THURSTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Aim High ♦ Work Hard ♦ Help Someone Else ♦ Do the Right Thing

STUDENT HANDBOOK 2012-2013

850 High Street
Westwood, MA 02090

Main Office: 781-326-7500, x2336
Absence Line: 781-326-7500, x2394
FAX: 781-326-2709

www.westwood.k12.ma.us

Thurston Middle School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, or sexual orientation.

THURSTON MIDDLE SCHOOL PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

I. ATTENDANCE

School Hours

7:50 a.m. - 2:25 p.m. regular school days

7:50 a.m. - 1:10 p.m early release Wednesdays

During the school year, the building is open from 6:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday –Friday.

Supervision of students is only available during school hours and at school-sponsored events. At all other times, students visiting the school should be supervised by a parents or responsible adult.

Absences

Daily attendance and punctuality are important for learning and required by state law. When a child will be absent or late, parents should call the school absence line at 781-326-7500, x2394 by 8:15 a.m. and leave the student's name, grade, and a reason for the absence/tardiness in the message. In addition, parents should provide a written note to the office on the day a student returns from an absence stating the reason for the absence.

Students who are absent from school may not attend or participate in any extracurricular functions that occur the same day or evening (such as sports events, dances, concerts, plays) unless permission from the principal is received. Students absent from school on Friday, may not participate in school events that take place during the weekend.

After ten (10) absence days (excused or unexcused) in a 60-day term, one or more of the following will take place:

- the child and family will be referred for support services within or outside of the school
- a meeting between school administrators and family members will be scheduled
- medical documentation will be required
- Saturday school attendance will be required

Students who miss twenty (20) school days may be required to attend summer school.

Excessive unjustified or unexcused absence is considered truancy. School officials will work with the local agencies, including the police and juvenile court, to improve attendance.

Please schedule medical/other appointments and family vacations outside of school hours. Thurston's academic program is rigorous. Daily instruction includes activities (e.g., presentations, discussions, or demonstrations) that cannot be made up, and when class time is missed, students often struggle to learn key concepts. Students should check in with teachers both before and after an anticipated absence. Teachers are not required to prepare assignments in advance if a student goes on vacation while school is in session.

Making Up Work

Students are responsible for making up work missed due to absences. Except in cases of prolonged or frequently recurring absences, students will have up to one week to complete make-up work.

Students who miss school are encouraged to call a classmate or check teacher/team web sites for missed homework. After several days of absence, students or parents may contact the team leader or guidance counselor to make arrangements for collecting make-up work.

In the event of an illness or medical condition that results in a prolonged (more than 5 days) absence or frequent absences, please contact the school nurse. The nurse will coordinate with the team to create a plan that addresses learning needs.

Tardiness

Students who arrive after 7:50 a.m. will be considered tardy. All students will be allowed up to five excused tardies per year with a parent note for illness, appointments or unexpected incidents.

Tardies in excess of five (5) per year will be considered unexcused. Tardies without a written note from a parent will also be considered unexcused. Consequences for unexcused tardies may include:

1st tardy	*Warning & referral to guidance*
2nd tardy	*Detention*
3rd tardy	*Detention and parent conference*

Students who are habitually tardy may also be required to attend after-school academic support programs or Saturday school.

Students who are late to classes will be assigned consequences by their teacher or team.

Student Dismissal

If a student will be picked up early from school, he or she must bring a note to the office before school. The note must include the time of dismissal, a reason for the dismissal and a parent/guardian signature. The student will then receive a pass.

When it is time to leave, **it is the student's responsibility to show the pass to the teacher and report to the office to wait for the parent or guardian.** For safety reasons, students may not wait outside. The parent/guardian must pick up the child in person in the office. Students must report to the office upon re-entering the building. Students are responsible for making up all work missed.

For safety reasons, students may not leave the school building or grounds during the school day without permission. Leaving without permission will result in disciplinary action.

School Cancellation

In the event of a school closure, late start, early dismissal or other unexpected schedule change, an announcement will be made via the district's automated phone call system. In addition, announcements will be made on local radio and television channels whenever possible.

Visitor Policy

All visitors, including parents/guardians, must sign in at the office and pick up a visitor's badge to wear for the duration of their stay. Students may not bring visitors to school without permission from the principal. Visitors are allowed only if they are able to contribute to (and not distract from) the education experience for all students.

II. ACADEMICS

Curriculum

The Thurston Middle School's curriculum offers core courses in language arts, math, science, social studies, reading (Gr. 6) and foreign language (Gr. 7 & 8). Core classes meet every day. In addition, a variety of exploratory (arts) subjects are offered at each grade level, including art, band, chorus, culinary arts and consumer education, drama, health, technology, music, and physical education. Specific course syllabi are available on the school's web site.

Physical Education Guidelines

Students must change into gym clothes and wear sneakers for physical education. Teachers will follow up with parents if students do not change. If a student is unable to participate, a note from a parent/guardian is required. Nonparticipation for a period in excess of three days requires a note from a physician.

Homework

Homework is regularly assigned to all Thurston students. Its purpose is to reinforce concepts introduced in class, to promote independent study and time management skills, and to prepare students for the demands of a rigorous, college-preparatory high school. Teams will regularly monitor homework load and schedule project due dates in order to provide students with the opportunity to give their best effort. On a typical weeknight, students can expect to devote the following amount of time to their homework:

Grade 6 = 45 - 75 minutes
Grade 7 = 60 - 90 minutes
Grade 8 = 75 - 120 minutes

Weekend homework is typically less or equal to the amount assigned on a weeknight. Homework load is reduced during MCAS testing. Students participating in evening school-sponsored activities and events may be given extensions or modified assignments.

The first time in a term a student does not bring in his or her work, the teacher will call or email home. For a student on an IEP or a 504 plan, the teacher will touch base with the designated special educator and guidance counselor before calling/emailing.

