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SCHOOL DISTRICT LEGAL STATUS

The legal basis for public education in the District is vested in the will of the people as expressed in the Constitution of Massachusetts and state statutes pertaining to education.

Under the General Laws of Massachusetts, "... Every town shall maintain... a sufficient number of schools for the instruction of all children who may legally attend a public school therein."

The public educational system of Westwood structurally is a department of the town operated under laws pertaining to education and under regulations of the Massachusetts Board Elementary and Secondary of Education. The area served by the Westwood Public Schools is coterminous with the Town of Westwood.

Established by law

LEGAL REFS.: Constitution of Massachusetts, Part II, Chapter V, Section II
M.G.L. [71:1](#)

CROSS REF.: [BB](#), School Committee Legal Status

Historical Note: Massachusetts has the oldest public school system in the nation. Dating back to 1647, the laws of the Massachusetts Bay Colony required towns to provide for a program of public education.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR SCHOOL DISTRICT

The School Committee has the dual responsibility for implementing statutory requirements pertaining to public education and local citizens' expectations for the education of the community's youth. It also has an obligation to determine and assess citizens' desires. When citizens elect delegates to represent them in the conduct of public education, their representatives have the authority to exercise their best judgment in determining policies, making decisions, and approving procedures for carrying out the responsibility.

The School Committee therefore affirms and declares its intent to:

1. Promote two-way communication with citizens of the community. The public will be kept informed of the progress and problems of the school district, and citizens will be urged to bring their aspirations and feelings about their public schools to the attention of this body, which they have chosen to represent them in the management of public education.
2. Establish policies and make decisions on the basis of declared educational philosophy and goals. All decisions made by this Committee will be made with priority given to the purposes set forth, most crucial of which is the optimal learning of the children enrolled in our schools.
3. Act as a truly representative body for members of the community in matters involving public education. The Committee recognizes that ultimate responsibility for public education rests with the state, but individual School Committees have been assigned specific authority through state law. The Committee will not relinquish any of this authority, as represented by their local School Committee, since it believes that decision-making control over the children's learning should be in the hands of local citizens as much as possible.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY INCLUDING HARASSMENT AND RETALIATION

The Westwood School Committee and Westwood Public Schools are committed to maintaining an education and work environment for all school community members. that is free from all forms of discrimination, including harassment and retaliation. The members of the school community include the School Committee, employees, administration, faculty, staff, students, volunteers in the schools, and parties contracted to perform work for the Westwood Public Schools.

Westwood Public Schools does not exclude from participation, deny the benefits of District from or otherwise discriminate against, individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, active military/veteran status, marital status, familial status, pregnancy, or pregnancy-related condition, homelessness, ancestry, ethnic background, national origin, or any other category protected by state or federal law in the administration of its educational and employment policies, or in its programs and activities.

This commitment to the community is affirmed by the following statements. The School Committee commits to:

1. Promoting the rights and responsibilities of all individuals as set forth in the State and Federal Constitutions, pertinent legislation, and applicable judicial interpretations.
2. Encouraging positive experiences in human values for children, youth and adults, all of whom have differing personal and family characteristics and who come from various socioeconomic, racial and ethnic groups.
3. Working toward a more integrated society and enlisting the support of individuals as well as groups and agencies, both private and governmental, in such an effort.
4. Using all appropriate communication and action techniques to air and address the grievances of individuals and groups.
5. Carefully consider, in all the decisions made within the school district, the potential benefits or adverse consequences that those decisions might have on the human relations.
6. Initiating a process of reviewing policies and practices of the school district in order to achieve to the greatest extent possible the objectives of this statement.

The Westwood Public Schools requires all members of the school community to conduct themselves in accordance with this policy.

It shall be a violation of this policy for any member of the school community to engage in any form of discrimination, including harassment and retaliation, or to violate any other civil right of any member of the school community. We recognize that discrimination can take a range of forms and can be targeted or unintentional; however, discrimination in any form, including harassment and retaliation, will not be tolerated.

