

Abington Public Schools  
Elementary Handbook  
and  
Integrated Preschool Addendum  
for  
Parents/Guardians and Students



Dear Families,

The Abington Elementary Schools administration and staff welcome you and your child to the Abington Public Schools. We are pleased to offer your child a wide variety of educational opportunities provided at the highest professional level. We take great pride in Abington's educational heritage and special pride in our Vision Statement, Core Values, Guiding Principles, and District Level Goals which can be found on the district website at [www.abingtonps.org](http://www.abingtonps.org).

Communication with the home is a top priority in the Abington Elementary Schools; hence, the purpose of this guide. It contains rules and regulations, as well as the rights and responsibilities of your child. It also contains many of the answers to questions asked routinely of school personnel. **Please keep this handbook as a reference.**

We wish you and your child a happy and successful educational experience in Abington.

Sincerely,

Elementary Administration and Staff

### **Massachusetts General Laws**

State law requires that the Student Handbook include the rules pertaining to the conduct of students, as well as the policies and procedures to be followed in administering these rules. These rules and policies, derived from our federal and state laws, are more particularly delineated in *Massachusetts General Laws*, Chapter 71, Section 37H, 37 H ½ and 37 H ¾. They attempt to define both the rights and responsibilities of students in our schools.

These rules refer to matters that can occur both inside and outside the school. They refer to everything from the most serious offenses to the least serious issues that are nevertheless important for good order and discipline of the school. These rules explain the process due to students when disciplinary problems occur. "Due process" is required under the circumstances of each case.

### **Abington Public Schools Policies**

The Abington School Committee has approved policies on a variety of topics. Many of these policies are referenced or summarized in the student handbook. To read a full text of these policies, please visit [www.abingtonps.org](http://www.abingtonps.org). Unless otherwise indicated, all policies cited in this handbook were approved by the Abington School Committee on December 10, 2015.

# **DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

*The mission of the Abington Public Schools is to provide all students with relevant, challenging educational experiences to prepare them to be engaged, responsible citizens and members of the global community.*

### ***Guiding Beliefs***

*We believe in:*

- ◆ making decisions in the best interests of students.
- ◆ supporting all students in achieving success.
- ◆ fostering the physical, intellectual, technological, social, emotional, and artistic development of our students.
- ◆ creating a safe, tolerant, supportive, organized, and equitable learning environment.
- ◆ providing challenging educational experiences that build character.
- ◆ developing self-discipline and personal responsibility
- ◆ promoting creativity, problem solving, effective communication, and critical thinking skills.
- ◆ cultivating the educational partnership among home, school, and community
- ◆ nurturing a culture of collaboration, collegiality, and mutual respect.
- ◆ encouraging staff initiative and innovation.
- ◆ implementing professional development that is essential for effective instruction and improved student learning.
- ◆ reviewing and updating curriculum, instruction, and assessment in a regular cycle.
- ◆ recognizing that effective and appropriate technology is essential for teaching and learning.
- ◆ inspiring all students to become life-long learners.

### ***Vision Statement***

The Abington Public School District, in partnership with families and the community, is a model school system that provides opportunities for all students to think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, and act responsibly to achieve their highest potential in academics, arts, and athletics.

We are dedicated to providing state of the art resources for teaching and learning, technology, and facilities in an environment that is safe and supportive, enabling students to become life-long learners.

Our students are prepared to face the challenges of the future in an ever-changing world.

### **AEEP IMPROVEMENT GOALS**

<b>Goal 1</b>	<i>Continually identify and implement developmentally appropriate curricular materials and activities, differentiating instruction between the preschool and pre-kindergarten levels</i>
<b>Goal 2</b>	<i>Maximize the opportunities and resources afforded by the co-located preschool, middle school, and high school at 201 Gliniewicz Way</i>
<b>Goal 3</b>	<i>Provide ongoing opportunities to teach and reinforce good citizenship, social skills, resilience and core values</i>
<b>Goal 4</b>	<i>Strengthen parent and community involvement and engagement</i>

### **BBES SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GOALS**

<b>Goal 1</b>	<i>Provide rigorous and relevant curriculum and instruction in an optimal learning environment</i>
<b>Goal 2</b>	<i>Continue the development of a positive climate and sense of belonging for students, families, and staff</i>
<b>Goal 3</b>	<i>Improve communication with the BBES Community, as well as the local and global community</i>

### **WOODSDALE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GOALS**

<b>Goal 1</b>	<i>Implement practices to challenge, support, and celebrate the achievement of students and staff</i>
<b>Goal 2</b>	<i>Create opportunities for increased community connections</i>
<b>Goal 3</b>	<i>Provide a healthy and safe learning environment through effective leadership and operations</i>

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# **BASIC INFORMATION**

## **CENTRAL OFFICE PERSONNEL, SCHOOL COMMITTEE AND ADMINISTRATORS**

### **SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

Christopher Coyle, Chairperson  
Jannette Leary, Vice-Chairperson  
Wendy Happel, Secretary  
Jaclyn Abrams, Member  
Lisa Augusta, Member

### **SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

Peter Schafer  
Office: 781-982-2150

### **ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR BUSINESS AND FINANCE**

Felicia Moschella  
Office: 781-982-2150

### **DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES**

James Robbins  
Office: 781-982-2175

### **Elementary Administrative Offices**

#### **Abington Early Education Program, Out of District Coordinator**

Lora Monachino  
781-982-2195

#### **Beaver Brook Elementary School**

Catherine Zinni  
781-982-2185

#### **Woodsdale School**

Jonathan Hawes  
781-982-2180

## SCHOOL HOURS

Woodsdale Elementary School  
8:40 a.m. – 2:45 p.m.  
Beaver Brook Elementary School  
9:00 a.m. – 3:05 p.m.  
Kindergarten Full-Day Program  
9:00 a.m. – 3:05 p.m.  
Early Education Program  
8:20 a.m. – 10:55 a.m.  
11:35 a.m. – 2:10 p.m.

## STUDENT WELFARE

There is no supervision provided for students in Grades Preschool-4 before the beginning of the school day. Therefore, the school department cannot assume responsibility for students who arrive prior to that time. Normally, students will be permitted to enter school buildings not earlier than 15 minutes prior to the start of the school day. However, during inclement weather or on extremely cold days, students will be able to enter school buildings when the buses are on site. No children are permitted in the buildings unless under supervision of the classroom teacher or other school personnel. Students are to leave the buildings and school grounds promptly at the close of school, unless engaged in school-supervised activities.

During school hours or while engaging in school-sponsored activities, students will be released only into the custody of parents or other persons authorized in writing by a parent or guardian.

## EMERGENCY CLOSINGS/SCHOOL CANCELLATIONS

As an alternative to closing school for a full day, the Abington School Committee has in place a 90-minute delayed opening schedule. This schedule may be used on days when it appears as if the weather and/or road conditions will improve enough in the early morning to allow schools to open. If the decision is made to delay the opening of school by 90 minutes or to cancel school, the message will be delivered via local television and radio news stations including, but not limited to: WBZ, WBET, WJDA, WHDH, WPLM, WATD and WRKP after 6:00 a.m. **Please do not telephone and congest necessary school, police, or fire department phone lines.**

### **Two Hour Delayed Opening Schedule (*No morning Preschool or Kindergarten sessions*)**

<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>CLASSES START</b>	<b>CLASSES DISMISSED</b>
Woodsdale Elementary School	10:10 a.m.	2:45 p.m.
Beaver Brook Elementary School	10:30 a.m.	3:05 p.m.
Abington Early Education Program	No AM session Afternoon PK session at regular time	2:10 p.m.



## **EMERGENCY PLANS**

### **Drills**

Fire drills at regular intervals are required by law and are an important safety precaution. It is essential that when the first signal is given, everyone obeys orders promptly and clears the building by the prescribed route as quickly as possible. The teacher in the classroom will give the students instructions. Additional drills such as evacuation, enhanced lockdown, reverse evacuation, horizontal containment and shelter in place are conducted on a regular basis.

### **School Evacuation Plans**

Each elementary school has an evacuation policy to take effect if the need arises for an emergency evacuation. This policy will be sent home each fall to be reviewed by parents/guardians with their children.

### **Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)**

The location of AEDs in each school is as follows:

Beaver Brook (2 AEDs) – front lobby; hallway between two gyms

Woodsdale – outside main office

Abington Early Education—main hall

## **SCHOOL ENTRANCE REQUIREMENT**

### **Screening**

A preschool screening program for 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds, as mandated by Chapter 766, will be conducted each spring. This program is designed to identify children with developmental delays and/or disabilities. This screening is not a complete diagnostic assessment; however, it is used by teachers and administrators for educational purposes. Parents/Guardians can expect to receive the screening results within one week after the screening. The results will be very general and significant only in the few instances where a child needs additional evaluation.

Children are eligible to enter Kindergarten in September if they attain their fifth birthday on or before August 31<sup>st</sup> of that school year. Children are eligible to enter Grade 1 in September if they attain their sixth birthday on or before August 31<sup>st</sup> of that school year.

### **Registration**

Registration for children who are entering Kindergarten or Grade 1 in September will be conducted in conjunction with preschool screening during early spring. The following materials are required in accordance with Massachusetts Law and must be completed prior to any child entering school in September for the first time:

1. Proof of Residency
2. Birth Certificate
3. Health History
4. Physical Examination must be no sooner than September 1<sup>st</sup> of the year prior to the student entering Kindergarten or Grade 1.
5. Certificate of Immunization is required regarding diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, (series of 5); measles, mumps, rubella, (series of 2); poliomyelitis, (series of 4); hepatitis B, (series of 3); varicella vaccine or physician's documentation that the child has had chicken pox illness; proof of current lead level testing; and such other communicable diseases as may be specified from time to time by the Department of Public Health.

Initial admission of children to the first grade (or other grades) will involve a consideration of both chronological age and the readiness of the children to do the work of those grades.

## **NONDISCRIMINATION**

The Committee's policy of nondiscrimination will extend to all students, all staff, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business. No individual shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to the District or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study on account of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability. If an individual has a complaint or feels that they have been discriminated against because of their race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability, their complaint should be registered with the Title IX compliance officer, Felicia Moschella, Assistant Superintendent.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

The Abington Elementary Schools are committed to maintain a safe, secure and productive environment for everyone. Students are expected to treat all members of the school community with dignity and respect. It is the policy of the Abington Public Schools not to discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation in its educational programs, services, activities, or employment practices as required by Chapter 151B of the General Laws, Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971; Title IX of the State 1972 Educational Amendments; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Violations of civil rights will not be tolerated.

Each person has the right to be free from derogatory or degrading remarks or actions which cause humiliation. All forms of "put-downs", sexual comments or harassment, or physically intrusive or violent behavior are unacceptable. They detract from a supportive, caring educational environment which we try to promote in our schools.

Felicia Moschella, Assistant Superintendent, has been appointed the sexual harassment grievance officer and is vested with the authority and responsibility of processing all sexual harassment complaints.

## **PARENTAL NOTIFICATION RELATIVE TO SEX EDUCATION**

In accordance with General Laws Chapter 71, Section 32A, the Abington School Committee has adopted this policy on the rights of parents and guardians of our students in relation to curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues.

At the beginning of each school year, all parents/guardians of students in our schools will be notified in writing of the courses and curriculum we offer that primarily involve human sexual or human sexuality issues. The Superintendent of Schools will determine the administrator(s) responsible for sending the notice(s). Parents/Guardians of students who enroll in school after the start of the school year will be given the written notice at the time of enrollment. If planned curricula change during the school year, to the extent practicable, parents/guardians will be notified of this fact in a timely manner before implementation.

Each such notice to parents/guardians will include a brief description of the curriculum covered by this policy, and will inform parents/guardians that they may:

1. Exempt their child from any portion of the curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexual issues, without penalty to the student, by sending a letter to the school Principal requesting an exemption. Any student who is exempted by request of the parent/guardian under this policy may be given an alternative assignment.

2. Inspect and review program instruction materials for these curricula, which will be made reasonably accessible to parents/guardians and others to the extent practicable. Parents/guardians may arrange with the Principal to review the materials at the school.

A parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with a decision of the Principal concerning notice, access to instructional materials, or exemption for the student under this policy may send a written request to the Superintendent for review of the issue. The Superintendent or designee will review the issue and give the parent/guardian a timely written decision, preferably within two weeks of the request. A parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with the Superintendent's decision may send a written request to the School Committee for review of the issue. The School Committee will review the issue and give the parent/guardian a timely written decision, preferably within four weeks of the request. A parent/guardian who is still dissatisfied after this process may send a written request to the Commissioner of Education for review of the issue in the dispute.

The Superintendent of Schools will distribute a copy of this policy to each Principal by September 1 of each year.

## **PPRA NOTICE AND CONSENT/OPT-OUT FOR SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES**

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), 20 U.S.C. & 1232h, requires Abington Public Schools to notify you and obtain consent or allow you to opt-out your child from participating in certain school activities. These activities include a student survey, analysis, or evaluation that concerns one or more of the following areas ("protected information surveys"):

1. political affiliations or beliefs of the student or political affiliations of the student's parents/guardians;
2. mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
3. sexual behavior or attitudes;
4. illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
7. religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents/guardians;
8. income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

This requirement also applies to the collection, disclosure or use of student information for marketing purposes ("marketing survey") and certain physical exams and screenings.

If you wish to review any of the survey instruments or instructional materials used in connection with any protected information or marketing survey throughout the school year or have your child opt-out of participation, please submit a written request to the building principal by September 15. The school hereby notifies parents/guardians that unless a written request is received in the office of the principal, the school will assume the right to administer any survey and/or instructional material used in connection with any protected information or marketing survey it deems appropriate.

## **BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION POLICY**

The Abington School Committee and the Abington Public School District is committed to providing a safe and civil educational environment for all students, employees, volunteers and patrons which is free from harassment, intimidation, bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy shall apply to students and members of a school staff, including, but not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity, paraprofessionals and appointed volunteers.

Policy:

The Abington Public School District, in accordance with the General Laws of Massachusetts, Chapter 71, §37O, prohibits bullying in any form.

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

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

(ii) at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Nothing in this Policy requires the district or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited. Nothing in this policy is designed or intended to limit the District's authority to discipline or take remedial action under General Laws Chapter 71, §§ 37H or 37H1/2, M.G.L. Chapter 76 § 5 or other applicable laws or school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether this policy covers the conduct or behavior.

**I. Definitions**

Bullying is defined as the repeated and intentional use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities or paraprofessionals of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target. Bullying is characterized by an imbalance of physical, psychological or emotional power, that:

- Causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- Places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
- Creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- Infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- Materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

For purposes of this section, bullying shall include cyberbullying.

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

Perpetrator is defined as a student or a member of a school staff, including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, counselor, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional who engages in bullying or retaliation. For purposes of this Policy, the term "aggressor" will have the same meaning as "perpetrator".

Cyberbullying is defined as bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 370 for a complete legal definition of cyberbullying.

Where the term "bullying" is used in this document, it is intended to encompass both "bullying" and "cyberbullying" as defined above.

