
**Columbus
Elementary School
37 Hicks Avenue
Medford, Massachusetts
781-393-2177**

**Student Handbook
Reprinted for School Year 2011-12**

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Columbus Elementary School!

The faculty and I are eager to help make this year a successful and happy one for you and your child. The information provided in this handbook is designed to give you and your child some insight into the requirements, rules and regulations of the school. Please review the contents of the Handbook with your child. Knowing what is expected at the Columbus School will surely make you and your child more comfortable here. We can then all work together to achieve our academic and social goals

If you have questions or comments at any time during the year, please share them with us. Your child's teacher or I will try to respond within a day. We look forward to working with you and hope your experiences at the Columbus are enjoyable.

Mrs. Joan M. Yaeger, Principal

CONTACT INFORMATION

Main Number

781-393-2177 ext.3501 or 3502

Secretaries will connect you to teacher mailboxes or other offices

Mrs. Yaeger, Principal

781-393-2177 ext. 3506

jyaeger@medford.k12.ma.us

MEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS MISSION STATEMENT

The Medford Public Schools is a caring educational partnership of school, family and community designed to ensure that all students are afforded a safe and healthy learning environment in which they develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to reach their full academic and personal potential. This partnership is dedicated to providing all students with a 21st century education that will enable them to be life-long learners and contributors to a diverse and rapidly changing world.

COLUMBUS SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Columbus Elementary School is to provide every child with an education based on respect for self and others. The Columbus is a diverse school community that includes an English language support program and a K-5 Therapeutic Learning Program. The instructional focus of the Columbus promotes the ability to think clearly and creatively, to communicate effectively, and to develop a lifelong curiosity and love of learning. It is our hope that with the development of these skills our children will become happy, productive, responsible citizens of the 21st century.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Medford Public Schools insures against discrimination in education programs and employment on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation and disability.

Do not hesitate to call the Office of the Superintendent of Schools if you have any questions or concerns: 781-393-2442.

MASSACHUSETTS COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (MCAS)

The MCAS is designed to meet the requirements of the Education Reform Law of 1993. The law specifies that the testing program must:

- Test *all* public school students in Massachusetts, including students with disabilities and English language learners;
- Measure performance based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework learning standards;
- Report on the performance of individual students, schools, and districts;
- Hold schools and districts accountable, on a yearly basis, for the progress they have made toward the objective of the No Child Left Behind Law that all students be proficient in Reading and Mathematics by 2014.

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT

The Federal *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* requires school districts that receive Title I funding to notify parents of their right to know the professional qualifications of the classroom teachers who instruct their child.

As a recipient of these funds, the Medford Public schools will provide you with this information in a timely manner if you request it.

COLUMBUS PTO

PTO Mission Statement

The mission of the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) is to support the ongoing academic and social/emotional education of all Columbus School students. We will accomplish this by working together to

- Support the educational process.
- Organize family events that promote community.
- Promote fundraising that will provide cultural and educational enrichment programs for students.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT COUNCIL

The School Improvement Council meets monthly during the school year to develop a School Improvement Plan. The council is composed of nine members:

- ✓ Mrs. Joan M. Yaeger, Principal, Chairperson
- ✓ Three staff members elected by the faculty
- ✓ Four parent members elected by the parents
- ✓ Community Representative

Nominations are accepted and elections are held in September. Please call Mrs. Yaeger if you are interested in being nominated for the council. 781-393-2177 ext. 3506

ARRIVAL

Arrival time is 8:30 a.m. Children will be marked tardy after 8:40 a.m. Any child arriving after 8:40 must enter through the front door and be signed in. Students should not arrive prior to 8:15 a.m.

Students should line up at their designated grade assigned spots in the play area upon arrival. All students and parents who walk should cross at crosswalks only.

Students arriving by bus should depart the bus and line up at their designated grade assignment spots.

Parents driving students should pull as far up as possible in the drop-off zone and remain in the vehicle while children exit on the curbside and proceed to the play area.

Any parent/guardian needing to enter the school must use the front entrance and sign in at the Main Office.

DISMISSAL

Dismissal time is 2:35 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday and 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday.

Students will be dismissed from the East Albion St. side of the school. Parents/guardians are to wait for their children on the upper level of the play area or on the East Albion St. sidewalk. Students are to cross only in the crosswalks. Dismissal from the front entrance of the school is restricted to children riding on school provided transportation. This is for safety reasons and will be enforced. Students traveling by bus will line up in the cafeteria and wait for their bus to pull up in front of the school and then board the bus.

REMINDER

Children are not allowed in the playgrounds before school or at dismissal time unless accompanied by a parent who is responsible for the child's safety.

ABSENCES / EARLY DISMISSAL

A signed note from the parent/guardian is required following a student's absence from school. Please call the school nurse if a student has been absent for 3 days. If the student is out for longer than 5 days, a physician's note is requested before the student may return to school. Frequent absences negatively impact instruction. Family vacations must be scheduled when school is not in session.

If a student needs to be dismissed prior to the end of the school day, a signed note from the parent/guardian should be brought in to school and given to the classroom teacher. The parent/guardian is required to come to the Main Office and sign an early dismissal form. Students should not be dismissed without a valid reason, as missed classroom time is an educational opportunity denied the student.

VISITOR POLICY

All visitors to the Columbus Elementary School must use the front entrance and sign in at the Main Office. School personnel will direct all visitors to their appropriate destination.