The second time in a term a student does not bring in his or her work, the teacher will call or email home (see above) AND ask the team leader to put the student on the team agenda for discussion. The team will assess whether the missed HW indicates a pattern of behavior. If not (or if there is uncertainty) the team will monitor the situation to see if a pattern emerges. If so, the team will to take action as follows.

Once a pattern of not completing work emerges, the team will examine the case and take one of the following steps

If a student consistently has too much or too little homework, the student or parents should contact the team leader or guidance counselor.

Students are expected to use their agenda books to plan for homework and long-term assignments. Teams and teachers also post assignments on a team-based homework website as a backup system.

Textbooks and Supplies

A general supply list is mailed home and posted on our web site before the opening of school. Individual teachers may have additional specific requests. Students should have all supplies by no later than the sixth day of school. **Please check regularly to make sure your student is supplied with basic materials required for learning.** All students are expected to use a Thurston Agenda Book, which is issue on the first day of school, to record assignments.

Thanks to the support of the PTO, extra school supplies are made available to families with financial need. To request supplies, please contact your child's guidance counselor.

Each student is given all required texts. Students are responsible for their books. If lost, a replacement fee will be charged. If damaged, a rebinding or replacement fee will be charged.

Library/Media Center

The library/media center is open during regular school hours. Books, books on tape or CD, videos and DVD's, are available to all students along with internet resources and several on-line databases for student use at school and at home. All materials, except reference sources and those on reserve, may be checked out and renewed as needed. **The library is open after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays until 3:30.**

Grades and Progress Reports

Report Cards: Students will hand deliver report cards for trimesters 1 and 2. Students will bring two copies of the report card home. One copy is to be signed and returned to the homeroom teacher. Third trimester report cards will be mailed.

***Progress Reports*:** Progress Reports are issued to all students at the midpoint of each trimester. Students will bring two copies of the report home. One copy is to be signed and returned to the homeroom teacher.

Failed Classes

In order to be eligible for promotion to the next grade, a student must successfully complete classes in language arts and math. Students who receive a **final grade of D+ or lower in language arts or math must successfully make up these subjects in order to be eligible for promotion to the next grade.** Private tutoring may take the place of summer school with prior written permission from the principal. All costs for summer school and/or private tutoring are the family's responsibility.

III. Student Services and Support

Teams

Thurston has a team structure that includes two sixth, seventh and eighth grade teams and an arts team. Teachers and counselors meet as teams several times each week to discuss student progress and to plan team activities. This structure offers children a sense of physical and emotional security and enables students, teachers and parents to work collaboratively. It also facilitates interdisciplinary instruction, which invites students to discover connections and relationships among content areas. To discuss your child's performance in a specific subject, please contact your child's teacher. To discuss broader issues that may affect your child's overall performance, please contact your child's team leader or guidance counselor.

Counselors

Every student is assigned a counselor to help him/her through the year. The counselor's role is varied, and important functions include: acting as the student's advocate, providing direct (counseling) services, and helping parents maintain contact with the school. If you have questions about your child's academic or social progress in school, please call your child's counselor.

School Psychologist

Services through the school psychologist (x2388) are available to students and parents, including psychological services and testing for Special Education.

Access to Mental Health Services

In the following emergency situations, a school psychologist, counselor or school nurse may provide assistance to a student without prior parent/guardian consent: 1) if there is reason to believe a student may pose a danger to others or is at risk for self-harm; 2) if a student has been a victim of injury, exploitation or maltreatment, or 3) if a student is in danger of injury, exploitation or maltreatment. In such cases, the parent/guardian will be contacted and informed of the nature of the intervention as soon as possible.

Referrals to Special Education

A student may be referred for a special education evaluation by a parent or any person in a care-giving or professional position concerned with the student's development. The criteria for special education require that the child have a disability as defined by law; that the child is not making effective progress in school as a result of the disability; and that he or she requires specialized instruction or related services in order to access the general curriculum.

For questions regarding special education, please contact the Department Head of Student Services. Additional information is also available online at the Massachusetts Bureau of Special Education Appeals website: http://www.doe.mass.edu/bsea.

Between Parent and School

Parents with questions or concerns should email and/or leave a message with the office, and a staff member will get back to you as soon as possible. In addition, if a parent has information that may impact a child's education in any way, they should contact a counselor, teacher or administrator.

Questions about specific classroom expectations, requirements, and grades should be directed to the teacher. Broader issues, such as grade level activities, general grade policies, or scheduling a team meeting, should be directed to the grade level team leader. If concerns revolve around questions of potential learning difficulties, then the school psychologist (x2388) or Department Head of Student Services (x2330) should be called.

Questions pertaining to school-wide issues should be directed to the principal (x2398) or assistant principal (x2335). If you don't know whom to call, start with a team leader or counselor. He or she will provide the requested information or direct you to the person best able to answer your question(s). If you have long-standing concerns or an unresolved situation, please contact an administrator.

Although teachers cannot leave their classes for phone calls, they will return their messages promptly.

The Thurston Parent-Teacher Organization

The primary mission of the Thurston Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) is to provide a link between parents and the school. The PTO board includes four parent officers who meet on a monthly basis with the principal and assistant principal. Board members help fulfill the PTO mission by promoting special events; collecting and managing dues; coordinating volunteers to run events; promoting email, print and telephone communication; and organizing fundraising efforts.

IV. Student Life/Daily Routines

Student Behavior

Behavior expectations at Thurston are spelled out in the *Student Behavior Rubric* that is reviewed with students at the start of each year and posted throughout the building. Consequences for inappropriate behavior are included on the rubric. A copy of the rubric is on page 10 of the Student Handbook.

Students are expected to adhere to all behavior expectations during school-sponsored events, including after-school activities and special events like concerts, dances or games. In addition, students may not attend school-sponsored or district-sponsored events without appropriate adult supervision.

