

WACHUSETT REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

1401 Main Street, Holden, MA 01520

Telephone: 508-829-6771

Main Fax: 508-829-4895

Athletics & Health Office Fax: 508-829-1689

Website: www.wrsd.net/wrhs

2023-2024 STUDENT HANDBOOK

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

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

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

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

At the District level, the ADA and Section 504 (disability pertaining to students) Coordinator is Joan DeAngelis, Director of Special Education & Student Services, WRSD, 1745 Main St., Jefferson, MA 01522, 508-829-1670.

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

MISSION STATEMENT

Wachusett Regional High School is committed to an educational process that fosters independence and responsibility in our students. By offering diverse, challenging academic programs and rich co-curricular activities, Wachusett Regional High School strives to provide students with the skills and knowledge to achieve their potential as life-long learners.

CORE VALUES

Critical Thinking/Problem Solving
Creativity/Innovation
Citizenship/Responsibility
Communication
Collaboration

STUDENT LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

Students will . . .

- Exercise responsible citizenship
- Communicate effectively
- Think critically and solve problems
- Think creatively
- Collaborate and learn actively
- Use technology effectively

DAILY LIFE AT WRHS

ATTENDANCE – Students are expected to attend school regularly in order to obtain maximum benefit from their education and in order to develop habits of punctuality, self-discipline, and responsibility. There is a clear connection between good attendance, academic success and success after high school (see Attendance Policy page 12).

The Wachusett Regional School District closely monitors school attendance and enforces all attendance laws and policies, in accordance with Chapter 76 of the Massachusetts General Laws. The Commonwealth and the District also track and report chronic absenteeism, in accordance with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

School attendance prior to age 16 is compulsory. In accordance with M.G.L. c. 76, § 18, the following procedures apply :

- No student 16 through 18 years old will be permitted to withdraw without approval from his/her parent or guardian.
- When students turn 18 years old, they reach the “age of majority,” at which time they may earn the privilege of writing their own excuse notes. Students who abuse this privilege may have it revoked following a parent conference with the assistant principal. Students who receive this permission are responsible for the notes written. Students who have reached the age of majority still will not be dismissed without an appropriate reason.
- Any student 16 years or older who seeks to withdraw from school prior to graduation must obtain a withdrawal form from the school administration. No student shall be considered to have permanently left the school district unless an administrator from the school or school district has sent notice within a period of five (5) days from the student’s tenth (10) consecutive unexcused absence to the student and to the parent or guardian of such student, in both the primary language of such parent or guardian and English, stating that such student and his parent or guardian may meet with the school committee or its designated representatives within ten (10) days after the sending of the notice, prior to the student permanently leaving school, The time for meeting may be extended at the request of the parent or guardian and with consent of the school committee or its designated representatives, provided no extension shall be for longer than fourteen (14) days. Such meetings shall be for the purpose of discussing the reasons for the student permanently leaving school, the consequences of dropping out, the benefits of earning a high school diploma, and alternative educational, alternative resources, and/ or other placements.

The preferred and most efficient way to report a student absence or tardy at WRHS is via the PowerSchool Parent Portal and should be done by 8:00 a.m. of the day in question. Parents and guardians can log into the PowerSchool Parent Portal through a web browser (<https://wrsd.powerschool.com>) or the PowerSchool Mobile App.

Additionally, parents or guardians can call (508) 829-6771, before 8:00 a.m. to report the student's absence or tardy and the reason for it. To report an absence upon the student's return to school, a note from the parent/guardian explaining the absence should be brought to the main office. A call will be made to each absent student’s home if we are not contacted by a parent or guardian. Parents/guardians who have questions or need assistance with reporting an absence or late arrival through the PowerSchool Parent Portal can call the attendance secretary at (508) 829-6771 extension 5070 for assistance.

When a student misses 5 days during the school year due to unexcused absences, the parent/guardian will be contacted and a meeting will be held with the Principal or Principal’s designee to develop action steps to address the student’s attendance.

TARDY TO SCHOOL – Students are expected to be in first-period class at 7:35 a.m each school day and are not allowed to leave first-period class until after the pledge and/or announcements. Students arriving after 7:35 a.m, or designated start of school day, must sign in at the front door/main office and then report to their appropriate class. Students are allowed three tardies per quarter that must be verified by a note, phone call, or email to the student's administrator from a parent/guardian on that day or the next school day. All tardies beyond the three allowed per quarter will result in disciplinary action (see Student Management Code). All students in the building or on school grounds prior to the 7:35 a.m. bell, or designated start of school day, and who are late to period-one class will be sent to the Main Office to sign in and be considered tardy to school.

When a student misses 2 or more classes in 5 days during the school year due to unexcused tardies, the parent/guardian will be contacted and a meeting will be held with the Principal or Principal’s designee to develop action steps to address the student’s attendance.

TARDY TO CLASS – Two tardies to class (less than one-minute tardy) per quarter are tolerated. Each additional occurrence per quarter will be referred to administration and dealt with as defined by the Student Management Code.

DISMISSALS/SCHOOL DAY – Students who are dismissed must bring a note from their parent/guardian indicating their full name, grade, the date/time, phone number and reason for dismissal to the main office **before school**. Try to avoid dismissals during school hours.

Phone dismissals are not allowed unless approved by an administrator. Students leaving campus without proper dismissal from the Main Office or the Health Office, will be considered truant.

Students being dismissed during long block study must seek approval from their administrator. The only exception is that seniors may apply for "Early Dismissal" if they have no classes scheduled during long block and the following period.

DISMISSAL PRIOR TO SCHOOL VACATION – When family obligations or other long-range plans conflict with school closing dates, students must inform their class administrator of their plans. Students must also make arrangements with their teachers to complete assignments missed during their absence. These absences are considered unexcused under the Attendance Policy.

MAKING UP WORK MISSED WHEN ABSENT – Students are allowed to make up work according to the following schedule when their absence from school is not the result of truancy:

- 1-day absence:** 2 school days to make up the work
- 2-day absence:** 4 school days to make up the work
- 3, 4, 5-day absence:** 1 school week to make up the work

More than one week's absence will be treated as a special case and arrangements must be made with each teacher. Students are responsible for making those arrangements and should obtain work from their school counselors during their absence.

In case of an absence that occurs on the day an assignment is due, the aforementioned schedule for make-up does not apply. In this case, work must be turned in immediately upon return from the absence. If absence is due to suspension, all work must be submitted one day after returning to school. Special circumstances will be treated on a case-by-case basis.

If a student is present during any part of the day that a long-term assignment is due, it is expected that the student submit that assignment to their teacher on that day. Students are responsible for all class assignments missed due to field trip participation and should make up their work in a timely way. Students should work this out with the classroom teacher prior to the trip.

WITHDRAWAL OR TRANSFER FROM SCHOOL – In order to withdraw or transfer from school, students must complete the necessary forms provided by the Counseling Office and sign out formally. Failure to do so will result in incomplete school records. Students are financially responsible for all books and materials issued to them and they must be returned to faculty/staff before the student withdraws.

VISITORS/VISITOR'S PASS – All visitors (including parents) must sign in at the main office and wear a "Visitor's Pass" that must be returned to the main office upon leaving.

STUDENT PASSES – Passes are required whenever students leave a classroom during a class period and can be checked by staff or administrators. Passes should include the student's name, date, time, destination, and the teacher signature. Students in the hall during a class period without a pass may result in disciplinary action.

STUDENT IDENTIFICATION CARDS – All students will be assigned to have their picture taken during the first week of school depending on their schedule. Picture retakes will occur at the end of October for those students that missed the original dates. Information to purchase pictures will be sent home in advance of these dates. In addition to allowing students/parents to order pictures from the photographer, each student will receive a student ID card. Students should have their ID on their person at all times and show it to any WRHS staff member when asked. There is a \$5 replacement fee for lost IDs. See the principal's secretary in the main office for a replacement ID.

CAFETERIA – Students will be scheduled for one 30-minute lunch period during which time they must remain in the cafeteria. All other areas are off limits during lunch and students may not leave campus during the lunch period without permission. **For the 2023-2024 school year, all students will be eligible for one free breakfast and one free lunch per day.** However, all additional breakfasts and lunches and snacks must be purchased at full price. Check prepayments for lunches are accepted, as well as cash. Make certain to include the student(s) name(s) and identification number(s) on the check. Students may make deposits during the school day, however, they are encouraged to do so **before school**. We also offer an online pre-payment system, for more information go to <https://wrsdschoolnutrition.com/>. With free meals being accessible to all students, there are no IOUs for any items. Students are not allowed to charge food to another student's account or allow other students to use their personal account. Remember that this is your school and your cafeteria. Be responsible with your food and beverage. Clean up after yourself or consequences may be assigned by the Administration. **All food and drinks must be consumed in the cafeteria or in a designated room during nutrition break.**

FOOD AND BEVERAGES – With the exception of the school cafeteria and in a designated room during nutrition break, the consumption of food and beverages anywhere in the building is prohibited during the school day; upon entering the school building until dismissal at 2:10 p.m. Classroom functions approved in advance by the Administration and clear bottled water will be allowed. Travel coffee mugs, juice, vitamin water and snacks are not allowed outside of the cafeteria or the designated room during nutrition break. The consequences of not following this rule are outlined in the Student Management Code.

BREAKFAST – Wachusett offers a complete breakfast that meets the USDA guidelines and includes a hot meal and other healthy items such as bagels, cereal, fruit, and will be open before school at 7:00 a.m. for breakfast.

LUNCH – Wachusett is committed to the District’s Nutrition and Wellness Policy. There are five stations serving lunch every day. Each station’s main entrée is served as a complete meal, which includes a choice of fruit, vegetable and milk. Each student will be allowed one free lunch per day but any additional purchases will be at the daily lunch price of \$4.50. Available at all serving lines are chips, cookies and drinks for an additional cost.

NUTRITION BREAK – Students are allowed time to have a small nutritious snack during the first five minutes of third period at which time morning announcements will be read. Students must bring their snack with them to class and will not be allowed to leave after the start of the period. The policy which states no food or drink (with the exception of clear water) outside of the cafeteria will not change other than this nutrition break. Abuse of this policy may result in a loss of privileges. Due to safety issues some areas may be excluded from this policy (i.e., science labs, gymnasium). Nutritious snacks are recommended such as fruit, breakfast bars, etc.

FIRE DRILLS/ALARM – Fire drills will take place throughout the year. Faculty and staff will direct students on how and where to exit the building when the fire alarm sounds. Directions for leaving each area are also posted. When the alarm sounds, follow the instructions given to you by faculty and staff members and leave the building quickly and quietly. Remain in the designated area until students have checked in with their teacher and are told to reenter the school. Upon reentering, all students must report directly back to the class they were in when the alarm sounded. The setting off of a false fire alarm is a criminal offense; offenders will be dealt with severely by school and local officials (see Student Management Code).

FIELD TRIPS – Field trips are designed to enrich the school curriculum and it is a privilege to participate in them. Administration may exclude students from participating in field trips due to behavior and/or academic reasons. Students are asked to contribute to the cost of field trips as well as complete and return a field trip permission form and health form, in order to participate. Students must notify their teachers of their upcoming absence from class as a result of their trip. Students are responsible for all class assignments missed due to field trip participation and should make up their work in a timely way. Plans to make up work should be discussed with the classroom teacher prior to the trip. During field trips, Wachusett Regional School District and Wachusett Regional High School rules are in effect at all times. In addition, the teacher in charge will have further instructions regarding student behavior.

TRANSPORTATION

AFTER SCHOOL – Students should only remain after school for scheduled student activities. We ask that while waiting for a ride, students should wait in either the cafeteria or outside of the building near the gym entrance or main office entrance. Any students found loitering elsewhere will be asked to leave the building and further consequences may be issued by administration. On the occasion that a student remains in the building after school for any other reason, a school administrator should be notified.

BUS POLICIES – Riding the school bus is a privilege. Students are expected not to interfere with the driver, other riders, or the safe operation of the bus. Failure to act responsibly may result in loss of this privilege, as well as discipline under the Student Management Code. Students should be reminded that all school rules remain in effect on the school bus.

STUDENT PARKING – Only eligible students in Grade 12 may apply for a year-long Student Parking Permit. Rules associated with receiving a parking permit and reasons for losing it are included with the Parking Permit Application available on the school website. Students that have a pattern of disciplinary infractions may not be eligible for parking. All applications must be filled out completely and will be checked for accuracy and completeness.

A parking fee is charged and a sticker issued that **MUST** be visible on the student’s car as outlined on the parking application. Parking on campus is a privilege that can be revoked due to disciplinary or academic problems, unpaid fines, unsafe driving, unauthorized transfer or sale of a parking sticker to another student, or any abuse of the parking privilege. **Students who park without authorization or who violate parking regulations will be fined and/or towed at the owner’s expense.**

Limited parking spaces will be available to juniors and seniors only for one-day use at a cost of \$2 per day. A junior or senior may be issued up to ten one-day passes per quarter. Students requesting these spaces are strongly recommended to make requests at the Main Office in advance. Parking spaces cannot be guaranteed on the day of request. Plan ahead if you need to bring a car to school.

Administrators have the legal right to search students' cars given reasonable suspicion.

IDLING OF MOTOR VEHICLE – Massachusetts law prohibits the unnecessary idling of motor vehicles on school grounds. M.G.L. c.90, §16B prohibits operators of motor vehicles from allowing any motor vehicle to idle unnecessarily on school grounds except for any of the following reasons: traffic conditions; queuing at a school for the purpose of picking up or discharging students; turbo-charged diesel engine cool down or warm up; maintenance of appropriate temperature for school buses when accepting or discharging passengers not to exceed three minutes in any fifteen minute period or one minute in any fifteen minute period for other motor

vehicles. Violators may be subject to a civil fine of up to \$100 may be imposed for a first offense and \$500 for second and subsequent offenses.

GENERAL INFORMATION

ACADEMIC INFORMATION – WRHS is a four-year comprehensive high school accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

GRADING SYSTEM

A+ = 97-100	A = 93-96	A- = 90-92
B+ = 87-89	B = 83-86	B- = 80-82
C+ = 77-79	C = 73-76	C- = 70-72
D+ = 67-69	D = 63-66	D- = 60-62
E = 50-59	(fail with make-up possible)	
F = 0-49	(no make-up possible)	

COURSE LOAD – All students are required to be full-time students. In order to be a full-time student, students are required to be enrolled in at least 5 courses that meet every day.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS – 110 total credits are needed for graduation. They include English (20), Social Studies (15), Mathematics (15), Science (15), Physical Education (7 1/2), Health (2 1/2), Fine Arts (5), Foreign Language (10) and other Electives (20). Please consult your school counselor and the *WRHS Educational Guide* for more information regarding academic programs and policies.

MIDYEAR AND FINAL EXAMS – All students are required to take midyear and final exams (see senior final exam exemptions) in all of their major subjects. Exams are worth 20% of the semester (two-term) average. Exam schedules will be posted on the WRHS website (www.wrsd.net/wrhs).

Students may not be dismissed early from an exam. If a student leaves an exam early, they will receive a grade of 0. See senior exam policy for any exceptions.

Make-up exams are allowed only with administrative approval. Upon receiving approval, it is the responsibility of the student to contact the teacher and arrange a time for the make-up exam. It is expected that make-up exams will be completed during exam week and/or scheduled make-up period that takes place the week following exams.

Exemptions - All requests for exemptions must start with the Director of School Counseling, the Department Head and the student's Administrator with final approval from the Building Principal.

EXEMPTION FROM FINAL EXAMS – Only seniors have the opportunity to be exempt from final exams at the end of the school year. In order to be eligible, they must have a quarter 3 and 4 (semester 2) average equal to or above 90%. Students will not receive an exemption if their attendance is in violation of the WRHS Attendance Policy.

NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY – Wachusett is a charter member of the National Honor Society. Please see NHS selection criteria on page 14.