SCHOOL CANCELLATIONS

Any announcements of school cancellations will be aired on television channels 4, 5, 7, and 15. They will also be broadcast on the following radio stations: WRKO 680; WBZ 1030; WEEI 850; WCOP 980; WMEX 1410; WHIL 1430; WEZE 1260. Additionally Mrs. Yaeger will make a "Connect-Ed" phone call to all families in the school data base.

BUS RULES

Transportation by school bus is considered a privilege by the School Department. Appropriate behavior on the buses is expected from all students. These rules apply to bus use for field trips/extracurricular activities as well as for transportation to and from school.

- 1. Be at the bus stop early.**
The bus driver may not see you running for the bus if you are late. You could slip and fall.
- 2. Wait for the bus in a safe place.**
Stay on the sidewalk because a car could hit you if you are in the road.
- 3. Leave room for the bus doors to open.**
When the bus arrives, stand back and do not crowd. The bus doors open out.
- 4. Sit down as soon as possible.**
There may be other people waiting to get on.
- 5. Stay seated at all times.**
Take off your backpack and put it on your lap. Buses are designed for three to a seat.
- 6. Keep hands, arms and head inside the bus at all times.**
A bus is wider than a car and it get very close to trees and poles. You could be seriously injured.

BUS RULES (continued)

7. **Do not eat or drink on the bus.**
Cleanliness and safety are important concerns.
8. **Listen to the bus driver and follow directions.**
The bus driver's instructions are for your safety.
9. **Leave the bus carefully, using the handrail.**
Hold on to the rail because you could fall.
10. **Take 10 giant steps in front of the bus before crossing in front of it.**
You should be able to see the driver's face. Remember, if you can't see his face, he cannot see you.
11. **Wait for the bus driver's signal before crossing the road.**
Your driver will signal you when it is safe to cross.
12. **Look both ways before crossing the road.**
Check the road yourself. The driver may not see everything.
13. **Stay away from the bus if you drop or forget something.**
NEVER go back to pick up something in the road. Get an adult to get it for you. If you forget something on the bus, you can always get it later. The bus driver can't see you if you are too close to the front of the bus.
14. **Riding the school bus is a privilege. Failure to obey the rules could result in a warning, detention or a loss of that privilege.**

The following disciplinary action will be taken when a student misbehaves on the bus:

- First infraction -- Student will be spoken to directly by the Principal.
- Second infraction -- Student's parent/guardian will be called.
- Third infraction -- May result in a 1-5 day suspension of bus privileges.
- Subsequent infraction(s) -- May result in student's bus privilege being permanently revoked.

SECURITY

The Columbus Elementary School will keep all doors locked after students enter at 8:30. Anyone needing to enter the building must use the front entrance and go directly to the Main Office to sign in.

Students in grades 1-5 will be assigned a school locker. Locks are not permitted on these lockers and remain the property of the Medford Public Schools. When deemed appropriate school system personnel may inspect a student's locker.

SAFETY / PARKING

Student safety is one of the highest priorities of the Columbus Elementary School. All students and parents should follow the posted signs for walking and parking, cross only within the white painted crosswalks, and follow all rules directed by crossing guards, security guards and school personnel on duty. Please observe the posted 10 miles per hour speed limit.

In case of a fire drill students will exit the building according to the designated plan per classroom. Most classes will assemble in Columbus Park.

Parents/guardians are expected to park in the parking lot at Columbus Park and walk their student to the play area. Parking in front of the school or in the drop off area is not permitted.

Please note that the side parking lot, adjacent to the school, is reserved for STAFF ONLY before and during school hours. We ask that parents **PLEASE RESPECT** this policy.

REMINDER

State laws require all drivers and passengers to wear seat belts in moving cars, that children under age 6 use approved car seats, and that children age 12 and under ride in the back seat for safety.

HEALTH INFORMATION

Please visit the school nurse website at www.medford.k12.ma.us.health. Important guidelines, helpful links, upcoming events and forms can be found and downloaded.

A school nurse is on duty every day. Physical examinations are required for any student new to the Medford Public School system. State law requires that all immunizations be up to date. Students who do not comply with this law will not be allowed to attend school. Immunizations can be obtained from your family physician/pediatrician or the City Hall Clinic. Please call 781-393-2449 for operating hours and procedures. Medical clearance must be obtained through the School Department Health Office at Medford High School.

Vision and hearing screening tests will be done annually by the school nurse. The school nurse will also provide a postural screening each year for students in grade 5.

It is imperative that parents/guardians notify the school of all injuries or extended illnesses affecting their children's ability to attend school. Home tutoring may be available for long-term absences.

In accordance with School Committee policy, parents/guardians are required to contact the school nurse for the proper procedure before a student who requires the use of crutches or other assistive devices may attend school.

If a student is unable to participate in physical education classes for medical reasons, a doctor's note must be submitted to the nurse for reentry into the physical education program.

HEALTH GUIDELINES

The following guidelines should be followed when determining whether your child is well enough to participate in the school program.

Keep your child home if he/she has:

FEVER - Children may not attend schools with a temperature over 99.6°F. Children should be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school.

RASH - Any rash of unknown cause or a rash that is blistered or has discharge. Children need to be rash free or bring a physician's certificate stating they are not contagious.

PINK EYE - Conjunctivitis needs to be seen and treated by the physician. Signs of pink eye include red, itchy eyes often accompanied by a yellow discharge.