Finally, it is important for students to understand that their behavior in the community at large—walking to and from school, for example, or at local business establishments—is a reflection on their families and their school. We expect that all Thurston students will treat their fellow citizens and community property with courtesy and respect.

Homeroom and X-Block

All students are assigned to a homeroom for a few minutes each morning and a full period ("X-Block") later in the day. Homeroom provides a "home base" for students, and homeroom time is used to communicate important information regarding school events and policies.

The X-Block period provides time for silent reading as well as homework. Students are encouraged to seek extra help or schedule make-up tests during this period.

Dress Code/Appearance

Thurston's dress code is governed by health, safety, decency, and the protection of school property. Because of these factors, all students will be expected to wear appropriate clothing. Clothing that is disruptive to the educational process, poses safety concerns, and/or interferes with an individual's right to learn is not permitted. No student will be allowed to wear any style of clothing, footwear, or accessory that may be unsafe or hazardous. We ask students not to wear the following:

- hats or other non-religious head-coverings
- sunglasses
- shirts that display obscene language, violence; or references to drugs, alcohol or tobacco
- clothing that exposes midriffs or underwear (including bra straps); low-cut tops
- spaghetti-strap, halter or strapless tops
- short (above fingertip length) shorts or skirts
- chains (e.g., wallet or belt chains)

In addition, certain types of footwear may be prohibited in some classes for safety reasons. It is important for students to understand that the administration will be the final judge with regard to this policy. Students who do not follow the policy may be removed from class until more appropriate clothing is provided by parents, guardians, or caretakers. **This policy applies to all school functions such as field trips, dances, etc.**

Lockers/Locks

Each student is assigned a locker with a built-in combination lock, and it is each student's responsibility to **lock his or her locker.** Students are urged to leave valuable items at home. The school cannot be responsible for personal possessions that are lost or stolen. School lockers are:

- **considered school property for which administrators retain a right of inspection periodically to ensure compliance with regulations.**
- subject to search in accordance with Massachusetts General Law.
- never to be used for storing items such as alcohol, stolen property, weapons, and illegal drugs.

Lost And Found

Any student who is missing an item is urged to check his or her classrooms and the lost and found. The lost and found for clothing, backpacks and other large items is in a closet adjacent to the small gym. Small items, valuables (e.g., glasses, earrings) and books are kept in the office. All unclaimed items are donated to charity on a regular basis.

Cafeteria/Lunch

Thurston's Cafeteria offers a selection of lunch items to students. In addition, a limited number of breakfast items are available for purchase between 7:25 and 7:45 a.m. Each grade has lunch during a separate, 30-minute lunch period. Each student must bring his/her own lunch, money or lunch card. Full lunches cost $2.75. Snack items like cookies, chips, or fruit may be purchased at an additional cost. Courteous behavior is expected, and students are expected to clean up after themselves. No food or drink except plain water is allowed outside the cafeteria after lunch.

Teams also designate a snack time for students to eat morning snacks brought from home.

Personal Devices

Technology can be a powerful tool to enhance learning. Students may bring personal devices to school, but these devices are *for learning purposes only* during the school day and during school-sponsored activities. Personal devices may include tablets, netbooks, laptops, e-readers, cell phones, cameras and portable music players. If a student brings a personal device to school, he or she must:

- Leave the device *silenced* and *locked in a locker* when it is not being used for learning. This includes during lunchtime and passing time.
- Bring it only to those classes in which teachers have given specific permission.

If the device is audible, visible or in use outside of designated classes, or if it is being used inappropriately (e.g., for game playing instead of reading), it will be confiscated by a teacher and turned in to the office. A parent/guardian will be contacted to retrieve the item. If a student has had a personal device confiscated more than once, he or she will be required to complete an after-school detention as well.

Thurston Middle School is not responsible for the loss of personal items or devices.

Nuisance Items

Students should not bring anything to school that will disrupt the learning environment. This includes toys, electronic games, gag gifts, rubber bands, laser pointers, pen lights, or any other items that might be distracting in classes. "Nuisance items" will be confiscated and turned in to the office. A parent/guardian will then be contacted to retrieve the items.

V. Organizations and Activities

Tuesday-Thursday Activities at Thurston

Offerings change each year based upon teacher expertise and student interest. Information about upcoming activities and other activities is announced to students, sent home to parents and posted on the Thurston web site each September and January. Late buses are available on Tuesdays and Thursdays to students participating in after-school programs at no cost.

Student Council

Interested students may opt to run for Student Council—a representative group that meets every month to discuss and implement initiatives that improve student life and support the wider community.

Interscholastic Sports

Thurston has several competitive sports teams: football (grade 8), field hockey (grade 8), volleyball (grade 8) and cross-country (grades 6-8) in the fall and track (grades 6-8) in the spring. Signs ups are on a first-come, first-served basis. There are no try-outs. Students must meet academic and behavior eligibility requirements to participate in sports.

WOSC

Since its inception in 1950, the World Organization Study Club has been open to all eighth grade students in good academic and behavioral standing. Members meet one or two Mondays per month after school to study current as well as past world political events, complete community service projects and/or correspond with students in other nations. Members may also participate in various committees, such as planning the WOSC dances and other fundraising events. The culminating event is the trip to New York. There are no late buses available for transporting Westwood students after WOSC meetings.

Plays

Thurston students may participate in either a 6th grade play or a 7th/8th grade musical. Tryout and rehearsal schedules are shared with students and parents via announcements, posters and email each year. Participating students must meet academic and behavior eligibility requirements and be able to attend all performances.

Dances

General Rules

Attendance at school on the day of a dance is a prerequisite for admission (see p. ??). Students who leave early must be picked up by parents/guardians and may not return once they leave. **Visitors/guests may NOT attend dances.** If a student brings a visitor/guest, the parent will be called, and both host and guest will be required to leave.