LOCKERS - All students will be assigned a locker and a lock on the first day of school and should use only the locker assigned to them. Freshmen and new students will be assessed a \$5 locker fee should they choose to use a locker. Students are responsible for the condition of their locker and for its contents. Students will be assessed for any damage that is done to their locker. All belongings must be removed by the last day of school. If the lock is missing from the locker at any time, the student will be charged a \$10 replacement fee. Writing on lockers is strictly prohibited. Students are reminded that administrators have the legal right to search lockers and their contents, given reasonable suspicion (see Searches).

SCHOOL FACILITIES AND MATERIALS – Students are responsible for damage incurred to school property. Students will receive textbooks and other materials for all of their courses at WRHS. Check any book or piece of equipment for damage when it is issued to you and report it to the appropriate faculty or staff member. Students should write their name and year of issue in all textbooks that they receive.

Students should keep track of their books and materials and report any losses to an appropriate faculty or staff member. Check for lost books and materials at the Main Office. Students are responsible to pay the full replacement cost of any damaged or lost books, equipment or other school materials. Graduation tickets will not be issued until these bills are paid.

EVENTS CALENDAR – Dances, plays, class activities, and other social events are held throughout the year. Applications for these events must be filed in the Main Office well in advance of the event. Final clearance for all events must be made through administration before they are included on the school's activity calendar.

CLASS DUES – Every student is responsible for class dues. Class dues fund some of the graduation expenses, as well as help defray the cost of other senior activities as well as future alumni events. Class dues are \$100 for all students present during their senior year. All students, whether participating in senior activities or not, are responsible for dues. It is recommended that students pay dues in yearly installments or in advance so as not to increase the financial burden at the end of senior year.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES – Students are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities at WRHS. There are a number of activities outside the traditional classroom and students are welcome to participate. If a student is absent during the day the student may not attend extra curricular activities without approval from administration. See the Wachusett homepage for an up-to-date list of activities.

ATHLETICS – There are many varsity, junior varsity, and freshman athletic teams at WRHS. Varsity teams are open to all and tryouts are held prior to each of the three sports seasons. Beyond the eligibility requirements for WRHS teams (see *Educational Guide*), our athletic organizations are under the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA). All coaches will review the Wachusett and MIAA rules on eligibility at the beginning of the season. These rules must be adhered to or student will be ineligible and/or contests forfeited. If a student is absent during the day the student may not attend athletic practices or competitions without approval from administration.

ATHLETIC FEE – The Wachusett Regional School District Committee has voted that each student on an athletic team must pay a fee of \$250 or \$350 per family for each season (fall, winter, spring) that they participate in a sport. The fee is due from each athlete prior to the first interscholastic athletic contest scheduled for that sport. The fee may be paid online or by check or money order, made payable to the Wachusett Regional School District. Students who do not pay the fee will be ineligible to participate. Students may apply for free or reduced fees based upon need.

STUDENT ATHLETE CONCUSSION POLICY – WRHS has established the following Concussion Protocol for all student-athletes competing in our interscholastic programs. All students, coaches, and parents are expected to be familiar with its contents.

Any student-athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional.

If it can be determined during a contest by the school's health care professional (this person must be a Medical Doctor, Doctor of Orthopedics, or Certified Athletic Trainer) that an athlete removed from play does not have a concussion and is cleared to play, then that student-athlete may be allowed to re-enter the competition. If the health care professional does not clear the athlete for return to the contest, then the athlete must adhere to the following ***Return-to-Play Protocol***:

1. Only a Medical Doctor, Doctor of Orthopedics, Physician's Assistant or Nurse Practitioner working under a Medical Doctor or Doctor of Orthopedics, may clear the athlete for return to competition.
2. The clearance must be in writing.
3. The clearance may not be on the same date on which the athlete was removed from play.

"AWAY" CONTEST PROTOCOL – It is important to note that students, coaches, and parents are held to the same procedures and guidelines regarding concussion protocol when they compete on the road at "away" athletic events. In the event that the opposing school does not have an MD, OD, or Certified Athletic Trainer on staff, the student who sustains a possible concussion is "done for the day." They will not be cleared to re-enter the contest. Coaches and parents do not have the authority to clear a student-athlete for re-entry to a contest.

MANDATED FREE ONLINE CONCUSSION COURSE – Massachusetts state law currently requires that parents and legal guardians take a free online course to familiarize themselves with the signs and symptoms of a concussion. The course will also discuss proper response to a suspected concussion, return to play protocols, and suggestions for the prevention of sports-related head injuries. The Wachusett Regional High School Athletic Department highly encourages student-athletes to take this course as well. The course may be accessed at www.nfhslearn.com

PHYSICAL EXAMS FOR ATHLETES – According to MIAA guidelines, all students participating in interscholastic athletic contests must have had a physical examination within thirteen months prior to participation. Physical exams are only valid thirteen months to the day of the exam and must be renewed to continue participation even if it is in the middle of a season. WRHS schedules an optional physical examination date in the summer. The cost of the physical is \$20 payable to Wachusett Regional School District at the time of the exam.

SPECTATOR SPORTSMANSHIP GUIDELINES FOR ATHLETIC EVENTS – Athletics at Wachusett Regional High School are considered an extension of the classroom. As such, we strive to achieve a high degree of sportsmanship at our athletic contests. It is the

responsibility of the district to teach and model good behavior and to maintain a safe and orderly environment at all times. Spectator conduct that is identified, at the discretion of the school administration (or designated supervisor) as profane, inappropriate or disorderly, or any behavior that interferes or threatens to interfere with the event, shall result in the following:

•**Warning:** a warning may be issued if the behavior is considered inappropriate. Warnings do not have to be given if the behavior is considered profane or if it has interfered with the operation of a game from an administrator/supervisor's, coaches' or officials' perspective.

•**Ejection:** spectators will be removed from the event should their behavior disrupt the operation of the game or is considered profane. Spectators that have been warned previously regarding inappropriate behavior shall be removed should the inappropriate behavior continue.

•**Suspension:** a spectator that has been removed from an event may have their privileges revoked for a period of time. This period of time will be determined by the school administration.

For behavior that is severe in nature or for failure to follow the directives of the administration or event supervisor, law enforcement officials will be contacted. Violation of sportsmanship guidelines may result in additional consequences by school administration.

RELEASE OF STUDENT RECORDS TO GRADUATING SENIORS – As per Massachusetts Department of Education Educational Law 603 CMR 23.06(3), each graduating student's complete student record will be released to him/her. At WRHS, we provide records to seniors on "Cap & Gown" day. As the Student Record will generally be destroyed by the District within thirty (30) calendar days of providing a copy to the graduating student, students are encouraged to maintain the records provided to them securely at home. This information will be needed for entrance into colleges and the workforce. If the student does not pick up his/her student record on this day, it may be obtained in WRHS Main Office for five (5) school days after graduation. Records may be picked up by the student, parent/guardian, or designee. A designee must be appointed in writing by the student or parent/guardian.

POSTERS – Permission to hang posters must be secured through an administrator who will review and initial all posters and notices before they are posted. All posters/notices must be in good taste and those who put them up must take them down immediately after the event. Approved posters should be posted on cinderblock walls, glass or cork strips. Outdated, damaged or posters placed without administrative approval or placed in areas other than those that are designated, will be removed.

LOST AND FOUND – All articles found should be taken to the Main Office where they may be claimed. Items are discarded periodically throughout the year.

STOLEN PROPERTY – Locks are issued for students to use on their school locker. In addition to securing these lockers, students are strongly recommended to obtain their own locks to secure their physical education locker. If a student does not have a lock for PE, they may give their valuables to their teacher. Occasionally items are stolen, and students should promptly report the theft to their administrator and/or PE teacher if this occurs. When personal items are stolen, students should also fill out a report with the Holden Police Department. Wachusett Regional High School assumes no responsibility for lost or stolen items.

STUDENT PUBLICATIONS – Wachusett Regional High School supports student publications and generally maintains the free speech rights of students in such publications. However, final editorial control of such publications is in the hands of the school administration (WRSC Policy P6515).

MEDICATION – If a student requires medication, including over-the-counter medications, they must secure written orders from their doctor before medication may be given or taken in school. All medications must be brought to the Health Office for storage and distribution. These written orders and medications must be kept on file in the Health Office. If a student carries medication on their person without school approval, the student may be subject to disciplinary action potentially leading to expulsion from school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION MEDICAL EXCUSES – Students are expected to participate in physical education classes. Only students with a written note from their doctor may be excused from physical education classes. Students must file their doctor's note with the Health Office within two weeks of the restrictive impairment.

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

MAIN OFFICE/ADMINISTRATION – The Main Office (room A101) and Counseling Department (room A111) are located at the main entrance of the building.

COUNSELING SERVICES – The Counseling Department is staffed by the Director of School Counseling, eight school counselors, one school adjustment counselor, three school psychologists, and two full-time secretaries. Services include, but are not limited to; providing academic, career and personal/social support and development to students, delivering a school counseling curriculum, academic advising, coordinating individual student planning and meeting immediate needs and concerns by providing responsive

services, making referrals for additional assistance and consulting and collaborating with parents, teachers, administrators and community resources.

MEDIA CENTER – The Media Center (room C105) is open from 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. It contains both print and electronic resources. Other computer laboratories throughout the school can access similar information through our network environment.

HEALTH OFFICE – The Health Office (room H101) is located on the first floor near the stairs leading to the gym. Medical treatment consists of first aid for injuries and care for students who become ill during school hours. Parents/guardians of students who need to leave school during the day because of illness will be contacted in order to arrange transportation for the student. Students going to the Health Office must have a pass and sign in and out of the office with the Health Office secretary. Students should not visit the Health Office during passing period except for emergencies. Please respect those who truly need services and go there only when necessary.

STUDENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES

All members of the Wachusett community are expected to be good citizens by treating themselves and others with respect. Students are expected to use open and effective communication skills to address issues as they develop, using parents, peers, counselors, teachers, the resource officer and administrators as resources when appropriate. There are clear behavioral expectations and consequences for student violations. Please refer to the Student Management Code for a more detailed list.

CHEMICAL VIOLATION – Any use, consumption, possession, distribution, in the presence of illegal consumption or possession, or sale of any alcohol, drug, tobacco product, nicotine dispensing product or any controlled substance is in violation of school policy and students are subject to discipline outlined in the Student Management Code. These violations are also applicable to student athletes under M.I.A.A. Rule 62.1 and will result in team suspensions. These infractions will also be applicable to any student involved in extracurricular activities and will result in a suspension from those activities.

The WRHS Administration reserves the right to administer a breathalyzer test to any student suspected of consuming or possessing alcohol during the school day or at any school-sponsored event.

SEARCHES – Wachusett Regional School District authorities may exercise their rights to conduct a search of student cars, lockers, desks, and/or the student's person and personal belongings given reasonable suspicion that the search will produce evidence of a violation of school rules or applicable laws. Lockers and desks remain, at all times, the property of the District.

A warrantless search (non-emergency) of a student's school locker or articles carried by students on their person or in their personal belongings, may be conducted if there is a reasonable suspicion that the search is necessary to protect the health and/or safety of students and staff, or to detect a violation of school rules or applicable laws. Such a search may be conducted if school authorities suspect that a student possesses such items as, but not limited to, weapons, dangerous instruments, stolen goods, tobacco and tobacco products, nicotine dispensing products, narcotics, hallucinogens, amphetamines, barbiturates, marijuana, unregistered drugs, drug paraphernalia, controlled substances, alcoholic beverages, or evidence of cheating or other academic misconduct.

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT – Wachusett Regional School District and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts have strict regulations regarding bullying and harassment. Under no circumstances is this behavior tolerated.

Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action in accordance with WRSD Policies #P1000, #6438, and Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 71, Section 37O. Instances of bullying and harassment, which occur both in and out of school, may also result referrals to law enforcement authorities.

For more information refer to Policy #P1000 and #6438 on the district website at www.wrsd.net

HAZING – See Commonwealth of Massachusetts General Laws on Hazing contained within the Wachusett Regional School District Policies in this handbook.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES – Student use of personal electronic devices (including but not limited to: cell phones, headphones/earbuds, wearable technology, etc.) will be allowed with specific limits during the school day.

Students will be issued a WRHS Chromebook for use for the school year. Students will be required to bring the WRHS Chromebook to school, fully charged, on a daily basis. Students will use their WRHS Chromebooks as directed by their classroom teacher. Students will not be allowed to use *their own personal computer* during classroom and other academic time. If a student's Chromebook is lost, stolen or damaged, the student is responsible for contacting the IT department for a replacement.

Students will be allowed to use electronic devices and make phone calls prior to the start of school at 7:27 a.m. Once the 7:27 a.m. bell rings, phone calls can no longer be made or accepted on cell phones. Any phone calls after 7:27 a.m. must go through the main office or through the student's administrator. If a student has an emergency and needs to access a cell phone that student should see their administrator.

Students are allowed to use personal electronic equipment in a non-disruptive manner (texting, etc.) before and after school, during lunch, study hall, and passing periods. Cell phones and other personal electronic devices are prohibited from being used during class (unless teacher directed) and in the school bathrooms.

Personal electronic device use should not cause disruption, infringe on the rights of other students or cause students to be late to class. Examples of such disruptive behaviors include but are not limited to loud music, photos, videos, etc.

Once the bell rings to begin class, all personal electronic devices (including but not limited to: cell phones, headphones/earbuds, wearable technology, etc.) must be silenced (not on vibrate) and cell phones will be put in a space provided by the classroom teacher. Headphones, earbuds, etc need to be put out of sight and not worn. Unless otherwise directed by the teacher, cell phones will remain in this predetermined area throughout the entirety of the class period. Students will not be able to take their cell phones with them if they leave class to go to the bathroom, locker, etc.

Personal electronic equipment may be subject to search by the school administration where there is reasonable suspicion that the electronic device contains evidence of violations of school rules, District policies, and /or applicable laws and regulations.

WRSD DRESS / PERSONAL ATTIRE – Neatness, cleanliness, and appropriateness are the keystones of school dress and appearance in the Wachusett Regional School District. Personal dress and appearance may not violate reasonable standards of health, safety, cleanliness, and may not result in disruption or disorder within the school.

The WRSD Dress Code for school and school functions hopes to achieve three goals:

- 1. Promote a respectful learning environment.***
- 2. Promote a safe learning environment where dress does not interfere with the successful and safe completion of learning activities.***
- 3. Promote an equitable and inclusive learning environment in which the dress code does not negatively impact any group based on race, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, ethnicity, religion, disability, socio-economic status, and/or body type/size.***

The responsibility of proper dress and grooming rests primarily with the student and his/her/their parents or guardians. We ask that students and parents/guardians work to ensure that the goals outlined above are being met with the student's school dress attire.

Hoods, except those worn in relation to required religious practice or with prior administrative approval due to a disabling condition, may not be worn within the school building as such headwear interferes with the identification of students and presents safety concerns. Sunglasses are not to be worn inside the building except with medical authorization and prior approval of the school administration.

Offensive clothing can sometimes be subjective to the individual; however, students should be aware that if symbols, words, or pictures on clothing cause, or are reasonably forecast to cause, a substantial disruption of the school environment, they will be asked to remove and replace the offensive clothing. Offenders may be subject to other disciplinary action as well. To this end, we ask that students and parents be considerate of how dress choices affect the safety and comfort of others. Clothing may not depict, advertise, or advocate the use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or other controlled substances, and weapons.

In addition, a student's personal dress and appearance must comply with any and all applicable state and federal health and safety regulations, especially while attending a lab or shop.

SOCIAL EVENTS – WRHS students may be required to show their school IDs in order to enter event sites. Wachusett students may be excluded from participating in social events based upon behavioral and academic performance. All students attending social events may be subjected to a breathalyzer test and must adhere to all school rules.

SCHOOL DANCE POLICY - The following dance conduct policy is designed to promote a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment at WRHS dances. All student guests for dances must be pre-approved by administration.