VOMITING or DIARRHEA - If your child has either vomiting or diarrhea the evening before school he/she should remain home the next day.

COUGH - Students who are unable to sleep due to cough or students who have a productive cough.

NASAL DISCHARGE - Any discharge that is not clear (yellow, greenish).

MEDICATIONS

If a student requires medication to be given during the school day, the parent/guardian must contact the school nurse to be advised of the proper procedure. In accordance with state law, no school personnel except the school nurse may dispense medication of any kind to students. Students may not take medication on their own while at school, nor may students transport any medication to or from school. Parents/guardians must transport all required medications.

ALLERGIES

The school nurse must be notified if a child suffers from a food, medication or environmental allergy or requires the use of an epi-pen. Please contact the school nurse if your child requires the use of an epi-pen so that an appropriate plan of care may be developed.

MEAL TIMES & COSTS

We are very fortunate to have the **UNIVERSAL BREAKFAST PROGRAM** at the Columbus School. All children are encouraged to participate in the program at no cost. Breakfast is provided to the children at 8:35 in each classroom. Breakfast consists of a grain product (for example cereal, muffin, or breakfast bar), a dairy product (milk), and a fruit (juice, fresh or sliced fruit). Please encourage your child to participate in this voluntary program.

Lunch is served in three shifts each day; 11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.; 12:05 p.m. – 12:35 p.m.; 12:40 p.m. – 1:10 p.m..

The cost of a full lunch, including milk and fruit or vegetable, is \$2.35 daily, and the reduced price is \$0.40.

Lunch tickets may be purchased in quantity on Tuesdays and Thursdays: 5 tickets for \$11.75. Lunch may also be purchased daily for \$2.35.

Menus for the upcoming month are distributed to all students during the last week of the month. Application forms for reduced fee meals are distributed at the beginning of each school year, and are also available at the Main Office or from the Parent Information Center at Medford High School, Room B100, 781-393-2130.

Students are expected to act appropriately in the cafeteria and respect all lunchroom personnel. All students are expected to clean up after themselves and dispose of all trash in the appropriate receptacles.

A single snack may be brought to school to be eaten during the morning. Students may also bring a bottle of water to drink as needed during the day. Cans and glass containers are not permitted.

Students are discouraged from bringing peanut butter products for snack and/or lunch due to the prevalence of peanut butter allergies. Students who do bring these products will be asked to sit at the 'PEANUT BUTTER TABLE' at lunch time as a safety measure for all students.

REMINDER

Students should not share food brought from home because of the possibility of food-based allergies. Food may not be sent to class to celebrate a child's birthday.

DRESS CODE

It is the expectation of the M.P.S. and the Medford School Committee that students will come to school appropriately dressed. This includes clothes that are appropriate for safety, the time of year, and weather conditions. On cold days all students should come to school with a coat/jacket, hat, and gloves/mittens. Clothing deemed inappropriate by the school administration - because of offensive language or artwork, because it is unsafe (backless and high-heeled shoes) or because it is too revealing, etc. - will be restricted. 'Heelies' and flip-flops are not allowed at school. Open toe sandals must have a back strap and be worn with socks for safety on the stairs and playground.

DISCIPLINE CODE

All students are required to treat other children and staff as well as the school building, grounds and materials with respect and will be held responsible for their actions. This code of discipline has been developed to provide all students with a positive and safe educational environment.

PHASE I

A serious conduct violation refers the student to the main office. Appropriate disciplinary action will be determined by the administration and may include:

1. Referral to classroom teacher.
2. After school detention.
3. Loss of building privileges, i.e. assemblies, recess, intramurals, field trips, extra-curricular activities
4. Parental notification and/or conference
5. Unsatisfactory notation in general conduct

DISCIPLINE CODE (continued)

PHASE II— Level 1 Suspension

Certain serious or chronic offenses may necessitate more stringent disciplinary action. These offenses may include:

1. Habitual tardiness
2. Fighting and/or threatening behavior
3. Offensive or obscene language or gestures
3. Defacing of school property
4. Forgery
5. Insubordination to school staff
6. Disrespect

Please understand that physical violence of any type will not be tolerated at the Columbus School. We must respect each other and no form of physical contact is acceptable.

THERE WILL BE ABSOLUTELY NO EXCEPTIONS TO THESE GUIDELINES. STUDENTS MUST BE PICKED UP FROM SCHOOL IMMEDIATELY AFTER SUCH AN OCCURRENCE.

Students not conforming to this policy may be suspended from school for periods of one day to five days depending on the nature of the offense and the frequency of the same.

These rules apply before school, walking to or from school, on buses and vans, in all classes and lunch, as well as on field trips and during special events.

PHASE III—Level 2 Suspension or Expulsion

All major violations, as determined by the Medford School Committee, may be subjected to Level II suspension or expulsion. Such violations include: arson, assault, battery, explosives (fireworks, etc.), drugs, alcohol, extortion, blackmail, coercion, larceny-theft, vandalism, intimidation of school personnel and any violations of city ordinances and the general laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Level II suspension is up to ten (10) days and all such violations will be reported to the Superintendent of Schools. Recommendations for expulsion are handled through the Superintendent. These procedures and policies have been mandated by the Medford School Committee. The administration will respond to any behavior which interferes with the academic decorum or threatens the safety of any student. Refer to the Weapons Policy of the Medford Public Schools.