Retaliation is defined as any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment, directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

## **II. Leadership**

The Abington Public School Department's administration, faculty and staff will, in conjunction and cooperation with each school building's Student Support Team (SST) review, develop and oversee bullying prevention and intervention efforts.

- As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, planning is reviewed and developed in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents, and guardians.
- At least once every four years beginning with 2015/16 school year, the district will administer a Department of Elementary and Secondary-developed student survey to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in our schools. Additionally, the school or district will annually report bullying incident data to the Department.
- It is recognized 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, or sensory, disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. Specific steps will be taken to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

## **III. Procedures for Reporting Bullying and 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 shall be recorded in writing. A school staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee 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 staff members, may be made anonymously. The school district will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, an Incident Reporting Form, a voicemail box, a dedicated mailing address, and an email address.

### **A. Reporting by Staff**

A staff member will report immediately to the principal or designee when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to the principal or designee does not 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.

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

The Abington Public School District expects students, parents or 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. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a 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 or designee. The principal or designee will consider the following when addressing a student involved in an act of bullying or retaliation:

- Acknowledge student's feelings
- Determine if there are safety issues that must be addressed immediately
- Staff member completes incident report and gives to designated administrative staff member

If a report is anonymous:

- Determine if there are safety issues that must be addressed immediately
- Staff member completes incident report and gives to designated administrative staff member

#### **IV. Procedures for Investigating Reported Bullying or Retaliation**

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.

The safety of all students involved in the alleged incident will be monitored at all times.

Interview Procedure:

- Interview the target and the alleged aggressor separately
- Identify the problem
- Determine if incident is repetitive in nature
- Protect the target’s confidentiality when possible
- In case of denial or if further information is needed, interview witnesses.
- Make the alleged aggressor aware of consequences of retaliation against target and reporter
- Encourage reporting of future incidents
- Document all interviews

#### **V. Procedures for Follow-Up of Investigating Reported Bullying or Retaliation**

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 directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

- **Prohibition of Retaliation**  
It will be explained to the target, aggressor, and where appropriate, the witnesses that any retaliation taken by any party against any other party as a result of the reporting of the incident is strictly forbidden and could be subject to school and/or legal action.
- **Insufficient Evidence**  
If there is insufficient evidence that the situation meets the definition of bullying, inform the parties involved and continue to monitor the situation. Refer to the Student Handbook for further disciplinary action if applicable.
- **Target Safety**  
The target’s need for protection will be assessed and addressed. A post incident conference with the target will be held during which the target will be reassured of his or her safety and steps taken to prevent further occurrences.

- **Disciplinary Action Procedure**  
In cases where it is determined that disciplinary action is needed the Principal or designee shall assign such consequences as are outlined in the Student Code of Conduct within the Student Handbook.
- **Notification of Parents**  
Parents of the alleged aggressor and target should be contacted as soon as possible following the conclusion of the investigation or the end of the student day, whichever comes first.  
  
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.
- **Student Support Team (SST) Follow-Up**  
Following the conclusion of the investigation, the case will be brought to the building level Student Support Team. SST will discuss further needs of the target, aggressor, appropriate family members of the involved students and any witnesses and determine if further services and/or referrals to outside services are necessary. When appropriate, additional staff members will be notified such as: special education, general education, and support staff.
- **Special Education Process: Students on an Individual Education Plan (IEP)**  
An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools, Section 7  
  
“For students identified with developmental or mental disabilities, the IEP team must consider and specifically address the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing. (see M.G.L.C. 71B, 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010)  
  
Whenever the IEP Team evaluation indicates that a student’s disability affects social skills development or when the student’s disability makes him or her vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing, the IEP must address the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.
- **Reporting of Criminal Acts Relative to Bullying**  
Should it be determined that a crime has been committed in the act of bullying and/or cyberbullying, the Principal or designee will contact the Superintendent of Schools then the Abington Police Department in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding.
- **False Accusations**  
If it is determined that a student has knowingly provided a false accusation of bullying or retaliation, such action will be considered in itself an act of harassment or bullying/retaliation. An appropriate consequence will be assigned as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct within the Student Handbook.
- **Notification of Other Districts**  
If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, the principal or designee will promptly notify the principal or designee of the other school or district. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

## **VI. Training and Professional Development**

The Abington Public Schools is dedicated to providing 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 an extracurricular activity and paraprofessionals. Our plan for providing professional development reflects the requirements under M.G.L.c.71,§ 370.

#### A. Annual Staff Training

Abington Public Schools has committed to train faculty representatives through the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC) at Bridgewater State University. This training is approved by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and is grounded in the research and best practices of Bullying Prevention and Intervention. Through this “Train-the-Trainer” Model, faculty representatives will serve as liaisons to all staff.

#### B. Ongoing Professional Development

The bullying prevention and intervention policy includes ongoing, research-based professional development to build the skills of all members of school staff, including but not limited to educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity and paraprofessionals, to prevent, identify and respond to bullying. The content of such professional development includes:

1. Developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents;
2. Developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
3. Information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among the aggressor, the target, and any witnesses to the bullying;
4. Research findings on bullying;
5. Information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and
6. Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.

#### C. Written Notice to Staff

All Abington Public Schools’ employees will be provided a copy of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy. It will also be available as an electronic document on the Abington Public Schools’ Website at [www.abingtonps.org](http://www.abingtonps.org).

#### D. Parents and Guardians

Parents and Guardians will be informed about the bullying prevention and intervention curricula used by the school district or school including:

1. How parents and guardians can reinforce the curricula at home and support the school or district policy;
2. Dynamics of bullying; and
3. Online safety and cyberbullying.

Parents and guardians will also be notified in writing each year about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy, in the language(s) most prevalent among the parents or guardians. School- or district-specific approaches to collaboration should take into account age, climate, socio-economic factors, linguistic, and cultural make-up of students and the parents.

The school or district will offer education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by the district or school. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the PTO, School Councils, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, or similar organizations.

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 Policy 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 Abington Public Schools will post the Policy and related information on its website at [www.abingtonps.org](http://www.abingtonps.org).

#### **VII. Problem Resolution System**

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

### **HAZING**

Hazing is prohibited. Any student who feels s/he is being hazed should report such information immediately to a staff member. Hazing is in violation of *Massachusetts General Laws*, Chapter 269, Sections 17-19. Anyone who is aware of hazing and/or is at the scene where hazing takes place is required to report the offense to a school official. Any student who is involved in hazing will be subject to suspension. In all cases relating to hazing, students will receive procedural due process.

### **AUDIO-VIDEO RECORDING**

The Abington Public Schools have a responsibility to maintain discipline and protect the safety, security, and welfare of our students and staff, while at the same time safeguarding District facilities, vehicles, and equipment.

As part of fulfilling this responsibility, the Abington School Committee authorizes the use of audio-video/digital surveillance cameras in school building common areas, on and around school grounds and on vehicles under the control of the District which are transporting students. Digital or video recorder placements shall be based on the presumption and belief that students and staff have no reasonable expectation of privacy in public areas that occur in plain view of other students, staff, or bystanders.

Signs shall be posted, to notify students, staff, and visitors that video or digital cameras may be in use. Parents and students shall also be notified through the student handbook and/or by other means that cameras may be in use. Students and others will be held responsible for any violations of school rules, District Policies and Procedures, or law recorded by the cameras.

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

Abington Public Schools has, on occasion, the need to use photographs or videotape of various school activities and classes. At times, the District has photographs in local newspapers and provides video programming designed for instructional and informational purposes which appears on cable or broadcast stations. Parents/Guardians indicate their consent by signing the media release line on the Student Information Form sent home at the beginning of the year. Parents/Guardians will continue to be notified when special needs students are involved.

## **PRESS AND MEDIA GUIDELINES**

1. Consistent with this policy, the School Committee and faculty encourage members of the press and media to visit the schools.
2. All guests and visitors, including members of the press and media, must register in the school office. Identification badges are required.
3. The principal will cooperate with and assist members of the press and media who wish to interview or photograph students or staff. In order not to interfere with the education of students:
  - The principal may make available a room or space where students and/or staff who wish to talk with reporters may do so; and
  - The principal may require reasonable lead-time to make arrangements.
4. We require that members of the press or media identify themselves as such to students and/or staff, who are free to respond, or not respond, as they choose. Parental permission must be given if student pictures are to be used for publication or if quotations are attributed to students who are minors.

## **COMPUTER, NETWORK, INTERNET AND E-MAIL AND OTHER FORMS OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR STUDENTS OF THE ABINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

The Internet is a vast, global network linking computers at universities, schools, science labs, and other sites. Through the Internet, one can communicate with people all over the world through a number of discussion forums, as well as through electronic mail. In addition, many files of educational value are available for downloading. Because of its enormous size, the Internet's potential is without boundaries. It is possible to speak with prominent scientists, world leaders, and close friends. With such great potential for education also comes the potential for abuse. It is the purpose of the guidelines to make sure that all who use Abington Public Schools' Technology Network, which includes Internet access and electronic mail capability, use this resource in an appropriate manner.

Abington Public Schools' Technology Network, which includes Internet access, electronic mail capability, voice mail, telephones, fax machines, etc., exists solely for educational purposes, which are defined as classroom activities, career and professional development, and high quality self-discovery activities of an educational nature. Although limited personal use of these systems is authorized, provided it does not interfere with any student's work or the business of Abington public Schools, users acknowledge they have no expectation of privacy in connection with the use of these systems or with the transmission, receipt, or storage of information on these systems. Abington Public Schools' Technology Network is not to be considered a resource intended for use as a public forum or for any purpose that is not directly related to the delivery of educational services.

Members of Abington Public Schools' community are responsible for good behavior on the school technology network, just as they are in a classroom or school hallway. Communications on the network may reach larger audiences than face-to-face conversations or telephone discussions. General school rules for behavior, as stated in student handbooks and communications apply. Access to network services will be provided to those who act in a considerate and responsible manner. Discipline will be imposed pursuant to the student disciplinary code, as set forth in the school's student handbook.

Abington Public Schools believes that the benefits to students from access to information resources and opportunity for collaboration available through the Internet exceed the potential disadvantages. However, the parents/guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources. Parents/guardians should be aware that their child's level of access to the Internet will depend upon that child's grade level. The following is a description of the manner in which Abington Public Schools intends to incorporate network use and Internet access in the schools:

- a. Grades Kindergarten through Two: During school time, teachers of students at these grade levels will guide them toward appropriate materials. Internet access will be limited to teacher-directed and teacher-demonstrated use.
- b. Grades Three through Eight: Students at these grade levels may have the opportunity to conduct research via the Internet in the classroom, only during directly supervised instruction.
- c. Grades Nine through Twelve: Students at these grade levels may be given individual access passwords and may have the opportunity to access the Internet and conduct independent research on the Internet both during classroom instruction and outside classroom instruction.

The Abington Public Schools will make every reasonable effort to minimize the risk that users will encounter objectionable material on the Internet. However, there is no absolute guarantee that this will not happen. Through the use of suitable technological safeguards, education, supervision, and responsible use, Abington Public Schools believes the Internet can be used safely and effectively.

In order for a member of Abington Public Schools' community to use the computer network, s/he must read the following rules and sign the version of the User Contract appropriate to the user's grade level. Students in grades Kindergarten through Two are not required to sign the User Contract because they will not be accessing the Internet or using e-mail individually. For users under the age of 18, the User Contract must be signed by a parent/guardian.

The Abington Public Schools uses a filter to restrict minors' access to materials that might be harmful to them. The employment of this filter and this Acceptable Use Policy ensure that Abington Public Schools meets the requirements of the Children's Internet Protection Act.

#### RULES:

1. **NETWORK ACCESS IS A PRIVILEGE, NOT A RIGHT.** The use of the network must be consistent with, and directly related to, the educational objectives of Abington Public Schools. A violation of the terms of this Acceptable Use Policy may result in suspension or termination of network access privileges (other than directly supervised access during classroom instruction), may result in other disciplinary action consistent with the disciplinary policies of Abington Public Schools, and could result in criminal prosecution, if applicable. Abington Public Schools will cooperate fully with law enforcement officials in any investigation relating to misuse of Abington Public Schools' Technology Network.
2. Violation of this Acceptable Use Policy includes, but is not limited to, the following conduct:
  - a. communicating or generating material that causes a person to fear for her/his own safety or the safety of others; or is designed to insult a person; or will likely injure a person's reputation by exposing her/him to hatred, contempt, or ridicule (commonly referred to as cyber-bullying);
  - b. intentionally placing unlawful or inappropriate information on a system;

- c. using profane, vulgar, threatening, defamatory, abusive, discriminatory, harassing, or otherwise objectionable or criminal language in a public or private message;
  - d. sending messages or posting information that would likely result in the loss of a recipient's work or system;
  - e. sending "chain letters" or "broadcast messages" to lists or individuals; subscribing to "list serves" or "newsgroups" without prior permission; or using the Internet access for any other personal use, without prior permission;
  - f. participating in other types of use which could cause congestion of the network or interfere with the work of others;
  - g. using the network in a manner that would violate any U.S. or state law (including, but not limited to, copyrighted material, threatening material, and spreading of computer viruses);
  - h. accessing or transmitting materials that are obscene, sexually explicit, or without redeeming educational value;
  - i. accessing any prohibited sites on the Internet;
  - j. revealing one's own personal address or telephone number without authorization;
  - k. revealing one's password to anyone else, using anyone else's password, or pretending to be someone else when sending information over the computer network;
  - l. attempting to gain unauthorized access to system programs or computer equipment, (including attempts to override, or to encourage others to override, any firewalls established on the network);
  - m. attempting to harm, modify, or destroy data of another user;
  - n. exhibiting any other action whatsoever which would in any way subject the user or Abington Public Schools to any civil or criminal action;
  - o. discussing highly sensitive or confidential school department information in e-mail communications:
  - p. using Abington Public Schools' Technology Network to buy, sell, or advertise anything;
  - q. accessing unauthorized discussion groups or "chat rooms";
  - r. using Abington Public Schools' Technology Network for gambling;
  - s. using Abington Public Schools' Technology Network for political campaigning purposes (including attempts to influence ballot questions or to promote or oppose a candidate for public office);
  - t. failing to log-off the Technology Network at the conclusion of a work session or at the request of the system administrator;
  - u. using the Technology Network for recreational purposes or activities relating to personal hobbies; and
  - v. behavior or use that is in violation with any other Abington Public Schools' policies or handbooks.
3. The Abington Public Schools assumes no responsibility for:
- a. any unauthorized charges or fees (including telephone charges, long distance charges, per minute surcharges, and/or equipment or line costs);
  - b. any financial obligations arising from unauthorized use of the system for the purchase of products or services;
  - c. any cost, liability, or damages caused by a user's violation of these guidelines; and
  - d. any information or materials that are transferred through the network.
4. The Abington Public Schools makes no guarantee, implied or otherwise, regarding the reliability of the data connection. Abington Public Schools shall not be liable for any loss or corruption of data resulting while using the network.