DANCE CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS - Please note that these expectations apply both on and off the dance floor. Sexually suggestive dancing may result in: the student being removed from the event, the student not being allowed to attend the next dance, and parent notification.

The dance rules are as follows:

- No front to back touching/grinding
- No straddling legs
- No bending over
- No touching of the breasts, buttocks, or genitals
- Both feet must remain on the floor
- Hands between waist and shoulders only

- No “making out”(overt and/or prolonged public displays of affection)

DUE PROCESS – WRHS student management policies are based upon a firm belief that all students have a right to a quality education and that this right should not be infringed upon in any way. Administrators are here to help students if a problem arises. Under school rules, all students at WRHS are guaranteed due process. The process provided will be dependent upon the nature of the violation of which the student is accused and the potential sanctions therefor.

Definitions:

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

In-School Suspension: the removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises, for no more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions during the school year. **Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating cumulative days of suspension. Further, the removal of a student for disciplinary reasons for less than half of the time in which school is in session on a given day, shall not constitute an in-school suspension.*

Short-Term Suspension: the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten consecutive or cumulative school days or less. A principal may, in his or her discretion, allow a student to serve a short-term suspension in school. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days. **Suspensions or expulsions imposed in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H and/or 37H1/2 shall not be counted toward the maximum number of days of short or long-term suspension permitted under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H3/4 and/or 603 CMR 53.00.*

Long-Term Suspension: the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days. **Suspensions or expulsions imposed in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H and/or 37H1/2 shall not be counted toward the maximum number of days of short or long-term suspension permitted under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H3/4 and/or 603 CMR 53.00.*

Written Notice: Written correspondence sent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent/guardian for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent.

Principal: The primary administrator of the school or the Principal’s designee for disciplinary purposes.

Superintendent: The Superintendent of Schools or the Superintendent’s designee for purposes of a disciplinary appeal.

Due Process Requirements

In-School Suspension: Prior to the imposition of an In-School Suspension, the student will be informed of the disciplinary offense and provided with an opportunity to respond. If the principal determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the principal will provide oral notice to the student and parent of the length of the In-School Suspension and will make reasonable efforts to meet with the parent. On or before the day of the In-School Suspension, the principal will deliver written notice to the parent of the basis for and length of the in-school suspension and invite the parent to meet to discuss the student’s behavior if such a meeting has not already occurred.

Emergency Removal under Section M.G.L. c. 71 §37H3/4: The principal may remove a student from school temporarily when a student is charged with a violation of school rules in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H3/4 and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the Principal's or designee’s judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption presented. The principal shall immediately notify the Superintendent in writing of the emergency removal and the reason for it, and describe the danger or disruption presented by the student. The emergency removal shall not exceed two (2) school days following the day of the emergency removal.

In the event of an emergency removal, the principal or designee shall make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student's parent/guardian of the emergency removal and the reason(s) therefor. The principal or designee shall provide written notice to the student and parent/guardian as provided above and provide the student an opportunity for a disciplinary hearing with the principal as provided above, and the parent/guardian an opportunity to attend the hearing, before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for hearing is otherwise agreed to by the Principal, student, and parent/guardian. The principal will render a decision orally on the same day as the disciplinary hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day, which meets the requirements of 603 CMR 53.08.

In the event of an emergency removal from school, the principal or designee will not release the student until adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation.

Out-of School Suspension: In the case of disciplinary offenses not involving: a) possession of a dangerous weapon; b) possession of a controlled substance; c) assault on a member of the educational staff; or d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, the student and parents will be given oral and written notice of the disciplinary offense with which the student is charged and the opportunity to participate in a hearing prior to the imposition of an out-of-school suspension. Written notice of the date and time for the hearing will be provided in English and in the primary language of the student's home and will identify the disciplinary offense with which the student has been charged, the basis for the charge, the potential length of the student's suspension, and shall inform the parent and student of the right to interpreter services if necessary to participate in the hearing. Where a student may be subject to a Long-Term Suspension, the Principal will also notify the student and parent of the student's right to legal representation (at private expense), the right to present and examine witnesses, the right to review the student's record and documents that may be relied upon by the Principal, and the right to request that the hearing be audiotaped.

For disciplinary offenses involving: a) possession of a dangerous weapon; b) possession of a controlled substance; c) assault on a member of the educational staff; or d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, the student will be given oral notice of the violation with which the student is charged and an opportunity to respond thereto prior to the Principal's imposition of a short-term/interim suspension ten (10) consecutive school days or less pending formal disciplinary proceedings. Upon imposition of a short-term or interim suspension or an interim suspension of ten (10) consecutive days or less pending further disciplinary proceedings, the student and parents will be provided with written notice of the suspension and the date and time of any formal disciplinary proceedings to consider the student's long-term suspension or expulsion.

In accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H3/4 and 603 CMR 53.08(3)(d)(5) disciplinary decisions made by the principal or principal's designee which do not result in long-term suspensions are not subject to appeal.

Principal's Hearing:

Short-Term Suspension:

At the Principal's hearing, the student and parents (if participating) may dispute the charge(s) against the student and present information, including mitigating facts, for the principal's consideration in determining consequences for the student. Massachusetts regulations do not provide for a student to be represented by an attorney at an in-school or short-term suspension hearing. Short term suspensions imposed in accordance with 603 CMR 53.00 cannot be appealed.

Long-Term Suspension:

In addition to the rights afforded a student in a short-term suspension hearing, the student will have the following rights:

- the right of the student and the student's parent to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate;
- the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's/parent's expense;
- the right to review the student's record and the documents upon which the Principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not;
- the right to produce witnesses on their behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident;
- the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;
- the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the Principal, and to receive a copy of the audio recording upon request.

Principal's Decision:

Based on the evidence presented at the hearing, the Principal will determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense and the remedy or consequences to be imposed. In accordance with the requirements of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H3/4, as amended through Chapter 177 of the Acts of 2022, the Principal or Principal's designee, when acting as a decision-maker at a disciplinary hearing to consider a student's possible short-term or long-term out-of-school suspension for violations of school rules other than offenses involving drugs, weapons, assaults on school staff, and/or felony offenses, shall, when deciding the consequences for the student, first consider ways to re-engage the student in the learning process. The Principal shall not suspend the student out-of-school on a short-term or long-term basis under such circumstances until alternative remedies have been employed and their use and results documented unless specific reasons are documented as to why such alternative remedies would be unsuitable or counter-productive, or unless the student's continued presence in school would pose a specific, documentable concern about the infliction of serious bodily injury or other serious harm (physical and/or psychological) upon another person while in school. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H3/4(b).

Alternative remedies for purposes of these requirements may include but shall not be limited to: (i) mediation; (ii) conflict resolution; (iii) restorative justice; and (iv) collaborative problem solving.

If the Principal decides to suspend or expel the student, written notice of the Principal's decision will be sent to the student and parents in English and the primary language of the home identifying the disciplinary offense, the factual basis for the Principal's decision, the beginning and end dates of the suspension or expulsion, and the process for appeal regarding long-term suspensions and expulsions. The Principal will also notify the student and parent of the student's opportunity to make academic progress during the period of removal from school in accordance with M.G.L. c. 76, §21.

Appeals:

Where the student is excluded in accordance with M.G.L. c.71 §37H, the student shall have ten (10) calendar days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the Superintendent of Schools. For exclusions imposed pursuant to M.G.L. c.71 §37H1/2, the student shall have five (5) school days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the Superintendent. And for exclusions imposed pursuant to M.G.L. c.71, §37H3/4, the student shall have five (5) calendar days from the effective date of the suspension imposed by the Principal but shall be granted an extension of seven (7) calendar days upon request.

In conducting an appeal of a long-term suspension imposed in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H3/4, the Superintendent or designee shall first consider ways to re-engage the student in the learning process. The Superintendent or designee shall not uphold the suspension of the student from school until alternative remedies have been employed and their use and results documented, unless specific reasons are documented as to why such alternative remedies would be unsuitable or counter-productive, or unless the student's continued presence in school would pose a specific, documentable concern about the infliction of serious bodily injury or other serious harm (physical and/or psychological) upon another person while in school. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H3/4(b).

Academic Progress:

Any student who is serving an in-school or out-of-school short-term suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion shall have the opportunity to earn credits, as applicable, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of the student's removal from the classroom or school. Any student who is expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days, whether in school or out of school, shall have an opportunity to receive education services and to make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, in accordance with the school's education service plan. M.G.L. c.76, §21.

DISCIPLINE AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in this handbook. In addition to those due process protections afforded to all students, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the regulations issued pursuant to said statutes require that additional provisions be made for:

- Students who have been found eligible for special education services under the IDEA.
- Students who have been found to have a disability that substantially limits a major life activity, as defined under §504 of the Rehabilitation Act.
- Students who the school district knows or has reason to know might be eligible for special education services. The school is deemed to have knowledge that a student is a student with a disability if before the behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred: (1) the student's parent/guardian expressed concern in writing to supervisory or administrative personnel, or the student's teacher, that the student is in need of special education and related services; (2) the student's parent/guardian requested an evaluation of the child; or (3) the student's teacher, or other school personnel, expressed specific concerns directly to the director of special education or to other supervisory personnel about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the student.
 - The school is not deemed to have knowledge of a disability if (1) the parent/guardian has not allowed an evaluation or has refused special education and related services; or (2) the child has been evaluated and determined not to be a child with a disability.

These students are generally entitled to increased procedural protections prior to imposing discipline that will result in the student's removal from their educational program for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or where there is a pattern of short-term removals that exceed ten (10) school days in a given year.

If a request is made for an evaluation of a student's eligibility for special education services during the time period in which the student is subjected to disciplinary measures, the evaluation shall be conducted in an expedited manner. Until the evaluation is completed, the student shall remain in the educational placement determined by school authorities, which can include suspension or expulsion without direct educational services.

The following additional requirements apply to the discipline of students with disabilities:

- Students with disabilities may be excluded from their programs for ten (10) school days or less in the school year to the extent that such sanctions would be applied to all students. Within ten (10) school days of a determination that a student with a disability will be excluded for disciplinary reasons from his/her program for more than ten (10) consecutive school days in a given school year or is subjected to a pattern of removal constituting a “disciplinary change of placement” as defined under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and/or Section 504, building administrators, the parents/guardians and relevant members of the student’s IEP or 504 Team will meet to determine the relationship between the student’s disability and behavior (“Manifestation Determination”).
- If building administrators, the parents/guardians, and relevant members of the student’s IEP or 504 Team determine that the student’s conduct was not a manifestation of the student’s disability, the school may discipline the student in accordance with the procedures and penalties applicable to all students but will continue to provide a free appropriate public education to those students with IEPs. The student’s IEP Team will identify the services necessary to provide a free appropriate public education during the period of exclusion, review any existing behavior intervention plan or, where appropriate, conduct a functional behavioral assessment of the student. Eligible Section 504 students shall be entitled to receive alternative education services in accordance with the school’s Education Services Plan during any suspension or expulsion in excess of ten (10) consecutive days.
- If building administrators, the parents/guardians, and relevant members of the student’s IEP or 504 Team determine that the conduct giving rise to disciplinary action was a manifestation of the student’s disability, the student will not be subjected to further removal or exclusion from the student’s current education program for the incident of misconduct (except for conduct involving weapons, drugs, or resulting in serious bodily injury to others) until the IEP or 504 Team develops, and the parents/guardians consent to, a new placement, or unless the school obtains an order from a court or from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA) or a court authorizing a change in the student’s placement. The student’s Team shall also review, and modify as appropriate, any existing behavior intervention plan or arrange for a functional behavioral assessment.
- If a student with a disability possesses or uses illegal drugs, sells or solicits a controlled substance, possesses a weapon on school grounds, or causes serious bodily injury to another on school grounds or at a school function, the school may place the student in an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) for up to forty-five (45) school days regardless of whether the conduct was a manifestation of the student’s disability. A court or BSEA Hearing Officer may also order the placement of a student who presents a substantial likelihood of injury to self or others in an appropriate interim setting for up to forty-five (45) school days

CONSEQUENCES FOR VIOLATIONS OF SCHOOL RULES (see Student Management Code for details) – When school rules are violated, the following may be implemented:

- **Academic Penalty** – For every class that meets daily that a student cuts or is truant, two points will be deducted from the student’s quarter average. For every class that meets every other day that a student cuts or misses because they are truant, two points will be deducted from the student’s quarter average.
- **Detentions** – Detention hall is typically held after school from 2:20-3:20 p.m. Monday-Thursday. Students who arrive after 2:20 p.m. will not be allowed into detention. Only the administrator who originally assigned the detention may give students permission to reschedule a detention. Deadlines to complete detentions are at the discretion of the Principal or designee.
- **Extracurricular Penalty** – Students who violate school policy may be temporarily removed from participation in athletic events, extracurricular activities and/or school-sponsored events. Administration reserves the right to revoke grade appropriate privileges including but not limited to late entry/early dismissal, and parking.
- **School Service** – Students who violate school policies may be assigned to perform school service in place of other penalties. Such service may include projects that assist in the operation of the school community.
- **Saturday Detention** – Saturday detention will be held at Wachusett from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., from September through June. An administrator will be present while students make use of their time through academics and school service. Transportation is not provided. Deadlines to complete Saturday detentions are at the discretion of the Principal or designee.
- **In-School Suspension** – Students who violate the school policy, and at the discretion of the administrator, may be assigned in-school suspension in accordance with the due process procedures set forth above.
- **Out-of-School Suspension** – In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to suspend students from attending school. These instances involve serious disruptions of the school community, or when other forms of discipline do not appear to be effective. For the duration of an out-of-school suspension, students may not visit the campus or attend any school-related events except to participate in alternative education services in accordance with the School’s Education Services Plan. The parents and student will be required to participate in a reentry meeting with the school administration immediately prior to, or upon, the student’s return to school at the conclusion of the suspension imposed.

- **Juvenile Courts** – The administration will use the court system to work with students who are habitual school offenders or with students who have excessive absences from school.
- **Behavioral Contracts** – In order to address inappropriate behaviors on the part of individual students, some students and their parents/guardians will be required to sign contracts outlining specific behaviors expected of students and the consequences that will follow if these behavioral expectations are not met before the student may continue at WRHS.
- **Long-term Suspension** – **Serious violations of school rules or applicable laws may result in a student’s long-term suspension from school in excess of 10 consecutive or cumulative school days.** A principal may, in his or her discretion, allow a student to serve a long-term suspension in school. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days. Except for students who are charged with a disciplinary offense set forth in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H(a) or (b), or M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ½ no student may be placed on long-term suspension for one or more disciplinary offenses for more than 90 school days in a school year beginning with the first day that the student is removed from school. No long-term suspension shall extend beyond the end of the school year in which such suspension is imposed.
- **Exclusion/Expulsion** – For offenses involving possession of dangerous weapons, possession of controlled substances, assaults of school staff or in certain situations involving felony charges of which a student is convicted or to which the student admits guilt in a court of law, the student may be subject to expulsion from school. Expulsion is defined under applicable regulations as the removal of a student from the school premises, regular classroom activities, and school activities for more than 90 school days, indefinitely, or permanently, as permitted under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or 37H½.

VIOLATIONS OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All students’ academic work must reflect their own honest efforts. Cheating and plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to copying homework, papers, lab reports, quiz or test answers; acquiring or disseminating quizzes or tests before they are administered; or using information from the Internet or other outside sources without proper attribution.

Any student known to have cheated will be subjected to penalties, up to receiving “0” for the work. Possible penalties will be made known to each class by the teacher and will be included in the course syllabus.

Students who collaborate with others in cheating by allowing their papers to be copied or by other means will be subjected to penalties commensurate with their involvement, which may include the student receiving “0” for the work or suffering significant grade reduction.