A suspension includes exclusion from **all** school related/sponsored activities.

603 R sect.46.00 RESTRAINT POLICY

The Medford Public Schools complies with the provisions of 603 CMR sect. 46.00 dealing with restraint of students in the public schools. To that end, the policy developed pursuant to those regulations is available upon request from the Principal, the Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services, and the Superintendent's Office. Further, the policy is posted (identify location).

PERSONAL PROPERTY

Personal property should remain at home with the exception of those items needed for classroom use. This includes toys, all electronic materials, etc. Bicycles, scooters, roller blades, roller-skates, skateboards, etc. are not allowed in the Columbus Elementary School.

PLEASE NOTE: Beepers, cell phones and electronic games are not permitted.

PLAYGROUND USE

All students should act in an appropriate manner when using the outdoor play equipment. Equipment is age appropriate and students should use the areas designated for their grade level. Parents/guardians wishing to use the playground before or after school understand that they are solely responsible for supervising their child/children. Children **MUST** be accompanied by a parent in the playground before and after school.

REMINDER

Parents/guardians and students are reminded that the rules about acceptable behavior within the school apply to the playground, school grounds, and pedestrian walkways as well. Students are expected to be respectful and courteous to each other at all times. Behaviors which are unacceptable in school -- such as play fighting, pushing, bullying, verbal taunting, etc. -- will not be tolerated outside the school building or on the way to/from school. We ask for parents/guardians' cooperation in bringing any infractions of these rules to the attention of the administration.

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Information is available in the office regarding after-school programs at each elementary school. The Columbus also offers short term after-school clubs. A list of clubs and fees is sent home several times during the school year.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Participation in extra-curricular activities is a privilege available to students. Students whose attendance, punctuality or conduct is problematic may lose that privilege.

ACCESSIBILITY OF EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The provision of equal educational opportunities shall guide all decision-making related to school district facilities, selection of educational materials, equipment, curriculum, and regulations affecting students. The district shall make reasonable accommodations for students with identified physical and mental impairments that constitute disabilities, consistent with the requirements of federal and state laws and regulations.

Medford Public Schools ensures that all of Medford's students have equal access to extracurricular activities, including intramural and interscholastic sports, clubs, and school activities sponsored by the district. Extracurricular activities or clubs sponsored by the school do not exclude students on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, or homelessness.

Extracurricular programs are routinely examined and to make sure that program organizers provide reasonable accommodations for students with identified physical and mental impairments that constitute disabilities, consistent with the requirements of federal and state laws and regulations. The District also ensures equal access for students with disabilities to after school activities such as clubs, sports, or evening activities and will provide, as recommended by the IEP Team appropriate services to enable this participation. Students, who are receiving education in out-of-District facilities, as recommended by the IEP Team, shall also have an equal opportunity to participate in these activities, as deemed appropriate to meet their individualized needs.

GRADING

Grade K uses the following reporting system: C = Consistent; D = Developing; E = Emerging; N = Not Yet, O=Not Introduced

Kindergarten progress reports are issued twice a year: mid-term and June. Parents/guardians must schedule a teacher conference to receive their student's mid-term report card.

Progress reports are issued to students in grades 1-5 three times a year; December, March and June. Report cards use the following reporting system: 1=Not Meeting Grade Level Standards, 2=Progressing Toward the Grade level Standards, 3=Meets the Grade Level Standards, 4=Exceeds the Grade Level Standards. Parents/guardians must schedule a teacher conference to receive their student's first progress report.

TEACHER CONFERENCES

All parents/guardians will meet with teachers for a conference to receive the first progress report of the school year. If a parent/guardian needs a conference with a teacher at any time during the school year, a note should be sent to the individual teacher. This will enable the teacher to contact the parent/guardian and arrange a convenient appointment.

HOMEWORK & AGENDA BOOKS

Homework is usually assigned four evenings per week, Monday through Thursday. All students are expected to complete any assigned homework, including any assignments that were missed because of absence. Agenda books are distributed to students in grades 3, 4, and 5 in order for them to develop an organized way of remembering their assignments and informing parents/guardians of these assignments. Parents/guardians are expected to sign the agenda books nightly and are encouraged to use them as a way to communicate with teachers.

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to promote literacy with their children. Students should read each night either out loud with their parents, parents reading to them or children reading silently to themselves.

LIBRARY PROCEDURE

The Columbus School will share a librarian with the three other elementary schools. Parent volunteers will help keep the library accessible during school hours. Schedules will be worked out with classroom teachers.

Each student may check out one book at a time, which is due during the class's next library visit. All books must be returned to school on the date they are due. Parents will be notified if books are overdue. If books are lost, reimbursement for the cost of the book will be requested.

Parents/guardians: If you would like to visit the library please contact the librarian for times and dates. Any parent who wishes to volunteer in the library, please contact a member of the PTO or Mrs. Yaeger.

MEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS SYSTEM WIDE POLICIES

IMPORTANT: The following section highlights Medford Public Schools' System wide Policies that most concern elementary students at this time. Policies will be added as necessary. We suggest that parents/guardians use their discretion in sharing this information with young children, as some of the references to such topics as substance abuse and/or weapons may be frightening or confusing. Please note, however, that these policies do apply at every grade level and should be taken seriously by all Medford students and their parents/guardians.