5. All messages and information created, sent, or retrieved on the network are the property of the Abington Public Schools. Electronic mail messages and other use of electronic resources by students and staff are also the property of Abington Public Schools and should not be considered confidential. While Abington Public Schools does not plan to review cache files or back-up files on a regular basis, it reserves the right to access and monitor all messages and files on the computer system as it deems necessary and appropriate in the ordinary course of its business for purposes including, but not limited to, ensuring proper use of resources and conducting routine network maintenance. Where appropriate, communications including text and images may be disclosed to law enforcement or other third parties without prior consent of the sender or receiver. Also, the user understands that use of Abington Public Schools' technology will not use code, access a file, or retrieve any stored communications on any of the systems unless authorized by Abington Public Schools.
6. The Abington Public Schools strongly condemns the illegal distribution (otherwise known as pirating) of software. Any users caught transferring such files through the network, and any whose accounts are found to contain such illegal files, shall immediately have their accounts permanently revoked. In such event, the user's network access will be limited to directly supervised use during classroom instruction. In addition, all users should be aware that software piracy is a federal offense and is punishable by a fine or imprisonment.
7. Because of size, many kinds of materials eventually find their way to the network. If a user finds materials that are inappropriate while using Abington Public Schools' Technology Network, s/he shall refrain from downloading this material and shall not identify or share this material. It should be understood that the transfer of certain kinds of materials is illegal and punishable by fine or imprisonment.
8. Should a user, while using the Abington Public Schools' Technology Network, encounter any material that s/he feels may constitute a threat against the safety of fellow students, staff members or the property of Abington Public Schools, that user is obligated to report her/his discovery of such material to a teacher or to her/his principal.

The Abington Public Schools' Administration reserves the right to amend this policy at any time without prior notice. Users will be notified in writing of any amendments to this policy.

### **Disclaimer of Liability**

Abington Public Schools makes no warranties of any kind for the service they provide. Abington Public Schools will not be responsible for any damages you may suffer. Use of any information and software obtained through the Internet is at your own risk. Abington Public Schools specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services. In addition, it cannot guarantee the efficacy of any firewall or "blocking" software that it might use.

## **ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT/TOYS**

Electronic devices used for personal communications, such as cell phones, can disrupt normal school activities and can distract both students and teachers. Such devices must be powered off and put away during the school day. Other electronic devices, such as tablets and e-readers, may be used for academic purposes at the discretion of the teacher and/or building administrator. **The school cannot be held responsible for the disappearance of or damage to electronic equipment or any other non-school related personal items brought to school.**

## **OBSERVATIONS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

1. Parents' request to observe their child(ren), current program, or a potential placement must be made at least five days in advance with the Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services or designee and/or Principal.
2. The Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services or designee shall contact the parent(s) for initial scheduling conversation within five (5) days of receipt of the parents' request.
3. When a parent requests an observation of a special needs student or program, the Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services or designee will seek approval from the Director of Special Education and the building principal before it is processed. Such approval may only be withheld for those reasons outlined within law and DESE regulation.
4. The Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services or designee and/or Principal will work with the classroom teacher and the observer to set up the specifics of the observation (including, but not limited to, scheduling and placement of the observer in the classroom).
5. The number, frequency, and duration of observation periods will be determined on an individual student basis in accordance with law and regulation. The start and end time of observation periods and a schedule of observation periods will be stated in advance. In order to minimize classroom or student disruption, the length of individual observation periods may be limited.
6. If the observer is not the parent, the parent must sign a release for the individual to observe.
7. The number of observers at any one time may be limited.
8. The observer will be informed that he/she is not to interfere with the educational environment of the classroom. If his/her presence presents a problem, he/she will be asked to leave. This notice is particularly important, since the presence of parents can influence both the performance of their child(ren) and those of others.
9. The observer will be asked to submit his/her report of the observation in advance of any follow-up TEAM meeting.
10. The observer will be informed that he/she is there to evaluate the appropriateness of a specific educational program to meet the needs of an individual child. He/she is not there to evaluate a teacher's ability to perform his or her contractual job duties.
11. The observer will be instructed regarding the disclosure of confidential or personally identifiable information relating to other children. Staff must be mindful of removing materials which may be part of students' records from plain view. In the event that removal is not possible the observer may be asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement.
12. A school administrator, or designee, also will observe at the same time and take notes as to what is observed, paying particular attention to note anything that is non-typical concerning the period. This observation summary will be placed in the student's file and provided to the parent(s) prior to any follow-up TEAM meeting.

## **TELEPHONE USE**

Students will be permitted to use the telephone in the office only in case of an emergency. No calls will be allowed for forgotten books, assignments, lunch, lunch money, instruments, etc.

## **VISITORS/SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS**

The staff and administration of Abington Public Schools welcome parents/guardians to play an active role in the life of the schools. Every effort is made to provide an atmosphere in the schools in which parents/guardians and other visitors feel welcome. Security measures require that all visitors report to the office to sign-in. Visitors will be asked for positive photo identification. Knowing who is in the building is important primarily for safety reasons, but disruption of classrooms and of the learning process also becomes a factor when visitors are seen walking the corridors or entering classrooms unannounced. Video surveillance cameras may be in use. Anyone wishing to volunteer in a classroom, on field trips, or at PTO events **MUST** have a current CORI on file with the Abington Public Schools. Each school communicates its volunteer guidelines.

## **TOBACCO USE ON SCHOOL GROUNDS**

The Smoke-Free Workplace Law prohibits smoking in all enclosed workplaces, including public and private schools. In addition, Massachusetts requires that all public schools through high school prohibit smoking on school grounds, on school buses, and at school sponsored events. The law is commonly referred to as the "Education Reform Act" (*MG.L. ch. 270, §22(b)(2); MGL c. 71, §§2A, 37H; c. 90, §7B(10)*).

## **ANIMALS IN SCHOOL**

No animal shall be brought to school without prior permission of the building Principal. School principals, in consultation with the Health Services Providers in each building, shall utilize the Massachusetts Department of Public Health publication, "Animals in the Classroom: Recommendations for Schools," and review student health records to determine which animals may be allowed in the school building. The decision of the Principal shall be final.

### **Educational Program**

Use of animals to achieve specific curriculum objectives may be allowed by the building Principal provided student health and safety are not jeopardized and the individual requesting that the animal be brought to school is responsible for adhering to the "Animals in the Classroom: Recommendations for Schools" and any other conditions established by the Principal to protect the health and well-being of students.

### **Service Animals (Guide or Assistance Dogs)**

The Abington Public School District's School Committee does not permit discrimination against individuals with disabilities, including those who require the assistance of a service animal. The District will comply with Massachusetts law concerning the rights of persons with guide or assistance dogs and with federal law and will permit such animals on school premises and on school transportation. If, in the opinion of the school Principal or authorized designee, any service animal is not in the control of its handler, or if it is not housebroken, the service animal may be excluded from the school or program. The service animal can also be excluded if it presents a direct and immediate threat to others in the school.

### **Requests**

**Student requests** for service animal accommodations, including requests to have a service animal accompany a student in classrooms are determined by the section 504 Team or the special education Team meeting process. **Employee requests** for disability accommodations, including requests to have a service animal at work, are handled through the appropriate disability accommodation policy and procedures of the ADA act and Abington Public School District policy.

Service animals accompanying individuals with disabilities are welcome in all areas of the schools that are open to the public (except in situations noted in the full policy). Specific questions related to the use of service animals on the Abington Public School District properties by visitors should be directed to the ADA Coordinator or the Administrator of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services.

**INCIDENTAL EXPENSES**

During the course of the school year, there are several expenses for items and activities which are optional. School pictures of students are taken, but their purchase is voluntary.



# ACADEMICS

## FIELD TRIPS

### **Background**

The Abington School Committee (School Committee) recognizes that first-hand experiences provided by field trips and school-sponsored trips (field trips) are an extension of the classroom experience that expand and reinforce concepts learned in the classroom and can provide new and unique experiences not available in the classroom setting. As it is widely acknowledged that not all children learn in the same way, field trips allow students the opportunity to expand their learning in ways different from those typically available in the classroom.

### **Purpose and Scope**

A field trip is student travel away from school premises that is approved by the school district through established procedures for the purpose of curriculum-related study, co-curricular activities, or interscholastic programs. The various types of field trips are described in the Field Trip Policy.

In the planning of field trips, the health and safety of the students and the compliance with the requirements of state laws and regulations is paramount. Matters to be considered are spelled out in the Field Trip Policy. The school principal or designee is responsible for ensuring that a teacher(s), advisor(s), or other school staff member(s) proposing a field trip plans, implements, and assesses the trip within the criteria listed in the policy.

### **Transportation**

Use of leased vans and privately owned vehicles for field trips is prohibited, with the exception of the Abington Public Schools' owned van, except in the case of a bona fide emergency. Nothing in this field trip policy should be construed to prohibit field trips where students travel by means of walking.

### **Approval**

Approval for all trips requiring School Committee approval must be sought no less than four (4) weeks prior to the scheduled trip departure date. The approval process for a trip must be completed prior to promoting, advertising, or making any preparations for the trip, including, but not limited to, taking deposits from students, engaging students in fundraising activities or making contractual arrangements. All field trips must be approved in writing by the appropriate authority as specified in the policy.

### **Cancellation**

The Superintendent of Schools has the authority to cancel any field trip until the time of departure for any reason. In such event, school officials will make a reasonable effort to obtain a refund of monies paid by students and parents. However, such refunds are not guaranteed.

### **Non-School Sponsored Trips**

Teachers, advisors and other school staff sometimes privately conduct trips and events involving the participation of Abington Public School students. The School Committee neither sanctions nor prohibits such activities, nor assumes any responsibility for them. Teachers, advisors and other school staff are prohibited from soliciting students for privately run trips through the school system. Teachers, advisors and other school staff are expected to clearly state that such trips are not school-sponsored and that the Abington School Committee and the Abington Public Schools do not sanction the trip or assume any responsibility.

# **HOMEWORK**

Homework is any assigned activity done outside school, which relates to any phase of learning. It can be enrichment, a refinement, or a reinforcement of learning activities. It is hoped that the guidelines, which follow, will assist teachers assigning homework and aid parents/guardians in understanding homework assignments.

## **Purpose of Homework**

- to supplement and reinforce school learning by providing further practice and application
- to stimulate initiative, independence, responsibility, and self-direction
- to enrich the student's school experiences
- to foster the growth of permanent lifetime interests in learning
- to teach ability to budget time and organize one's materials
- to provide opportunities to use skills and knowledge learned in school in creative ways outside school

## **Role of the Teacher**

- to design homework to accomplish a specific purpose clearly related to the curriculum for the grade level
- to assign the homework, carefully making sure the assignment is clear
- to assess homework consistently and provide feedback to students about their success on homework
- to assist students in learning how to study
- to communicate with students and parents/guardians when problems concerning homework arise
- to vary types of assignments so as to hold the students' interest and to meet different needs
- to insist on high standards of work done on home assignments, especially in terms of neatness and accuracy
- to individualize homework assignments to the extent possible. (Some students may be able to do more and some less within the established time guidelines)
- to post homework assignments so they can be clearly visible and available to students during the day
- to establish guidelines for students to follow in completing long term assignments

## **Role of the Student**

- to be responsible for the completion and return of assignments on the due date
- to confer with parents/guardians and/or teachers if assignments are unclear or too difficult

## **Role of Parents/Guardians**

- to establish the importance of homework and to encourage the child to accept responsibility for completing home assignments
- to assist the child when the teacher and parent have conferred and agreed that this assistance would be helpful
- to notify the teacher if an unforeseen occurrence prevents the child from completing an assignment. (An unforeseen occurrence may include a variety of circumstances, such as trauma or illness.)
- to insist on high standards of work on home assignments by providing a quiet and distraction-free location and by eliminating television, radio, telephone, and other stimuli.
- to supervise the homework but allow students to complete the assignments independently
- to monitor the time utilized by their children to complete homework assignment (Too little or too much time spent on homework on a regular basis – guidelines below – should be a cause of concern and should be communicated to the teacher. )

- to assign their own reading, writing or academic task when their children do not bring home a school assignment (This will promote the habit of doing homework on a regular basis whether or not the child brings a homework assignment from school.)

### **Homework Guidelines**

<b><u>Kindergarten</u></b>	Up to 10 minutes, up to 4 times per week, at the discretion of the teacher
<b><u>Grade 1</u></b>	Up to 10 to 20 minutes, up to 4 times per week, at the discretion of the teacher
<b><u>Grade 2</u></b>	Up to 20 to 30 minutes, up to 4 times per week, at the discretion of the teacher
<b><u>Grade 3</u></b>	Up to 30 minutes, 4 times per week
<b><u>Grade 4</u></b>	Up to 40 minutes, 4 times per week

Homework at Grades K-4 should not normally be given during weekends, holidays, or vacations except for occasional long-term assignments or make-up due to absence. Long-term assignments are those that are due to be passed in some time in the future. A book report, for example, which was assigned in September and due to be passed in October 15<sup>th</sup>, is considered a long-term assignment. Long-term assignments may involve a number of steps, so in the event the entire assignment has not been completed, credit may be given for the portion of the assignment which was submitted.

## **PROMOTION AND RETENTION**

The School Committee is dedicated to the best total and continuous development of each student enrolled. The professional staff is expected to place students at the grade level best suited to them academically, socially, and emotionally.

In evaluating student achievement, each teacher will make use of all available information, including results of teacher-made tests and other measures of skill and content mastery, standardized test results, and teacher observation of student performance. The Principal will direct and aid teachers in their evaluations and review grade assignments in order to ensure uniformity of evaluation standards.

Students will normally progress annually from grade to grade. Exceptions may be made when, in the judgment of the professional staff, such exceptions are in the best educational interest of the students involved. Exceptions will only be made after prior notification and explanation to each student's parents/guardians, but the final decision will rest with the building Principal.

### **Grade Placement of Students**

Many factors are considered in student placement such as the social, emotional, and academic well-being of the student. Input from parents/guardians will become a part of the placement process. Parents/ Guardians will receive a letter in the spring which will provide information about their role in the placement process. Placement decisions for each child are determined by a team of teachers with additional input from specialists. Due to fluctuation in class composition, it may become necessary for the principal to adjust class placement. It is the School Committee's policy to balance class sizes to the extent possible.

Class placements into Grades K-4 will be mailed from each school one week prior to the opening of the new school year.

## **STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES**

Learning needs to be valued as an ongoing process that requires the daily interaction of students with their peers and teachers. Student absences do affect the learning process. While a student may make-up the paperwork missed, s/he can never duplicate the learning experiences lost by that day's absence. Students are expected to be in school every day. **Parents must notify the school if the child is to be absent, tardy, or dismissed. In addition, upon the child's return to school, a written note must be submitted for each absence stating the date and reason for the absence.**

When children are absent from school for the purpose of a family vacation, their learning is interrupted and their progress may be affected. Therefore, we strongly encourage families to plan vacations during the regular school vacation schedule. It is our practice not to give homework or in-class assignments in advance to students who are on vacation when school is in session. Work missed during such absences must be made up within a week after a child returns to school. This may require missing recess or finishing work at home in addition to regularly assigned homework.

