one for students). These booklets, with details about what to do, are available in the Main Office and in the Guidance Office. You do not have to remain silent. Your voice is important in stopping, and preventing, harassment of any kind.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

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

Among these rights and responsibilities are the following:

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

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

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

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

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

Suspension and Exclusion

Suspension is defined as the act of the chief administrator of a school in removing a student from school for a period not to exceed ten consecutive school days. Exclusion is defined as an act of the School Committee in removing a student from school permanently or for any period of time exceeding ten consecutive school days.

1. The Superintendent, a Principal/Headmaster, or an Assistant Principal/Associate Headmaster may suspend a student for a period not to exceed ten consecutive school days for disobedience and/or misconduct as related to Policy 711, Paragraph 3 of the Official Policy Manual and the detailed rules supporting these paragraphs as promulgated in the current student manual.

Prior to suspension, a student must be given oral or written notice of the charge(s) against him or her, an explanation of the basis for the accusation(s) and an opportunity to present his or her version of the facts.

A student may be suspended prior to notice and hearing if he or she poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process if not removed immediately. In these cases, notice of suspension proceedings must be given within twenty-four hours of the decision to suspend and the hearing must be held within seventy-two hours of removal.

In a hearing on suspension, the Principal/Headmaster (Superintendent, Assistant Principal/Associate Headmaster) is not required to give the student opportunity to secure counsel, to confront and cross-examine supporting witnesses of the charge(s), or to call his or her own supporting witnesses.

Suspension may be used as a preliminary step to exclusion from school.

Whenever possible, the student's parent or guardian will be informed of the suspension prior to the student's departure from school. Within twenty-four hours after the suspension, the student's parent or guardian will be sent a letter by certified mail informing them of the reasons for and the length of the suspension.

2. With the exception of G.L. Ch. 71 §37H and §37H1/2 the School Committee may exclude a student from school permanently or for any period of time exceeding ten consecutive school days for very serious disobedience and/or very serious misconduct as related to policy 711, Paragraph 3 and other appropriate paragraphs in the 500, 600, and 700 sections of the Official Policy Manual and the detailed rules supporting these paragraphs as promulgated in the current student manual.

Prior to a vote on exclusion, the student and his or her parent/guardian will be informed in writing of the charge(s) and the basis for the charge(s) and will be advised of their right to a hearing before the School Committee.

On the request of the student and/or the parent or guardian, the School Committee will hold a hearing on the charge(s) prior to a vote on exclusion.

The hearing will be held in Executive Session. The student has the right to secure counsel and have counsel represent him or her at the hearing. The student has the right to confront and to cross-examine witnesses supporting the charge(s) and to call his or her own supporting witnesses.

To vote to exclude a student from school, a majority of the members present must concur providing a quorum has been established. Votes and records of Executive Sessions remain secret according to the provisions of the law.

3. In accordance with Ch. 71, Section §37H, of the General Laws, a Principal/Headmaster may exclude or suspend a student at his/her judgment for the violations of good conduct listed. The student excluded or suspended under this provision may appeal to the Superintendent in accordance with subsection (d) of Ch. 71, Section §37H.

4. In accordance with Ch. 71, Section §37H 1/2, of the General Laws, a Principal/Headmaster may exclude or suspend a student upon the issuance of a complaint charging a student with a felony. The suspension/ expulsion may be appealed to the Superintendent. The Superintendent's decision shall be the final decision on the matter.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 39:23A

APPENDIX 2 – Federal and State Regulations

Americans with Disabilities Act

The Watertown Public Schools, in compliance with the American Disabilities Act, prohibits the discriminatory assignment of students with disabilities to segregated classes or facilities based solely on the student's disability. Students with disabilities may be assigned to separate facilities or courses when such a placement is necessary to provide equal educational opportunity.

An Act Relative to Bullying in the Schools, M.G.L. c 71, § 370

The law requires each Plan to include a statement prohibiting bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. All acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

- (i) on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, and
- (ii) at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited.

See section titled "Anti-Bullying Procedures" in your handbook for more information.

Education Reform Act of 1993, M.G.L. c.71, § 37H

Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, all student handbooks shall contain the following provisions:

- (a) Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the Principal.
- (b) Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide, or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or the school district by the Principal.
- (c) Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have

representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the Principal.

After said hearing, a principal may, at his discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b).