In all cases, the principal or the class administrator along with the department head and teacher will be informed about both the incident and the penalty imposed, and the parent/guardian will be notified. The administration reserves the right to impose other penalties up to and including removal from the course, removal from honor societies, a loss of eligibility for scholarships with “honor” as criteria, and possible short-term or long-term suspension from school.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The law pertaining to school attendance is outlined in Chapter 76 of the General Laws of Massachusetts, and clearly prohibits unexcused school absence. Therefore, these absences shall be considered irresponsible student behavior.

It is the intent of this policy, within the spirit of The Education Reform Act and The Time on Learning Guidelines, to hold students accountable for their attendance. Because poor student attendance will affect credits earned, the Attendance Policy is included here for ready referral by parents, students and staff.

I. ATTENDANCE POLICY

- A. Students who are absent will not receive individual course credit as follows:
 - 1. Full-year courses (5 credits) - sixteen (16) classes missed
 - 2. Semester courses (2.5 credits) - eight (8) classes missed
 - 3. Every other day semester courses (1.25 credits) - six (6) classes missed
- B. Students who miss more than one half (1/2) of a class will be charged with one (1) full absence
- C. Transfers
 - 1. Students who transfer into Wachusett Regional High School from another school system shall receive a prorated number of absences.
 - 2. Students who transfer into a class within the same department will carry over the number of classes missed.
 - 3. Students who transfer classes outside of a department will receive a prorated number of absences.

II. ABSENCES

- A. **Excused Absences** are the only absences that do not impact loss of credit.

1. Excused absences include: bereavement, religious holidays, court dates, documented chronic medical conditions, long term illness with a doctor's note, documented college visits, school-sponsored field trips/events (if all work assigned is completed upon the student's return to class).
2. The Attendance Review Committee may request third party substantiation of the above circumstances (i.e., note on doctor's stationary, documentation from a court). These must be provided immediately upon the student's return to school.

B. Unexcused Absences

1. All other absences will count towards a student's accumulated total and potential loss of credit (i.e., home sick, doctor visits, family vacations).

III. STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Students enrolled at Wachusett Regional High School are expected to be present each time their classes meet.
- B. Students absent from school must have a parent/guardian call to report the absence and reason for it on the day of the absence or submit a note to the attendance secretary immediately upon their return to school.
 1. The note must indicate the date(s) of absence, reason for absence, and must be signed by the student's parent or guardian.
 2. The note does not excuse the absence. The note verifies the absence.
 3. Students and parents/guardians are responsible for making and keeping copies of the above-mentioned documentation. (For absences to be considered excused, refer to Section II, A 1 & 2).
- C. Students with a diagnosed, chronic medical condition should have documentation from their physician on file with their class administrator **at the start of each school year**. Each absence related to a diagnosed, chronic medical condition may require documentation from a physician throughout the school year.

IV. FACULTY'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Teachers will record all absences and tardies in PowerSchool for each student.
- B. Teachers will report to the class administrator, in a timely manner, all students who have reached half of the allowed absences for a warning letter to be sent home. Then, when the maximum absence limit for a course is reached, they will report that to the class administrator for consideration of credit withdrawal.

V. ADMINISTRATORS' RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Upon teacher notification, a letter will be sent home to the parent if the child has four (4) or more absences in a semester course or eight (8) or more absences in a full-year course. Copies of the letter will be given to the student's teachers and also the student's administrator.
- B. Class administrators will issue parent notification letters when the halfway point has been reached.
- C. When a student misses five (5) days during the school year due to unexcused absences or misses two (2) or more classes in five (5) school days due to unexcused tardies, the parent/guardian will be contacted and a meeting will be held with the student's administrator to develop action steps to address the student's attendance.
- D. When a student reaches the maximum limit, the student will be informed in a meeting with the class administrator. An attendance hearing will be held with the student's administrator. Parents/guardians will be notified in the event of any loss of credit. Parents/guardians have five days to request a hearing.
- E. Class administrators will inform the student's teachers of the decisions made by the Attendance Review Board.

VI. REVIEW PROCESS

- A. Students will receive written notification from their administrator to share with their parents when they reach the maximum absence limit.
- B. Parents/guardians must respond within five (5) school days from the date of the notification to request a hearing. In a case where there are fewer than five (5) school days remaining in a semester or school year, the hearings must be requested before the commencement of final exams and midterm exams.
- C. Parents/guardians who request a hearing will go before an Attendance Review Committee consisting of the student's class administrator and the student's school counselor.
- D. The Attendance Review Committee will evaluate the documentation and circumstances and decide upon maintaining loss of credit or restoring lost credit.

VII. APPEALS PROCESS

- A. Parents/guardians have the right to appeal the Attendance Review Committee’s decision in writing to the Principal within five (5) school days. The decision of the Principal is final.

VIII. CREDIT LOSS/RESTORATION

- A. Courses are successfully completed and credit granted when the student:
 - 1. Earns a passing grade
 - 2. Fulfills the attendance requirement
- B. Credit Loss
 - 1. In a course where a student fails to receive credit because of excessive absences, the graduation credit requirement will not be considered fulfilled.
- C. Credit Restoration
 - 1. Credits lost due to absences may be restored by written agreement with the Attendance Review Committee. A student may successfully complete the same or similar course(s) at an evening school, summer school or local college. Students cannot restore credit by taking a course the same school year (for a year-long course) or the same semester (for a semester-long course).

**NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY
FACULTY COUNCIL SELECTION CRITERIA**

Faculty Council Role: Selection and dismissal of members

- Selection for membership to the chapter is to be by a majority vote of the Faculty Council.
- Selection is based on a prerequisite GPA, Student Activity Forms, and may ask for teacher recommendations.
- Evaluations are expected to be used by the Faculty Council, adviser, and the principal and should be considered confidential unless local or state policies dictate to the contrary.
- Selection Guidelines:
 - Candidates must have attended the school the equivalent of one semester;
 - A cumulative GPA is to be used to determine scholastic eligibility;
 - All four criteria must be considered in the selection process, though the local Faculty Council determines the weight that any individual criterion receives.

Scholarship: average B or 85%

Leadership

The leadership criterion is considered highly important for membership selection. Some Faculty Councils may wish to interpret leadership in terms of the number of offices a student has held in school or community organizations, although it is important to recognize that leadership also exists outside elected positions including effective participation in other co-curricular activities offered on campus. Other Faculty Councils may define leadership in less objective terms. Leadership roles in both the school and community may be considered provided they can be verified.

The student who exercises leadership:

- Is resourceful in proposing new problems, applying principles, and making suggestions
- Demonstrates initiative in promoting school activities

- Exercises positive influence on peers in upholding school ideals
- Contributes ideas that improve the civic life of the school
- Is able to delegate responsibilities
- Exemplifies positive attitudes
- Inspires positive behavior in others
- Demonstrates academic initiative
- Successfully holds school office or position of responsibility; conducts business effectively and efficiently; demonstrates reliability and dependability
- Is a leader in the classroom, at work, and in other school or community activities
- Is thoroughly dependable in any responsibility accepted
- Is willing to uphold scholarship and maintain a loyal school attitude

Service

Service is generally considered to be those actions undertaken by the student, which are done with or on behalf of others without any direct financial or material compensation to the individual performing the service. In considering service, the contributions this candidate has made to school, classmates, and community, as well as the student’s attitude toward service can be reviewed.

The student who serves:

- Volunteers and provides dependable and well organized assistance, is gladly available, and is willing to sacrifice to offer assistance
- Cheerfully and enthusiastically renders any requested service to the school
- Is willing to represent the class or school in inter-class and inter-scholastic competition
- Does committee and staff work without complaint
- Participates in some activity outside of school, for example, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, religious groups, volunteer service for the elderly, poor, or disadvantaged
- Mentors persons in the community or student at other schools

- Shows courtesy by assisting visitors, teachers, and students

Character

Character is probably the most difficult criterion to define. The Faculty Council should consider the positive as well as the negative aspects of character. All judgments in this and other selection criteria should be free of speculation and rumor. A person of character demonstrates the following six qualities: respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, fairness, caring, and citizenship.

The student of character:

- Takes criticism willingly and accepts recommendations graciously
- Consistently exemplifies desirable qualities of behavior (cheerfulness, friendliness, poise, stability)
- Upholds principles of morality and ethics
- Cooperates by complying with school regulations concerning property, programs, office, halls, etc.
- Demonstrates the highest standards of honesty and reliability
- Regularly shows courtesy, concern, and respect of others
- Observes instructions and rules, is punctual, and faithful both inside and outside the classroom
- Has powers of concentration, self-discipline, and sustained attention as shown by perseverance and application to studies
- Manifests truthfulness in acknowledging obedience to rules, avoiding cheating in written work, and showing unwillingness to profit by the mistakes of others
- Actively helps rid the school of bad influences or environment

A closer look at NHS...

To be inducted into Wachusett's National Honor Society a student must:

1. be a junior or a senior
2. have and maintain an *unweighted* average of 85.0
3. have strong leadership
4. complete community service
 - *at least 25 hours of diverse service (Not all hours should be from one event, place, etc)
5. have good character

Students who are eligible to apply will receive a letter in the fall and have the opportunity to submit an application. Once letters are mailed, eligible students will have the opportunity to pick up both the application, scoring rubric, and a copy of the by-laws from a designated area. Eligible students will be given a hard deadline to turn in their applications and all relevant documents. Students will be provided the opportunity to ask two teachers to provide a reference. Teachers will also be given a list of all applicants and will provide feedback regarding character.

Applications will then be reviewed by a Faculty Council.

The Faculty Council will use a rubric in order to rate the criteria listed above.

Once inducted, members will be expected to do the following:

- *maintain an unweighted GPA of 85.0
- *complete ten hours of service per semester
- *complete all NHS monthly service projects
- *mentor incoming freshmen (attend Orientation in August and meet with freshmen during activity periods)
- *provide tutoring two times per semester
- *attend all NHS monthly meetings (first Tuesday of each month)

WRHS 2023-2024 STUDENT HANDBOOK
STUDENT MANAGEMENT CODE

Students are reminded that all staff members are empowered to enforce all school rules and regulations. The rules that follow are meant to foster a safe, nurturing educational environment (in accordance with WRSD Policy #6436). Violation of the Management Code is considered a disruption of the school community. For any violations of Massachusetts State Laws or of school policy, Holden police may be notified. In addition, please note that the sanctions set forth in the Student Management Code constitute general guidelines and may not be construed as limiting the school administration’s authority to impose more significant disciplinary consequences for violations determined by the administration to be severe or egregious.

Tardy to School

Three (3) tardies (parental notification to school) per quarter are tolerated. All additional tardies exceeding three per quarter will be handled as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1 st offense | Minimum 1 detention |
| 2 nd offense | Minimum 2 detentions |
| 3 rd offense | Minimum 3 detentions |
| 4+ offenses | Saturday detention and loss of late entry/ early dismissal privilege with parent conference, or in-school suspension and extracurricular penalty. If there are medical conditions that require a student to be habitually tardy to school, it must be documented by a physician and approved by an assistant principal. |

*Students who are tardy to school must provide parental notification (phone call or note). Failure to provide proper notification will result in consequences stated above.

Tardy to Class

Two (2) tardies to class (less than one-minute tardy) per quarter are tolerated. Each additional occurrence per quarter will be referred to administration for the following consequences:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1 st offense | Minimum 1 detention |
| 2 nd offense | Minimum 2 detentions |
| 3 rd offense | Minimum 3 detentions |
| 4+ offenses | Saturday detention, in-school suspension, or an extracurricular penalty with parent conference. A teacher tardy policy may supersede this school-wide tardy policy. |

Any student with an unexcused tardy to class that exceeds one minute after the late bell will be referred to administration for further consequences.

Failure to Identify Oneself

While attending school, school events, or on school grounds, any student failing to identify himself or herself (either verbally or with a student ID) to a staff member will be subject to the following:

- | | |
|--------------|----------------------|
| Each offense | Minimum 2 detentions |
|--------------|----------------------|

Dress Code Violation

Any student referred to administration who is in violation of the WRHS dress code or wearing a hood at any time while in the school building will be subject to the following:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| 1 st office referral | Warning |
| 2 nd office referral | 1 detention |
| 3 rd office referral | 2 detentions |

Misconduct

Class, Study Hall, Assembly, Cafeteria, Corridors, or on WRHS Campus

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 st office referral | Minimum 2 detentions |
| 2 nd office referral | Minimum 3 detentions |
| 3 rd office referral | Minimum Saturday detention |

Further offenses Minimum overnight suspension or Saturday detention with parent conference, in-school suspension, or extracurricular penalty. Student must return to school the next day with a parent. Failure to return with a parent may result in additional sanctions/restrictions.

Class Cut

Class, Homeroom, Study Hall or Teacher Detention

1st offense Minimum 2 detentions and academic penalty (where appropriate)
2nd offense Minimum 3 detentions and academic penalty (where appropriate)
3rd offense In-school suspension, extracurricular penalty, Saturday school or overnight suspension and parent conference with contract and academic penalty

Truancy

Cutting 3 or more classes per day or leaving campus before or during the school day

1st offense Saturday detention with a parent conference.
2nd offense 3 detentions and Saturday detention.
3rd offense One-day in-school suspension and a Saturday detention.

Forgery

Notes, Passes, Official School Documents

Each offense Minimum 2 detentions and parent contact

School Damage (unintentional)

Clean up and repair or replace

Loitering in Bathroom Areas

1st offense 2 detentions
2nd offense 3 detentions
3rd offense Saturday School

Wandering the Building

1st offense 1 detention
2nd offense 2 detentions
3+ offenses Minimum 3 detentions or one Saturday detention

Consumption of food/drink

With the exception of the school cafeteria, the consumption of food and drink anywhere in the building is prohibited during the school day. The exceptions are: designated snack time, classroom functions approved in advance by the Administration, and clear bottled water.

1st office referral Warning
2nd office referral Minimum 1 detention
3+ office referral Minimum 2 detentions

Smoking, Tobacco Use, Possession and/or Use of Nicotine Dispensing Products, Vaping Devices, Possession or Distribution of Tobacco Products, Warning Potential Smokers, or Congregating where Use is Taking Place *

IN BUILDING, ON FIELD TRIPS, OR DURING OUTDOOR CLASS, ON CAMPUS OR AT SCHOOL ACTIVITY

1st offense 3 detention and parental conference.
2nd offense Parent conference with 1 day Saturday Detention and may include a cessation program as well as a fine from the Holden Police Department.
3+ offenses Parent conference with 1 day in-school suspension and may include a cessation program as well as a fine from the Holden Police Department, multiple offenses could result in an out of school suspension.

*** Students are reminded that the above infractions are also violations of the chemical-free contract for students/athletes under MIAA guidelines and will result in team suspensions.**

Office Detention Cut

1 st offense	Parent conference. Detention(s) owed will be served.
2 nd offense	Minimum 1 day Saturday school and parent conference. Detention(s) owed will be served.
3 rd offense	One day in-school suspension and may result in out-of-school suspension pending parent conference and contract. Detention(s) owed will be served. May lead to long-term suspension.

Electronic Devices

Offenses may result in a discipline referral and confiscation of the device by the student's administrator, requiring parental pickup of the device from the main office during school hours.

1 st office referral	Minimum 2 detentions
2 nd office referral	Minimum 3 detentions
3 rd office referral	Minimum Saturday detention
Further offenses	Minimum overnight suspension or Saturday detention with parent conference, in-school suspension, or extracurricular penalty. Student must return to school the next day with parent. Failure to return with parent may result in a full day out-of-school suspension until parent comes in for a conference.

Gambling

1 st offense	Minimum 5 detentions and parent conference. May lead to long-term suspension or exclusion.
2 nd offense	Minimum 1 day out-of-school suspension. May lead to long-term suspension or exclusion.
3 rd offense	Minimum 3 days out-of-school suspension with parent conference and contract. May lead to long-term suspension or exclusion.

Vulgar Disrespect to Staff

Minimum 2 days out-of-school suspension for each offense. This may also lead to a long-term suspension.