WOSC Dances

The WOSC dances generate funds to help fund scholarships for the New York trip. These dances are open to all Thurston seventh- and eighth-grade students. A variety of activities, including open gym and music, are provided, along with refreshments. Approximately six dances are planned by WOSC committee members throughout the year and supported and chaperoned by Thurston staff. Tickets for dances are sold during the school day and at the door.

Grade 6 Dance

Customarily, sixth-grade students have a separate social/dance opportunity in June.

Semi-Formal Dance

A semi-formal dance for grade 8 students is typically held on a Friday in June. This event is organized and chaperoned by Thurston PTO volunteers.

Priorities

Students must be in good academic standing to participate in all activities and sports. If a student does not meet academic eligibility requirements, he/she will be removed from activities until the team leader notifies the principal that performance has improved.

Students assigned detention or another consequence must fulfill disciplinary obligations before participating in extra-curricular activities.

Pupils who are absent from school ***may not*** attend or participate in any extracurricular functions which occur that same day (such as intramurals, dances, concerts, or the play) unless permission from the principal is received.

Community-Sponsored Activities

Teen Center Dances—often held at Thurston—are sponsored by Westwood Youth and Family Services, and chaperoned by parent and high school volunteers.

The Basement and **Thurston Thursdays** are after-school programs sponsored by *Westwood Youth and Family Services* (781-320-1006).

Many school year and summer programs are offered by the *Westwood Recreation Department* (781-461-0070).

For more information about these activities and events, please contact the appropriate agency.

VI. Student Health

Overview

The purpose of the Health Room is to provide support for ongoing student health concerns and to assist families in the event of an emergency or the onset of illness during the school day. **Please update your child's emergency contact information as soon as possible at the beginning of each school year.** This critical information is used by office and health room staff members to reach you or someone you trust in the event of an emergency. Emergency contacts should be people available to pick up your child when you are not. They should have access to a car and live nearby. The Health Room provides advisory and emergency care only. It is not a diagnostic clinic. After first aid has been administered, parents are responsible for contacting their family physician for diagnosis and follow-up care. Parents are responsible for notifying the school of any medical condition that may affect a student's health during the school day. Health records of students transferring to another school district will be sent without parental release if the receiving district requests them. If your child is transferring, please inform the school nurse prior to the move (x2334).

Contagious Disease

Please contact the school nurse if your child has been diagnosed with mono, chicken pox, strep throat, conjunctivitis, or any other communicable disease. This information is important in helping to control the disease and protect staff and students who are at risk.

Illness, Injuries, and Accidents Occurring in School

Students should report to the Health Room if an illness, injury or accident occurs in school. If a student needs to be dismissed

for these reasons, a parent or guardian will be called. In emergency situations, students may be transported to the nearest hospital by ambulance.

Immunizations

All immunizations must be up to date as specified by Massachusetts General Law. Parents will be notified by mail of immunizations that are due and the date when documentation must be received. Students without the proper documentation will be excluded from school, in accordance with state law.

New Students

All new students are required to have the necessary immunizations and a current physical exam. Students transferring from out of state/country have four (4) months to provide a recent physical exam.

Required Physicals

All grade six students and students transferring to Westwood Public Schools are required to submit a physical dated 6 months prior to entry or within 5 months after entry. Any student who has not submitted a physical by February 1 will be excluded from school. Students participating in interscholastic sports must have documentation of an up-to-date physical exam on file in the health room.

Insurance

Please contact Thurston's Health Office if a student does not have health insurance. The state offers low-cost insurance for all children through the age of 18. All information about income is confidential.

Medications

All medication, including over-the-counter medication, must be administered by the school nurse according to the following procedures:

a. A physician's medication order and parental consent form must be on file in the Health Room. These forms must be renewed at the beginning of each school year. A small picture for identification purposes is required for each student receiving medication in school.

b. Medications should be delivered by an adult. If you are unable to bring the medication to school, please call the nurse to arrange delivery. The persons delivering will be required to sign and verify the medication and amount being delivered. No more than a 30-day supply should be delivered.

c. Short-term prescriptions (10 days or less) may be contained in a pharmacy-labeled container in lieu of a doctor's order. A parental consent form is still required.

d. Inhalers and Epi-pens may be carried by students, provided there is a physician's order form and parental consent form on file in the Health Room. Students will be asked to demonstrate proficiency using their inhaler.

e. Lactaid tablets, nasal sprays, eye drops and digestive enzymes may be carried and self-administered by students. Please inform the school nurse if your child is taking one of these.

f. Students requiring an Epi-pen for severe allergic reactions are required to provide the medication, order form and parental consent by the first day of school. All students with an Epi-pen are required to have an Individual Health Plan that is renewed each year.

g. All medication needs to be picked up the last day of school or it will be destroyed.

h. No student is allowed to carry medication (prescription or over-the-counter) in school unless it falls into categories d. and e. above.

Screenings

The following screenings are performed during the school year. They are required under Massachusetts General Law. If there is any reason a student should not be screened, please notify the school nurse in writing.

Scoliosis: all grades, usually done Jan/Feb in gym classes.

Height, weight and BMI: grade 7, done with scoliosis screening.

Hearing and Vision: all grades

Please call the school nurse at x2334 if you have any questions regarding health issues. Information may also be obtained on the Westwood Public Schools website.

VII. TRANSPORTATION

Buses

The purpose of the school bus program is to transport students who live beyond the established walking distance to and from school in an efficient and safe manner. Bus routes are posted on the district web site and are available in the school office starting in late August.

Buses pick up and drop off students in the front of the building. Cars are prohibited from the front of the building during posted pick-up and drop-off times.