(d) Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of his appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.

(e) When a student is expelled under the provisions of this section, no school or school district within the commonwealth shall be required to admit such student or to provide educational services to said student. If said student does apply for admission to another school or school district, the superintendent of the school district to which the application is made may request and shall receive from the superintendent of the school expelling said student a written statement of the reasons for said expulsion.

Under appropriate circumstances, the principal, in his/her discretion, may consider the readmission of a student expelled from school pursuant to M.G.L. c.71, § 37H. The principal shall notify the student, in writing, at the time of his/her expulsion, of the terms and conditions which the student shall fulfill in order to petition the principal for readmission, as well as the process and timelines for such a petition. The principal's decision on an expelled student's petition shall be final and is not subject to appeal.

Education Reform Act of 1993, M.G.L. c.71, § 37H1/2

M.G.L. c.71, § 37H1/2 allows the principal of a school to suspend a student who has been charged with a felony or is the subject of a felony delinquency complaint, if the principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The statute also allows the principal to expel a student who has been convicted, adjudicated, or admitted guilt with respect to a felony or felony delinquency, if the principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

Students with Disabilities

The Code of Conduct applies to all students. There is a specific procedure, however, for disciplining students with disabilities. Your child's school can give you a copy of this document upon request. This procedure is also included in the "Notice of Procedural Safeguards" brochure that you receive with your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

In general, if a student with disabilities has violated the school's disciplinary code, the school may suspend or remove the student from his or her current educational placement for no more than 10 consecutive school days in any school year.

If a student with disabilities possesses, uses, sells or solicits illegal drugs on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event; carries a weapon to school or a school function; or inflicts serious bodily injury upon another person at school or a school-sponsored event, the school district may place the student in an interim alternative educational setting for up to 45 school days. If a student has been placed in an interim alternative education setting as a result of a disciplinary action, the student may remain in the interim setting for a period not to exceed 45 school days. Thereafter, the student will return to the previously agreed-upon educational placement unless the parent or the district has initiated a hearing on the disciplinary action that the district took and a hearing officer orders another placement, or the parent and the school agree to another placement.

Any time the school wishes to remove a student with disabilities from his or her current educational placement for more than 10 consecutive school days in any school year, or if a student is removed for disciplinary reasons for more than a total of 10 days in any school year when a pattern of removal is occurring, this is a “change of placement.” A change of placement invokes certain procedural protections under federal special education law. These include the following:

(a) Prior to any removal that constitutes a change in placement, the school district must convene a Team meeting to develop a plan for conducting a functional behavioral assessment that will be used as the basis for developing specific strategies to address the student’s problematic behavior. If a behavioral intervention plan has been previously developed, the Team will review it to make sure it is being implemented appropriately, and will modify it if necessary.

(b) Prior to any disciplinary removal that constitutes a change in placement, the school district must inform the parent that the law requires that the school district consider whether or not the behavior that forms the basis for the student’s disciplinary removal is related to his or her disability. This is called a “manifestation determination.” Remember that you, as the parent, always have the right to participate as a member of the group of people making this determination.

Consideration of whether the behavior is a manifestation of the student’s disability: The law provides that the school district and the parent, along with relevant Team members, must consider all evaluation information, observational information, the student’s IEP and placement; and must determine whether the student’s behavior that prompted disciplinary removal was a manifestation of his or her disability. The behavior is considered a manifestation of the student’s disability if the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to the student’s disability, or was a direct result of the school district’s failure to implement his or her IEP.

If the manifestation determination decision is that the disciplinary behavior was related to the student’s disability then the student may not be removed from the current educational placement (except in the case of weapon or drug possession or use, or serious bodily injury to another) until the IEP Team develops a new IEP and decides upon a new placement and the parent consents to that new IEP and placement, or a Hearing Officer orders a removal from the current educational placement to another placement.

If the manifestation determination is that the behavior was not related to the student’s disability, then the school may suspend or otherwise discipline the student according to the school’s code of student conduct, except that for any period of removal exceeding 10 days the school district must provide the student with educational services that allow the student to continue to make educational progress. The school district must determine the educational services necessary and the manner and location for providing those services.

In the case of a disagreement with the Team's determination: If the parent disagrees with the Team's decision on the "manifestation determination" or with the decision relating to placement of the student in an interim alternative education setting or any other disciplinary action, the parent has the right to appeal the Team's decision by requesting an expedited due process hearing from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA).