Vandalism

Intentional, Willful Destruction

Each offense	Restitution and minimum in-school suspension, extracurricular penalty, parent conference and up to out-of-school suspension, long-term suspension or exclusion.
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Theft

Each offense	Minimum Saturday detention with restitution and parent conference up to long-term suspension or exclusion. If necessary, the Holden Police Department will be contacted.
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Fireworks

Possession, Use, or Sale

Each offense	Minimum 5 detentions and parent conference up to out-of-school suspension or expulsion (M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H).
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Pulling Fire Alarms or Tampering with Fire Equipment (Alarm Covers, Extinguishers, etc.)

Each offense	Minimum 5 days out-of-school suspension leading up to long-term suspension or exclusion.
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Setting Fires

Each offense	Minimum 5 days out-of-school suspension leading up to long-term suspension.
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Fighting

1 st offense	Minimum 3 days out-of-school suspension and parent conference up to long-term suspension.
2 nd offense	Minimum 5 days out-of-school suspension and parent conference up to long-term suspension.
3 rd offense	Minimum 10 days out-of-school suspension and parent conference up to long-term suspension.

Excessive Horseplay/Endangerment to Others

Each offense	Minimum 1 day in-school suspension or extracurricular penalty and parent conference up to long-term suspension.
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Assault

1 st offense	Minimum 5 days out-of-school suspension and parent conference up to long-term suspension.
2 nd offense	Minimum 10 days out-of-school suspension up to long-term suspension.

Assault*On School Personnel, Verbal or Physical*

Each offense	Minimum 5 days out-of-school suspension and parent conference up to long-term suspension or expulsion.
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Weapons*Possession of any object that could be used to injure another and has no school-related purpose*

Each offense	Minimum 5 days out-of-school suspension and parent conference up to long-term suspension or expulsion.
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Hazing*Any activities viewed as initiation or rite of passage which are potentially dangerous or abusive will not be tolerated*

Each offense	Minimum 1 day out-of-school suspension and parent conference up to long-term suspension.
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Discrimination*Incidents against others for their ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, etc.*

Each offense	Parent conference, administrative meeting with the student and may include but not limited to: extracurricular penalty, detentions, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, long-term suspension. Repeated offenses may result in a minimum 1 day in-school suspension or extracurricular penalty and parent conference up to long-term suspension.
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Harassment*Refers to behavior that is not welcomed by a person, and is personally offensive to him/her and/or interferes with that person's ability to work effectively.*

Each offense	Parent conference, administrative meeting with the student and may include but not limited to: extracurricular penalty, detentions, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, long-term suspension or exclusion. Repeated offenses may result in a minimum 1 day in-school suspension or extracurricular penalty and parent conference up to long-term suspension or exclusion.
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Bullying

Violation of Wachusett's Bullying Policy will result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to, long-term suspension in accordance with Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 71, Section 37O. Retaliation against any individual who reports bullying or harassment or participates in the investigation thereof, may result in long-term suspension of 90 school days. Instances of bullying and/or harassment, which occur both in and out of school, may also result in a criminal investigation pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71 §37O.

Substance Abuse of Alcohol *Possession, being under the influence, sale or distribution at school or at school-related activities*

Each offense Minimum 3 days out-of-school suspension and parent conference up to long-term suspension.

Substance Abuse of Illegal Drugs *Possession, being under the influence, sale or distribution at school or at school-related activities*

Each offense Minimum 3 days out-of-school suspension and parent conference up to long-term suspension or exclusion.

Possession of Drug Paraphernalia

1st offense Minimum 3 days out-of-school suspension

2nd offense Minimum 5 days out-of-school suspension

Chemical Violation

Any use, consumption, possession, distribution or sale of any alcohol, drug, tobacco product or any controlled substance is in violation of school policy and students are subject to discipline. These violations are also applicable to student athletes under M.I.A.A. Rule 62.1 and will result in team suspensions. These infractions will also be applicable to any student involved in extracurricular activities and will result in a suspension from those activities.

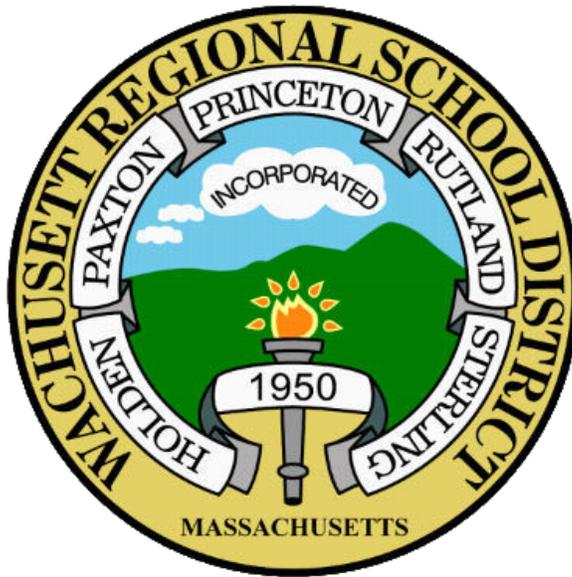
General Disruption

Any activity that disrupts school including, but not limited to, any verbal or written abuse of student, teacher, administrator, or other school personnel, and is not listed on the Student Management Code may result in detentions, Saturday detention, out-of-school suspension up to long-term suspension.

Any activity inside or outside the school that disrupts the school day or any school-sponsored event, the student(s) will be held accountable in school which may lead to detentions, Saturday detention, out-of-school detention up to long-term suspension or expulsion where permitted under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H and/or § 37H1/2..

A student charged with a felony or felony delinquency may be subject to suspension by the school principal upon the principal's determination that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. Any student pleading guilty or found guilty of a felony/felony delinquency may be subject to expulsion clusion by the school principal. upon the principal's determination that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H1/2.

WRSD Student Handbook Addendum
Policies and Procedures



2023-2024

The Wachusett Regional School District does not tolerate discrimination or harassment of students, parents, employees, or the general public on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy or pregnancy status, disability, homelessness, religion, age, or immigration status. Consistent with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act, the District also does not discriminate against students on the basis of homelessness.

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Nondiscrimination Statement

The Wachusett Regional School District does not tolerate discrimination or harassment of students, parents, employees, or the general public on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy or pregnancy status, disability, homelessness, religion, age, or immigration status. Consistent with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act, the District also does not discriminate against students on the basis of homelessness.

Use of Cameras / Surveillance

Parents, guardians, and students should be aware that security cameras and video recording systems are in use at all WRSD schools, for the purposes of monitoring the interior and exterior of school buildings, to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of students, staff, and visitors, and to protect school facilities.

While riding on buses or vans, students are under the jurisdiction of the school administration. For purposes of monitoring and student safety, school transportation vehicles may be equipped with video and audio recording systems. All students may be subject to video and audio surveillance for this purpose while riding a school bus or van.

Physical Restraint Information

The Wachusett Regional School District complies with the requirements of Massachusetts statutes and regulations governing the use and reporting of physical restraint in schools. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37G; 603 CMR 46.00. Physical restraint is defined as direct physical contact that prevents or significantly restricts a student's freedom of movement. Physical restraint does not include: brief physical contact to promote student safety, providing physical guidance or prompting when teaching a skill, redirecting attention, providing comfort, or a physical escort.

Physical restraint is considered an emergency procedure of last resort and may be used only when: (a) the student's behavior poses a threat of assault, or imminent, serious, physical harm to self and/or others; and (b) less intrusive interventions are ineffective or deemed to be inappropriate under the circumstances. Physical restraint in a public education program shall be limited to the use of such reasonable force as is necessary to protect a student or another member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm. Physical restraint is prohibited in the following circumstances: (a) as a means of punishment; or (b) as a response to property destruction, disruption of 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.

In the event that a physical restraint is administered, the parents/guardians will be notified orally within twenty-four (24) hours of the restraint and shall be provided with a written Restraint Report within three (3) school days of the restraint. 603 CMR 46.06.

Disciplinary Due Process

STUDENT SUSPENSIONS AND/OR EXPULSIONS:

NOTICE OF SUSPENSION HEARING:

Except in the case of an emergency removal or disciplinary offense defined under M.G.L. c. 71, §§37H or 37H1/2 or an in-school suspension as defined by 603 CMR 53.02(6), the school shall provide the student and parent/guardian with written and oral notice of the proposed out-of-school suspension, an opportunity to be heard at hearing, and the opportunity to participate at the hearing.

The Notice shall set forth in plain language:

- A. the disciplinary offense;
- B. the basis for the charge;
- C. the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension;
- D. the opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the principal or principal's designee concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and for the parent/guardian to attend the hearing;
- E. the date, time, and location of the hearing;
- F. the right of the student and student's parent/guardian to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate;

The principal, or principal's designee, shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent/guardian orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. In order to conduct a hearing without the parent/guardian present, the principal, or principal's designee, must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent/guardian. Reasonable effort is presumed if the principal or principal's designee sent written notice and documented at least two (2) attempts to contact the parent/guardian in the manner specified by the parent/guardian for emergency situations.

All written communications regarding notice of proposed suspension shall be either by hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to the address provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by the principal/principal's designee and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate.

SHORT-TERM SUSPENSIONS: HEARING AND DETERMINATION

A short-term suspension is the removal of the student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten (10) consecutive school days or less. Out-of-school short-term suspensions which do not cumulatively over the course of the school year exceed ten (10) school days of suspension shall be conducted in accordance with this section.

Principal's Hearing. The purpose of the hearing with the principal or the principal's designee for such purposes, is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student has committed the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts. A parent/guardian present at the hearing shall have the opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances. Under applicable regulations, students do not have a right to be represented by an attorney at a short-term suspension hearing.

Based on the available information, including mitigating circumstances, the principal or principal's designee will make a determination whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequence. The principal or principal's designee will provide notification in writing of his/her determination and provide reasons for the determination. If the student is suspended, the principal/principal's designee

shall inform the parent/guardian of the type and duration of the suspension, and shall provide an opportunity for the student to make up assignments and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal. If the student is in grades pre-k through 3, the principal/principal's designee shall send his/her determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons prior to imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the short-term suspension takes effect. All written communications regarding the hearing and principal determination shall be either hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to the address provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by the principal and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate.

Students do not have the right to appeal a short-term suspension imposed in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H3/4 and 603 CMR 53.00.

LONG-TERM SUSPENSIONS: HEARING AND DETERMINATION

A long-term suspension is the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. The purpose of the hearing with the principal or principal's designee is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, to provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, to determine if the student has committed the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the principal or principal's designee will consider in determining whether alternatives to suspension such as loss of privileges, detention, an apology, a student contract, restitution, and/or probation are appropriate.

Additionally, the student shall have the following additional rights:

- i. In advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the principal or principal's designee may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not;
- ii. the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's and/or parent's/guardian's expense;
- iii. the right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so; and the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school;
- iv. the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the principal or principal's designee. All participants shall be informed that the hearing is being recorded by audio. A copy of the audio recording will be provided to the student or parent/guardian upon request.

Based on the evidence submitted at the hearing the principal/principal's designee shall make a determination as to whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension (the use of evidence-based strategies and programs, such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive interventions and supports) what remedy or consequence will be imposed. If the principal/principal's designee decides to impose a long-term suspension, the written determination shall:

- i. Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing;
- ii. Set out key facts and conclusions reached by the principal/principal's designee;
- iii. Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school;
- iv. Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive a specific list of education services to make academic progress while suspended, and the contact information of a school member who can provide more detailed information.
- v. Inform the student of the right to appeal the principal's/designee's decision to impose a long-term suspension to the superintendent or his/her designee for said purpose within five (5) calendar days, which may be extended by parent/guardian request in writing an additional seven (7) calendar days.

The long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the superintendent/superintendent's designee decides to reverse the principal's/principal's designee's determination on appeal. If the student is in grades pre-k through grade 3, the principal/principal's designee shall send his/her determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons prior to imposing an out-of-school suspension, whether short-term or long-term, before the suspension takes effect. All written communications regarding the hearing and principal's/designee's determination shall be either hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to the provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by the principal/principal's designee and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or by other means of communication where appropriate.

APPEAL OF LONG-TERM SUSPENSION

A student who is placed on a long-term suspension shall have the right to appeal the principal's/ principal's designee's decision to the superintendent if properly and timely filed. A good faith effort shall be made to include the parent/guardian at the hearing. The appeal shall be held within three (3) school days of the appeal, unless the student or parent/guardian requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days, which the superintendent shall grant.

The student and parent/guardian shall have the same rights afforded at the long-term suspension principal hearing. Within five (5) calendar days of the hearing the superintendent or superintendent's designee shall issue his/her written decision which meets the criteria required of the principal's determination. If the superintendent or superintendent's designee determines the student committed the disciplinary offense, the superintendent/designee may impose the same or a lesser consequence than that of the principal. The decision of the superintendent/superintendent's designee on the student's appeal shall constitute the final decision of the school district with regard to the student's long-term suspension.

EMERGENCY REMOVAL

A student may be temporarily removed prior to notice and hearing when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense within the scope of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H3/4 and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school and, in the principal's/principal's designee's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption. The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days, following the day of the emergency removal. During the emergency removal the principal/designee shall make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and student's parent/guardian of the emergency removal and the reason for the emergency removal. The principal/designee may not remove a student from school on an emergency basis for a disciplinary offense until adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation. The principal/designee shall also provide the due process requirements of written notice for suspensions and provide for a hearing which meets the due process requirements of 603 CMR 53.08 within the two (2) school day time period, unless an extension of time for the hearing is otherwise agreed to by the principal/principal's designee, student, and parent/guardian.

A decision shall be rendered orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day.

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION UNDER 603 CMR 53:02(6) & 603 CMR 53.10:

In-school suspension is defined as the removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not the school premises, for not more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions over the course of the school year. An in-school suspension may be used as an alternative to short-term suspension.

A principal or principal's designee may impose an in-school suspension as defined above according to the following procedures:

The principal/principal's designee shall orally inform the student of the disciplinary offense charged and the basis for the charge, and provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident. If the principal/principal's designee determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the principal/principal's designee shall inform the student of the length of the student's in-school suspension, which shall not exceed ten (10) days, cumulatively or

consecutively, in a school year. On the same day as the in-school suspension decision, the principal/principal's designee shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding that the student committed the infraction, and the length of the in-school suspension. The principal/principal's designee shall also invite the parent to a meeting to discuss the student's academic performance and behavior, strategies for student engagement, and possible responses to the behavior. Such meeting shall be scheduled on the day of the suspension if possible, and if not, as soon thereafter as possible. If the principal/principal's designee is unable to reach the parent after making and documenting at least two (2) attempts to do so, such attempts shall constitute reasonable efforts for purposes of orally informing the parent of the in-school suspension.

The principal/principal's designee shall send written notice to the student and parent about the in-school suspension, including the reason and the length of the in-school suspension, and inviting the parent to a meeting with the principal/principal's designee for the purpose set forth above, if such meeting has not already occurred. The principal/principal's designee shall deliver such notice on the day of the in-school suspension by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or by other method of delivery agreed to by the principal/principal's designee and the parent.

SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION FOR DISCIPLINARY OFFENSES UNDER M.G.L. 71 §37H and/or 37H1/2: The due process notification and hearing requirements in the preceding sections do not apply to the following disciplinary offenses:

- I. Possession of a dangerous weapon, possession of a controlled substance, or assault of school staff. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H. A student may be subject to long-term suspension or expulsion if found in possession of a dangerous weapon, possession of a controlled substance, or the student assaults a member of educational staff.
- II. Issuance of felony or felony delinquency charges against a student/ Finding or admission of guilt to a felony charge/felony delinquency. A student who has been charged with a felony/felony delinquency may be subject to long-term suspension 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. A student who has been convicted of, or who has admitted guilt in a court of law to, a felony or felony delinquency charge may be expelled from school if the principal determines at the student's staff, and the principal determines the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

* All hearings to consider a student's suspension in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H and/or M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H1/2 shall be conducted by the building principal and not by a principal's designee. Appeals of suspensions or expulsions imposed accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H and/or M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H1/2 shall be conducted by the superintendent of schools and not by the superintendent's designee.