WEAPON POLICY

On motion of Mr. Skerry:

Voted: That the Proposed Revised Weapon Policy submitted by Mr. Buckley be adopted effective September, 1996:

A. *Elementary School*

WEAPONS: "Students that sell, possess, or carry weapons to school may be expelled. The weapons are to include, but are not limited to knives, firearms and clubs. Also, students may be expelled or suspended for other serious violations such as: arson, assault, battery, explosives (including fireworks), possession or selling drugs, alcohol, extortion, blackmail, coercion, larceny-theft, vandalism, intimidation of school personnel. These rules apply to elementary and after hours activities. The staff may utilize metal detectors consistent with the Medford Public School Policy."

B. *Middle School*

WEAPONS: "Students that sell, possess, or carry weapons to school may be expelled. The weapons are to include, but are not limited to, knives, firearms and clubs. Also, students may be expelled or suspended for other serious violations such as: arson, assault, battery, explosives (including fireworks), possession or selling drugs, alcohol, extortion, blackmail, coercion, larceny-theft, vandalism, intimidation of school personnel. These rules apply to middle school, and after hours activities. The school staff may utilize metal detectors consistent with the Medford Public School policy. Penalty for the first offense shall be suspension for not less than fifteen (15) days and/or possible expulsion. Penalty for the second offense shall be mandatory expulsion."

C. *High School*

WEAPONS: "Students that sell, possess, or carry weapons shall be expelled. The weapons are to include, but are not limited to, knives, firearms and clubs. Also, students may be expelled or suspended for other serious violations such as: arson, assault, battery, explosives (including fireworks), possession or selling drugs, alcohol, extortion, blackmail, coercion, larceny-theft, vandalism, intimidation of school personnel. These rules apply to high school and after hours activities. The staff may utilize metal detectors consistent with the Medford Public School policy."

IN ALL CASES, PRINCIPAL WILL HAVE A HEARING TO REVIEW FACTS OF WEAPONS VIOLATION INCIDENT. Decisions of the Principal to EXPEL can be appealed to the Superintendent of Schools, pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 71, Sec.37H.

HARASSMENT POLICY

Medford Public Schools will not allow any student to be a target of harassment. This applies in or around the school building, at lunch, hallways, on the athletic fields, at all school sponsored events and on school buses. The Medford Public Schools Harassment and Prevention Policy was developed to ensure that the educational opportunities of all students are not threatened or limited by such harassment and to ensure that individuals are free to learn and develop relationships without fear of intimidation, humiliation or degradation. Harassment can include any form of behavior that interferes with another person's sense of safety, dignity, or productivity in the school environment. Harassment based on a person's race, color, national origin, religion, age, disability or sexual orientation is unlawful and prohibited.

If you feel you have been a target of harassment, please talk to a school counselor about this matter or see the Principal who can assist you in filing a complaint form. Once the complaint is thoroughly investigated, student(s) aggressors may be subject to disciplinary action. Harassment incidents may result in a wide range of consequences, including but not limited, to a conference with parents, detentions, suspension, expulsion from school and contact with the Medford Police Department depending on the nature of the harassment. A parent/student reentry meeting to school is mandatory if you are involved in the harassment of another student(s).

Mr. Frank Howard (781) 393-2288 is the Medford Public Schools designated Harassment Coordinator.

CIVIL RIGHTS POLICY

The Medford Public Schools do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex or handicap in admission to, access to, treatment in or employment in its programs and activities. The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies and may be contacted for assistance or specific additional information:

Office of Human Diversity & Compliance City of Medford Medford City Hall, Room 214 Medford, Massachusetts 02155 (781) 393-2501	Special Education Director Medford Public Schools 489 Winthrop Street Medford, Massachusetts 02155 (781) 393-2229	Superintendent of Schools 489 Winthrop Street Medford, Massachusetts 02155 781-393-2442
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CIVIL RIGHTS LEGISLATION

Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

Prohibits discrimination, exclusion from participation, and denial of benefits on the basis of disability in the areas of employment.

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

Prohibits discrimination, exclusion from participation, and denial of benefits on the basis of disability in the areas of education programming and activities.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Prohibits discrimination, exclusion from participation, and denial of benefits based on race, color and national origin.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

Prohibits discrimination, exclusion from participation, and denial of benefits in educational programs based on sex.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Prohibits discrimination, exclusion from participation, and denial of benefits based on disability.

Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 76, Section 5

Prohibits discrimination in all public schools on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, religion and sexual orientation.

Inquiries concerning the application of nondiscrimination policies may also be referred to the Regional Director, Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, J.W. McCormack P.O.C.H., Room 222, Boston, MA 02109-4557.

ADA / SECTION 504 POLICY

The Medford Public Schools, in compliance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), do not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to, access to, or operations of programs and services. The Medford Public Schools do not discriminate on the basis of disability in hiring and employment practices.

Further information on the City of Medford's specific efforts to comply with the ADA and Section 504, can be obtained from the Superintendent of Schools as well as:

Office of Human Diversity & Compliance City of Medford Medford City Hall, Room 214 Medford, Massachusetts 02155 (781) 393-2501	Special Education Director Medford Public Schools 489 Winthrop Street Medford, Massachusetts 02155 (781) 393-2229
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The Medford Public Schools will provide auxiliary aids upon request to people with disabilities who need such aids for effective communication in the schools' activities, programs and services, if you need such assistance, please notify the appropriate department head or the ADA Coordinator or Section 504 Coordinator. Please make such requests at least two weeks in advance. This will help reduce any difficulty which may be experienced in obtaining certain auxiliary aids and services.