Hazing Law and Policy

Hazing as defined in Chapter 269 under the Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is prohibited in the Watertown Public Schools.

M.G.L. Chapter 269; Section 17 Hazing; organizing or participating; hazing defined

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

The term "hazing" as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug, or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation. (Added by St. 1985, c.536)

M.G.L. Chapter 269: Section 18 Failure to report hazing

Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime, shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars. (Added by St. 1985, c.536; Amended by St. 1987, c.665)

M.G.L. Chapter 269: Section 19 Copy of secs. 17-19; issuance to students and student groups, teams and organizations; report

Statement of Compliance and Discipline Policy Required

Each institution of secondary education and each public and private institution of post secondary education shall issue to every student group, student team, or student organization which is part of such institution or is recognized by the institution to exist as an unaffiliated student group, student team, or student organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen; provided, however, that an institution's compliance with this section's requirements that an institution issue copies of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to unaffiliated groups, teams, or organizations shall not constitute evidence of the institution's recognition or endorsement of said unaffiliated student groups, teams, or organizations.

Each such group, team, or organization shall distribute a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to each of its members, plebes, pledges, or applicants for membership. It shall be the duty of each group, team, or organization, acting through its designated officer, to deliver annually, to the institution an attested acknowledgment stating that such group, team, or organization has received a copy of this section and said sections seventeen and eighteen, that each of its members, plebes, pledges, or applicants has received a copy of sections seventeen and eighteen, and that such group, team, or organization understands and agrees to comply with the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public and private institution of post secondary education shall, at least annually, before or at the start of enrollment, deliver to each person who enrolls as a full time student in such institution a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Any person(s) found engaged in hazing may be subject to suspension or exclusion dependent upon the seriousness of the hazing offense.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act

Every child without a permanent home has a right to an education.

If you live in a shelter, motel, vehicle, or campground; on the street; in an abandoned building, trailer, or other inadequate accommodations; or with friends or relatives because you cannot find or afford housing, then your child has certain rights and protections under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act.

Your child has the right to:

- Access the same free and appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to all other children.
- Remain in the school he/she attended before becoming homeless.
- Receive transportation to the school they attend before your family became homeless or the school they last attended if you or a guardian requests such transportation.
- Enroll in school without giving a permanent address. Schools cannot require proof of residency that might prevent or delay school enrollment.
- Enroll and attend classes while the school arranges for the transfer of school and immunization records or any other documents for enrollment.
- Enroll and attend classes in the school of your choice even while the school and you seek to resolve disputes over enrolling your child.
- Receive the same special programs and services, if needed, as provided to all other children.

If you need assistance in enrolling your child into school contact: Director of Student Services

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) is a federal education law that aims to:

- Raise accountability by measuring each schools progress every year (Adequate Yearly Progress – AYP);

- Set goals to improve student performance in math, reading/English Language Arts (ELA) and science;
- Improve teacher quality by providing professional development funds;
- Provide parents/guardians with information about the professional qualifications of their child's classroom teachers. Parents/Guardians can request this information from the school principal, and
- Make schools safer and drug-free.

Nondiscrimination

Public schools have the responsibility to overcome, insofar as possible, any barriers that prevent children from achieving their potential. If someone has a complaint or feels that they have been discriminated against because of their race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability, their complaint should be registered with the Title IX non-discrimination compliance officer(s). This commitment to the community is affirmed in the following statements of School Committee intent to:

- 1.0 Promote the rights and responsibilities of all individuals as set forth in the State and Federal Constitutions, pertinent legislation, and applicable judicial interpretations.
- 2.0 Encourage positive experiences in human values for children and youth and adults, all of whom have differing personal and family characteristics and who come from various socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic groups.
- 3.0 Support a more integrated society and to enlist the support of individuals as well as groups and agencies, both private and governmental, in such an effort.
- 4.0 Use all appropriate communication and action techniques to air and reduce the grievances of individuals and groups.
- 5.0 Carefully consider, in all the decisions made within the school system, the potential benefits or adverse consequences that those decisions might have on the human relations aspects of all segments of society.
- 6.0 Ensure continual process of reviewing policies and practices of this school system in order to achieve to the greatest extent possible the objectives of this statement.