It shall also be a violation of this policy for any school community member to subject any other member of the school community to any form of retaliation, including, but not limited to, coercion, intimidation, interference, punishment, discrimination, or harassment, for reporting or filing a complaint of discrimination, cooperating in an investigation, aiding or encouraging another member of the school community to report such conduct or file a complaint, or opposing any act or practice reasonably believed to be prohibited by this policy.

LEGAL REFS: Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964
 Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Equal Employment
 Opportunity Act of 1972 Executive Order 11246, as amended by E.O. 11375
 Equal Pay Act, as amended by the Education Amendments of 1972 Title IX,
 Education Amendments of 1972
 Rehabilitation Act of 1973
 Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975
 No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C. § 7905 (The Boy Scouts of America
 Equal Access Act)
 M.G.L. 71B:1 et seq. (Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972)

CROSS REF: ACE, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability
 ACAB, Sexual Harassment
 GBA, Equal Employment Opportunity
 IJ, Instructional Materials
 JB, Equal Educational Opportunities

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY INCLUDING HARASSMENT AND RETALIATION

The Westwood Public Schools will respond promptly to any reports or complaints of discrimination, including harassment and retaliation, or other violations of civil rights, pursuant to our detailed response protocol. Where it is determined that discrimination or harassment has occurred, the District will act promptly to eliminate the conduct and will impose developmentally appropriate disciplinary, restorative, and/or corrective action.

Any member of the school community who is found, after investigation, to have engaged in any form of discrimination, including harassment or retaliation, against another member of the school community, will be subject to consequences determined appropriate by the administration. Such consequences may include restorative measures and corrective action, and/or student discipline or staff disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Definitions

"Discrimination" and "Harassment" are defined as unwelcome conduct, whether verbal or physical, that is based on any individual's actual or perceived race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, active military/veteran status, marital status, familial status, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions, homelessness, ancestry, ethnic background, national origin, or any other category protected by state or federal law. Discrimination and/or harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- Display or circulation of written materials or pictures that are degrading to a person or group described above.
- Verbal abuse or insults about, directed at, or made in the presence of, an individual or group described above.
- Any action or speech that contributes to, promotes or results in a hostile or discriminatory environment to an individual or group described above
- Any action or speech that is sufficiently severe, pervasive or persistent that it either (i) interferes with or limits the ability of an individual or group described above to participate in or benefit from employment or a program or activity of the District; or (ii) creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational or working environment.

Harassment may include, but is not limited to, any unwelcome, inappropriate, or illegal physical, written, verbal, graphic, or electronic conduct, and that has the intent or effect of creating a hostile education or work environment by limiting the ability of an individual to participate in or benefit from the district's programs and activities or by unreasonably interfering with that individual's education or work environment or, if the conduct were to persist, would likely create a hostile educational or work environment.

"Title IX Sexual Harassment" (effective August 14, 2020) means verbal, physical or other conduct that targets a person based on their sex, and that satisfies one or more of the following:

- A school employee conditioning educational benefits or services on participation in unwelcome sexual conduct (i.e., quid pro quo);
- Any unwelcome conduct that a reasonable person would find so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the school's educational program or activity;
- Any instance of "sexual assault", "dating violence", "domestic violence", or "stalking", as those terms are defined by the Clery Act (20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)(v)) and the Violence Against Women Act (34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(8), (10) & (30)).

Allegations of Title IX Sexual Harassment shall be reported and investigated pursuant to the Westwood Public Schools Protocol for Investigating Sexual Harassment and Retaliation Pursuant to Title IX.