This notice is available in alternative formats (such as ASCII computer diskette, Braille and audiotape) from the ADA Coordinator.

DISCIPLINE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

All students are expected to meet the requirements for conduct and behavior as set forth in this student handbook. In addition to those due process protections afforded to all students, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and related regulations provide eligible students or those the District knows or has reason to know might be eligible for such services with certain procedural rights and protections in the context of student discipline. Students who have been found to have a disability that substantially limits a major life activity, as defined under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, must also be afforded these increased procedural protections. Procedural Safeguards are required to be provided to these students prior to imposing discipline that will result in the student's removal for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or ten (10) cumulative school days (if constituting a change in placement) in a single school year. The following additional requirements apply to the discipline of students with disabilities:

The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for a student must indicate whether the student can be expected to meet the regular discipline code of the school or whether the code should be modified due to the student's disability.

In general, special education students may be excluded from their programs, just as any other student can be, for up to ten (10) school days per year. However, when a special education student is excluded from his/her program for more than ten school days in the school year, the student's Special Education Team must develop a functional behavioral assessment plan. In many instances, the Team also may be required to determine whether the student's behavior was related to his/her disability, a "manifestation determination."

If the Team determines the behavior was not related to the student's disability, the school may discipline the student according to the school's code of student conduct, except that the district must continue to provide the student with educational services during the period of suspension or expulsion. However, if the Team determines that the behavior was related to the disability, the student may not be excluded from the current educational placement (except in the case of weapons or drugs) until the Team develops and the parent(s) consent to a new IEP.

In the event, a student possesses, uses, sells or solicits a controlled substance or possesses a weapon at school or a school function, a school may place a student in an interim alternative education setting for up to 45 calendar days. Hearing officers may also order the placement of a student in an appropriate interim setting for up to 45 days upon determination that the current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others.

When a parent disagrees with the Team's decision on the "manifestation determination" or with a decision regarding placement, the parent has the right to request an expedited due process hearing from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals. Additional information regarding the procedural protections for special education students can be obtained from the Pupil Services office (781) 393-2229.

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL POLICY

GOALS

The Medford Public Schools wish to provide the optimum learning environment for our community of learners and therefore the Medford Public Schools promote a substance-free atmosphere. However, the Medford Public School System recognizes that certain individuals use/abuse drugs and alcohol. The use of these substances poses a potential danger to the individual using as well as the entire student body and staff. This policy recognizes the importance of a three-pronged approach to drug and alcohol use: prevention, enforcement, and rehabilitation.

The policy pertains to all vehicles while under school jurisdiction; all school facilities, school grounds and all school-sponsored functions and events regardless of their location. State law mandates that anyone within 1,000 feet of a school building convicted of possessing drugs with intent to distribute or actually distributing receive a mandatory two-year jail sentence. School lockers, desks and all other school fixtures are considered school property. The school system reserves the right to conduct periodic inspection of all school property.

DEFINITION OF DRUGS

The term drug includes all illegal drugs. It also includes over-the-counter medication, prescription medication, inhalants, or any substance that has not received medical clearance from the school health office for use by a specific student.

POLICY

Students with legitimate medical needs must be identified and cleared in the health office. Any student needing to take medication must follow the Medford Public Schools Medication Policy. No student can transport medication to school as per policy. Any illegal use of drugs and/or the misuse of prescribed or over-the-counter medications as defined in the Medford Public Schools Medication Policy constitutes abuse.

No person shall possess, have under his/her control, sell, dispense, purchase, administer, transport, be in the presence of, possess with intent to sell, or conceal alcohol or any controlled drug or any substance represented to be a drug or alcohol. No person shall ingest, inject, inhale, or otherwise introduce into the human body nor be under the influence of any drug or alcohol. No person shall possess, have under his/her control, sell, dispense, purchase, transport, possess with intent to sell, or conceal any drug paraphernalia or objects used for the containment or dispensing of alcohol.

Student athletes/cheerleaders and a parent/guardian of each must attend a mandatory chemical awareness session prior to the start of each season as a requirement of eligibility.

On an annual basis all students will sign an acknowledgment of having read the drug and alcohol policy after they have done so. School property, including lockers, may be periodically checked for drugs/alcohol at the discretion of the administration when there is reasonable suspicion of a violation of school rules. Students will not be allowed access to their cars/vehicles during the school day unless accompanied by a school official.

PREVENTION

The comprehensive health curriculum shall address the issues of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco throughout a student's academic experience. A variety of age-appropriate methods will be used; including, but not limited to, the established core curriculum, DARE, specific tobacco programs, and CASPAR (Alcohol/Drug Education). Tobacco education and tobacco cessation programs will be offered during the school year. The school will provide training and review of its drug/alcohol policies each year to all staff. Chemical awareness programs will be offered to all parents annually.

Local law enforcement, with approval of the principal or his/her designee, may periodically provide assistance in maintaining a drug/alcohol free environment. This may include both announced and unannounced visits by the canine drug detection unit in accordance with procedures promulgated by the Middlesex District Attorney's Office.