The Watertown School Committee's policy of nondiscrimination and all other pertinent Federal and State laws will extend to students, staff, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business; and will apply to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.

Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap

- 1.0 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and its accompanying regulations and amendments apply to all school systems receiving federal funds. Under this act the Watertown Public Schools:
 - 1.1 May not discriminate against qualified handicapped persons in any aspect of school

employment solely on the basis of handicap.

- 1.2 Shall make facilities, programs, and activities accessible, usable, and open to qualified handicapped persons.
- 1.3 Shall provide appropriate education at elementary and secondary levels, including non-academic and extracurricular services and activities, to qualified handicapped persons.
- 1.4 May not exclude any qualified handicapped person solely on the basis of handicap from participation in any preschool education or day care program or activity or any adult education or vocational program or activity.
- 1.5 Shall provide each qualified handicapped person with the same health, welfare, and other social services that are provided others.

Accordingly, employees of this school system will comply with the above requirements of the law and policy statements of this Committee and all other pertinent Federal and State laws to ensure non-discrimination on the basis of handicap.

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

The Watertown Public Schools in keeping with the regulations set out in the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment requires notification to parents and/or students under the following conditions:

- Instructional materials are made available for inspection by parents if those materials will be used in connection with a federal U.S. Department of Education or other publicly funded survey, analysis, or evaluation in which their children participate; and
- That schools obtain prior written parental consent before minor students are required to participate in any U.S. Department of Education or other publicly funded survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning:
 1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent;
 2. Mental and psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
 3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
 4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
 5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
 6. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, or ministers;
 7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parent; or
 8. Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).

- The right of parents to inspect, upon request, any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum for students. This term does not include academic tests or academic assessments.
- The right to prior knowledge and consent if the school district administers physical examinations or screenings. This does not include hearing, vision, or scoliosis screening.
- The right to prior knowledge of the school district’s collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or selling, or otherwise providing the information to others for that purpose.
- The right to inspect, upon request, any instrument used in the collection of personal information.

The Watertown Public Schools will notify parents, guardians, and/or eligible students the specific or approximate dates during the school year if and when these activities are scheduled. Such notification will be provided through specific notices, newsletters, and/or the Watertown Public Schools website.

This federal requirement is not intended to preempt applicable provisions of State law that require parental notification. The law does not apply to any physical examination or screening that is permitted or required by State law, including such examinations or screenings without parental notification. The requirements of PPRA do not apply to a survey administered to a student in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The requirements under PPRA do not supersede any of the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Restraint of Students

The Watertown Public Schools complies with the Department of Education (DOE) restraint regulations, 603 CMR 46.00 et seq. (“Regulations”), to the extent required by law. According to their terms, the Regulations apply not only at school but also at school-sponsored events and activities, whether or not on school property. A brief overview of the Regulations is provided below.

Methods and Conditions for Implementation

School staff may use physical restraint only:

1. When non-physical interventions would be ineffective and the student’s behavior poses a threat of imminent, serious harm to self and/or others.
2. *Pursuant to a student’s IEP or other written plan developed in accordance with the State and Federal law and approved by the school and parent or guardian.*

Physical restraint may not be used as a means of punishment or as a response to property destruction, disruption of the school order, a student’s refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive, or verbal threats that do not constitute a threat of imminent, serious physical harm. Chemical and mechanical restraints may only be used if explicitly authorized by a physician and approved by a parent or guardian. Seclusion is prohibited.

The Regulations do not prevent the teacher, employee, or agent of the District from using reasonable force to protect the student, other persons, or themselves from assault or imminent serious harm, or from restraining students as otherwise provided in the Regulations.

Reporting Requirements and Follow-Up

In instances when a physical restraint (1) lasts more than five minutes or (2) results in an injury to a student or staff member, the school staff must report the physical restraint to the principal or a designee. The principal/designee must maintain an ongoing record of all reported instances, which will be made available in accordance with State and Federal law and regulations. The principal/designee must also verbally inform the student's parent or guardian of the restraint as soon as possible, and by written report postmarked no later than three school working days following the use of the restraint. The written restraint report must be provided to the parent or guardian in the language in which report cards and other necessary school-related information are customarily provided.

In the event that a physical restraint (1) lasts longer than 20 minutes, or (2) results in serious injury to the student or staff member, the school must, within five school working days of the reported restraint, provide a copy of the written report to the DOE along with a copy of the school's record of physical restraint covering the thirty-day period prior to the date of the restraint.