A late bus is available on Tuesdays and Thursdays for students who are involved in after-school activities at Thurston. **The times and stops for the late buses are printed on the activity forms and are available in the main office.**

In the event that a bus driver submits a written student bus violation report to the administration, the administrator will appropriately discipline the student and contact the parent(s). If the student continues to act inappropriately, his/her bus privileges will be reviewed and may result in temporary and/or permanent removal from the bus. The following rules and procedures establish the code of behavior for all students riding Westwood Public School buses. In addition, all school rules apply on the bus and at the bus stop.

- **Students may only ride their assigned bus.** (Please contact the principal if an emergency necessitates alternative transportation for your child.)
- Students must show bus passes prior to boarding assigned buses.
- Students must wait in a safe place, clear of traffic and away from where the bus stops.

- Students must wait in an orderly manner and avoid "horseplay."
- Students shall remain seated, keeping aisles clear.
- Students are permitted to carry objects only if they can be held on their laps.
- Any vandalism will be the responsibility of the student involved.
- Students are prohibited from putting their heads, arms etc., or any object out of the bus windows.
- School and bus rules apply to any other carriers used for field trips or school-related activities.
- Students must respect others (no yelling, swearing, rough-housing, fighting, etc.)

Car Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Pick-up and drop-off is at the back of the building. Parents should enter the back lot, drive all the way around the loop, and exit via Nahatan Street. Drivers are urged to be alert to student walkers!

In accordance M.G.L. c71 Section 37, operators of school buses and personal motor vehicles, including students, faculty, staff and visitors, cannot idle such motor vehicles on school grounds. We appreciate your cooperation by complying with this law.

DISTRICT AND STATE POLICIES

I. CODE OF CONDUCT

Respect and responsibility make a school an inviting place to learn and grow. There are student expectations to support a climate in which mutual respect and trust can flourish.

Student Responsibility

- I am in school to learn.
- I will be on time and be prepared.
- I am responsible for what I do and say.
- I understand there are consequences for my actions.

Student Respect

- I will show respect for others.
- I will respect the learning process.
- I will show respect for the property of others.

Student Rights

- The classroom is a place for learning.
- School is a safe place, free from physical, verbal, and emotional harm.

Learning about respect and responsibility involves learning to make ethical and moral decisions. These decisions involve thinking about what actions to take and the consequences of those actions.

The following lists of some behaviors that reflect a lack of respect and responsibility for self and others. Disciplinary action may include assignment of detention, loss of privileges, suspension, or exclusion. Grounds for such action include, but are not limited to:

Arson
Assault
Bullying
Cheating
Cutting class
Cutting detention
Destruction of property
Disrespectful behavior/insubordination
Disrupting a school activity or the educational process
Endangering the safety and well-being of others
Fighting
Forgery or fraud
Harassment
Hazing/initiation
Leaving school grounds without permission or without following dismissal procedures
Lying to a faculty member
Plagiarism
Possession, sale, purchase or use of tobacco products, alcohol, or drugs
Possession of a weapon or dangerous item
Presence in unauthorized areas
Profanity/inappropriate language
Roughhousing
Theft
Truancy
Vandalism
Violation of a school policy

Definitions:

Detention—Teachers can detain students after school for disciplinary matters. Students and parents should have advance notice of detention. For more serious infractions, office detention may be assigned. Detention takes priority over that day's extracurricular activities. Detention begins immediately following the end of the regular school day and ends at 3:30 p.m., unless otherwise arranged with the teacher or principal.

Suspension—Suspension is defined as the school system's decision to prohibit a student from regular school attendance and/or the privileges or activities of the school system (including sports and extra-curricular activities) for one or more school days. A suspension may result from acts or omissions occurring on school and adjacent property, at school-related activities, or to/from school or school-related activities, or which relate to/bear upon the educational process of the school system.

Expulsion—A permanent suspension.

Parent—The legal guardian of the student. In the case where a student's parents are not married or are separated, the parent, for purposes of this policy, is the parent with legal custody. If both parents have joint custody, then the parent is the one with both legal and physical custody of the student. In the event that the parents have joint legal and physical custody of the student, then the parent, for purposes of this policy, is the parent with regular contact with the schools.

Suspension

1. A student facing a suspension shall be given oral or written notice of the charge(s) against him/her.
2. The student will be afforded the opportunity to present his/her version of the incident to a decision maker, prior to the imposition of the suspension.
3. The student's opportunity to present his/her version of the

story to the decision maker should precede the suspension, unless his/her presence in the school poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process. Under these circumstances, the student may be immediately removed from school and the necessary notice and hearing should follow as soon as practicable.

4. The Principal will notify the student and/or parent(s) of his/her decision.
5. The student's teachers are notified of the suspension.
6. All extracurricular privileges are revoked from the time of suspension until reinstatement in school.
7. The student must make up all school work including homework which was missed due to the suspension.

II. Bullying Policy

Bullying and Cyber-bullying are strictly prohibited in school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at school-sponsored or school-related activities, functions or programs whether on or off school grounds, at school bus stops, on school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the Westwood Public Schools, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the Westwood Public Schools and 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 Westwood Public Schools, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of school. Retaliation against any person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is strictly prohibited.

Definitions:

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 the victim that causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property, places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property, creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Cyber-bullying is defined as bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include but is not limited to electronic mail, internet communications, instant messaging, posting on social networking sites, or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying includes creating a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identify of another person, the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, or the distribution by electronic means or communication of messages that meets the definition of bullying above, whether distributed directly or creating a posting that may be accessing by one or more persons.

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

What Bullying is Not

It is important for all members of the school community to understand that conflict is not synonymous with bullying. For example, arguing, bantering back-and-forth, ignoring, roughhousing and fighting, while potentially serious forms of conflict, are not automatically defined as instances of bullying. Bullying is characterized by severity and/or repetition, and a power imbalance. Not every conflict meets these criteria.