Resources

The following individual is designated as the District ADA, Title VI, Title IX, and Sexual Harassment Coordinator, and Grievance Officer for the School Committee, administration, faculty, staff, volunteers in the schools, and for parties who are contracted to perform work for the Westwood Public Schools, and can be reached at:

Name/Position
Address
Phone

The following individual is designated as the District ADA, Title VI, Title IX, and Sexual Harassment and Civil Rights Coordinator for students in the Westwood Public Schools. In addition, the _____ is the District 504 Coordinator, and can be reached at:

Name/Position
Address
Phone

Inquiries concerning the Westwood Public Schools' policies and protocols, compliance with applicable laws, statutes, and regulations, and complaints may also be directed to the Director of Human Resources. Inquiries about laws, statutes, regulations and compliance may also be directed to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education or the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, 5 Post Office Square, 8th Floor, Suite 900, Boston, MA 02109; (617) 289-0111; Email: OCR.Boston@ed.gov; Website: www.ed.gov/ocr

LEGAL REFS.: Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964
Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 Executive Order 11246, as amended by E.O. 11375
Equal Pay Act, as amended by the Education Amendments of 1972 Title IX,
Education Amendments of 1972
Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975
No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C. § 7905 (The Boy Scouts of America
Equal Access Act)
M.G.L. 71B:1 et seq. (Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972)

CROSS REF: ACE, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability
ACAB, Sexual Harassment
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Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure
Civil Rights Grievance Procedure

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

NONDISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF SEX

The School Committee, in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, declares that the school district does not and will not discriminate on the basis of sex in the educational programs and activities of the public schools. This policy will extend not only to students with regard to educational opportunities, but also to employees with regard to employment opportunities.

The School Committee will continue to ensure fair and equitable educational and employment opportunities, without regard to sex, to all of its students and employees.

The Committee will designate an individual to act as the school district's Title IX compliance officer. All students and employees will be notified of the name and office address and telephone number of the compliance officer.

LEGAL REFS.: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
45 CFR, Part 86, (Federal Register, 6/4/75)
M.G.L. 76:5; 76:16 (Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971)
BESE 603 CMR 26:00

CROSS REF.: AC, Nondiscrimination

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The Westwood School Committee and Westwood Public Schools are committed to maintaining an education and work environment for all school community members. that is free from all forms of harassment, including sexual harassment. The members of the school community include the School Committee, employees, administration, faculty, staff, students, volunteers in the schools, and parties contracted to perform work for the Westwood Public Schools.

Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. The definition includes unwelcome conduct on the basis of sex that is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the school's education program or activity it also, includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment includes conduct by an employee conditioning an educational benefit or service upon a person's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct, often called quid pro quo harassment and, sexual assault as the Federal Clery Act defines that crime. Sexual violence is a form of sexual harassment. Sexual violence, as the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) uses the term, refers to physical sexual acts perpetrated against a person's will or where a person is incapable of giving consent (e.g., due to the student's age or use of drugs or alcohol, or because an intellectual or other disability prevents the student from having the capacity to give consent). A number of different acts fall into the category of sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, sexual abuse and sexual coercion. Massachusetts General Laws Ch. 119, Section 51 A, requires that public schools report cases of suspected child abuse, immediately orally and file a report within 48 hours detailing the suspected abuse to the Department of Children and Families. For the category of sexual violence, in addition to Section 51A referrals these offences and any other serious matters shall be referred to local law enforcement. Schools must treat seriously all reports of sexual harassment that meet the definition of sexual harassment and the conditions of actual notice and jurisdiction as noted above. Holding a school liable under Title IX can occur only when the school knows of sexual harassment allegations and responds in a way that is deliberately indifferent (clearly unreasonable in light of known circumstance).

While it is not possible to list all those additional circumstances that may constitute sexual harassment, the following are some examples of conduct, which if unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment, depending on the totality of the circumstances, including the severity of the conduct and its pervasiveness:

- Unwelcome sexual advances—whether they involve physical touching or not;
- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life; comment on an individual's body, comment about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons;
- Unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, suggestive or insulting comments;
- Inquiries into one's sexual experiences; and,
- Discussion of one's sexual activities.