### **Pupil Absence Notification**

Parents/Guardians will be notified when a student has:

- \* Missed 2 or more periods unexcused over at least five days in a school year, or
- \* Missed five or more school days unexcused in a school year

When students have met these criteria the Principal or Assistant Principal may request a meeting with the student's parent or guardian to develop an action plan for student attendance.

Absences will be categorized as either excused or unexcused according to the following definitions:

### **Excused:**

1. Absences with parental note for the following reasons:
  - a. Student illness (up to 9 per school year)
  - b. Death in family
  - c. Observance of religious holidays
  - d. Appearance in court
  - e. Temporary relocation due to unforeseeable circumstances; e.g., fire, flood, hospitalization of parent, etc.
  - f. Necessary business which cannot be reasonably transacted when school is not in session
2. Medically documented absences
3. Special circumstances as approved by the building principal and/or assistant principal

### **Unexcused:**

1. All absences that do not meet the criteria for excused

### **Tardiness:**

Tardiness is highly disruptive. Except in extenuating circumstances, students are expected to be on time for school. A student who is tardy must be signed into the school office by a parent/guardian.

### **Dismissal:**

Dismissals are highly disruptive and should be limited to extenuating circumstances. Students being dismissed must have a written notification submitted to the office. The time and reason for the dismissal **must** be included with the name of the person with whom the child will be dismissed. If a student is dismissed prior to completing three school hours, the student will be marked absent for the day.

Absences, tardiness and dismissals will be carefully monitored by the principal and/or designee. Chronic unexcused absences, tardiness and/or dismissals may result in the following actions being taken:

1. Verbal contact with parent/guardian
2. Letter mailed home and placed in student's file
3. 51A Report of Suspected Abuse or Neglect filed with Department of Children and Families
4. Court action instituted
- 5.

### **Standardized Testing**

The following standardized tests may be administered to elementary students; watch for testing dates throughout the year:

#### **District Testing Plan**

##### **Grades K-2**

- Early Screening Inventory (K)
- Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)
  - ACCESS (Limited English Proficient Students)

##### **Grades 3-4**

- Annual MCAS Schedule: ELA Reading Comprehension; Mathematics;
  - ACCESS (Limited English proficient Students)
- MCAS Alternate Assessment (Students with Significant Disabilities)
  - Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)

Individual assessments by specialists will be performed, as needed, throughout the year, with prior permission of parents/guardians. All test information is available to parents/guardians and may be requested in writing to the principal.

## **STUDENT PROGRESS REPORT POLICY**

### **Reporting Student Progress**

A student's progress and achievement is reported to the parents/guardians through the use of formal and informal conferences as well as through written reports. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to contact the schools as often as they deem necessary. Simply call the school and leave a message for the teacher or support person to call you, indicating which times would be best. This method is preferable to visiting the school spontaneously, since the teacher may have made prior plans for use of that time.

### **Mid-Term Reports**

Mid-Term Reports are to be sent at the mid-point of each marking period to keep parents/guardians informed of their child's general progress. These reports are sent home to be signed and returned to the school.

### **Report Cards**

A student report card regarding a student's school performance is given to parents/guardians of students in Grades 1-4 at the end of each marking period. Kindergarten report cards are sent home twice during the school year.

### **Procedures Utilized for Students Experiencing Difficulties**

When a student is identified by a teacher or a parent/guardian as experiencing difficulty, all efforts are made to meet the student's needs within the regular education program. The principal has established Instructional Support Teams (IST) and Student Support Teams (SST) to ensure that these efforts are made. A referral to the IST or SST is made by the classroom teacher. If parents/guardians have concerns about their daughter's/son's school progress, they can request that the teacher makes a referral to the appropriate team.

IST and SST meet on a regular basis. The specific goals are targeted toward a positive change in the student's performance.

Efforts that are made include the following:

- Use of optional teaching strategies, teaching environments, and/or materials
- Use of support services, consultative services, and involvement of the faculty.

### **Referral to Special Education**

Students are referred for an evaluation for Special Education, when appropriate. A student may be referred by any of the following to the Administrator of Special Education for an evaluation: A parent/guardian, school official (including a teacher), judicial officer, social worker, family physician, or student. There are a number of determining factors to ensure that students are referred to the Administrator of Special Education. A determination of whether to pursue pre-referral actions (such as IST or SST) or to refer for an evaluation is made by the principal. The parents/guardians are notified promptly and in writing if a condition below exists, if a referral is being made, and of their right to make such a referral:

- Any student who at mid-year presents a substantial risk of non-promotion (failing in two or more non-elective subjects).
- Any student who fails to be promoted at the end of the year.
- Any student who has been suspended for more than 5 school days in any quarter or excluded from school.
- Any student who has been absent without medical excuse more than 20 school days in any trimester.

# CODE OF CONDUCT

## **INTRODUCTION**

A student behavior code is an essential component in any school. Students, parents/guardians, and the professional staff need to know what to expect with regard to acceptable student behavior and appropriate student discipline. As we all know, student discipline is necessary in the process of education. It is the essential condition that allows a student to make orderly progress toward constructive learning. The controlling and disciplining of a student should have a constructive effect upon that student and, hopefully produce positive results. The following guidelines are suggested in assisting parents/guardians and teachers regarding the development and maintenance of appropriate and acceptable student behavior:

1. Define and explain the appropriate behavior for the student.
2. Define the limits of student behavior, and be sure the student understands them.
3. Discuss and explain a student's inappropriate behavior with her/him privately, whenever possible.
4. Be positive, constructive, fair and above all, consistent in dealing with the student.
5. Maintain the dignity of the student.

## **STUDENT BEHAVIOR CODE**

Each student will be expected to display appropriate behavior in school at all times. Students have the responsibility to conduct themselves in a way that demonstrates a respect for all individuals, their rights, and their property. This behavior is expected at school events, school-sponsored trips, walking to and from school, and those times when school buses or other school-provided transportation is used. Video surveillance cameras may be in use in and around school buildings.

## **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

If a student has poor behavior, s/he should be reported to the school principal who will confer with the student and parents/guardians, if necessary. The school principal, or her/his designee, will have the option of taking any of the following courses of action after a hearing has been provided for the student:

1. Loss of recess privileges
2. Writing a note of apology to the offended party
3. Writing a letter of explanation to her/his parents/guardians
4. Loss of participation in special school activities, such as field trips, programs, and/or after-school activities, etc., only with the principal's permission
5. Detention after school for twenty-five minutes, after notifying parents/guardians
6. Infractions of the discipline code reflected on the report card
7. School suspension according to the procedures established by the Abington School Committee.

## **PLAYGROUND RULES**

1. Students cannot participate in any activity that will be dangerous to themselves or to others.
2. No roller skates of any kind, skateboards, hard balls, bats, or hockey sticks, are allowed on the playground.
3. Audio devices are not allowed in school or on the playground.
4. Unless excused by teacher, nurse, or principal, every child is to participate in recess periods and to remain outside for the entire recess period.
5. No child may re-enter the building without permission from an adult on duty.

6. Children must remain within the play area at all times.
7. Fighting for any reason is not allowed.
8. Any activity, which may be dangerous to others, is not allowed (throwing stones, snowballs, sticks, wood chips, tackling, punching, etc.).
9. Children are expected to be courteous and to follow the direction of staff members on duty.
10. Gum chewing is not allowed on school property, unless specific permission is granted by the teacher and/or building administrator.

**Rules for using the swings:**

1. One child to a swing
2. No standing on or jumping off a swing
3. Allow other children to use the swing if they are waiting to do so
4. All students waiting to ride a swing must stand away from the arc of the swing in action

**Rules for using the slides:**

1. One person on the slide at a time
2. No fooling, pushing or shoving on any part of the slide
3. No climbing or running up the slide
4. No jumping off the slide

**CAFETERIA RULES**

All students are escorted to the cafeteria by their classroom teacher or designee. All eating of meals is to be done in the cafeteria and nowhere else, unless otherwise instructed by a building administrator. While in the cafeteria, students are expected to use appropriate manners when addressing each other, as well as all adults who have a responsibility in this facility at lunchtime. Only quiet talk will be permitted in the cafeteria. Fooling of any kind, loud boisterous behavior, or any inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated. Students who cannot conduct themselves accordingly may lose cafeteria privileges or be otherwise disciplined.

**CORRIDOR PASSING**

For the safety and orderliness of our students, staff will ensure, when students are entering or leaving the building, they remain in their respective lines with an appropriate level of talking. Students should not exceed a walking pace. Students will be instructed as to the procedure to be followed. Staff will be at their classroom entrance at all times when children are entering classrooms or other instructional areas.

**LANGUAGE/SOCIAL CONDUCT**

Appropriate language and social conduct are always the standard. Any verbal abuse, name-calling, or swearing is not accepted at any time.

**UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR WHICH MERITS CORRECTIVE ACTION**

**A. Categories**

1. Violence
2. Vandalism
3. Disruption
4. Disrespect

**B. Unacceptable Behavior**

1. Fighting and rough playing
2. Possessing or using a weapon at school, including but not limited to a toy
3. Using an object as a means of physical abuse



4. Vandalizing or stealing another's property at school or en route to and from school
5. Stealing or damaging school property
6. Verbally or physically abusing, insulting, or threatening any individual
7. Cursing, swearing, making obscene gestures or remarks
8. Disrupting the teaching/learning process
9. Cheating
10. Entering or leaving the building or classroom without permission (except in a situation of emergency or threatening emergency)
11. Being in unauthorized areas
12. Acting in a way that endangers the health or safety of students or other members of the school community
13. Eating in unauthorized areas
14. Chewing gum without permission
15. Continuing to violate any school rules
16. Using, possessing, or distributing illegal drugs or controlled substances
17. Smoking (INCLUDING E-CIGARETTES)

Violations of these rules will result in a corrective action by the teacher and/or principal.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES RELATED TO STUDENT DRUG/ALCOHOL INVOLVEMENT**

The need for a drug/alcohol policy in Abington Public Schools is an obvious one. In essence, the School Committee is charged with the responsibility of providing guidelines for student behavior under Massachusetts General Law. Once defined, the school system must guarantee the policies involved are promulgated to all segments of the community, i.e., students, parents/guardians, staff, and administrators; and are based on the premise that there is a proper balance between the concern for the individual child and the overall welfare of the general school population.

Most importantly, there is the necessity for an appropriate response to the sensitive matter of drug/alcohol use and abuse by students. It is the turmoil of today's society which breeds such a condition, and it must be offset by a realistic and honest approach by school officials which will afford hope and facilitate programming to those students most in need.

While it is incumbent for school officials to cooperate with local and state law enforcement authorities in such matters, it is equally important that the school system is prepared to develop an approach which should be preventative in nature. Certainly, the school system should encourage such activities as

- in-service education for the professional staff;
- the establishment of a positive health education curriculum which would include an understanding of all aspects of the drug/alcohol problem;
- the encouragement of the use of related referral service within the community;
- the development of a student's self-concept, concentrating on the necessity of self-discipline to attain physical and mental well-being; and
- the encouragement of students to initiate requests for assistance.

## **STUDENT DISCIPLINE**

The School Committee believes that all students deserve every opportunity to achieve academic success in a safe, secure learning environment. Good citizenship in schools is based on respect and consideration for the rights of others. Students will be expected to conduct themselves in a way that the rights and privileges of others are not violated. They will be required to respect constituted authority, to conform to school rules and to those provisions of law that apply to their conduct.

Each Principal shall include prohibited actions in the student handbook or other publication to be made available to students and parents.

Principals and staff shall not use academic punishment of any form as a consequence to inappropriate behaviors/actions by students.

The Principal may, as a disciplinary measure, remove a student from privileges, such as extracurricular activities and attendance at school-sponsored events, based on the student's misconduct. Such a removal is not subject to the remainder of this policy, law, or regulation.

The Superintendent shall provide each Principal with a copy of the regulations promulgated by DESE and shall have each Principal sign a document acknowledging receipt thereof, which shall be placed in their personnel file.

### **Suspension**

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

#### **Notice of Suspension:**

Except for emergency removal or an in-school suspension of less than 10 days, a Principal must provide the student and the parent oral and written notice, and provide the student an opportunity for a hearing and the parent an opportunity to participate in such hearing before imposing suspension as a consequence for misconduct. The Principal shall provide both oral and written notice to student and parent in English and in the primary language of the home if other than English. The notice shall include the rights enumerated in law and regulation. To conduct a hearing without a parent present, the Principal must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent.

#### **Emergency Removal**

A Principal may remove a student from school temporarily when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the Principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption.

The Principal shall immediately notify the Superintendent in writing of the removal including a description of the danger presented by the student.

The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days following the day of the emergency removal, during which time the Principal shall: Make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student's parent of the emergency removal, the reason for the need for emergency removal, and the other matters required in the notice as referenced in the applicable regulation; Provide written notice to the student and parent as required above; Provide the student an opportunity for a hearing with the Principal that complies with

applicable regulations, and the parent 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; Render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day, which meets the requirements of applicable law and regulation.

A Principal shall also ensure adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation prior to removal.

### **In School Suspension – not more than 10 days consecutively or cumulatively**

The Principal may use in-school suspension as an alternative to short-term suspension for disciplinary offenses.

The Principal may impose an in-school suspension for a disciplinary offense under this provision, provided that the Principal follows the process set forth in regulation and the student has the opportunity to make academic progress as required by law and regulation.

### **Principal's Hearing – Short Term Suspension of up to 10 days**

The hearing with the Principal shall be 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 committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequences for the infraction.

At a minimum, the Principal shall discuss the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information.

The student also shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the Principal should consider in determining whether other remedies and consequences may be appropriate as set forth in law and regulation.

The Principal shall provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the Principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.

The Principal shall, based on the available information, including mitigating circumstances, determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, what remedy or consequence will be imposed.

The Principal shall notify the student and parent of the determination and the reasons for it, and, if the student is suspended, the type and duration of suspension and the opportunity to make up assignments and such other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal, as required by law and regulation. The determination shall be in writing and may be in the form of an update to the original written notice.

If the student is in a public preschool program or in grades K through 3, the Principal shall send a copy of the written determination to the Superintendent and explain the reasons for imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the short-term suspension takes effect.

### **Principal's Hearing – Long Term Suspension of more than 10 days but less than 90 days (consecutive or cumulative)**

The hearing with the Principal shall be 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 committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequences for the infraction.

At a minimum, in addition to the rights afforded a student in a short-term suspension hearing, the student shall have the following rights: In advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the Principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not; 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 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; 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. If the student or parent requests an audio recording, the Principal shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made and a copy will be provided to the student and parent upon request.

The Principal shall provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the Principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.

The Principal shall, based on the evidence, determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension as required by law and regulation, what remedy or consequence will be imposed, in place of or in addition to a long-term suspension. The Principal shall send the written determination to the student and parent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the Principal and the parent.