For students who require the frequent use of restraint because they present a high risk of dangerous behaviors, school staff may seek and obtain the parent/guardian consent to waive reporting requirements for the restraints administered to an individual student that do not result in serious injury to the student or staff member or constitute extended restraint (longer than 20 minutes).

Follow-up procedures for restraint include not only reporting requirements set forth above, but also reviewing the incident with the student, staff, and consideration of whether follow-up is appropriate for students who witnessed the incident.

A copy of the Regulations can be obtained at www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr46.html.

Sex Education (MGL Ch. 71 §32A)

Schools are required by law to notify parents/guardians about any classes that will be held on human sexual education or sexual issues. The notice must tell the parent/guardian how he/she can review the content and materials of the classes.

While parents/guardians do not have to give permission for their children to take sex education classes, parents do have the right to exempt their children from such classes. Please read and **return** the sign-off page entitled "Commonwealth of Massachusetts: An Act Relative to Sex Education" to your building principal.

Student Record Regulations and Confidentiality

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s education records. They are:

The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days of the day the district receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask the Watertown Public Schools to amend a record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the district decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the district will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Committee; a person or company with whom the district has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

The parent/guardian has the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the district to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

FERPA requires that the Watertown Public Schools, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child’s education records. However, the Watertown Public Schools may disclose appropriately designated “directory information” without written consent, unless you have advised the District to the contrary in accordance with District procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the Watertown Public Schools to include this type of information from your child’s education records in certain school publications.

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent’s,

guardian's, and/or student's prior consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two Federal laws require school districts receiving Federal funds to provide military recruiters, upon request, with three directory information categories - names, addresses, and telephone listings – unless parents/guardians, and/or students have advised the school district that they do not want their information disclosed without their prior written consent.

If you do not want the Watertown Public Schools to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the school district in writing by September 15th of each school year. The Watertown Public Schools has designated the following information as directory information:

1. Student's name
2. Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
3. Address
4. Telephone listing
5. Weight and height of members of athletic teams
6. Electronic mail address
7. Photograph
8. Degrees, honors, and awards received
9. Date and place of birth
10. Major field of study
11. Dates of attendance
12. Grade level and the most recent school attended

Massachusetts Student Records Regulation

State regulations governing student records are briefly summarized below. These regulations are available at each public school and the superintendent's office for review. Parents may access the student records regulations through the Massachusetts Department of Education website.

A student's record consists of his or her school transcript and temporary record. The temporary record includes all information, which is organized on the basis of the student's name, is relevant to the educational needs of the student and is kept by the school. A student's parent or guardian or an eligible student (who is 14 years old or has entered the ninth grade), has the right to inspect all portions of the student's record upon written request to the principal. The record must be made available to the parent, guardian, or eligible student not later than two consecutive workdays after the request is made, unless the parent or guardian, or eligible student consents to a delay. The parent/guardian, or eligible student may request copies of any part of the record. A fee may be charged for the cost of copying.

Confidentiality of Records

No individual or organization other than the parent/guardian, eligible student, or school personnel working directly with the student is allowed access to a student's record without the specific written consent of the parent/guardian, or eligible student except in limited instances as specified by the State or Federal regulations governing student records.

Amendment or Deletion of Records

The parent, guardian, or eligible student has the right to add relevant comments, information, or other written material to the student's record. In addition, the parent, guardian, or eligible student has the right to request that information contained in the record be amended or deleted except for information inserted in the record by a special needs or Section 504 evaluation. The parent/guardian, or eligible student has a right to a conference with the school principal for the purpose of information contained in the school record. Within a week after such conference, the principal must render a decision in writing on the objection. If the parent/guardian or eligible student is not satisfied with the principal's decision, he or she may appeal such decision to the Superintendent of Schools and ultimately, to the School Committee.

Destruction of Records

A student's temporary record shall be destroyed no later than seven years after the student leaves the school system. The school system may offer the student, parent, or guardian the temporary record upon graduation or leaving school as long as the student, parent, or guardian acknowledges and accepts the temporary record by written consent. A student's transcript may be destroyed no sooner than 60 years after the student leaves the school system. A school principal or his or her designee may destroy misleading, outdated or irrelevant information contained in the temporary record during the time the student is enrolled in the school district, provided the parent/guardian, or eligible student has been notified in writing and given the opportunity to inspect and copy any of the information prior to destruction.