DEFINITION OF ABUSE

Students are not allowed to possess any drug or medication in school. Students who need inhalers, insulin, and epi-pens must be identified by the health office as having permission to carry their medication. Any illegal use of drugs and/or the misuse of prescribed or over-the-counter medications as defined in the Medford Public Schools Medication Policy constitutes abuse. Any use of alcohol, including medications containing alcohol, is forbidden and considered abuse.

DEFINITION OF SUSPICION

Suspicion is defined as: Recognition that a student's or individual's behavior or appearance is out of the ordinary, with or without evidence.

POLICY ENFORCEMENT

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in this handbook (*policy*).

Any student who poses an immediate threat to the safety of himself/herself or others will be suspended regardless of their regular/special education status. Additional provisions are made for individual students who have been found to need an Individual Education Plan. The Individual Education Plan of all students must state whether the student is able to meet the discipline code or if some modification is needed. A representative of the special education department will participate/advise in the disciplinary procedures for students with IEPs to interpret all modifications of the IEP and pertinent legal issues. Students without a modified discipline code shall be subject to the discipline outlined below.

Any staff member who suspects that a student is in violation of the school drug/alcohol policy is required to report the situation immediately to the appropriate administrator of that building (Submaster, Assistant Principal, Assistant Director, Principal, or Director) for evaluation. The appropriate administrator is then responsible to notify the school resource officer or designee. Staff members must be assured of confidentiality in reporting.

It is recommended that one individual in each building be identified as the appropriate administrator. The appropriate administrator must report all incidents, regardless of severity or outcome, in writing to the head administrator. If the administrator determines probable ingestion of drugs or alcohol, the student must be escorted to the health office for medical evaluation. If the nurse determines the student must be medically evaluated, the student will be transported via ambulance to the nearest medical facility.

When there are reasonable grounds to believe or where facts and circumstances give rise to reasonable suspicion that a person has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school as outlined in this policy and that a search will turn up evidence, a search conducted by school officials will be permissible if its scope is reasonably related to the objectives of the search.

The Medford Public Schools have a Memorandum of Agreement with the Medford Police. Any student found to be in violation of the policy must be reported to the school resource officer or police designee.

In the case of medical emergencies, the health office will notify the parent/guardian. The administrator in charge will handle all other communications between the school and parent/guardian.

VIOLATION

Notwithstanding the possibility of expulsion, the following disciplinary policy is recommended. The principal reserves the right to increase the penalty, based on the circumstances of each case.

First Offense

The school administrator notifies the school resource officer or designee. A student in violation will be suspended for three days. The student will be immediately removed from the school by parent/guardian or transported to the nearest medical facility if necessary. Social probation will be imposed for one month. *

Reentry must be accompanied by medical evidence that the student is drug/alcohol free. ** The Director of Guidance will refer the student to an in-house counselor for continued follow-up and monitoring of the treatment plan. The parent/guardian must meet with school administration to discuss a specific plan for the student, including monitoring of behavior as well as treatment.

Second Offense within One Year of First Violation

The police resource officer (or designee) is notified. A student in violation will be suspended for six days. The student will immediately be removed from the school by parent/guardian or transported to the nearest medical facility if necessary. Social probation will be imposed for two months.*

Reentry must be accompanied by medical evidence that the student is drug/alcohol free. ** The parent/guardian must agree to enroll said student in an outpatient drug/alcohol treatment program. The student must agree to adhere to the treatment plan recommended by the program. The Director of Guidance will refer the student to an in-house counselor for continued follow-up and monitoring of the treatment program. Failure to meet the treatment program requirements will result in an exclusionary hearing.

Third Offense within One Year of First Violation

The police resource officer (or designee) is notified. A student in violation will be suspended indefinitely, minimum of ten days, until an exclusionary hearing takes place. The social probation period will be indefinite.

DISTRIBUTING

If a student is found to be selling, distributing or in possession of a quantity sufficient to be charged with the intent to distribute drugs or alcohol, the Principal or designee will immediately notify the parent and the police for mandatory removal of the student. There will be Out of School Suspension and possible exclusion by the Principal. The police will take appropriate action under the law regarding the sale of drugs in proximity to school buildings. An incident report must be completed and forwarded to the head administrator.

- *Social Probation - Violation of the drug/alcohol policy is a serious infraction of the Code of Discipline in the Medford Public Schools. Students will lose the privilege of attending all school-sponsored events for the duration indicated. Seniors in violation of the drug/alcohol code will jeopardize participation in graduation exercises.
- **Medical Evidence—The parent/guardian is ultimately responsible for the medical clearance of a student.

CONFISCATED DRUGS/ALCOHOL/PARAPHERNALIA

All confiscated drugs/alcohol or paraphernalia must be immediately turned over to the police resource officer or his/her designee. A receipt should be obtained.

REHABILITATION

The Medford Public School System is committed to the academic achievement of all students. A student who is experiencing difficulty with drugs/alcohol will be supported through health services, counseling services, and administration. The school system will make every attempt to provide parent/guardian with referral for available community resources. The schools will annually review all policies and health curriculum to discourage students from engaging in risk-taking behaviors and encourage positive, healthy, life choices.

All students are encouraged to see their counselor, nurse, or police resource officer if they feel they are in need of assistance with alcohol or drugs. The school's support services will assist students to receive appropriate referrals.

The implementation of this policy will utilize all applicable due process, statutes, regulations, and guidelines.