The legal definition of sexual harassment is broad and in addition to the above examples, other sexually oriented conduct, whether it is intended or not, that is unwelcome and has the effect of creating an environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating, to male, female, or gender non-conforming students or employees may also constitute sexual harassment.

Because the District takes allegations of harassment, including sexual harassment, seriously, we will respond promptly to complaints of harassment including sexual harassment, and following an investigation where it is determined that such inappropriate conduct has occurred, we will act promptly to eliminate the conduct and impose corrective action as is necessary, including disciplinary action where appropriate.

Please note that while this policy sets forth our goals of promoting an environment that is free of harassment including sexual harassment, the policy is not designed or intended to limit our authority to discipline or take remedial action for conduct which we deem unacceptable, regardless of whether that conduct satisfies the definition of harassment or sexual harassment.

Retaliation against a complainant, because they have filed a harassment or sexual harassment complaint or assisted or participated in a harassment or sexual harassment investigation or proceeding, is also prohibited. A student or employee who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including student suspension and expulsion or employee termination.

The complainant does not have to be the person at whom the unwelcome sexual conduct is directed. The complainant, regardless of gender, may be a witness to and personally offended by such conduct.

NOTICE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The regulations require a school district to respond when the district has actual notice of sexual harassment. School districts have actual notice when an allegation is made known to any school employee. Schools must treat seriously all reports of sexual harassment that meet the definition of harassment and the conditions of actual notice and jurisdiction as noted whether or not the complainant files a formal complaint. Holding a school liable under Title IX can occur only when the school knows of sexual harassment allegations and responds in a way that is deliberately indifferent (clearly unreasonable in light of known circumstances). Schools are required to investigate every formal complaint and respond meaningfully to every known report of sexual harassment.

The regulation highlights the importance of supportive measures designed to preserve or restore access to the school's education program or activity, with or without a formal complaint. Where there has been a finding of responsibility, the regulation would require remedies designed to restore or preserve access to the school's education program or activity.

DUE PROCESS PROTECTIONS

Due process protections include the following:

- 1) A presumption of innocence throughout the grievance process, with the burden of proof on the school;
- 2) A prohibition of the single investigator model, instead requiring a decision-maker separate from the Title IX Coordinator or investigator;
- 3) The clear and convincing evidence or preponderance of the evidence, subject to limitations;
- 4) The opportunity to test the credibility of parties and witnesses through cross examination, subject to “rape shield” protections;
- 5) Written notice of allegations and an equal opportunity to review the evidence;
- 6) Title IX Coordinators, investigators, and decision-makers must be free from bias or conflict of interest;
- 7) Equal opportunity for parties to appeal, where schools offer appeals;
- 8) Upon filing a formal complaint the school must give written notice to the parties containing sufficient details to permit a party to prepare for any initial interview and proceed with a factual investigation. For K-12 schools a hearing is optional but the parties must be allowed to submit written questions to challenge each other’s credibility before the decision-maker makes a determination. After the investigation, a written determination must be sent to both parties explaining each allegation, whether the respondent is responsible or not responsible, including the facts and evidence on which the conclusion was based by applying either the preponderance of the evidence or the clear and convincing standard; however, a school can use the lower preponderance standards only if it uses that standard for conduct code violations that do not involve sexual harassment but carry the same maximum disciplinary sanction. As long as the process is voluntary for all parties, after being fully informed and written consent is provided by both parties, a school may facilitate informal resolution of a sexual complaint.

A district may establish an informal investigation process that may, upon the request of the complainant be followed by a formal process.