All parents/guardians of children in the Watertown Schools have the right of inspection of their children's records in accordance with [M.G.L Chapter 71, Section 34D](#), and [M.G.L Chapter 71, Section 34E](#). Also, a student, eighteen years of age or older, has the right of access to all records relative to him/her in accordance with M.G.L. Ch.71, Sections 34D, 34E.

M.G.L. Chapter 71, specifies detailed procedures that govern access to student records by parents who do not have physical custody of their children. For more information, please contact the principal.

Courtesy and the need for maintenance of order suggest that anyone interested in exercising the above right make his/her request in writing for an appointment with the principal so that possible questions may be answered.

Non-custodial Parent Access to Student Records

The Massachusetts Board of Education has amended Student Records Regulations concerning access to student records by non-custodial parents. As set forth in the amended regulation, 603 CMR 23.07(5), non-custodial parents are eligible to obtain access to their children's student records *unless* the school or district has been given documentation that:

1. The non-custodial parent has been denied legal custody based on a threat to the safety of the student or to the custodial parent;
2. The non-custodial parent has been denied visitation or has been ordered to supervised visitation;
3. The non-custodial parent's access to the student or to the custodial parent has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the order or any subsequent court order specifically allows access to student record information.

If you have any questions or need further information regarding any of the above named District Policies, Federal Laws, or State Laws, please contact the Watertown Public Schools Central Office. Watertown Public Schools, 30 Common Street.
Watertown, MA 02472. 617-926-7700 (phone)

APPENDIX 3 – Summaries & Signature Page

The Watertown Public Schools is required to collect signatures to ascertain that parents/guardians and students have read and understand the following:

1. Content of the Student Handbook (including Media Release, Directory Information, Transfer of Records, and Student Publication on the Internet)
2. Information concerning an Act Relative to Sex Education (M.G.L. Ch. 71 §32A)

To assist you, please refer to the following summaries.

Complete and return the signature page to your child's school no later than one week after the receipt of the Student Handbook.

Pictures, Names, or Quotes in the Media

Sometimes media (such as newspaper, television, radio, or cable) reporters or photographers would like to be involved in activities in the schools. Having a picture in the paper for participating in a program is usually acceptable to parents, but occasionally, for legal reasons, it is not prudent. **If you do not wish your child's name to be used or picture to be taken for the media, you must notify the school in writing on the back of the Signature Page.**

Directory Information Notice

The Watertown Public Schools has designated certain information contained in the education records of its students as directory information for purposes of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Student Record Regulations, 603 CMR 23.00 et seq.

The following information regarding students is considered directory information: name; address; telephone number; date and place of birth; major field of study; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; weight and height of members of athletic teams; dates of attendance; degrees, honors, and awards received; and post high school plans of the student.

Directory information may be disclosed for any purpose in the School System's discretion, without the consent of a parent/guardian of a student or an eligible student. Parents/guardians and eligible students have the right, however, to refuse to permit the designation of any or all of the above information as directory information. In that case, this information will not be disclosed except with the consent of a parent/guardian or eligible student, or otherwise allowed by FERPA and 603 CMR 23.00 et seq.

Any parent/guardian or student refusing to have any or all of the designated directory information disclosed must file a written notification to this effect with the school's

principal no later than one week following the receipt of this handbook. You can write this notification on the bottom of the Signature Page.

In the event a refusal is not filed, it is assumed that neither parent/guardian nor eligible student objects to the release of directory information.

Notice on Transfer of Records to Another School

Pursuant to 603 CMR 23.07 (g), notice is hereby given that the Watertown Public Schools forwards the complete school record of a transferring student to schools in which the student seeks or intends to enroll. Such transfer of records takes place without consent of the parent/guardian or eligible student.

An Act Relative to Sex Education (M.G.L. Ch. 71 §32A)

Parent Notification

The Health Education and Science programs of Watertown Public Schools contain comprehensive PreK-12 curricula. The goal of the program is to help students acquire appropriate content background to develop the life skills, including problem solving, communication, and decision-making abilities, to prepare for a healthy and productive future.

The Health Education and Science programs have been designed by our professional staff, using their own research based programs as well as programs developed by the Massachusetts Department of Education, the American Heart Association, the American Cancer Society, the American Red Cross, Operation Lifesaver, and other health and science education resources.