PREGNANCY POLICY

Medford Public Schools wishes to encourage pregnant or parenting students to complete the free and public education to which they are entitled. While pregnancy is not an illness, it is a short-term condition (like other short term conditions) that may impact a student's ability to function optimally in the school environment.

The school administration will request verification from a pregnant student's physician to ensure that they are receiving necessary prenatal care. The school administration may seek a release to speak with such the student's physician so that needed accommodations may be made to benefit this special population of students. Examples of such accommodations may include, but are not limited to, modifications of physical education, elevator pass or vocational school program adjustments (avoiding chemicals, etc.). However, the district does not require a pregnant student to obtain the certification of a physician that the student is physically and emotionally able to continue in school

Students who suspect they may be pregnant will be treated in a confidential manner in the health office. The school nurse will assist the student to receive the necessary health care.

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

Every effort will be made to see that the educational program of the student is disrupted as little as possible; that health counseling services, as well as instruction, are offered; that return to school after leave is encouraged; and that every opportunity to complete high school is provided.

BULLYING & CYBER-BULLYING POLICY GUIDELINES

It is the policy of the Medford Public Schools to provide a learning environment that is free from bullying and cyber-bullying (similar policies exist and define sexual harassment and hazing). It is a violation of this policy for any student to engage in bullying or cyber-bullying, or for any employee of the Medford Public Schools to condone or fail to report acts of bullying or cyber-bullying that they witness or become aware of (i) on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds; (ii) at school-sponsored or school-related activities, functions or programs, whether on or off school grounds; (iii) at school bus stops; (iv) on school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the school district; or (v) through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school district.

It is also a violation of this policy for any student to engage in bullying or cyber-bullying at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the school district, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or orderly operation of the school, as determined by school administrators.

The MPS School District will not tolerate retaliation against a person who reports bullying or cyber-bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying or cyber-bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying or cyber-bullying.

“Bullying” is defined as the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim’s property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

“Cyber-bullying” is defined as bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which includes but is not limited to any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by such things as electronic mail, internet communications, instant message, text message or facsimile. Cyber6 bullying includes (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation is a violation under the law. Cyber-bullying also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting is a violation of the law.

It is the responsibility of every student, parent and employee of the school district to recognize acts of bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation. Any student who believes that he or she has been the victim of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation should report it immediately to his or her teacher or principal.

Students, parents and members of the school staff (including but not limited to educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, coaches, advisors, advisors to an extracurricular activity, or paraprofessionals), who witness or become aware of bullying cyber-bullying or retaliation should immediately report it to the principal.

Reports of bullying or cyber-bullying will be promptly investigated. If the school principal or a designee determines that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the school principal or designee will (i) notify the police if the principal or designee believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator; (ii) take appropriate disciplinary action; (iii) notify the parents or guardians of the perpetrator; and (iv) notify the parents or guardians of the victim, and to the extent consistent with state and federal law, notify them of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation.

The School district will provide age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention and provide professional development to build the skills of staff members, as required by law. (see chart below) The Superintendent will develop a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan which shall sets forth the administrative guidelines and procedures for the implementation of this policy. Such Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan shall include, but not be limited to: procedures for reporting, responding to and investigating reports of bullying or retaliation; the range of disciplinary actions that may be taken against a perpetrator for bullying or retaliation or against someone for making a false accusation of bullying; procedures for remedying incidents of bullying and restoring a sense of safety for a victim and assessing that victim’s needs for protection; strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a person who reports bullying or provides information during an investigation; any notification

BULLYING & CYBER-BULLYING POLICY GUIDELINES (continued)

requirements consistent with state and federal law; a strategy for providing counseling or referral to appropriate services for perpetrators, victims and family members; and provisions for educating and informing parents about bullying and the School District's bullying prevention curriculum.

Students and parents or guardians will receive notice of the relevant student-related section of the Plan annually and faculty and staff at each school shall be trained annually on the plan applicable to the school. (see chart below) Each building principal shall be responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan at his or her school. The building principal or designee shall assist students, parents, and employees of the School District who seek guidance or support in addressing matters relating to any form of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation.

Any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action including, but not limited to reprimand, detention, loss of privileges, and/or suspension. An educational component will be part of the actions taken. If the false accusations have civil and/or criminal elements then further actions may be taken by appropriate law enforcement agencies.

Any staff member, parent, and/or community member who knowingly engage in false accusations will be subject to appropriate consequences administered by the school system and/or law enforcement agencies. Complaints of bullying or retaliation may be made anonymously; however, no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student, staff member, parent, or community member solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

INTERNET USE POLICY

Grades K-5

1. I will only use the Internet when there is an adult in the room with me.
2. I will not give out any information about my family, friends or me on the Internet.
3. I will not speak to strangers on the Internet without my teacher's permission.
4. I will tell my teachers and parents if anyone on the Internet asks personal questions about me. I will use "appropriate language "when using the Internet.
5. I will tell my teacher if I see anything on the Internet that makes me uncomfortable.
6. I will not copy anything from the Internet and claim it is my work.

The Internet Acceptable Use Policy on the Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement sign-off page must be returned before a child will be permitted to use the internet.

PHOTOGRAPHS / VIDEO POLICY

During the school year photographs/slides/video of students may be taken at assemblies and during class presentations. The photographs/slides/video are often displayed at the school and on occasion, published in the newspaper.

The appropriate section of the Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement sign-off page must be returned either giving or refusing permission to display a child's photograph.