Procedure for Reporting Bullying

If a student witnesses, is made aware of, or suspects that an incident of bullying has occurred, the student is required to report the bullying, either verbally or in writing, to the building Principal or the staff member within the school who has been designated by the Principal for purposes of reporting bullying. Students may make the report anonymously although a student should be aware that the Administration cannot take disciplinary action against a student based solely on an anonymous report.

Once the report is made, the Principal or his designee will initiate an investigation in accordance with the Westwood Public Schools' Bullying Prevention Policy.

Any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action.

Discipline for Bullying, Cyber-Bullying and Retaliation

Students who are found through investigation to have bullied, cyber-bullied or retaliated against a student who reported acts of bullying may be subject to disciplinary action. Discipline imposed, dependent on the nature and severity of the bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation can range from a verbal warning to expulsion, subject to applicable procedural requirements. School Administration will notify local law enforcement if it believes that criminal charges may be pursued.

Nothing in this section, prevents the Westwood Public Schools from imposing disciplinary sanctions on a student whose behavior does not meet the definition of bullying, cyber-bullying or retaliation but which nonetheless violates school policy

III. Academic Integrity

The Thurston community believes in the values of honesty, personal accountability, and respect for the rights of others. The Middle School staff will work in cooperation with parents to help students understand the importance of taking responsibility for their own work. Students should develop a thorough understanding of what academic integrity means, including knowing what plagiarism means and how to use sources correctly. Students must credit all material copied or gathered from CD-ROM, Internet, or software sources, just as they would cite references from printed materials and books. Examples of academic dishonesty may include, but are not limited to the following *(Taken from School Committee Policy IA)*:

- communicating with another student during an examination or quiz;

- copying material during an examination or quiz or copying another person's assignment;
- allowing a student to copy from one's examination, quiz or assignment;
- using unauthorized notes or devices;
- obtaining, removing or accepting a copy of and/or information about an examination or quiz without the knowledge and consent of the teacher;
- submitting a paper or project which is not entirely the student's work (i.e., plagiarism);
- changing answers and seeking credit on an assignment or examination after the work has been graded and returned;
- altering a teacher's grade system.

Teachers are strongly encouraged to involve parents in every case of cheating, but they must do so in the case of a repeat offense. Repeated offenses can result in disciplinary action, including suspension.

IV. Discipline of Special Education Students

1. Discipline of special education students is governed by state and federal law and the regulations promulgated thereunder. These include the IDEA, 20 USC 1401 et.seq., its implementing regulations, 34 CFR 300 et seq., and M.G.L. c. 71B and its implementing regulations, 603 CMR 28.00.
2. Students eligible for special education who violate school rules are subject to removal from their current educational placement for up to ten school days per year, to the extent that such removal would be applied to students without disabilities, without prior determination as to whether the misconduct is related to the student's disability.
3. Anytime school personnel seek to remove a student from his or her current educational placement for more than ten school days in a school year, this constitutes a "change of placement" and invokes certain procedural rights including but not limited to:

a. A review by the IEP Team of the relationship between the student's disability and the behavior subject to the disciplinary action, which is referred to a Manifestation Determination,

b. If the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability the student's Team will conduct a functional behavior assessment and develop a behavior intervention plan, provided that such an assessment was not already conducted before the behavior occurred. In the situation where an assessment was already conducted and a behavior intervention plan is already in place, the Team will review the plan and revise it accordingly. The student will also be returned to his educational placement unless the parent and the school agree otherwise.

c. If the behavior is not a manifestation of the student's disability, then the student may be removed from his educational placement to the same extent that a regular education student would be removed, provided that the special education student must continue to receive educational services to enable the child to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, and to continue to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the student's IEP. Additionally, the student should receive, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment and behavior intervention plan to prevent the behavior from happening again.

4. School personnel may order a change in educational placement of a special education student to an appropriate Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES) for not more than forty-five (45) days without regard to whether the student's behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability if the student: (i) carries or possesses a weapon to or at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a State or local educational agency; (ii) knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a State or local educational agency; or (iii) has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a State or local educational agency.
5. For more information regarding the rights of special education students see the Massachusetts Department of Education's Procedural Safeguards Notice, which is available in many languages, at http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/prb/. Additionally, copies of the state and federal special education law are available online at the Massachusetts Bureau of Special Education Appeals website, at http://www.doe.mass.edu/bsea/ or can be requested from the Director of Student Services.

Additional Disciplinary Procedure:

M.G.L CHAPTER 71, SECTION 37H (EXPULSION/EXCLUSION)

(a.) Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin or alcohol, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

(b.) Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher aide, or other educational staff on school premises or on school-sponsored school related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

(c.) Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) will be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal.

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

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

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

M.G. L. 37H1/2 FELONY COMPLAINT OR CONVICTION OF STUDENT; SUSPENSION; EXPULSION; RIGHT TO APPEAL

Notwithstanding the provisions of section eighty-four and sections sixteen and seventeen of chapter 76:

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

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

(2.) Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony delinquency, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may expel said student if such principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification the charges and reasons for such expulsion prior to such expulsion taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such expulsion; provided, however, that the expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent. The student shall have the right to appeal the expulsion to the superintendent, in writing, of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion. The superintendent shall a hold hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the expulsion.

Upon expulsion of such student, no school or school district shall be required to provide educational services to such student.

V. PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

The Westwood Public Schools are committed to providing an orderly, safe environment, conducive to learning for all students and staff members. Students of the district are protected by law from the unreasonable use of physical restraint. School staff may use physical restraint only (1) when non-physical interventions would be ineffective and the student's behavior poses a threat of imminent, serious physical harm to self and/or others or (2) pursuant to a student's IEP or other written plan developed in accordance with state and federal law and approved by the school and parent or guardian.

Only school personnel who have received training shall administer physical restraint on students unless a teacher,

employee or agent of the District finds it necessary to utilize reasonable force to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent serious physical harm. In the event of physical restraint of a student, the principal or his/her designee shall verbally inform the student's parents or guardians of the restraint as soon as possible, and by written report postmarked no later than three (3) working days following the use of restraint.