If the Principal decides to suspend the student, the written determination shall: Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing; Set out the key facts and conclusions reached by the Principal; Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school; Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of removal from school as required by law and regulation; Inform the student of the right to appeal the Principal's decision to the Superintendent or designee, but only if the Principal has imposed a long-term suspension. Notice of the right of appeal shall be in English and the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate, and shall include the following information: The process for appealing the decision, including that the student or parent must file a written notice of appeal with the Superintendent within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long-term suspension; provided that within the five (5) calendar days, the student or parent may request and receive from the Superintendent an extension of time for filing the written notice for up to seven (7) additional calendar days; and that the long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the Superintendent decides to reverse the Principal's determination on appeal.

If the student is in a public preschool program or in grades K through 3, the Principal shall send a copy of the written determination to the Superintendent and explain the reasons for imposing an out-of-school suspension before the suspension takes effect.

### **Superintendent's Hearing**

A student who is placed on long-term suspension following a hearing with the Principal shall have the right to appeal the Principal's decision to the Superintendent.

The student or parent shall file a notice of appeal with the Superintendent within the time period noted above (see Principal's hearing – Suspension of more than 10 days). If the appeal is not timely filed, the Superintendent may deny the appeal, or may allow the appeal in his or her discretion, for good cause.

The Superintendent shall hold the hearing within three (3) school days of the student's request, unless the student or parent requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days, in which case the Superintendent shall grant the extension.

The Superintendent shall make a good faith effort to include the parent in the hearing. The Superintendent shall be presumed to have made a good faith effort if he or she has made efforts to find a day and time for the hearing that would allow the parent and Superintendent to participate. The Superintendent shall send written notice to the parent of the date, time, and location of the hearing.

The Superintendent shall conduct a hearing to determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense of which the student is accused, and if so, what the consequence shall be. The Superintendent shall arrange for an audio recording of the hearing, a copy of which shall be provided to the student or parent upon request. The Superintendent shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made of the hearing and a copy will be provided to the student and parent upon request. The student shall have all the rights afforded the student at the Principal's hearing for long-term suspension.

The Superintendent shall issue a written decision within five (5) calendar days of the hearing which meets the requirements student committed the disciplinary offense, the Superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than the Principal, but shall not impose a suspension greater than that imposed by the Principal's decision. The decision of the Superintendent shall be the final decision of the school district with regard to the suspension.

## **EXPULSION**

Expulsion is defined as the removal of a student from school for more than ninety (90) school days, indefinitely, or permanently as allowed by law for possession of a dangerous weapon; possession of a controlled substance; assault on a member of the educational staff; or a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, or adjudication or admission of guilt with respect to such felony, if a Principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

Any student expelled from school for such an offense shall be afforded an opportunity to receive educational services and make academic progress.

### **Academic Progress**

Any student who is suspended or expelled shall have the opportunity to earn credits, 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, in English and in the primary language of the home, when such suspension or expulsion is imposed.

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

The Principal shall develop a school-wide education service plan describing the education services that the school district will make available to students who are expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days. The plan shall include the process for notifying such students and their parents of the services

and arranging such services. 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 the law.

The Principal shall notify the parent and student of the opportunity to receive education services at the time the student is expelled or placed on long-term suspension. 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.

For each student expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive 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 of Elementary and Secondary Education.

### **SUSPENSION OF SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS**

Students with special needs have certain additional rights as defined under the Massachusetts Chapter 766 regulations issued by the State Department of Education. Each special needs student is required to have an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) that specifies educational services for the student. The IEP also determines whether or not the student can be expected to meet the regular disciplinary code of the school or whether a modified disciplinary code is required to meet his/her needs.

If the student is approaching ten cumulative suspension days during a school year, the Special Needs Team must reconvene to determine if the infraction is related to the student's area of disability and/or the appropriateness of the student's placement or program. If the Team concludes that the student's misconduct is related to an inappropriate IEP, or is the result of an IEP that was not fully implemented, the IEP will be revised to better meet the student's needs and no further suspensions will occur at that time. Upon parental approval of the revised IEP, the student will be placed immediately in the new program.

If the team concludes that the student's misconduct was not due to any of these conditions and a period of exclusion from school is deemed necessary, an amendment to the IEP will be developed to provide for the delivery of special education services during the period of exclusion. In addition, the IEP will be modified to include a long-term plan to assure the student's continued attendance in an educational program. This alternative must be approved by both the Department of Education and the parents/guardians. If approved, the amended plan will be implemented immediately.

### **Procedures for suspension of students with disabilities when suspensions exceed 10 consecutive school days or a pattern has developed for suspensions exceeding 10 cumulative days. This policy outlines the responsibilities of the Team and responsibilities of the district.**

1. A suspension of longer than 10 consecutive days or a series of suspensions that are shorter than 10 consecutive days but constitute a pattern are considered to represent a change in placement.
2. Prior to a suspension that constitutes a change in placement of a student with disabilities, district personnel, the parent, and other relevant members of the Team, as determined by the parent and the district, convene to review all relevant information in the student's file, including the IEP, any teacher observations, and any relevant information from the parents, to determine whether the behavior was caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the disability or was the direct result of the district's failure to implement the IEP "a manifestation determination".

3. If district personnel, the parent, and other relevant members of the Team determine that the behavior is **NOT** a manifestation of the disability, then the district may suspend or expel the student consistent with policies applied to any student without disabilities, except that the district must still offer:
  - a. services to enable the student, although in another setting, to continue to participate in the general curriculum and to progress toward IEP goals; and
  - b. as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention services and modifications, to address the behavior so that it does not recur.
4. Interim alternative educational setting. Regardless of the manifestation determination, the district may place the students in an interim alternative educational setting (as determined by the Team) for up to 45 school days:
  - a. on its own authority if the behavior involves weapons or illegal drugs or another controlled substance or the infliction of serious bodily injury on another person while at school or a school function or, considered case by case, unique circumstances; or
  - b. on the authority of a hearing officer if the officer orders the alternative placement after the district provides evidence that the student is “substantially likely” to injure him/herself or others.

Characteristics. In either case, the interim alternative education setting enables the student to continue in the general curriculum and to continue receiving services identified on the IEP, and provides services to address the problem behavior.
5. If district personnel, the parent, and other relevant members of the Team determine that the behavior **IS** a manifestation of the disability, then the Team completes a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention plan if it has not already been done so. If a behavioral intervention plan is already in place, the Team reviews it and modifies it, as necessary, to address the behavior. Except when he or she has been placed in an interim alternative educational setting in accordance with part 4; the student returns to the original placement unless the parents and district agree otherwise.
6. Not later than the date of the decision to take disciplinary action, the school district notifies the parents of that decision and provides them with the written notice of procedural safeguards. If the parent chooses to appeal or the school district requires a hearing because it believes that maintaining the student’s current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others, the student remains in the disciplinary placement, if any, until the decision of the hearing officer or the end of time period for the disciplinary action, whichever comes first, unless the parent and the school district agree otherwise.

**Procedural requirements applied to students not yet determined to be eligible for special education:**

1. If, prior to the disciplinary action, a district has knowledge that the student may be a student with a disability, then Abington Public Schools makes all protections available to the student until and unless the student is subsequently determined not to be eligible. Abington Public Schools may be considered to have prior knowledge if;
  - a. The parent has expressed concern in writing; or
  - b. The parent has requested an evaluation; or
  - c. District staff had expressed directly to the special education director or other supervisory personnel specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the student.

Abington Public Schools may not be considered to have had prior knowledge if the parent has not consented to an evaluation of the student or has refused special education services, or if an evaluation of the student has resulted in a determination of ineligibility.

2. If Abington Public Schools had no reason to consider the student disabled, and the parent requests an evaluation subsequent to the disciplinary action, Abington Public Schools has procedures consistent with federal requirements to conduct an expedited evaluation to determine eligibility.
3. If the Student is found eligible, then he/she receives all procedural protections subsequent to the finding of eligibility

## **LIABILITY**

Students are personally liable or responsible for actions which result in the loss or damage of property of others or the school, and for behavior which interferes with the rights and education of other students. Any student experiencing or witnessing such violation of rights or property is requested to report those incidents to a member of the faculty or administration. There is also a fee for lost or damaged materials or textbooks.

## **SEARCH AND SEIZURE**

If a student is suspected of violating school rules or state law, s/he may be subject to reasonable search and seizure by a school official, including the search of his/her desk and/or personal effects.

## **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE ABINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND ABINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT**

This Memorandum of Understanding is established between the Abington Public Schools and the Abington Police Department regarding the establishment of a protocol for the reporting and coordination of response to incidents of violence or other illegal activity within Abington Public Schools. The Abington Public Schools and the Abington Police Department agree to coordinate their response to violence or other illegal activity by students and non-students which occur on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events. Through collaboration the two departments can ensure safe and secure school and community environments designed to maximize effective teaching and learning.

To ensure a safe educational environment, this collaborative effort between school administration and law enforcement supports “zero tolerance” for drugs, alcohol, weapons, hate crimes and violence within and on the grounds of the Abington Public Schools. Non students involved in such acts on school premises or at school events are to be reported in the same manner as students are reported. Non students include administrators, teachers, professional staff, support staff, clerical and custodial staff, security personnel, bus drivers, visitors and trespassers.

Although it will continue to be the sole prerogative of school officials to impose disciplinary sanctions for infractions of school rules and policies, it is the responsibility of school authorities to notify the Abington Police Department when any mandatory reportable act of criminal activity is detected or suspected on school grounds or at school-sponsored events. It is the responsibility of the Abington Police Department to respond when drugs, alcohol or weapons are found on school property or when a student is suspected of or charged with mandatory reportable acts of criminally chargeable offenses under Massachusetts General Laws.

M.G.L. c. 71 § 37H requires each school district to have a written Code of Conduct reflected in student handbooks stating the standards and procedures to assume building security and safety of students and school personnel, and the disciplinary measures to be taken in cases involving the possession or use of illegal substances or weapons, the use of force, vandalism, or civil rights violations. Reference to this Memorandum shall be made in these handbooks.

This Memorandum of Understanding is voluntarily entered into with the consent of both parties and is an internal document between the parties and does not confer any rights, privileges or obligations nor is it enforceable as against the parties hereto in any court, administrative hearing, or other forum. Any written or oral communication between the parties of the Memorandum of Understanding will be protected by all laws relating to privacy and confidentiality. This Memorandum of Understanding is in addition to, and does not



supplant, policies of the Abington Public Schools with regard to disciplinary procedures and codes of student conduct which are now or may be formulated and published in student handbooks.

The parties to this Memorandum of Understanding hereby understand and consent to the following terms, conditions and operating procedures:

1. A School Resource Officer will be assigned to work in the Abington Public Schools and he/she will report to the Chief of Police. The appointment/assignment of the School Resource Officer will be made annually pending the approval of the Chief of Police and the Superintendent of Schools.
2. The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee and the school principal or his/her designee are responsible for reporting the acts specified below. The Police Chief will designate an officer (or officers) to coordinate all reported criminal acts.
3. The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee and the school principal or his/her designee shall without undue delay report to the Abington Police Department any incident on school premises, including in or around a school bus, or at a school sponsored or school related function, if such incident involves any of the mandatory reportable acts set forth below. It is understood that it will not constitute an undue delay if the Abington Police Department is notified once a school administrator has cause to believe an allegation, and/or has knowledge that a mandatory act was committed or is about to be committed. This reporting shall be accomplished by contacting the Abington Police Department using the 9-1-1 system, by calling the department's business phone line, by police radio if issued to a school department employee, or directly to a police officer if nearby.

A **mandatory** reportable act shall include:

- (a) a student's possession or use of a dangerous weapon as defined in Massachusetts General Laws c. 269, § 10;
  - (b) any indecent or sexual assault;
  - (c) any instance of substance abuse, including the possession of alcohol, and the possession of any controlled substance as defined in Massachusetts General Laws c. 94C including but not limited to marijuana, cocaine and heroin;
  - (d) any assault and battery which results in bodily injury;
  - (e) any violation of a temporary or permanent restraining order or harassment prevention order;
  - (f) any so-called "hate crime," meaning for purposes of this section, any violation of Massachusetts General Laws c. 265, §§ 37 or 39;
  - (g) any substantial destruction of property or theft; *and*
  - (h) any threat to commit a crime against the person or property of another
4. All school department personnel, including but not limited to, administrators, teachers, professional staff, support staff, clerical and custodial staff, security personnel and bus drivers, shall immediately report to their direct supervisors (which shall cause the police department to be notified) and are also authorized, if they want to, to report to the Abington Police Department, if there is an imminent threat, any incident on school premises, including in or around a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function, if such incident involves any mandatory act specified above.
  5. Said supervisor shall immediately report such incident to the principal. Any principal who receives such a report and who has reasonable cause to believe the allegations shall file a written report with the superintendent of said school district on the same school day. The Superintendent shall file copies of said official reports, as soon as reasonably possible, with the local chief of police and, where required by law, the Massachusetts Department of Children and Family Social Services. When reports are forwarded to the Abington Police Department, the police will provide a follow-up response to the Superintendent of Schools.

6. The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee and the school principal or his/her designee may report to the Abington Police Department any incident on school premises, including in or around a school bus, or at a school sponsored or school related function, if such incident involves any of the following discretionary reportable acts:

A **discretionary** reportable act shall include:

- 1) Any student's violation of a state criminal statute which warrants reporting but is not a mandatory reportable act as described above; and
  - 2) Finding any student, regardless of age, who is reasonably believed to be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.
7. Any teacher or other school employee who has reasonable grounds to believe that a student has committed a mandatory reportable act or a discretionary reportable act, as defined above, shall if practicable, take (or cause to be taken) the student to the Principal or his/her designee. The Principal/designee shall ask the reporting teacher/employee what happened and take custody of any physical evidence. In the case of a mandatory reportable act, all evidence of the crime, and the scene itself, when appropriate, shall be secured in place until the arrival of a police officer from the Abington Police Department. The officer will work with school employees to limit disruptions to others, in attendance at a school or other location, while maintaining a crime scene for an investigation that will proceed.
  8. The Principal/designee shall inform the student and his/her parent or guardian of the nature of the offense and inform the student and his/her parent or guardian that certain offenses must be reported to the police. The Principal/designee may offer the student the opportunity to respond to the teacher/employee's report. The Principal/Superintendent shall in the case of a mandatory reportable act, and may in the case of a discretionary reportable act, without undue delay notify the local police department of the presence of contraband and the existence of any physical evidence. All contraband (drug, alcohol, firearms, and dangerous weapons) shall be immediately surrendered to the police department.
  9. Upon notification from the Principal/Superintendent or his/her designee or any school department employee (*only as outlined in section #4*), police shall respond without undue delay in cases of mandatory reportable acts and may respond in other cases. Police shall investigate such cases and, where appropriate, refer such cases to the District Attorney's Office.
  10. In addition, the Principal/Superintendent will comply with Massachusetts General Laws c. 71, § 37L requiring that an incident involving a student's possession or use of a dangerous weapon on school premises at any time be reported in writing to the Chief of Police. This report must be filed in any case involving a student's possession or use of a dangerous weapon on school premises, regardless of whether it occurred during school hours, and whether or not the student has been expelled.
  11. The Abington School Department will maintain files for all school reports submitted to the department and appropriate records for all school incidents including acts or suspected acts of violence. The Abington Police Department will maintain appropriate records for all incidents/activities that it investigates.
  12. The Superintendent of Schools, Chief of Police and other designated school administrators and police officers will meet to collaborate on the implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding and establish communication lines to support a safe, secure school and community. They will then continue meeting on at least an annual basis.