During health and science classes, student questions will be answered factually and in an age-appropriate manner. Each student's privacy will be respected, and no one will be required to answer questions or reveal personal information. Material is presented factually.

Under Massachusetts law and the Watertown School Committee policy, you may exempt your child from any portion of a curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues. If you would like to exempt your child from a particular class, please send the request in writing.

The Director of Health Education or the Principal are available to meet with you to review curriculum and materials. To review these materials, please call to make an appointment.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that your child has a positive and educationally enriching experience this school year. If you have any questions regarding the exemption process for the Health and Science Programs, please call your school's principal.

To exempt your child from any portion of the health and/or science curriculum that primarily involves sexual education or human sexuality issues, you must notify the school in writing on the back of the Signature Page.

An Act Relative to Bullying in the Schools, M.G.L. c 71, § 370

Please read section "Anti-Bullying Procedures" in this handbook.

Signature Page

*PLEASE CUT OUT AND DELIVER TO SCHOOL OR HOMEROOM TEACHER
Complete and sign both sides of this page.*

Student Information:

Last Name
First Name
Home Address
Date of Birth
Age

School/Grade

Parent Information

Parent/Guardian
Name
Home Phone & Cell
E-Mail Address

Student Handbook

I acknowledge that I have read and we have discussed the preceding rules and regulations of this SCHOOL HANDBOOK.

An Act Relative to Sex Education

I acknowledge that I have read the information concerning parent notification of any classes that will be held on human sexual education or sexual issues as related to Sex Education M.G.L. Ch. 71 §32A .

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian

Signature

Date

If you do not want to have any or all of the designated directory information disclosed, please write a note here. Let us know what information you would NOT like disclosed.

An Act Relative to Bullying

I acknowledge that I have read the information concerning parent notification on bullying as related to An Act Relative to Bullying in the Schools, M.G.L., c 71 § 370.

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Permission for Student Publication on the Internet

During the school year, students attending Watertown Public Schools will be creating many different projects, some of which will appear on district, school, and classroom websites. These projects will pertain directly to the curriculum. These give students the added incentive to produce excellent work that is published for others to see. These projects may include: photographs/video of the student, the student's voice, student work such as illustrations and writing. We will only include a student's first name with his or her published work.

If you have any objections to your child's work being published on the Internet, check the options for which you do not give permission, sign, and return this page to your child's teacher.