VI. HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

The following laws are the basis for the non-discrimination and harassment policies: M.G.L. c. 76 s. 5; M.G.L. c. 151B s.3A; M.G.L. c. 151B s. 4; Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

The Westwood Public Schools, in accordance with the provisions of state and federal law prohibit discrimination and harassment on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, sexual orientation, age, religion or creed, disability, choice of association, political affiliation, appearance or life style and language preference in educational programs and activities of the public schools. This policy reflects that:

1. Each person shall be guaranteed the right to an education consistent with the goals and policies of the school system.
2. Each person shall be guaranteed freedom from harassment, prejudicial comments or discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, gender, age, sexual preference, religion or creed, disability, choice of association, political affiliation, appearance or lifestyle, and language preference in educational programs and activities of the public school.

The Westwood School Committee is committed to maintaining an educational atmosphere in which every student can pursue scholastic achievement and personal fulfillment. All harassment is considered destructive behavior that interferes with the educational process, and shall not be tolerated. If a school department employee is accused of sexual harassment by a student, it shall be reported, subject to the provisions of Chapter ll9, Sect. 51A of the Massachusetts General Laws, to the principal or Superintendent of Schools.

The Westwood School Committee maintains a neutral position regarding students' interpersonal relationships. However, the Committee considers embraces, intimate touching and other physical actions of a personal nature as inappropriate in an educational setting. When these actions are unwelcome, they definitely constitute sexual harassment. The purpose of the following policy is to define sexual harassment, establish appropriate standards of behavior for the student body, and set guidelines for recognizing and dealing with sexual harassment. A separate policy dealing with sexual harassment in the workplace for school department employees was approved by the School Committee on February 11, 1993.

Definition: **Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, other verbal and nonverbal actions and physical conduct of a sexual nature when such behavior unreasonably interferes with school performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment.**

Sexual harassment may include:

- Assault, threats, inappropriate touching, intentionally blocking movement, comments, gestures, looks or written communications of a suggestive or derogatory nature;
- Continuing to express sexual interest after being informed that the interest is unwelcome;
- Leering, voyeurism, or stalking, obscene gestures, actions or materials;
- Displaying lewd or sexually explicit photographs or other materials, including clothing.

This is not a list of all possible types of sexual harassment; it is examples of actions that may be defined as sexual harassment. Of course, there are other actions not listed here that may be sexual harassment. In most cases, the student who feels sexually harassed makes the judgment that the actions are sexual harassment. That individual's feelings and reactions to inappropriate behavior determine whether sexual harassment has taken place.

Standards of Conduct

The School Committee expects students to demonstrate a standard of conduct based on respect for all other students, regardless of sex, race, color, national origin, sexual orientation, religion or creed, disability, choice of association, political affiliation, appearance or life style, and language preference. Harassment is a violation of an individual's personal dignity. Anyone who engages in harassment violates School Committee policy.

General Guidelines

1. Problems and complaints regarding sexual discrimination and harassment should be resolved quickly and fairly. When possible, such problems and complaints should be resolved directly between the student and harasser.
2. Students who feel they have been harassed or discriminated against should inform an advocate of the incident first. Any adult staff member in the building may serve as an advocate for a student reporting harassment or discrimination. The names and telephone numbers of advocates will be published yearly in the Student Handbook. For a complete listing of staff members, please see pages 1 and 3 of the Student Handbook.
3. Advocates must immediately inform the principal of any complaint of harassment or discrimination. Also, if one student tells another student or school department employee about sexual harassment, the student or school department employee should inform an advocate of the incident.

4. Retaliation in any form for the filing of a complaint or the reporting of sexual harassment is prohibited and will result in serious disciplinary action.

Procedure for Dealing with Harassment and Discrimination

Any individual subjected to harassment or discrimination may, if he or she chooses, confront the harasser directly in order to resolve the complaint on a personal level.

If the student does not want to deal directly with the harasser, or cannot resolve the matter with the harasser, the student should **immediately** report the conduct to an advocate. The advocate must always take every report of harassment/discrimination seriously and respond immediately. In appropriate circumstances, the advocate may suggest sitting down with the harasser and the student together to work out a resolution.
If the student decides not to meet the harasser, the following steps may be taken:

1. The student may choose to write a letter with an attached response sheet listing:
    a. The exact description of the behavior, including when and where it happened;
    b. A description of how the behavior made the student feel (for example embarrassed, humiliated, angry);
    c. A request that the behavior stop because it is harassment/discrimination and is against the law;
2. The advocate should assist the student in drafting the letter.
3. The letter should be signed and dated by the student. The student or the advocate should deliver one copy of the letter to the harasser and one copy to the principal's office.

The alleged harasser should have an opportunity to respond in writing. The advocates will be available to assist the alleged harasser as well.

If the behavior does not stop, or if the student chooses not to write a letter or confront the harasser directly, the school administration will conduct an investigation. During the investigation, the school administration shall:

1. Provide the student and the alleged harasser an advocate at all discussions regarding the case;
2. Keep the investigation group as small as possible to protect the rights of both parties and to prevent the investigation from becoming overly publicized.

If the harassment/discrimination does not stop after the harasser has been disciplined, the advocate should coordinate with the Administration in order to impose more severe disciplinary sanctions.

The Administration has the right to report a complaint of harassment/discrimination to the appropriate authorities outside the school department.

VII. Student Hazing Policy

M.G.L. C.269. S.17. Crime of Hazing: Definition; Penalty

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

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

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action. Added by St.1985, c.536; amended by St.1987, c.665.