13. Abington Police Department will continue to provide police services to the Abington Public Schools with a high priority response to reported crimes in progress in and around school facilities. The Abington Police Department will also maintain visibility of uniformed Abington Police Officers, manpower permitting, when requested by the School Department at arrival and dismissal of students at targeted locations.
14. The Abington Police Department will respond to and be responsible for all reports of missing or abducted children. Parents will be notified by the appropriate authorities.
15. The Abington School Department will plan with the Abington Police Department for safety and security of certain extra-curricular activities involving Abington students, and held on property owned and controlled by the Town of Abington, including school buildings and athletic fields.
16. Nothing in this Agreement shall supersede or contravene any school or police department administrative procedures or any collective bargaining agreement.

## **STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES**

The School Committee recognizes that there may be conditions in the school system that are in need of improvement and that students should have some means by which their concerns may be effectively expressed, considered, and dealt with fairly. Such means, if well-conceived and understood in advance, can do much to maintain harmonious relationships among the schools and the students and community.

The traditional "open door" policy in the public school system will be continued. Students--and their parents and/or guardians--who believe that a student has received unfair treatment may bring forward their grievance. Appeals of individual disciplinary cases will be required to follow the district's policy on student discipline. Any applicable provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws or federal law will be followed by school officials in conducting hearings and reviews of student grievances. In general, procedures will begin with the authority imposing the penalty (for example, Principal or teacher) and may ultimately be referred to the Superintendent and on to the School Committee if applicable.

Every attempt will be made to seek a satisfactory solution to any legitimate grievance in a friendly and informal manner.

# STUDENT LIFE

## DRESS CODE

Since one of the purposes of Abington Public Schools is to create a safe, supportive learning community, and since appropriate dress reflects positively on the school community, students will be prohibited from wearing any clothing that detracts from the learning process or otherwise compromises health, safety, or cleanliness.

Students are encouraged to dress in a neat manner and are expected to conform to the following standards. The following articles of clothing have proven to be disruptive to the educational process and should not be worn:

- Clothing displaying vulgar writing or symbols, or any other inappropriate references
- Shorts and skirts that are not equal in length or longer than the end of the fingertips, when arms are held loosely by the side
- Clothing that exposes the midriff
- Shirts which are not of full waist-length, front and back
- Shirts with shoulder straps less than 1 inch in width
- Pants not worn at the waist, or with undergarments visible
- Head apparel, except for religious or medical purposes

## FOOD SERVICE POLICY

The Food Service Program uses the software program "Nutrikids" in all the schools in the district. A student is assigned a unique PIN number which is entered at the school cashier stations to complete any transaction.

The Food Service Program provides a nutritionally government approved breakfast and lunch daily to all students wishing to take advantage of the program. There are three pricing levels:

Free                Students who have been approved for a free lunch through either an application process or directly certified through the Department of Transitional Assistance database.

Reduced           Students who qualify for a reduced price lunch (0.40) through the application process.

Full Price           Students who purchase meals with no qualified reduction.

A student may purchase a school breakfast or lunch in one of the following ways:

- a. Use pre-paid funds in their individual foodservice account; or
- b. Use cash in the amount owed.

The School Lunch Program is mandated to provide free or reduced priced meals to only those students who have qualified for that benefit. We are required by law to collect appropriate funds for all other meals provided.

### **LOST/FORGOTTEN FUND**

The Food Service Program recognizes that an occasional occurrence may prevent a student from having funds available to complete a meal purchase. In the occasional occurrences, we allow the following:

Grade K through 8:

Students may charge up to the equivalent of three (3) meals. This is done with the expectation of prompt reimbursement. If, after the three meal limit is reached, payment is not received the students account is suspended. Any student that seeks a lunch on a suspended account will be given the opportunity to purchase an "Emergency Meal" which will consist of a cheese sandwich, fruit and milk. A \$1.50 charge will be added to the account. Any student that seeks a breakfast on a suspended account will be given the opportunity to purchase either fruit or a 4-ounce juice. A \$.50 charge will be added to the account.

**NEGATIVE ACCOUNTS**

Families of students with negative accounts will be notified on a regular basis of the delinquent account. We encourage use of the website [myschoolbucks.com](http://myschoolbucks.com) to monitor the activity in your student's accounts.

**HOME SCHOOLING**

A student being educated in a home-based program within the District may have access to public school activities of either a curricular or extracurricular nature upon approval of the Superintendent.

**STUDENT PUBLICATIONS**

Within the school setting, students enjoy the constitutional right of freedom of expression, including the right to express their views in student publications, provided such expression does not cause, or threaten to cause by reasonable forecast by school officials, any disruption or disorder in the school. Additionally, such constitutional right of freedom of expression does not include expression which is obscene, defamatory, or advocates violence or illegality where such advocacy is imminently likely to incite the commission of such acts to the detriment of school security, or which can reasonably be forecast to cause substantial disruption or material interference with school activities.

Each student publication shall contain the following: "Pursuant to state law, no expression made by students in the exercise of such rights shall be deemed to be an expression of school policy and no school officials shall be held responsible in any civil or criminal action for any expression made or published by the students."

The time, place and manner of distribution of literature will be reasonably regulated by the Principal.

**STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES AND REQUIREMENTS**

The Health Office is available to students during the school day. A registered nurse is available for health counseling, emergency health services when a student is ill, and for intervention regarding any student's health concerns.

When a student becomes ill, s/he should obtain permission from a teacher and go to the Health Office. If the nurse is not available immediately, the student should report to the School Office. If a student is significantly ill, the parent or guardian will be notified, and the student will be dismissed to the parent/guardian/designated adult.

Parents/guardians should notify the school nurse of all extended illnesses so the nurse can be the medical liaison between the home and school and make any necessary accommodations. Students should present a certificate from their physician after recovery from a communicable disease before re-entering school. Students also may be required to present a doctor's certificate after an absence of five or more consecutive days occasioned by illness.

State law requires all students to have current immunizations to be able to attend school. A parent who does not have the required immunization documentation for a student will be notified of the status, and the student will be excluded from school and school activities until the documentation is obtained. We request that anytime a child receives an immunization from a source outside school, the parent provides the school Health Office with a copy of the immunization from the physician.

Accident reports are filed by staff members and are submitted to the office when an accident requiring medical attention occurs. If a student is injured after school on school grounds, the accident should be reported to the nurse as soon as possible after the accident.

The Abington Public Schools will comply with these regulations as set forth by the MA Department of Public Health and:

- Provide educators, parents, and health care providers with this information before and, if requested, after the screenings
- Improve the health and well-being of our school age children
- Identify children who may be at risk for health problems

This program compliments the APS wellness initiative. Screenings will take place throughout the school year. Further information will be posted on the Abington Public Schools website, [www.abingtonps.org](http://www.abingtonps.org)

## **PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS OF STUDENTS**

Every student will be examined for screening in sight, hearing, BMI, and for other physical problems as provided in the law and regulation. A record of the results will be kept by the school nurse. Vision Screening is done at entry to school with Massachusetts requiring physicians to conduct vision screening and stereopsis testing prior to or within 30 days after school entry to kindergarten. Screening is conducted annually thereafter through grade 5, once in grades 6 through 8. Hearing Screening is conducted annually through grade 3 and once in grades 6 through 8. Scoliosis Screening is conducted in grades 5 and 6.

Height and Weight Measurement is done with those students in grades 1 and 4 at the elementary level. Notice is provided at the beginning of the school to parents about the screening program. Parents are given an opportunity to not have their child participate in this screening by providing the school nurse with a written letter at each grade where the student is to be screened. Body Mass Index (BMI) score and percentiles are calculated and information is maintained in the student's health record beginning of the school year. All screenings are done in a manner to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of the student. Parents/guardians may request in writing and that they receive this information or that it be shared with persons or providers of their choice.

The District shall provide to the Department of Public Health aggregate data on results by grade, gender, and BMI category as specified in guidelines established. No personally identifiable information is shared without the written consent of the parent or legal guardian.

Physical Examination information is to be submitted upon registration to the Abington Public Schools, done within one year prior to school entrance or within 30 days after school entry and at intervals of 3 to 4 years thereafter. Physicals are to be submitted: at entry to school in the case of Pre-School, at entry to Kindergarten, and in Grade 4 at the elementary level.

## **ADMINISTERING MEDICATIONS TO STUDENTS**

All medication should be given at home whenever possible. In the event that medication needs to be given during the school time, the student may do so after consent forms, available in the health office, are completed by the students' physician and parent and/or guardian. Any medication to be given for more than ten (10) school days must have a signed physician order form. Medication must be in a labeled prescription bottle from a pharmacy and brought in by the parent and/or guardian. In the event that a parent wants their child to receive Tylenol, Ibuprofen, Tums, etc. for pain, headaches, etc. a consent form must be signed for the nurse to administer these medications.

No student is allowed to carry any medication with them during school hours or functions, with the exception of those students who have completed consent forms to 'self-administer'. Abington Public Schools shall not prohibit students with asthma or other respiratory disease from possessing and administering prescription inhalers or students with life-threatening allergies from possessing and administering epinephrine in accordance with Department of Public Health regulations concerning students' self-administration of prescription medications.

A written medication order from the licensed prescriber is required prior to the administration of any prescription medication within the school.

### **Procedure:**

1. The school nurse obtains a written medication order from the licensed prescriber prior to administering any prescription medication.
2. The school nurse obtains written authorization by the parent/guardian prior to medication administration.
3. The order includes, but is not limited to:
  - Student name
  - Name, phone number and signature of licensed prescriber
  - Name, route and dose of medication
  - Frequency and time of administration
  - Date of order
  - A diagnosis and any other medical condition(s) requiring medication, if not a violation of confidentiality or if not contrary to the request of a parent, guardian or the student to keep confidential
  - Specific directions for administration
  - Consent for student self-administration
4. Every effort is made to obtain the following information from the licensed prescriber as appropriate:
  - Any special side effects, contraindications and adverse reactions to be observed
  - Any other medication being taken by the student
  - Date of return visit, if applicable

5. For short-term prescription medications i.e. those requiring administration for ten (10) school days or fewer, the pharmacy-labeled container is used in lieu of a licensed prescriber's order. If a nurse has a question relating to the order, a request is made for a written order from the licensed prescriber.
6. For over the counter medications an i.e. non-prescription medication, the school nurse complies with the Board of Registration in nursing's protocols regarding administration of over the counter medications in schools. Only medications listed in the APS – Medical Directives and signed by a school physician may be administered. Any and all others require a physician order.
7. Investigational new drugs are administered in the school with written order by the licensed prescriber, written consent of the parent/guardian and a pharmacy labeled container for dispensing. If there is a question, the Head School Nurse seeks consultation and/or approval from the school physician(s) to administer the medication in a school setting.
8. All medication orders are renewed as necessary, including the beginning of each academic year.
9. A telephone order or an order for any change in prescription medication from a physician is received only by the school nurse.
10. All verbal orders must be followed by a written order within three school days or the verbal order becomes void.
11. Faxed orders are acceptable with the hard copy remaining on file in the license prescriber's office.
12. The written medication order is kept on file as a permanent part of the student's Health Records.
13. The school nurse provides the parent/guardian with the Parental Consent for Prescription Medication Form.
14. The consent form includes, but is not limited to:
  - Parent/guardian/emergency contact name and phone number
  - List of all current medications, if not in violation of confidentiality
  - Approval for school nurse or personnel designated by the school nurse to administer the prescription medication
  - Name and phone number of prescribing provider
15. The written Parental Consent Form is kept on file as a permanent part of the student's Health Record.
16. In accordance with the Standards of Nursing Practice, the school nurse may refuse to administer or allow to be administered any medication, which, based on an individual assessment and professional judgment, has the potential to be harmful, dangerous or inappropriate. In these cases, the parent/guardian and licensed prescriber are notified immediately by the school nurse and the rationale for refusal is explained. All unresolved issues are reported to the Head School Nurse and to the School Physician.

## **INOCULATIONS OF STUDENTS**

Students entering school for the first time, whether at kindergarten or through transfer from another school system, will be required to present a physician's certificate attesting to immunization against diphtheria, whooping cough, poliomyelitis, tetanus, measles, and such other communicable diseases as may be specified from time to time by the Department of Public Health. The only exception to these requirements will be made on receipt of a written statement from a doctor that immunization would not be in the best interests of the child, or by the student's parent or guardian stating that vaccination or immunization is contrary to the religious beliefs of the student or parent.



## **CONCUSSIONS**

Concussions are considered to be a mild form of a traumatic brain injury and the potential for their occurrence in children is greatest during activities where collisions can occur, such as during physical education (PE) class, playground time, or school-based sports activities. There are also many activities and sports in which children are engaged beyond the school setting where injury can occur. Although most people recover quickly and fully from a concussion, current research shows the time needed is often slower among young children. Students may exhibit a various array of physical, mental/behavioral/emotional symptoms, all of which can have impact on the student in the educational setting.

As the student returns to school following a concussion, the school nurse has a significant role in supporting the student. The school nurse is able to provide on-going monitoring of symptoms, collaborate with parents, teachers, and health care providers, and to establish accommodation plans individualized to meet the needs of the child.

Communication between home and school is critical to the health and safety of any student who has received a concussion. We ask parents to notify the school nurse directly when there has been a significant injury or concussion diagnosed as the brain needs time to rest and that it is a process that cannot be rushed.

## **LATEX POLICY**

To minimize exposure to latex allergens in the school environment, latex products are not allowed in school. Latex balloons will be prohibited from inside the school and outside on school grounds. Mylar balloons may be substituted.

## **WELLNESS POLICY ON PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION**

This policy is based on Massachusetts standards that apply to competitive foods and beverages sold or provided to students 30 minutes before the beginning of the school day until 30 minutes after the school day ends. The Abington School Committee is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity.

The District will work with the Wellness Advisory Committee to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The Wellness Advisory Committee also will serve as a resource to school sites for implementing those policies. The Wellness Advisory Committee consists of a group of individuals representing the school and community, and will include the Food Services Director, Wellness Director, School Committee members, school administrators, teachers, health professionals, parents, students, and members of the public.

The District discourages students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

To support children's health and school nutrition-education efforts, school fundraising activities will not involve food or will use only foods that meet the above nutrition and portion size standards for foods and beverages sold individually. All foods used for fundraising purchases must be packaged by a manufacturer with nutrition information available. Schools will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity. The District will make available a list of ideas for acceptable fundraising activities.

Schools will not use foods or beverages, especially those that do not meet the nutrition standards, as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, and will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment.