Due Process Procedures M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H:

The principal shall notify the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) in writing of the opportunity for a hearing, and the right to have representation (at private expense) at the hearing, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses on the student's behalf. After said hearing, the a principal may, in his/her discretion, decide to impose a long-term suspension rather than expulsion. A student who is suspended from school on a long-term basis or expelled for such an infraction shall have the right to appeal the decision to the superintendent. The student shall have ten (10) calendar days from the date of the long-term suspension/expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of his/her appeal. The student has the right to counsel (at private expense) at the hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student was guilty of the alleged offense. The superintendent's decision on the student's appeal shall constitute the final decision of the school district with regard to the student's long-term suspension or expulsion.

Except where circumstances warrant the student's immediate short-term, interim removal from the school premises due to immediate safety concerns or substantial disruption of the school environment, a student

shall not be suspended or expelled from school in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H until a hearing in which the student and parents have the opportunity to participate is conducted by the principal. Prior to the imposition of any such short-term interim removal, the principal shall, at a minimum conduct a preliminary informal hearing with the student to inform the student of the violation(s) of which the student is accused and provide the student with the opportunity to respond thereto.

Due Process Procedures M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H1/2:

Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony, or the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the principal may suspend a student for a period of time determined appropriate by the principal 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. Except where circumstances warrant the student's immediate short-term, interim removal from the school premises due to immediate safety concerns or substantial disruption of the school environment, a student shall not be suspended or expelled from school in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H1/2 until a hearing in which the student and parents have the opportunity to participate and to be represented by an attorney (at private expense) is conducted by the principal.

Prior to the hearing to consider the student's long-term suspension or expulsion in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H1/2, the principal shall notify the student and parents in writing of the charges and of the date and time of a hearing to consider the Student's possible long-term suspension or expulsion at which the student has the right to be represented by an attorney (at private expense) and to present evidence and witnesses in the student's defense. Upon the conclusion of said hearing, and prior to the effective date of any long-term suspension or expulsion imposed, the principal shall issue a written decision notifying the student and parents of the principal's findings and determinations, the effective date and length of any long-term suspension or expulsion imposed, and of the student's right to appeal to the superintendent any long-term suspension or expulsion imposed by the principal within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the principal's decision.

Superintendent Appeals M.G.L. 71, § 37H1/2:

The hearing on the student's appeal of any long-term suspension or expulsion imposed by the principal shall be conducted within three (3) calendar days of the submission of the student's appeal request. Pending the superintendent's decision on the student's appeal, the long-term suspension or expulsion imposed by the principal shall remain in effect. At the appeal hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony, and the right to counsel (at private expense). The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal. The superintendent shall render a written decision on the student's appeal within five (5) calendar days of the appeal hearing.

SCHOOL-WIDE EDUCATION SERVICES PLAN FOR STUDENTS SUSPENDED OR EXPELLED FROM SCHOOL (M.G.L. c. 76, § 21, 603 CMR 53.13:

(1) Any student who is serving an in-school suspension, short-term suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion shall have the opportunity to earn credits, as applicable, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of his or her removal from the classroom or school. The principal shall inform the student and parent of this opportunity in writing when such suspension or expulsion is imposed.

(2) Any student who is expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days, whether in school or out of school, shall have an opportunity to receive education services and to make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, through the school-wide Education Service Plan.

(3) Each school has a process for developing a school-wide Education Service Plan for education services that the school district will make available to students who are expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive school days. Students and their parents will be notified of the alternative educational services available to through the school or school district and of the process for arranging such services at the time of suspension/expulsion. Education services shall be based on, and be provided in a manner consistent with, the academic standards and curriculum frameworks established for all students under M.G.L. c 69, §§ 1D and 1F.(4)

Notice of Education Services for Students in Long-Term Suspension and Expulsion; Enrollment Reporting.

(a) The principal shall notify the parent and student of the opportunity to receive education services at the time the student is expelled or suspended in excess of ten (10) consecutive school days. Notice shall be provided in English and in the primary language spoken in the student's home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate. The notice shall include a list of the specific education services that are available to the student and contact information for a school district staff member who can provide more detailed information.

(b) For each student expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, whether in school or out of school, the school district shall document the student's enrollment in education services. For data reporting purposes, the school shall track and report attendance, academic progress, and such other data as directed by the Department.

DISCIPLINE AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in this handbook. In addition to those due process protections afforded to all students, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the regulations issued pursuant to said statutes require that additional provisions be made for:

Students who have been found eligible for special education services under the IDEA.

Students who the school district knows or has reason to know might be eligible for special education services. The school is deemed to have knowledge that a student is a student with a disability if before the behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred: (1) the student's parent/guardian expressed concern in writing to supervisory or administrative personnel, or the student's teacher, that the student is in need of special education and related services; (2) the student's parent/guardian requested an evaluation of the child; or (3) the student's teacher, or other school personnel, expressed specific concerns directly to the director of special education or to other supervisory personnel about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the student.

The school is not deemed to have knowledge of a disability if (1) the parent/guardian has not allowed an evaluation or has refused special education and related services, or (2) the child has been evaluated and determined not to be a child with a disability.

Students who have been found to have a disability that substantially limits a major life activity, as defined under §504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

These students are generally entitled to increased procedural protections prior to imposing discipline that will result in the student's removal for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or where there is a pattern of short term removals that exceed ten (10) school days in a given year.

If a request is made for an evaluation of a student's eligibility for special education services during the time period in which the student is subjected to disciplinary measures, the evaluation shall be conducted in an expedited manner. Until the evaluation is completed, the student shall remain in the educational placement determined by school authorities. If the student is subsequently found eligible, then he/she receives all procedural protections subsequent to the finding of eligibility.

The following additional requirements apply to the discipline of students with disabilities:

Students with disabilities may be excluded from their programs for ten (10) school days or less in the school year to the extent that such sanctions would be applied to all students. Before a student with a disability can be excluded from his/her program for more than ten (10) consecutive days in a given school year or subjected to a pattern of removal constituting a "disciplinary change of placement," building administrators, the parents/guardians, and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team will meet to determine the relationship between the student's disability and behavior (Manifestation Determination).

If building administrators, the parents/guardians, and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team determine that the student's conduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, the school may discipline the student in accordance with the procedures and penalties applicable to all students but will

continue to provide a free appropriate public education to those students with IEPs. The student's IEP Team will identify the services necessary to be provided in addition to any services to which the student is entitled through the school's Education Services Plan so as to ensure the student's free appropriate public education during the period of exclusion, review any existing behavior intervention plan or, where appropriate, conduct a functional behavioral assessment of the student. Eligible Section 504 students shall be entitled to receive alternative education services in accordance with the school's Education Services Plan during any suspension or expulsion in excess of ten (10) consecutive days.

If building administrators, the parents/guardians, and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team determine that the conduct giving rise to disciplinary action was a manifestation of the student's disability, the student will not be subjected to further removal or exclusion from the student's current education program for the incident of misconduct (except for conduct involving weapons, drugs, or resulting in serious bodily injury to others) until the IEP or 504 Team develops, and the parents/guardians consent to, a new placement, or unless the school obtains an order from a court or from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA) or a court authorizing a change in the student's placement. The student's Team shall also review, and modify as appropriate, any existing behavior intervention plan or arrange for a functional behavioral assessment.

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

Selected Massachusetts Laws - Student Conduct

1. M.G.L. c.71, § 37H – Policies Relative to Conduct of Teachers or Students: Student Handbooks

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 37H:

(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 as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

(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 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, in their 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) Any school district that suspends or expels a student under this section shall continue to provide educational services to the student during the period of suspension or expulsion, under section 21 of chapter 76. If the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student in an education service plan, under section 21 of chapter 76.

2. M.G.L. c.71, § 37H ½ - Felony Complaint or Conviction of Student - Suspension; Expulsion; Right to Appeal

(1) Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony or upon the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may suspend such student for a period of time determined appropriate by said principal or headmaster if said principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and the reasons for such suspension prior to such suspension taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such suspension; provided, however, that such suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

The student shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent in writing of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the suspension. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the student's request for an appeal. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of

the city, town, or regional school district with regard to the suspension.

(2) Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony delinquency, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may expel said student if such principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and reasons for such expulsion prior to such expulsion taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such expulsion; provided, however, that the expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

The student shall have the right to appeal the expulsion to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent, in writing, of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town, or regional school district with regard to the expulsion.

Any school district that suspends or expels a student under this section shall continue to provide educational services to the student during the period of suspension or expulsion, under section 21 of chapter 76. If the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student under an education service plan, under section 21 of chapter 76.

M.G.L. c.71, § 37H ³/₄ - Suspension or Expulsion on Grounds other than Those set forth in Secs. 37H or 37H ¹/₂

(a) This section shall govern the suspension and expulsion of students enrolled in a public school in the commonwealth who are not charged with a violation of subsections (a) or (b) of section 37H or with a felony under section 37H1/2.

(b) Any principal, headmaster, superintendent or person acting as a decision-maker at a student meeting or hearing, when deciding the consequences for the student, shall consider ways to re-engage the student in the learning process; and shall not suspend or expel a student until alternative remedies have been employed and their use and results documented, following and in direct response to a specific incident or incidents, unless specific reasons are documented as to why such alternative remedies are unsuitable or counter-productive, and in cases where the student's continued presence in school would pose a specific, documentable concern about the infliction of serious bodily injury or other serious harm upon another person while in school. Alternative remedies may include, but shall not be limited to, : (i) mediation; (ii) conflict resolution; (iii) restorative justice; and (iv) collaborative problem solving."

(c) For any suspension or expulsion under this section, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled, or a designee, shall provide, to the student and to the parent or guardian of the student, notice of the charges and the reason for the suspension or expulsion in English and in the primary language spoken in the home of the student. The student shall receive the written notification and shall have the opportunity to meet with the principal or headmaster, or a designee, to discuss the charges and reasons for the suspension or expulsion prior to the suspension or expulsion taking effect. The principal or headmaster, or a designee, shall ensure that the parent or guardian of the student is included in the meeting, provided that such meeting may take place without the parent or guardian only if the principal or headmaster, or a designee, can document reasonable efforts to include the parent or guardian in that meeting. The department shall promulgate rules and regulations that address a principal's duties under this subsection and procedures for including parents in student exclusion meetings, hearings or interviews under this subsection.

(d) If a decision is made to suspend or expel the student after the meeting, the principal or headmaster, or a designee, shall update the notification for the suspension or expulsion to reflect the meeting with the student. If a student has been suspended or expelled for more than 10 school days for a single infraction or for more than 10 school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year, the student and the parent or guardian of the student shall also receive, at the time of the suspension or expulsion decision, written notification of a right to appeal and the process for appealing the suspension or expulsion in English and in the primary language spoken in the home of the student; provided, however, that the suspension or expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing. The principal or headmaster or a designee shall notify the superintendent in writing, including, but not limited to, by electronic means, of any out-of-school suspension imposed on a student enrolled in kindergarten through grade 3 prior to such suspension taking effect. That notification shall describe the student's alleged misconduct and the reasons for suspending the student out-of-school. For the purposes of this section, the term "out-of-school suspension" shall mean a disciplinary action imposed by school officials to remove a student from participation in school activities for 1 day or more.

(e) A student who has been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 school days for a single infraction or for more than 10 school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year shall have the right to appeal the suspension or expulsion to the superintendent. The student or a parent or guardian of the student shall notify the superintendent in writing of a request for an appeal not later than 5 calendar days following the effective date of the suspension or expulsion; provided, that a student and a parent or guardian of the student may request, and if so requested, shall be granted an extension of up to 7 calendar days. The superintendent or a designee shall hold a hearing with the student and the parent or guardian of the student within 3 school days of the student's request for an appeal; provided that a student or a parent or guardian of the student may request and, if so requested, shall be granted an extension of up to 7 calendar days; provided further, that the superintendent, or a designee, may proceed with a hearing without a parent or guardian of the student if the superintendent, or a designee, makes a good faith effort to include the parent or guardian. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony, cross-examine witnesses and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal in writing within 5 calendar days of the hearing. That decision shall be the final decision of the school district with regard to the suspension or expulsion.

(f) No student shall be suspended or expelled from a school or school district for a time period that exceeds 90 school days, beginning the first day the student is removed from an assigned school building.

4. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37L – Notification to School Personnel of Reporting Requirements for Child Abuse and Neglect and Fires; Reports of Students Possessing or Using Dangerous Weapons on School Premises, Transferred Students' School Records

The school committee of each city, town or regional school district shall inform teachers, administrators, and other professional staff of reporting requirements for child abuse and neglect under section 51A of chapter 119 and the reporting requirements for fires under section 2A of chapter 148.

In addition, any school department personnel shall report in writing to their immediate supervisor an incident involving a student's possession or use of a dangerous weapon on school premises at any time.

Supervisors who receive such a weapon report shall file it with the superintendent of said school, who shall file copies of said weapon report with the local chief of police, the department of children and families, the office of student services or its equivalent in any school district, and the local school committee. Said superintendent, police chief, and representative from the department of children and families, together with a representative from the office of student services or its equivalent, shall arrange an assessment of the student involved in said weapon report. Said student shall be referred to a counseling program; provided, however, that said counseling shall be in accordance with acceptable standards as set forth by the board of education. Upon completion of a counseling session, a follow-up assessment shall be made of said student by those involved in the initial assessment.

A student transferring into a local system must provide the new school system with a complete school record of the entering student. Said record shall include, but not be limited to, any incidents involving suspension or violation of criminal acts or any incident reports in which such student was charged with any suspended act.

School Committee Policies

POLICY 1000 NON-DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

The Wachusett Regional School District does not tolerate discrimination or harassment of students, parents, employees, or the general public on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy or pregnancy status, disability, homelessness, religion, age, or immigration status. Consistent with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act, the District also does not discriminate against students on the basis of homelessness.

The Superintendent shall designate at least one administrator to serve as the compliance officer for the District's non-discrimination policies in education-related activities, including but not limited to responding to inquiries related to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Americans with Disabilities Act; the Age Act; M.G.L. c. 76, § 5; M.G.L. c. 151B and 151C; and 603 C.M.R. § 26.00. Inquiries about the application of Title IX to the District may be referred to the District's Title IX Coordinator, to the Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, or both.

The Wachusett Regional School District's policy of nondiscrimination will extend to students, staff, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business; no person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in employment, admission to a public school of the District or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, pregnancy or pregnancy status, age, homelessness, disability or immigration status.

In addition to designating at least one administrator to handle inquiries regarding the District's non-discrimination policies, the Superintendent shall adopt and publish one or more grievance procedures for addressing reports of discrimination, harassment and retaliation under the protected classes identified in this policy. If an individual is interested in filing a complaint that they have been discriminated against because of their race, color, sex, gender identity, pregnancy or pregnancy status, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, homelessness, disability, or immigration status, their complaint should be filed in accordance with the District's grievance procedures for discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.

The student and personnel handbooks and grievance procedures shall identify the name, office address and telephone number for the compliance officer(s) for the above-referenced statutes. This policy and related grievance procedures shall be posted on the District's website.

POLICY 1020 NON-DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF DISABILITY

The Wachusett Regional School District believes that individuals with disabilities are integral members of the school community.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires that no qualified individual with a disability shall be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, employment opportunities, and activities of the school district or be subject to discrimination in District programs. Similarly, no school district shall exclude or otherwise deny services, programs, or activities to an individual because of the known disability of a person with whom the individual is known to have a relationship or association. The Wachusett Regional School District complies with the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Definition: A "qualified individual with a disability" is an otherwise qualified individual, determined through an individualized process to have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities and who, with or without reasonable modification to rules, policies, or practices, the

removal of architectural, communication, or transportation barriers, or the provision of auxiliary aids and services, meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or the participation in programs or activities provided by the District.