If you have no objections, leave the boxes empty and sign this page and return it to your child's teacher.

~~~~~

I **do not** give permission for the following to be published on the Internet:

- Student's Photograph/Video
- Student's Voice
- Student's Work

By signing below, I verify that I understand the above release about publishing my child's curriculum project work on the District's, School's, or Classroom's websites and that I have indicated my preferences. By checking a box, I am withholding permission to publish my child's photograph/videos, voice, or work on the District's, School's, or Classroom's websites. If my preference changes during the school year, I will contact the principal.

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Grade & Classroom Teacher/English Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Please let us know if you have access to the Internet at home. This will help us in our plans to have Internet available before and after school.**

**We have access to the Internet at home:                      YES                      NO**

## APPENDIX 4 – Gender Identity

The Watertown Public Schools strives to provide a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment in which all students can thrive and succeed in its schools. The Watertown Public Schools prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation and ensures that all students have equal rights of access and equal enjoyment of the opportunities, advantages, privileges, and courses of study.

*From the Massachusetts Legislature:*

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same as follows:

**Section 1. Section 7 of Chapter 4 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2010 Official Edition, is hereby amended by adding the following clause:**

Fifty-ninth, “Gender identity” shall mean a person’s gender-related identity, appearance or behavior, whether or not that gender-related identity, appearance or behavior is different from that traditionally associated with the person’s physiology or assigned sex at birth. Gender-related identity may be shown by providing evidence including, but not limited to, medical history, care or treatment of the gender-related identity, consistent and uniform assertion of the gender-related identity or any other evidence that the gender-related identity is sincerely held as part of a person’s core identity; provided, however, that gender-related identity shall not be asserted for any improper purpose.

## **APPENDIX 5 – Harassment and Discrimination**

### **Harassment & Discrimination**

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

Harassment means conduct of a verbal or physical nature that is designed to embarrass, distress, agitate, disturb, or trouble any person when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's work or education or of an individual's participation in school programs or activities.
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for decisions affecting the individual.
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or creating an intimidating or hostile learning or working environment.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

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

General Harassment (sexual harassment) includes unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors and other physical or verbal conduct of a sexual nature as listed below:

1. Submission is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's participation in school programs or activities.
2. Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for work or educational decisions affecting such individual.
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or educational performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working/educational environment.

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

Violations will be cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination or expulsion.

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

### ***Filing a Discrimination Complaint***

Any employee or other person who believes that she/he has been the victim of discrimination because of her/his race, color, national origin, genetics information, active military status, age, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, religion, age or other legally protected status, should promptly register a complaint, giving as much specific information as possible, to employee's Principal, direct supervisor or the Director of Human Resources.

A person with a complaint involving discrimination may either use this grievance procedure or file the complaint with the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination or the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission at the addresses provided below.

### ***Contents of Complaints and Time Lines for Filing:***

Complaints under this grievance procedure should be filed within 30 school days of the alleged discrimination. The complaint should be in writing. The grievance representative, building principal, or any person of the grievant's choosing may assist the grievant with filing the complaint. The written complaint must include the following information:

- A. The name and school of the grievant.
- B. The name (and address and telephone number if not an employee) of the grievant's representative, if any.
- C. The name of the person(s) alleged to have caused the discrimination or harassment (respondent).
- D. A description, in as much detail as possible, of the alleged discrimination or harassment.
- E. The date(s) of the alleged discrimination or harassment.
- F. The name of all persons who have knowledge about the alleged discrimination or harassment (witnesses), as can be reasonably determined.
- G. A description, in as much detail as possible, of how the grievant wants the complaint to be resolved.

### **Investigation and Resolution of the Complaint**

The Principal, Human Resources Director or their designee, will interview witnesses whom s/he deems necessary and appropriate to determine the facts relevant to the complaint, and will gather other relevant information. Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that such interviews and gathering of information will be completed in a timely manner.

As soon as possible upon receiving the complaint, the Principal or Human Resources Director will meet the grievant and/or her/his representative to review the information gathered and, if applicable, to propose a resolution designed to stop the discrimination or harassment and to correct its effect. As soon as possible after the meeting with the grievant and/or representative, the Principal or Human Resources Director will provide written disposition of the complaint to the grievant and to the respondent(s).

All the time lines specified above will be implemented as specified, unless the nature of the investigation or exigent circumstances prevent such implementation, in which case, the matter will be completed as quickly as practicable. In addition, it should be noted that in the event the respondent is subject to a collective bargaining agreement which sets forth a specific time line for notice and/or investigation of a complaint, such time lines will be followed.

Confidentiality of grievant, respondents and witnesses will be maintained, to the extent consistent with the Watertown Public School's obligations relating to investigation of complaints and the due process rights of individuals affected.

Retaliation against someone because he/she has filed a complaint under this grievance procedure or has cooperated in an investigation is strictly prohibited. Acts of retaliation may result in disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or dismissal.

If the grievant is not satisfied with a disposition the grievant may appeal the disposition to the Superintendent, as follows:

Dr. Jean M. Fitzgerald, Superintendent  
Watertown School Administration Building  
30 Common Street  
Watertown, Massachusetts 02472  
Telephone: (617) 926-7700

The superintendent will issue a written response on the appeal to the grievant typically within ten (10) school days of receiving the appeal.



Generally, a grievant may file a complaint with:

The U.S. Department of Education  
Office for Civil Rights  
33 Arch Street, Suite 900  
Boston, Massachusetts 02110-1491  
Telephone: (617) 289-0111  
TDD: (877) 521-2172

In general, complaints to the Office for Civil rights must be filed within 180 calendar days of the alleged discrimination or harassment. Complaints should be made in writing, if possible. All complaints will be taken seriously and will be investigated thoroughly. If, after investigation, a complaint is determined to be warranted then appropriate action will be taken, up to and including disciplinary action against the person or persons who behave in a discriminatory fashion.

Employees may also file a complaint by contacting:

Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD)  
One Ashburton Place  
Boston, MA 02108  
(617) 727-3990

United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission  
John F. Kennedy Federal Building  
475 Government Center  
Boston, MA 02203  
Phone: (617) 565-3200  
TDD: (617) 565-3204