School-Sponsored Events (such as, but not limited to, athletic events, dances, or performances). Foods and beverages offered or sold at school-sponsored events outside the school day should strive to meet the nutrition standards for meals and/or foods and beverages.

#### Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education.

Physical Education (P.E.) K-12. All students in grades K-12, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will receive physical education in accordance with the Massachusetts Frameworks, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/health> All physical education will be taught by a certified physical education teacher. Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity (e.g., interscholastic or intramural sports) will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement. Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Daily Recess. All elementary school students will be provided time each day for supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

## **STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

Among these rights and responsibilities are the following:

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

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

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

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

# STUDENT RECORDS

In order to provide students with appropriate instruction and educational services, it is necessary for the school system to maintain extensive and sometimes personal information about them and their families. It is essential that pertinent information in these records be readily available to appropriate school personnel, be accessible to the student's parents or legal guardian and/or the student in accordance with law, and yet be guarded as confidential information.

The Superintendent will provide for the proper administration of student records in keeping with state and federal requirements, and shall obtain a copy of the state student records regulations (603 CMR 23.00). The temporary record of each student enrolled on or after June 2002 will be destroyed no later than seven years after the student transfers, graduates or withdraws from the School District. Written notice to the eligible student and his/her parent of the approximate date of destruction of the temporary record and their right to receive the information in whole or in part, shall be made at the time of such transfer, graduation, or withdrawal. The student's transcript may only be destroyed 60 years following his/her graduation, transfer, or withdrawal from the school system.

The Committee wishes to make clear that all individual student records of the school system are confidential. This extends to giving out individual addresses and telephone numbers.

## **APPLICATION OF RIGHTS**

603 CMR 23.00 is promulgated to insure parents' and students' rights of confidentiality, inspection, amendment, and destruction of students' records and to assist local school systems in adhering to the law. 603 CMR 23.00 should be liberally construed for these purposes.

- (1) These rights shall be the rights of the student upon reaching 14 years of age or upon entering the ninth grade, whichever comes first. If a student is under the age of 14 and has not yet entered the ninth grade, these rights shall belong to the student's parent.
- (2) If a student is from 14 through 17 years or has entered the ninth grade, both the student and his/her parent, or either one acting alone, shall exercise these rights.
- (3) If a student is 18 years of age or older, he/she alone shall exercise these rights, subject to the following. The parent may continue to exercise the rights until expressly limited by such student. Such student may limit the rights and provisions of 603 CMR 23.00 which extend to his/her parent, except the right to inspect the student record, by making such request in writing to the school Principal or Superintendent of Schools who shall honor such request and retain a copy of it in the student record. Pursuant to M.G.L. c.71, s.34E, the parent of a student may inspect the student record regardless of the student's age.
- (4) Notwithstanding 603 CMR 23.01(1) and 23.01(2), nothing shall be construed to mean that a school committee cannot extend the provisions of 603 CMR 23.00 to students under the age of 14 or to students who have not yet entered the ninth grade.

## **THE STUDENT RECORD**

The student record shall consist of the transcript and the temporary record, including all information, recording and computer tapes, microfilm, microfiche, or any other materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics concerning a student that is organized on the basis of the student's name or in a way that such student may be individually identified, and that is kept by the public schools of the Commonwealth. The terms as used in 603 CMR 23.00 shall mean all such information and materials regardless of where they are located, except for the information and materials specifically exempted by 603 CMR 23.04.

The temporary record shall consist of all the information in the student record which is not contained in the transcript. This information clearly shall be of importance to the educational process. Such information may include standardized test results, class rank (when applicable), extracurricular activities, and evaluations by teachers, counselors, and other school staff.

### **ACCESS OF ELIGIBLE STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

The eligible student or the parent, subject to the provisions of 603 CMR 23.07 (5), shall have access to the student record. Access shall be provided as soon as practicable and within ten days after the initial request, except in the case of non-custodial parents as provided in 603 CMR 23.07 (5). Upon request for access, the entire student record regardless of the physical location of its parts shall be made available.

(a) Upon request, copies of any information contained in the student record shall be furnished to the eligible student or the parent. A reasonable fee, not to exceed the cost of reproduction, may be charged. However, a fee may not be charged if to do so would effectively prevent the parents or eligible student from exercising their right, under federal law, to inspect and review the records.

(b) Any student, regardless of age, shall have the right pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, section 34A to receive a copy of his/her transcript.

(c) The eligible student or the parent shall have the right upon request to meet with professionally qualified school personnel and to have any of the contents of the student record interpreted.

(d) The eligible student or the parent may have the student record inspected or interpreted by a third party of their choice. Such third party shall present specific written consent of the eligible student or parent, prior to gaining access to the student record.

### **ACCESS OF AUTHORIZED SCHOOL PERSONNEL**

Subject to 603 CMR 23.00, authorized school personnel shall have access to the student records of students to whom they are providing services, when such access is required in the performance of their official duties. The consent of the eligible student or parent shall not be necessary.

### **ACCESS OF THIRD PARTIES**

Except for the provisions of 603 CMR 23.07(4)(a) through 23.07(4)(h), no third party shall have access to information in or from a student record without the specific, informed written consent of the eligible student or the parent. When granting consent, the eligible student or parent shall have the right to designate which parts

of the student record shall be released to the third party. A copy of such consent shall be retained by the eligible student or parent and a duplicate placed in the temporary record. Except for information described in 603 CMR 23.07(4)(a), personally identifiable information from a student record shall only be released to a third party on the condition that he/she will not permit any other third party to have access to such information without the written consent of the eligible student or parent.

(a) A school may release the following directory information: a student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance, weight and height of members of athletic teams, class, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, degrees, honors and awards, and post-high school plans without the consent of the eligible student or parent; provided that the school gives public notice of the types of information it may release under 603 CMR 23.07 and allows eligible students and parents a reasonable time after such notice to request that this information not be released without the prior consent of the eligible student or parent. Such notice may be included in the routine information letter required under 603 CMR 23.10.

(b) Upon receipt of a court order or lawfully issued subpoena the school shall comply, provided that the school makes a reasonable effort to notify the parent or eligible student of the order or subpoena in advance of compliance.

(c) A school may release information regarding a student upon receipt of a request from the Department of Social Services, a probation officer, a justice of any court, or the Department of Youth Services under the provisions of M.G.L. c. 119, sections 51B, 57, 69 and 69A respectively.

(d) Federal, state and local education officials, and their authorized agents shall have access to student records as necessary in connection with the audit, evaluation or enforcement of federal and state education laws, or programs; provided that except when collection of personally identifiable data is specifically authorized by law, any data collected by such officials shall be protected so that parties other than such officials and their authorized agents cannot personally identify such students and their parents; and such personally identifiable data shall be destroyed when no longer needed for the audit, evaluation or enforcement of federal and state education laws.

(e) A school may disclose information regarding a student to appropriate parties in connection with a health or safety emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals. This includes, but is not limited to, disclosures to the local police department and the Department of Social Services under the provisions of M.G.L. c. 71, section 37L and M.G.L. c. 119, section 51A.

(f) Upon notification by law enforcement authorities that a student, or former student, has been reported missing, a mark shall be placed in the student record of such student. The school shall report any request concerning the records of the such child to the appropriate law enforcement authority pursuant to the provisions of M.G.L. c. 22A, section 9.

(g) Authorized school personnel of the school to which a student seeks or intends to transfer may have access to such student's record without the consent of the eligible student or parent, provided that the school the student is leaving, or has left, gives notice that it forwards student records to schools in which the student seeks or intends to enroll. Such notice may be included in the routine information letter required under 603 CMR 23.10.

(h) School health personnel and local and state health department personnel shall have access to student health records, including but not limited to immunization records, when such access is required in the performance of official duties, without the consent of the eligible student or parent.

### **ACCESS PROCEDURES FOR NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS**

As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 34H, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with the following provisions:

(a) A non-custodial parent is eligible to obtain access to the student record unless:

1. the parent has been denied legal custody or has been ordered to supervised visitation, based on a threat to the safety of the student and the threat is specifically noted in the order pertaining to custody or supervised visitation, or
2. the parent has been denied visitation, or
3. the parent's access to the student has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record, or
4. there is an order of a probate and family court judge which prohibits the distribution of student records to the parent.

(b) The school shall place in the student's record documents indicating that a non-custodial parent's access to the student's record is limited or restricted pursuant to 603 CMR 23.07(5)(a).

(c) In order to obtain access, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student record to the school principal.

(d) Upon receipt of the request the school must immediately notify the custodial parent by certified and first class mail, in English and the primary language of the custodial parent, that it will provide the non-custodial parent with access after 21 days, unless the custodial parent provides the principal with documentation that the non-custodial parent is not eligible to obtain access as set forth in 603 CMR 23.07 (5)(a).

(e) The school must delete all electronic and postal address and telephone number information relating to either work or home locations of the custodial parent from student records provided to non-custodial parents. In addition, such records must be marked to indicate that they shall not be used to enroll the student in another school.

(f) Upon receipt of a court order that prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to G.L. c. 71, §34H, the school shall notify the non-custodial parent that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial parent.

At least once during every school year, the school shall publish and distribute to students and their parents in their primary language a routine information letter informing them of the following:

(a) The standardized testing programs and research studies to be conducted during the year and other routine information to be collected or solicited from the student during the year.

(b) The general provisions of 603 CMR 23.00 regarding parent and student rights, and that copies of 603 CMR 23.00 are available to them from the school.

In those school systems required under M.G.L. c. 71A to conduct a bilingual program, all forms, regulations, or other documents regarding 603 CMR 23.00 that a parent receives or is required to receive shall be in the language spoken in the home of the student, provided that it is a language for which the school system is required to provide a bilingual program.

# TRANSPORTATION

## SCHOOL BUS RULES AND REGULATIONS

### MANDATED TOWN-PAID TRANSPORTATION

Under *Massachusetts General Laws*, transportation at town expense shall be furnished to all Abington students in grades K-6 who live two miles or more from the school they attend. Transportation at town expense is based solely on the student's home address and is only for transportation between the student's home bus stop and the school s/he attends. Additionally, transportation shall be provided at town expense for children whose Individualized Education Plan (IEP) requires such transportation or whose physical condition makes such transportation necessary as stated in an (IEP).

### NON-MANDATED FEE-BASED TRANSPORTATION

The Fee-Based Transportation System provides an option for arranging bus service for students in Grades K-6 who live less than 2 miles from their school and for all students in grades 7-12. There is a provision for a fee waiver. The "Fee Waiver Application Form" must be completed and submitted by July 1 to the Superintendent's Office. This form is available online at [www.abingtonps.org](http://www.abingtonps.org) and in the school offices and Superintendent's Office. Eligibility is subject to the income guidelines and verification. Ridership is not guaranteed, as it is dependent upon sufficient funding and available seating. Visit [www.abingtonps.info](http://www.abingtonps.info).

### TWO-MILE LIMIT

The two-mile measurement is the shortest vehicular route between the nearest walkway or driveway to the student's residence to the nearest walkway or gateway leading to the front door of the school. If the mileage is in dispute, a "Distance Appeal Form" must be completed and submitted by July 1 to the School Department. This form is available online at [www.abingtonps.org](http://www.abingtonps.org) and in the school offices and Superintendent's Office. The distance will be re-checked, and a decision will be made. This decision shall be final. Appeals not properly submitted by July 1 will not be honored. Please note that the shortest vehicular route may change from year to year as new streets open to traffic; therefore, the shortest vehicular route will be based on streets existing as of July 1 of each year. Mileage will NOT be calculated to or from a daycare provider.

### STREET LIST

A list of eligible and ineligible streets will be posted at each elementary school and on Abington Public Schools' website, [www.abingtonps.org](http://www.abingtonps.org).

### APPLICATION, FEES & DUE DATE

- During the month of April students will receive a Transportation Packet containing rules and regulations, frequently asked questions, and all pertinent forms.
- **The bus fee is \$255 per student with a \$510 family cap.** The fee is refundable only if the child is not assigned a seat. Aside from this exception, and because buses must be contracted in advance, the fee is nonrefundable and refunds will not be prorated in any manner or for any reason. The seat purchased is not transferable to another route.
- **The application and payment-in-full must be submitted by July 1.** This payment ensures that your child is included on the bus list as routes are developed during the summer. Applications and

payments received after July 1 will be considered late and will be honored only if space is available and if there is an existing stop on the route.

- Subject to the availability of seats and an existing bus stop, applications for children whose parent/guardians are experiencing an emergency situation will be accepted and processed during the school year. Applications submitted under this provision must be accompanied by a written explanation of the nature of the emergency and any supportive documentation requested by the school department. A committee comprised of the Chairman of the School Committee, Superintendent of Schools, and a Principal will review and act on such emergency requests and, if approved, will set a prorated fee.

### **NEW RESIDENTS**

Subject to the availability of seats and an existing bus stop, applications and fees for children of new residents will be processed at the time of registration.

### **IDENTIFICATION**

In mid-August, bus passes will be mailed directly to the households of all mandated and enrolled riders. Beginning the first day of school, each bus student is required to carry the bus pass; not doing so could result in exclusion from the bus. We suggest attaching the pass to the back pack. This will keep the pass handy and allow the student to display it without delay. Lost passes will be replaced for a \$5.00 fee.

### **BUS STOPS AND ROUTING**

Students in Grades K-12 are not entitled to street-by-street or door-to-door pick-up and/or delivery. The School Department will establish common neighborhood bus stops. Timing and routing does not allow for additional bus stops, even if the bus passes your residence. Bus stops will be published in the local newspaper approximately two weeks prior to the opening of school. As it is unknown how many buses will be funded, the length of bus routes may be affected. All efforts will be made to schedule bus routes so no child is riding for more than one hour per trip.

## **SCHOOL BUS SAFETY PROGRAM**

### **SAFETY**

Safety is a responsibility that is shared between the home and the school district. While the law requires the School Department to furnish a defined level of transportation, it does not relieve parents/guardians of students from the responsibility of supervision until such time as the child boards the bus in the morning. Once the child boards the bus – and only at that time – does s/he become the responsibility of the school district. Such responsibility shall end when the child is delivered to the regular bus stop at the close of the school day. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to escort the child to and from the bus stop where there are no sidewalks, where sidewalks are only on one side, where the bus stop is on the opposite side of the street, and where there are either traffic or commuter rail concerns. Emergency evacuation drills will be conducted at least twice a year to acquaint student riders with procedures in emergency situations.

### **BUS CONDUCT**

In view of the fact that a bus is an extension of the classroom the School Committee shall require students to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with established standards for classroom behavior as stated in the *Student Handbook*. Bus drivers have the authority and the responsibility to maintain good order while operating the bus. Additionally, bus drivers are instructed to inform the building administrator about any student misconduct that creates an annoyance or distraction while driving. The building administrator will



inform the parents/guardians of the misconduct and request their cooperation in monitoring the child's behavior. Any student who becomes a disciplinary problem on the school bus may have riding privileges suspended on a temporary or permanent basis. In such cases, the parents/guardians of the child involved become responsible for getting the child to and from school safely. There will be no refunds resulting from disciplinary action.