Reasonable Modification: The District shall make reasonable modification in policies, practices, or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability or, in case of eligible students, to ensure a free appropriate public education as defined under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Communications: The District shall take the appropriate steps to ensure that communications with applicants, participants, students, and members of the public with disabilities are as effective as communications with non-disabled individuals. To this end, the District shall furnish appropriate auxiliary aids and services where necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy benefits of, a service, program, or activity conducted by the District. In determining what type of auxiliary aid or service is necessary, the District shall give primary consideration to the requests of the individuals with disabilities. Any decision that, in compliance with its responsibility to provide effective communication for individuals with disabilities, would fundamentally alter the service, program, or activity or unduly burden the District shall be made by the District's appointed ADA Coordinator after considering all resources available for use in funding and operating the program, service, or activity. A written statement of the reasons for reaching that conclusion shall accompany the decision.

Auxiliary Aids and Services: "Auxiliary aids and services" includes, but are not limited to: (1) qualified interpreters, note-takers, transcription services, written materials, assisted listening systems, and other effective methods for making aurally delivered materials available to individuals with hearing impairments; (2) qualified readers, taped texts, audio recordings, Braille materials, large print materials, or other effective methods for making visually delivered materials available to individuals with visual impairments; (3) acquisition or modification of equipment or devices; and (4) other similar services and actions.

Limits of Required Modifications: The District is not required to take any action that it can demonstrate would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of a service, program, or activity or in undue financial and administrative burdens.

Notice: The District shall make available to applicants, participants, students, beneficiaries, and other interested persons information regarding the provisions the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the applicability of those statutes to the services, programs, or activities of the District. The information shall be made available in such a manner as the School Committee and Superintendent find necessary to apprise such persons of the protections against discrimination assured them by the ADA and/or Section 504.

Compliance Coordinator: The District shall designate at least one employee to coordinate its efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, including any investigation of any complaint communicated to it alleging its noncompliance or alleging any actions that would be prohibited under the ADA and/or Section 504. The District shall make publicly available the name, office address, and telephone number of the employee(s) so designated and shall adopt and publish procedures for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action that would be prohibited under the ADA and/or Section 504.

POLICY 1523 DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE PUBLICATIONS

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

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

This policy shall be included in all Student Handbooks.

POLICY 3611.4 ENRICHMENT

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

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

Wachusett Regional School District shall:

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

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

POLICY 3625 TEACHING ABOUT ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND DRUGS

In accordance with state and federal law, the District shall provide age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate, evidence-based alcohol, tobacco, and drug prevention education programs in grades K-12.

The alcohol, tobacco, and drug prevention program shall address the legal, social, and health consequences of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use, with emphasis on nonuse by school-age children. The program also shall include information about effective techniques and skill development for delaying and abstaining from using, as well as skills for addressing peer pressure to use alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.

Prevention requires education, and healthy decision-making. The objectives of this program are:

- To prevent, delay, and/or reduce alcohol, tobacco, and drug use among children and youth.
- To increase students' understanding of the legal, social, emotional, and health consequences of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use.
- To teach students self-management skills, social skills, negotiation skills, and refusal skills that will help them to make healthy decisions and avoid alcohol, tobacco, and drug use.

The curriculum, instructional materials, and outcomes used in this program shall be recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the Wachusett Regional School District Committee.

This policy shall be posted on the District's website and notice shall be provided to all students and parents/guardians in accordance with state law. Additionally, the District shall file a copy of this policy with DESE in accordance with law in a manner requested by DESE.

POLICY 6400 BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE

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

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

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

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

Student Handbook. The student handbook shall be reviewed annually with input sought from the school council. The student handbook shall be printed and distributed to all enrolled students and all staff members at the start of each school year. The student handbook shall include, but not be limited to, sections dealing with:

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

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

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

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

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

A warrant-less search (non-emergency) of a student's school locker or articles carried upon the student's

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

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

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

Students will have the right and the responsibility to complete all assignments and make up all tests missed during the suspension. It will be the student's responsibility to confer with teachers and to complete make-up work within a reasonable time but in no instance exceeding three weeks after the suspension expires.

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

POLICY 6431.1 TOBACCO PRODUCTS ON SCHOOL PREMISES PROHIBITED

Use of any tobacco products, including, but not limited to: cigarettes, cigars, little cigars, chewing tobacco, pipe tobacco and snuff and electronic cigarettes, electronic cigars, electronic pipes or other similar products that rely on vaporization or aerosolization, within school buildings, school facilities, on school grounds or school buses, or at school-sponsored events by any individual, including, but not limited to, school personnel and students, is prohibited at all times.

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

A student determined to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to the student discipline code. This policy shall be promulgated to all staff and students in appropriate handbook(s) and publications.

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

POLICY 6433.1 ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND DRUG USE BY STUDENTS PROHIBITED

A student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use or consume, possess, buy or sell, or give away: any beverage containing alcohol; any tobacco product, including vapor/E-cigarettes; marijuana; steroids; or any controlled substance except for prescribed medical purposes within any school or on school grounds at any time. The Wachusett Regional School District Committee (WRSDC) also prohibits the use or consumption by students of the aforementioned on school grounds or school buses, or at any school-sponsored event.

Additionally, any student who is under the influence of drugs or alcoholic beverages prior to, or during, attendance at or participation in a school-sponsored activity, will be barred from that activity and may be

subject to disciplinary action.

Verbal Screening

- The school district shall utilize, in accordance with law, a verbal screening tool approved by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to screen students for substance abuse disorders. The tool shall be administered by trained staff on an annual basis at grades 7 and 10.
- Parents/guardians shall be notified of the screening prior to the opening of school each year. Parents/guardians shall have the right to opt out of the screening by written notice prior to or during the screening.
- All statements made by a student during a screening are confidential and shall not be disclosed except in the event of immediate medical emergency or in accordance with law. De-identified results shall be reported to the Department of Public Health within 90 days of the completion of the screening process.

This policy shall be posted on the District's website and notice shall be provided to all students and parents/guardians of this policy in accordance with state law. Additionally, the District shall file a copy of this policy with DESE in accordance with law in a manner requested by DESE.

POLICY 6515 STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

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

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

1. No school publication will accept advertising that is political, religious, or discriminatory in nature.
 2. All advertising is subject to review and approval by the principal or a designee relative to content and appropriateness.
 3. Final editorial control and approval of all materials intended for publication are the responsibility of, and may be subject to the approval of, the school administration.
 4. This policy shall be referenced in the "Student Handbook".
 5. A statement indicating the editorial control by the school administration regarding all advertising will be included on order forms or other similar correspondence.
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POLICY 6613.2 ATHLETIC HEAD INJURY AND CONCUSSION POLICY

The safety of students is a high priority for the Wachusett Regional School District. Students who sustain head injuries while in extracurricular athletic activities and those involved in their treatment must follow the protocol based on 105 C.M.R 201.000 (<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/com-health/injury/105-cmr-201.pdf>) found online on the high school and middle schools' websites as well as in the student handbooks.

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

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

POLICY 6621 TRANSPORTATION SAFETY AND SECURITY PROCEDURES

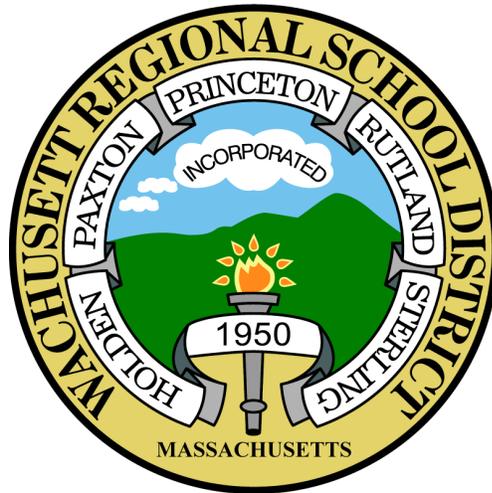
The Wachusett Regional School District and its staff share with students and parents the responsibility for student safety during transportation to and from school. The authority for enforcing District requirements of student conduct on buses will rest with the principal.

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

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

HOLDEN - PAXTON - PRINCETON - RUTLAND - STERLING



Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

REVISED 12/1/20

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Wachusett Regional School District Mission Statement

The Wachusett Regional School District seeks to ensure meaningful student growth and promote social emotional well-being in a safe and nurturing environment. We will integrate the talent, experience, and knowledge of all members of our community to develop lifelong learners, equipped to think critically in an ever-changing, global society.

Wachusett Regional School District Core Values

Commitment to Excellence

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

Perseverance

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

Critical Thinking

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

Collaboration

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

Global Citizenship and Responsibility

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

Creativity and Innovation

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

Acceptance and Respect of Others

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

I: LEADERSHIP

The WRSD Leadership is committed to implementing the district's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and in conjunction with community efforts, to promote and ensure a safe and positive teaching and learning environment.

District leaders, community leaders, teachers, parents, guardians, and student leaders, have a primary role in teaching students to regard one another in a respectful, civil, and dignified manner to create an environment that improves and sustains the emotional and behavioral health of all students. These stakeholders will promote understanding and respect for diversity and differences in all venues through modeling respectful behavior and promoting and sustaining a commitment to programs that are focused on supporting social-emotional development at all grade levels.

The WRSD will provide age-appropriate anti-bullying educational experiences for all students in the district. As a school district, WRSD will enhance student achievement by creating and maintaining an educational environment where all students feel safe. In the unlikely event that a student feels uncomfortable, the school culture will strongly support student communication of their concerns to teachers, staff, administrators, parents or guardians.

A. Public Involvement in Developing the Plan

As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the Wachusett Regional School District Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan was developed in consultation with school staff, professional support personnel, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, parents and guardians.

Prior to the presentation of this plan to the School Committee, a final draft of the plan will be made available on the WRSD website for Public Comment. The plan will be reviewed biennially (every 2 years).

B. Implementation

Consistent with applicable laws and regulations, all Principals will be implementing, with the support of the Superintendent and/or the School Committee, the following documents/ action plans:

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

C. Planning & Oversight

The Wachusett Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan has been developed in collaboration with key stakeholders, including school and district administrators, school-based mental health staff, parents, school committee members, and local law enforcement. The principal or designee is

responsible for the implementation and oversight of the plan, except when a reported bullying incident involves the principal or assistant principals as the alleged aggressor. In such cases, the Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for investigating the report and other related steps, including addressing the safety of the alleged target. If the Superintendent is the alleged aggressor, the School Committee or designee shall be responsible for investigating the report and other steps necessary to implement the plan, including addressing the safety of the alleged target.

II: TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

All stakeholders in the Wachusett Regional School District must be made aware of the state anti-bullying law and how it changes the definitions, reporting, investigation, and punishment of bullying incidents. Our School Committee, administrators, and faculty will be responsible for disseminating this information and for projecting how these changes will reflect on cultural changes in our schools as the implementation of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O moves forward.

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

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

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

B. Ongoing professional development.

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

- Effective and developmentally or age-appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- Developmentally or age-appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- Information regarding the power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to bullying;
- Current research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
- Current information on the nature of cyberbullying

Professional development will also continue to address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and 504 Plans.

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

- Emphasizing the importance of establishing and maintaining supportive student-teacher/staff relationships in school
- Emphasizing the importance of repairing harm (repairing relationships) in alignment with the Restorative Practices approach
- Teaching empathy, perspective-taking, and respect for the diversity and differences that exist among people
- Focusing on building students' social-emotional learning competencies and skills
- Incorporating trauma-sensitive teaching strategies
- Strategies for promoting prosocial bystander actions

C. Written notice to staff

The school district will provide all staff with an annual written notice of The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. Sections related to staff responsibilities will be included in the District Employee Handbook.

III: ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

A key aspect of promoting a positive school climate is ensuring that the underlying social and emotional needs of targets, aggressors, families, and others are addressed.

Below is a summary of strategies aimed to provide supports and services necessary to meet these needs. In order to enhance the district's capacity to prevent, intervene early, and respond effectively to bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation, these services will be available to reflect an understanding of the dynamics of bullying and to provide approaches to address the needs of targets and aggressors.

The Superintendent or their designee will regularly update and provide to all schools a list of mental health resources available in the community as well as community programs/partnerships that support student well-being. School administrators, staff, and parents will collaborate in determining appropriate referral services.

A. Identifying resources.

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

B. Counseling and other services

The District will work collaboratively with school mental health staff and outside agencies to maintain a list of providers that will support schools in developing safety plans for students who have been targets of bullying or retaliation, providing social skills programs to prevent bullying, and offering education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors. Schools may consider current tools including, but not limited to: behavioral intervention plans, restorative practices, social skills groups, and other related resources and approaches. The district will reference the American School Counseling Association for guidance on these matters.

C. Students with disabilities

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

D. Referral to outside services

The school district will use a referral procedure for referring students and families to outside services. Referrals must comply with relevant laws and local policies.

E. Student Surveys and Data Collection

At least once every four years, the Wachusett Regional School District will administer a Department of Elementary and Secondary Education student survey to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in our schools.

Additionally, the district will annually report bullying incident data to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Data from these surveys will be compiled and shared annually with district and school administration as well as School Committee in order to promote continual improvement.

IV: ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

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

- Each grade level will be provided developmentally-appropriate and evidence-based curriculum and instruction to teach pro-social skills that support academic success. Engaging Schools identifies these skill sets as follows: ([see Appendix C: Learning & Life Competencies](#))
 1. **Self-Awareness:** *The ability to accurately assess my feelings, behavior, interests, values, and strengths through my experiences, and name and describe the benefits of skills, behaviors, and mindsets that help me to be a good student.*
 2. **Self-Management:** *The ability to express emotions skillfully, manage my emotions by using strategies, sustain focus and pay attention, and accept help, feedback, correction, or consequences with good will.*
 3. **Social Efficacy:** *The ability to listen respectfully, make an effort to understand the emotions, words, and actions of others, and help and support others.*
 4. **Academic Efficacy:** *The ability to invest in quality work, organize to learn and study, and set goals and self-assess.*
- The entire school community (e.g. students, teachers, parents, bus drivers, lunchroom staff, janitorial staff, etc.) will work collaboratively to promote a caring and supportive school environment among all of its staff and students.

A. Non-Academic Bullying Prevention Efforts:

- The administration will review student behavioral expectations during assemblies during the first few weeks of school.
- The definition of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation and the protocol for handling incidents of bullying will be emphasized.
- Staff presence will be increased in areas where bullying is most likely to occur, such as bus arrival and departure locations, hallways, lunchrooms, recess, and near restrooms.
- A variety of evidence-based prevention programs to promote diversity awareness and respect for self and others will be explored and offered. District schools currently use the following programs: Second Step, Responsive Classroom, MARC (Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center), and PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) ([See Appendix B for full descriptions of these programs](#))
- Schools will create opportunities for students to engage in a variety of activities that are meaningful to them and that help them to feel positively connected to the school and/or the local community.
- Schools will promote a culture of kindness and community where students are empowered to speak out against bullying.

B. Academic Bullying Prevention Efforts:

- When possible, Learning and Life Competencies for School Success, including related target behaviors, will be incorporated into classroom activities and instruction, as well as other aspects of the school day ([See Appendix C](#))

V. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION

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

All disciplinary actions will balance the need for safety and accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior and/or lagging social-emotional skills ([see Learning & Life Competencies in Appendix C](#)).

A. Reporting Bullying or Retaliation:

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member will be recorded in writing.

A school or district staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee or to the superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor or to the School Committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor, any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses.

Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously. No disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

When reporting in writing, administrators, teachers, students, parents/guardians, school bus drivers, cafeteria workers, playground monitors, and any and all other staff and community members can access the “**Bullying, Cyber-bullying, Retaliation Incident Referral Form**” ([see Appendix A](#)) in the Main Office of the school, guidance/school psychologist’s office, the nurse’s office, and on the Wachusett Regional School District website.