C.269, S.18. Duty to Report Hazing

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

C.269. S.19. Hazing Statutes to Be Provided; Statement of Compliance and Discipline Policy Required

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

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

sections seventeen and eighteen, that each of its members, plebes, pledges or applicants has received a copy of sections seventeen and eighteen, and that such group, team or organization understands and agrees to comply with the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

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

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post secondary education shall file, at least annually, a report with the board of higher education and in the case of secondary schools, the board of education, certifying that such institution has complied with its responsibility to inform student groups, teams, or organizations and to notify each full time student enrolled by it of the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen and also certifying that said institution has adopted a disciplinary policy with regard to the organizers and participants of hazing, and that such policy has been set forth with appropriate emphasis in the student handbook or similar means of communicating the institution's policies to its students. The board of regents and, in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution which fails to make such report. Added by St.1985, c.536; amended by St.1987, c.665.

VIII. Section 504--Student and Parent Rights in Identification, Evaluation and Placement

The following is a description of student and parent rights granted by federal law. The intent of the law is to keep you fully informed concerning decisions about your child and to inform you of your rights if you disagree with any of these decisions.

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO…

1. have your child take part in and receive benefits from public education programs without discrimination based on a disability.
2. have the school district advise you as to your rights under federal law.
3. receive notice with respect to identification, evaluation or placement of your child.
4. have your child receive a free appropriate public education. This includes the right to be educated with other students to the maximum extent appropriate. It also includes the right to have the school district make reasonable accommodations to allow your child an equal opportunity to participate in school and school-related activities.
5. have your child educated in facilities and receive services comparable to those provided to students without disabilities.
6. have your child receive special education and related services if s/he is found to be eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (PL101-476), or to receive reasonable accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.
7. have evaluation, educational and placement decisions made based upon a variety of information sources, and by individual who know the student, the evaluation data and placement options.
8. have transportation provided to a school placement setting at no greater cost to you than would be incurred if the student were placed in a program operated by the school district.
9. give your child an equal opportunity to participate in non-academic and extracurricular activities offered by the school district.
10. examine all relevant records relating to decisions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, educational program and placement.
11. obtain copies of educational records at a reasonable cost if the fee would effectively deny you access to the records.
12. receive a response from the school district to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of your child's records.
13. request amendment of your child's educational records if there is reasonable cause to believe that they are inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of your child. If the school district refuses this request, it shall notify you within a reasonable time and advise you of the right to a hearing.
14. request mediation or an impartial due process hearing related to decisions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, educational program or placement. You and your child may take part in the hearing and have an attorney represent you.
15. ask for payment of reasonable attorney fees if you are successful on your claim.
16. file a local grievance.

The person in the school district who is responsible for Section 504 compliance is: the K-12 Director of Student Services (781-326-7500 x1345). You may contact any of the following state and federal agencies:

1. The United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights 33 Arch Street Boston, MA 02110
2. The Bureau of Special Education Appeals, 350 Main St. Malden, MA 02149
3. The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, One Ashburton Place 6th Floor, Room 601 Boston, MA 02108
4. The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, John F. Kennedy Federal Building, 475 Government Center Boston, MA 02203

IX. Technology (Acceptable Use)

Internet Availability

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

Access to the system/network, including external networks (Internet and Web sites), shall be made available to employees and students for instructional and administrative

purposes and in accordance with administrative regulations and procedures.

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

Monitored Use

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

Filtered Access

The Westwood Public Schools will use available technology to protect students and staff from inappropriate materials. Although this filtering technology is useful and, in most cases effective, staff will need to provide on-site supervision of students using the Internet. The technology is not a substitute for on-site supervision.

Liability

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

X. Student Records

Federal and state laws provide parents and eligible students (those who are age 14 or older) with rights of confidentiality, access, and amendment relating to student records. Copies of the Massachusetts Student Records Regulations ("Regulations"), detailing these rights are available in the school office and the office of Student Services. The following is a general overview of the provisions in the Regulations.

Access and Amendment: A parent or eligible student has a right to access student records and seek their amendment if the parent or eligible student believes them to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. In order to obtain access or to see amendment to student records, please contact the building principal.

Confidentiality: Release of student records generally requires consent of the parent or eligible student; however, the Regulations allow certain exceptions. For example, staff employed or under contract to the district have access to records as needed to perform their duties. The Westwood Public Schools also releases a student's complete student record to authorized school personnel of a school to which a student seeks or intends to transfer without further notice to, or receipt of consent from the eligible student or parent.

In addition, the Westwood Public Schools has a practice of releasing directory information, consisting of the following: the student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance, weight and height of the members of athletic teams, class, participation in recognized activities and sports, honors and awards, and post–high school plans. In the event a parent or eligible student objects to the release of any of the above information, the parent/eligible student may state that objection in writing to the school principal. Absent receipt of a written objection within 2 weeks of the date of notice, the directory information will be released without further notice or consent.

Please see the regulations for a description of other circumstances in which student records may be released without the consent of a parent or eligible student.

Access by Non-Custodial Parents: Non-custodial parents share equal standing with custodial parents to access student record information, unless a court order limiting the rights of the non-custodial parent is presented to the school. If such a court order is provided to the school, the school then needs to notify the custodial parent that the non-custodial parent seeks to obtain access to student records. A twenty-one (21) day waiting period is then imposed. If no such court order is presented to block the rights of the non-custodial parent, after the twenty-one (21) day waiting period, student records should be provided to the non-custodial parent; however, the name, address, telephone and email information should be deleted from the records and the records should be stamped to indicate that they cannot be used to enroll the student in another school district. School personnel should also be mindful of the fact that "authorized school personnel" excludes staff who have no contact with the student. Those persons are considered third parties, and can only access the student record information after receiving informed written consent from the parent or eligible student.

Complaints: Parents and eligible students have a right to file a complaint concerning alleged failures of a school district to comply with the requirements of the student records laws and regulations with the Massachusetts Department of Education, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148. Complaints relative to federal statutes and regulations governing student records may be filed with the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washin gton, DC.