The following regulations will apply to all students who utilize bus transportation:

1. Be at your bus stop five minutes before your regular pick-up time.
2. While waiting for the bus, do not run, push or play games.
3. Bus riders should not move toward the bus until the bus has come to a complete stop.
4. Do not push or shove while entering or leaving the bus.
5. Take your seat promptly upon entering the bus and remain in it until you arrive at your destination. Do not throw anything on the bus or out the window. There will be no standing or saving of seats on the bus.
6. Do not use profane, loud or boisterous talk or make other noises that might distract the driver.
7. Students shall be courteous, at all times, to the driver, fellow students, and passers-by.
8. Treat bus equipment well. Damage to equipment will be paid by the offender to the School Department.
9. Smoking or lighting of matches is prohibited.
10. Leave the bus promptly upon arrival at your destination.
11. In crossing a highway, do so only after the driver signals that it is safe to cross. Pass ten feet in front of the bus and look for traffic in both directions before proceeding.
12. Students must have written permission to leave the bus, other than at home or at school.
13. In case of an emergency, students are to remain on the bus, unless requested to leave by the bus driver and only under her/his direction.
14. There is no eating or drinking on the bus.
15. Electronic devices are not allowed on the bus, unless specific permission has been granted by the building administrator and/or designee. Cell phones must be powered off.

The building administrator may deprive students of riding the bus if there are violations of these rules or if students engage in any other action which jeopardizes the health and safety of those riding the bus. In all cases, a report must be made by the principal to the parents/guardians of the child involved and to the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, where an appeal can be made.

All eligible Grades K-6 bus students are expected to ride the bus to which they are assigned both to and from school and to be picked up and dropped off at their assigned bus stops. Students will be asked to walk to a common bus stop. In that situation, the child should be accompanied to the stop by a parent/guardian. The safety responsibility for escorting to and from the bus stop shall rest with the parents/guardians of the student involved.

Parents/Guardians of students are responsible for supervision until such time as the child boards the bus in the morning and after the child exits the bus at the end of the school day. Once the child boards the bus – and only at that time – does s/he become the responsibility of the school district. Such responsibility shall end when the child is transported to the regular bus stop at the close of the school day. It is also expected that all students will be at the stop **5 minutes before the bus arrives**. Bus driver have been instructed **NOT TO STOP** if no child is waiting. For safety reasons, it is most important that a parent/guardian be at the bus stop to receive the homecoming child.

As always, safety is of primary importance. At the bus stops and on the school bus, students are expected to be well-behaved and cooperative, at all times. A student who repeatedly misbehaves, or who by her/his actions poses a threat to the safety of others on the bus, may be suspended, and if such behavior continues, bus privileges could be removed for a longer period of time.

1. Students will be picked-up and dropped-off at daycare upon approval of this waiver by the building administrator. **Approval is subject to the availability of seating and these arrangements being permanent, prearranged, and the same for all days.** Approval also is subject to the daycare being located on an established route. Routes are established based on home addresses. The availability of seats will be determined only after accommodating the addresses serviced by the route. Students whose residences are serviced by the route will always have priority to daycare accommodations. **If you live 2 or more miles from school, you will not be assessed a transportation fee to and from your home address. However, if you request a transportation waiver, you will be assessed the transportation fee of \$255.00 per student with a \$510.00 family cap.**
2. Students will be picked-up and dropped-off at one consistent stop Monday through Friday. Designated stops will be determined based upon the location of students. Group stops will be utilized. The responsibility of escorting a child across the street when sidewalks are only on one side and/or where the bus stop is on the opposite side of the street shall rest with the parents/guardians of the student involved.
3. You may request another established bus stop, other than your house, upon approval of a transportation waiver and upon receipt of the transportation fee provided that:
  4. The stop is on a route scheduled for your child's school.
  5. The arrangement is permanent and the same for all days.
  6. There is space available on the bus.
  7. Also, for kindergarten students:
    8. Balancing of class size is the first priority for A.M. and P.M. session assignments for Kindergarten.
    9. If you are assigned an A.M. session, your waiver can only be waived to another A.M. session address.
    10. If you are assigned a P.M. session, your waiver can only be waived to another P.M. session address.
  11. In each case, availability of bus seats will be determined only after accommodating the addresses serviced by the routes.
12. Students whose residences are serviced by the route will always have priority to daycare accommodations.
13. Kindergarten AM/PM assignments are based upon the home address. Students will only be transported to another address within that same assigned session subject to the above criteria.

## **STUDENT TRANSPORTATION IN PRIVATE VEHICLES**

School buses will be used for the transportation of students participating in co-curricular or extracurricular activities. However, when buses are not available, private vehicles may be permitted to transport students to or from school activities that fall within the academic day or extend the school day provided all of the following conditions are met:

1. The driver will be required to complete a Department of Motor Vehicles Driving Record review.
2. The owner of the vehicle being used in transporting students must file evidence with the Superintendent of personal liability insurance coverage on the vehicle in the amounts of \$100,000 - \$300,000 or more.
3. The parents of students to be transported in this manner will be fully informed as to this means of transportation and will sign a statement to this effect.
4. The activity has the approval of the Superintendent of Schools.

## **BICYCLES/ROLLERBLADES/SCOOTERS**

Students in Grades 3-4 may ride their bicycles to and from school if they have obtained written permission from their parents/guardians. These notes will remain on file in the school office.

Massachusetts Law requires all children under the age of thirteen to wear a safety helmet when riding their bicycles. Students are expected to wear protective equipment (elbow pads, wrist pads, kneepads and a helmet) when rollerblading and riding scooters.

# INTEGRATED PRESCHOOL ADDENDUM

## **PHILOSOPHY OF THE ABINGTON INTEGRATED PRESCHOOL**

The philosophy of the integrated preschool grows from the belief that children learn best when they are able to practice developmental skills by playing and interacting with typically developing peers in a hands-on, concrete way. Through ongoing interactions with adults, other children, and their environment, preschoolers develop important social, motor, language and thinking skills.

Our curriculum is designed to meet the needs of all students utilizing a play-oriented approach. Lessons are implemented with attention to the developmental needs of all preschool-aged children, with emphasis given to meeting the individualized needs, interests and developmental levels of each child in the program.

The integrated preschool curriculum allows children to make choices about their activities based on their own interests. These activities are generally theme-based and are designed to challenge all levels of learners. The program follows a structured routine, allowing children to anticipate and plan for their day. However, schedules are flexible enough to allow for special events or extend a topic that is of extra interest to the students. Because the growth of large muscles and developing coordination is so critical at this stage of development, the program includes movement opportunities both in the gym and on the playground.

The curriculum is based on the *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences* and the NEAYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) definition of a developmental program. Areas of development that will be specifically addressed are:

- Social/Emotion Development
- Cognitive Development
- Language Development
- Gross/Fine Motor Development

## **ADMISSION PROCEDURE FOR PRESCHOOL**

In accordance with *Massachusetts General Law 603 CMR 28.06 (7)*, the Abington Public Schools Integrated Preschool Program is designed to meet the needs of Abington's special needs preschool population as well as provide a unique experience for other preschool children from the community to serve as typically developing peers. Children with special needs are referred for admissions through the Special Education Department of Abington Public Schools.

Applications for admission for typically developing peers (hereafter referred to as "peers") will be taken in the spring prior to intended attendance. Approximately 24 slots are available for peers each year. Should the number of peer applicants exceed the number of slots, a lottery system will be implemented.

To be eligible for admission, children must meet the following criteria:

- Peers must be three or four years of age and not eligible for entry to the Abington Kindergarten program.
- Peers must demonstrate skills within six months of age expectancy in the following areas: speech/language, cognition, gross/fine motor skills, and socialization/behavior skills.
- Peers must be toilet trained.

Peers will be screened during April for preschool readiness and the best possible match with the children with special needs. Class groupings are established to provide the optimal learning environment for each child, and therefore reflect a balance with respect to developmental skills. Additionally, the effect individual children will have on one another is considered. The ultimate responsibility for classroom assignments for typically developing peers is with the principal.

Children who do not meet criteria for admission during the initial screening will be scheduled for a second screening, to take place in the fall. Questions regarding the outcome of screenings should be directed to the principal.

### **PRESCHOOL APPLICATIONS**

Applications are accepted between December and February for the following September. Applications can be accessed through the Abington Public Schools website or be picked up at the Center School office. ***A COMPLETE APPLICATION AND REGISTRATION FEE IS REQUIRED TO RESERVE A SPACE IN THE PROGRAM.*** Applicants will be screened during April to determine readiness for the program for the following September.

### **ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN'S PROGRESS**

Children's progress and achievement is assessed and reported through daily observations, work samples, standardized tests, and biyearly progress reports. Conferences for parents/guardians of peers are held at the end of January. Team Meetings for children with special needs are held throughout the year in accordance with the children's IEP cycle.

If a classroom teacher is concerned about an area of a child's development, this may result in a referral for an evaluation. Please note that all referrals require advance permission from a parent/guardian.

### **PROGRAM EVALUATION**

Parental/Guardian input is integral to the success of the program. Comments and suggestions, both pros and cons, are welcome at any time. Additionally, an evaluation will be made available during January conferences.

### **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

The quality of the program is directly enhanced by the involvement of parents/guardians, grandparents, and other family members. Participation in the daily events of the school is encouraged and is permitted following the completion of a CORI. There are occasions when young children do not respond well to having their parents/guardians/family members in their learning space. In those cases, contributing to parties, preparation of classroom materials, and supplying recycled materials for center activities are additional ways adults may become involved.

Parent/guardian participation in the PTO is also strongly encouraged. Contact the Center School PTO for more information about meetings and involvement with the parent community.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Teachers value ongoing communication with parents/guardians. Classroom newsletters, email, communication books, phone calls, conferences, and shared discussions at arrival and dismissal are vehicles for keeping in touch with school personnel. However, because it can be challenging to speak with any one individual at length during arrival, dismissal or class time, parents/guardians are encouraged to make an appointment to discuss anything that requires more than a brief check-in.

## **BEHAVIOR/DISCIPLINE**

The majority of behavior difficulties amongst preschoolers occur because young children often lack the necessary skills to cope with frustrating situations. Teachers and staff examine the program on an ongoing basis to ensure the appropriateness of expectations and demands. Staff are trained in non-physical de-escalation techniques and are accountable to the State for reporting any physical interventions. Physical punishment, psychological coercion, threats, derogatory remarks, and withholding food and/or toileting opportunities are strictly prohibited. Inappropriate and maladaptive behaviors are addressed by redirection. A soothing, comfortable space is made available to children for calming purposes, as needed. Parents/guardians will be notified if a child's inappropriate behavior is continuous or poses a danger to her/him or others. In these circumstances, consequences will be determined on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the principal and other designated school/district personnel.

The discipline philosophy of the program is based upon the belief that children learn responsibility and respect when they are provided appropriate models and guidance. We know that children learn self-control when adults treat them with dignity and use discipline techniques such as:

1. Setting clear, consistent, and fair limits for classroom behavior
2. Learning to value mistakes as learning opportunities
3. Redirecting children to more acceptable behavior or activities
4. Praising children when they demonstrate more acceptable behavior
5. Listening when the children talk about their feelings and frustrations
6. Guiding children to resolve conflicts and model
7. Modeling skills that will help children solve their own problems
8. Reminding children of the classroom rules and their rationale

## **ABSENCES**

Regular attendance is strongly encouraged. However, to ensure the health and safety of all students, please reference the Abington Public Schools Elementary Handbook illness policy in deciding whether or not to send your child to school when s/he is not feeling well. If a child becomes ill during the school day, parents/guardians or emergency contacts will be called for pickup. Please call (781)982-2195 and leave a message if your child will be absent from school **and** send a note providing the reason for absence upon his/her return.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

Birthday celebrations are an opportunity to build children's self-esteem and self-awareness. As such, we encourage celebrations in the classroom. However, in keeping with district-wide wellness policy, party favors must be limited to non-edibles. Please notify your child's teacher in advance to make arrangements for a celebratory activity on your child's special day.

## **CLOTHING**

Each student should bring a complete change of clothes (top, pants, socks, and underwear) to be kept in school. Please put clothes in a plastic bag and label with your child's name. Wet or soiled clothes will be sent home, and a replacement set should be sent with your child the following day. During the wet season, please be sure students bring a comfortable pair of shoes to wear after removing their outside boots. Because students do go outside whenever possible, please be certain that the children are always dressed appropriately for the colder weather (e.g. coats, boots, hats, mittens). Smocks will be provided in the classrooms during multi-media activities (e.g. paint, glitter, glue). However, please note that accidents do happen and clothes may accidentally become soiled.

## **TOILETING**

Bathroom times are incorporated into the daily schedule. Children are also allowed to use the facilities on an as-needed basis, and will always be accompanied by a staff member. Children who require a change of clothing will be assisted, as needed. Soiled clothing will be sealed in a bag and sent home. If/when clothing is sent home, please supply the school with another change of clothes. All children should have an extra set of labeled clothing kept at school throughout the year.

## **OUTDOOR PLAY**

Outdoor play is an important part of our daily schedule. Children will go outside each day unless the wind chill is below 20 degrees Fahrenheit or the heat index is above 90 degrees Fahrenheit.

## **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

Drop-off occurs at the rear entrance to the building. Parents/guardians should park their cars and bring their children directly into the gymnasium/cafeteria where they will be met by staff. We encourage all parents/guardians to make a quick break at the door by giving a hug/kiss and saying goodbye. It is our experience that when children learn to separate quickly and consistently along with their classmates, they are much more comfortable making the transition from home to school. Morning students should arrive at 8:15 a.m., and afternoon students should arrive at 11:30 a.m. Students will be dismissed to their parents/guardians at 10:50 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. Due to the number of students being dropped-off and picked-up, it is important to be on time. If for some reason you will be late in meeting your child, please call the office and indicate your approximate time of arrival.

Transportation will not be provided for students attending the integrated preschool program, unless required by special education laws. Students with special needs requiring transportation will be met by staff members at the front entrance of the building.

If your child will be going home with someone other than her/his regular driver, please write a note to inform staff of the change. The individual will be required to provide identification at the time of pick-up. In case of an emergency, you may call the main office and leave a message. **No child will be dismissed from the school to an unknown caregiver without expressed parent/guardian permission and provision of appropriate identification.**

## **KINDERGARTEN WAIVER PROCESS**

In the event that a parent believes a child should be retained in preschool and/or wishes to postpone kindergarten, the following waiver process is available.

- Parent(s) meet with Principal to discuss the reasons for retention
- Principal provides parent(s) with a waiver packet and reviews the forms inside:
  - ESI-R Parent Questionnaire
  - Physician form
  - Preschool teacher form
  - Consent form allowing Center School staff or psychologist to speak with or observe at current preschool
- Parent(s) complete the packet and return it to Principal
- Waiver Committee meets to review all forms and information and makes recommendations to Center School Principal
- The school Principal notifies the parent(s) of the committee's decision via mail
- The ultimate decision regarding retention/kindergarten postponement is with the principal.