1. Reporting by Staff:

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

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

The Wachusett Regional School District believes that it is the responsibility of students, parents, guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the Principal or designee.

Any individual who wishes to file such a complaint may request, and shall be provided with, assistance from a school staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff

member, or with the principal. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

The filing of a false or fabricated complaint of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation is strictly prohibited and shall result in disciplinary action [\(See Appendix A for reporting forms\)](#).

B. Responding to Report of Bullying, Cyberbullying or Retaliation- Allegations of Bullying

1. Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target; and altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target. The principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

2. Obligations to Notify Others

a. Notice to Parents or Guardians

Once an assessment of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation has been made and been deemed valid, the Principal or his/her designee will immediately inform the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the target and the aggressor of the investigation determination and any actions taken to prevent further incidents. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.

While prior notice of an investigation shall not be required, there may be incidents where parents are notified prior to the Investigation.

In providing notice of investigation findings, the Principal shall maintain the privacy of any child/individual who is not the child of the parents/guardians to whom the notice is provided. The Principal shall not report specific information to the target’s parents/guardians about the disciplinary action taken against an aggressor unless it involves a directive for there to be no communication between the aggressor(s) and victim(s), or another directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

The Principal shall also notify the parents about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s Problem Resolution System and the process for accessing that system, regardless of the outcome of the investigation.

b. Notice to Another School or District

If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All

communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

c. Notice to Law Enforcement

At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the principal or designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if they have a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the student aggressor.

In making this determination, the principal will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school or district policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer, if any, and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.

3. Investigation

The principal or designee will investigate promptly all reports of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s), student developmental factors, and the ages of the students involved.

During the investigation, the principal or designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, and others as necessary. The principal or designee (or whoever is conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged student aggressor, target, and witnesses of the importance of the investigation, their obligation to be truthful and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Interviews may be conducted by the principal or designee, other staff members as determined by the principal or designee, and in consultation with the school counselor, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the principal or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The principal or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with school or district policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the principal or designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

4. Determinations

The principal or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The principal or designee will:

- 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and
- 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary.

Depending upon the circumstances, the principal or designee may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's or student aggressor's parents or guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development.

The principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and if bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. All notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal or designee cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directives that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

The principal or designee shall inform the parent or guardian of the target about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's problem resolution system and the process for accessing that system, regardless of the outcome of the bullying determination.

5. Responses to Bullying / Consequences from Findings

Bullying behavior can take many forms and can vary dramatically in its level of seriousness and what impact it has on the target and other students. Accordingly, there is no one prescribed response to verified acts of bullying. While conduct that rises to the level of "bullying," as defined in this Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, will generally warrant disciplinary action against the aggressor, whether and to what extent disciplinary actions are imposed (e.g., detention, suspension, etc.) is a matter for the professional discretion of the Building Principal or his/her designee.

District administrators will integrate a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach compensatory social-emotional skills and target behaviors. The needs and safety of the target will also be considered as part of restoring resolution to the bullying matter. Verified acts of bullying shall result in intervention by the building Principal or his/her designee and will address the acts of the aggressor and the needs of the target, and assure the sanction against bullying behavior is enforced with the goal that the bullying behavior will cease and desist.

Consequences should be considered with the following factors in mind:

- A. Nature, severity, and chronicity of the behavioral impact on the target
- B. Degree of physical, psychological, social harm on the target
- C. Student's age, development, and degree of maturity
- D. Surrounding circumstances and context in which the incident(s) occurred
- E. Prior disciplinary history and persistent patterns of behavior
- F. Relationship between and among the parties involved
- G. Context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred
- H. The need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior and social-emotional skills.

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

- A. Verbal explanation and/or reprimand focusing on the nature of the harm caused
- B. Temporary removal from the classroom
- C. Loss of privileges (including before and after school activities)
- D. Detention
- E. In-school suspension
- F. Out-of-school suspension
- G. Reassignment of seats in lunch, bus, class, etc.
- H. Reassignment of classes
- I. Referral to an outside agency

J. Report to law enforcement

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

- A. Reparation to the target in alignment with the Restorative Practices philosophy and model
- B. Completion of a related curricular based assignment(s)
- C. Meeting with Civil Rights Coordinator
- D. Completion of community service designed to increase the aggressor's skills in empathizing with others
- E. Therapeutic support, including counseling or referral, for both aggressor(s) and target(s)

***** All completed Bullying Reports will be forwarded to Central Office for record-keeping and review. *****

VI: COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

Wachusett Regional School District recognizes the importance of collaboration with families in order to optimize the school's effectiveness in preventing and responding to bullying.

A. Parent Education & Resources:

The District will offer education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and social competency work being done in the District. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the PTO, PTA, School Councils, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, and other similar organizations.

B. Notification Requirements:

Each year the school or district will inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about the anti-bullying curricula that are being used. This notice will include information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyberbullying and online safety. The school or district will send parents written notice each year about the student-related sections of the Plan and the school's or district's Internet safety policy. All notices and information made available to parents or guardians will be in hard copy and electronic formats and will be available in the language(s) most prevalent among parents or guardians. The school or district will post the Plan and related information on its website.

VII: PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

All students will be afforded the same protection under this Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, regardless of their status under the law.[L1] We recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to become targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics.

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

- A. on school grounds, on property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, at a function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a school district or bullying school, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school district or a school; and at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related or through
- B. the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the school district or school, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. As stated in M.G.L. c.71 Sec.37O nothing contained herein shall require schools to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

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

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

VIII: PROBLEM RESOLUTION

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

IX: DEFINITIONS:

1. Bullying:

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

- I. causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property;
- II. places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his/her property;
- III. creates a hostile environment at school for the victim;
- IV. infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or
- V. materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

2. Cyber-bullying:

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

3. Hostile Environment:

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

4. Target / Victim:

A student who has been subject to bullying or retaliation

5. Aggressor/ Perpetrator:

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

6. Local law enforcement agency:

Local police department

7. Principal:

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

8. Retaliation:

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

X: RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS

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

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Bullying Reporting Forms



Wachusett Regional School District

Holden, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland, Sterling

Bullying, Cyber Bullying, and Retaliation Incident Referral Form

Thank you for taking a few minutes to fill out this form. Our intent is to take all bullying reporting incidents seriously and to investigate them immediately. No disciplinary action will be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report, however please be advised that making a **knowingly false report** may result in disciplinary consequences.

This form is to be confidentially maintained in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g.

1. Name of Reporter: _____ (please print)

I would like to remain anonymous

2. Date of filing of this report _____

3. Date of Incident _____

4. What type of incident was this? Bullying Cyber Bullying Online (texting / cell phone)

5. Where did the incident take place: on school property on a school bus at a bus stop
 at a school sponsored activity/event Other _____

6. Please tell us who you are: Student Parent Other (specify) _____
 Teacher Administrator

7. If student, state your school: _____ Grade _____ Homeroom _____

8. If staff, state your school or work site: _____

9. To the best of your knowledge, did a physical injury result from this incident?

Yes No Not Sure

10. Information about the Incident:

Name of target (person who was bullied): _____ Check whether: Student Staff Other

Name of the aggressor person who is bullying) _____ Student Staff Other

Name of any witnesses: _____ Student Staff Other

_____ Student Staff Other

Describe what you know about this incident on the back side of this form. (Please be as specific as possible)
After you have completed this form, please submit it to a school administrator.

Jefferson School
1745 Main Street, Jefferson, MA 01522
Telephone: (508) 829-1670 Facsimile: (508) 829-1680
www.wrsd.net



Wachusett Regional School District

Holden, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland, Sterling

Student Reporting Form for Bullying and Retaliation

*Our intent is to take all bullying reporting incidents seriously and to investigate them immediately. No disciplinary action will be taken against a student solely on the basis of an initial report. Please be advised that making a **knowingly false report** may result in disciplinary consequences.*

This form is to be confidentially maintained in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g.

Today's Date _____ Date of Incident _____

Name _____ Grade _____

Please indicate **what** is happening, **when** it is happening and **where** it is happening.

What:

.

When:

Where:

After you have completed this form, please submit it to a school administrator.

Jefferson School
1745 Main Street, Jefferson, MA 01522
Telephone: (508) 829-1670 Facsimile: (508) 829-1680
www.wrsd.net

APPENDIX B: Research-Based Curricula

Second Step: (K - 8)

Second Step is a universal intervention designed for use with all students in a school. Second Step teaches students how to effectively manage their emotions and demonstrate self-control. Research indicates that children who learn and use these skills do better in school academically. Direct observation of student behavior in various settings (i.e., classroom cafeteria, and playground) during different stages of the intervention (i.e., baseline, two weeks after completion, and 6 months after completion) revealed decreases in physical aggression and increases in neutral and pro-social behavior.

Link for further information:

http://www.cfchildren.org/Portals/1/SS_BPU/BPU_DOC/SEL_Bullying_Paper.pdf

Responsive Classroom: (K - 8)

Responsive Classroom is a research-based approach to K-8 teaching that focuses on the strong link between academic success and social-emotional learning (SEL). We believe that high-quality education for every child is built on the foundation of a safe and joyful learning community.

Link for further information:

<https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/about/research/>

PBIS:

Positive behavior support is an application of a behaviorally-based systems approach to enhance the capacity of schools, families, and communities to design effective environments that improve the link between research-validated practices and the environments in which teaching and learning occur. Attention is focused on creating and sustaining Tier 1 supports (universal), Tier 2 supports (targeted group), and Tier 3 supports (individual) systems of support that improve lifestyle results (personal, health, social, family, work, recreation) for all children and youth by making targeted behaviors less effective, efficient, and relevant, and desired behavior more functional.

Link for further information, Elementary:

<http://www.pbis.org/resource/785>

Link for further information, Middle / High School:

<http://www.pbis.org/resource/900>

MARC (Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center) K-5 Bullying and Cyberbullying Curriculum

The goal of this curriculum is to educate children in grades K-5 about bullying and cyberbullying and to raise their awareness about how these behaviors impact children. It utilizes both Teacher-As-Educator and Peer Learning Models.

Link for further information:

<http://marccenter.webs.com/Evaluation%20of%20the%20Massachusetts%20Aggression%20Reduction%20Center%20C2%92s%20K-2.pdf>

Grades 6-12 Advisory Curriculum (Bullying & Cyberbullying)

This is a bullying, cyberbullying, and cyber-behaviors curriculum, designed for use by grades 6 through 12. The Curriculum is divided into Lesson Plans designed to be conducted in a 20-minute period of time. The intention is to enable schools to use the Curriculum either during Advisory Periods regular class periods.

Link for further information:

<http://marccenter.webs.com/advisory-curriculum>

High School Cyber-skills Curriculum

The goal of this research-based curriculum is to increase the knowledge and awareness of children in grades 9-12 about cyber-skills.

Link for further information:

<http://marccenter.webs.com/hscyberskills>

APPENDIX C: Learning & Life Competencies

Positive **MINDSETS** that set the stage for developing Learning and Life Competencies

A **mindset** is a set of deeply held assumptions and beliefs that drive behavior and create powerful incentives to sustain prior habits, choices, and preferred ways of doing things. Mindsets set the stage for academic engagement and developing Learning and Life Competencies. Self-identification with the values of schooling and the roles of a learner will influence the attitudes and perceptions a student holds in relation to his/her learning and academic performance. When students feel that school and school work have value, when they feel a sense of belonging in the classroom, and they approach learning tasks with positive expectations, they have a capacity to sustain their effort over time and express their curiosity, enthusiasm, and personal interest in what they are learning. This boosts students' confidence about their day-to-day experiences and fires up hope in their future. The examples below provide a range of entry points for conversations with students.

EXAMPLES:

- School and school work have value for me.
- I belong to an academic community.
- I approach tasks with positive expectations and an open mind.
- I accept challenges, take academic risks, and push myself to excel.
- My ability and competence grow with my effort.
- I express curiosity, enthusiasm, or personal interest in what I am learning.
- I cultivate personal talents, values, and positive qualities of character.
- I have hope in a positive future I can make for myself.

Learning and Life Competencies for School, College, and Career Success		
Skill Set	Competency	Target Behaviors
Self-Awareness	I know myself.	1. I am aware that my beliefs, mindsets, and emotions impact my capacity to learn and be skillful. 2. I can accurately assess my feelings, behavior, interests, values, and strengths through my experiences. 3. I know when I have done the right thing and when I make mistakes. 4. I know when I bother others or upset them.
	I am aware of skills, behaviors, and attitudes that help me.	5. I can name and describe the benefits of skills, behaviors, and mindsets that help me be a good student and a good person. 6. I know what motivates me. 7. I know when it is important to follow rules, procedures, and norms of acceptable behavior.
Self-Management	I identify, express, and manage emotions.	8. I name and assess emotions accurately 9. I express emotions skillfully even when I feel angry, frustrated, or disrespected. 10. I manage my emotions by using strategies to cool down and regain my balance.
	I exhibit self-regulation.	11. I sustain my focus and pay attention throughout an activity or task. 12. I work silently without bothering others. 13. I accept help, feedback, correction, or consequences with good will. 14. I follow instructions, procedures and rules.
	I demonstrate perseverance and resiliency.	15. I persist in my effort until I “get it” and finish the task. 16. I pursue and sustain efforts to complete long-term tasks and achieve long-term goals related to my future. 17. I can right myself and bounce back even when I experience temporary setbacks, failure, or adversity.

Learning and Life Competencies for School, College, and Career Success

Skill Set	Competency	Target Behaviors
Social Efficacy	I communicate and problem solve effectively	18. I focus my attention on people who are speaking to me. 19. I listen respectfully and paraphrase/summarize or question before speaking. 20. I use school-appropriate language and project appropriate body language. 21. I use problem-solving strategies to work things out. 22. I resolve interpersonal conflicts constructively.
	I demonstrate empathy and respect.	23. I make an effort to understand the emotions, words and actions of others. 24. I respect the dignity of each person and their rights to be heard, to be valued, and to learn in a safe classroom. 25. I accept other viewpoints respectfully and appreciate individual and group similarities and differences 26. I stand up for people whose rights, identity, or dignity have been violated. 27. I interrupt or call attention to incidents of bullying, harassment, prejudice, or teasing.
	I foster healthy relationships.	28. I greet and talk to people in a friendly manner. 29. I use words of common courtesy like please and thank you, excuse me, sorry about that. 30. I am dependable and follow through on what I say I am going to do. 31. I help and support others.
	I am assertive and I self-advocate.	32. I use neutral, non-aggressive language to express myself. 33. I can verbalize and present my ideas my values, and my needs to others. 34. I take initiative to seek help. 35. I can navigate across different settings in order to present my best self to others.
	I cooperate and participate.	36. I work effectively with different students. 37. I take on various roles and responsibilities to complete the learning task. 38. I take turns, listen to and encourage others, and do my fair share.
	I demonstrate civic responsibility.	39. I volunteer to take on leadership roles or extended responsibilities in a group. 40. I do positive things to make class a good place to learn. 41. I take responsibility for my words and actions and acknowledge the impact of my behavior on the community. 42. I make responsible decisions.
Academic Efficacy	I invest in quality work.	43. I attempt each part of the question, task, assignment, or test. 44. I revise, edit/proof, and correct for quality and accuracy. 45. I push myself to take academic risks. 46. I complete assigned tasks regularly. 47. I engage in critical, reflective and creative thinking.
	I organize to learn and study.	48. I attend class every day and arrive to class on time. 49. I organize myself and manage my materials. 50. I prioritize and manage my time and tasks. 51. I figure out the instructions before I begin a task. 52. I use a range of study strategies to remember and apply key knowledge, skills and understandings.
	I set goals and self-assess.	53. I make sure that I know the criteria for high quality work. 54. I set specific learning goals and identify and adjust action steps to improve my grade. 55. I monitor my academic progress through written and oral self-reflection and conferencing. 56. I can identify the evidence that shows my effort to meet my goal.