The Superintendent in consultation with the Title IX Coordinator shall designate the principal of each school in the district, or their designee (or some other appropriate employee(s)) as the initial entity to receive the sexual harassment complaint. Also, in a matter of sexual harassment, the district shall require that the Title IX Coordinator be informed, as soon as possible, of the filing of the complaint. Nothing in this policy shall prevent any person from reporting the prohibited conduct to someone other than those above designated complaint recipients. The investigating officer may receive the complaint orally or in writing, and the investigation shall be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances and in compliance with applicable law. The investigation will be prompt, thorough, and impartial, and will include, at least, a private interview with the person filing the complaint and with witnesses. Also, the alleged harasser will be interviewed. When the investigation is completed, the complaint recipient will, to the extent appropriate, inform the person filing the complaint and the person alleged to have committed the conduct of the results of that investigation.

RECORD KEEPING REQUIREMENTS

Schools must create and maintain records documenting every Title IX sexual harassment complaint. This could include mediation, restorative justice, or other models of alternative dispute resolution. Schools must keep records regarding the school's response to every report of sexual harassment of which it becomes aware even if no formal complaint was filed, including documentation of supportive matters offered and implemented for the complainant.

This policy, or a summary thereof that contain the essential policy elements shall be distributed by the **(Name of District)** School District to its students and employees and each parent or guardian shall sign that they have received and understand the policy.

List the name and phone number of the District's Title IX Coordinator

List the appropriate party by name and phone number to receive a complaint in each District School

Please note that the following entities have specified time limits for filing a claim.

The Complainant may also file a complaint with:

- The Mass. Commission Against Discrimination, 1 Ashburton Place, Room 601
Boston, MA 02108.
Phone: 617-994-6000.
- Office for Civil Rights (U.S. Department of Education)
5 Post Office Square, 8th Floor
Boston, MA 02109.
Phone: 617-289-0111.
- The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission,
John F. Kennedy Bldg.
475 Government Center
Boston, MA 02203.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 151B:3A
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
BESE 603 CMR 26:00
34 CFR 106.44 (a), (a)-(b)
34 CFR 106.45 (a)-(b) (1)
34 CFR 106.45 (b)(2)-(b)(3,4,5,6,7) as revised through June 2020

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

Note: A summary of the attached Policy, as adopted, must be sent to parents/guardians, students, employees, unions, and prospective employees of the school district including Title IX Coordinator(s), investigator(s) and the decision-maker. The above referenced employees must attend training sessions on the implementation of the Policy.

NONDISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF DISABILITY

Title II of the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1992 requires that no qualified individual with a disability shall because the District's facilities are inaccessible to or unusable by individuals with disabilities, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, and activities of the District or be subject to discrimination. Nor shall the District exclude or otherwise deny services, programs, or activities to an individual because of the known disability of a person with whom the individual is known to have a relationship or association.

Definition: A "qualified individual with a disability" is an individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable accommodation to rules, policies, or practices, the removal of architectural, communication, or transportation barriers, or the provision of auxiliary aids and services, meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or the participation in programs or activities provided by the District.

Reasonable Accommodation: The District shall make reasonable accommodation in policies, practices, or procedures when the accommodations are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless the District can demonstrate that making the accommodations would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity.

Communications: The District shall take the appropriate steps to ensure that communications with applicants, participants, and members of the public with disabilities are as effective as communications with others. To this end, the District shall furnish appropriate auxiliary aids and services where necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy benefits of, a service, program, or activity conducted by the District. In determining what type of auxiliary aid or service is necessary, the District shall give primary consideration to the requests of the individuals with disabilities.

Auxiliary Aids and Services: "Auxiliary aids and services" includes (1) qualified interpreters, note takers, transcription services, written materials, assisted listening systems, and other effective methods for making aurally delivered materials available to individuals with hearing impairments; (2) qualified readers, taped texts, audio recordings, Braille materials, large print materials, or other effective methods for making visually delivered materials available to individuals with visual impairments; (3) acquisition or modification of equipment or devices and (4) other similar services and actions.

Limits of Required Accommodation: The District is not required to take any action that it can demonstrate would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of a service, program, or activity or in undue financial and administrative burdens. Any decision that, in compliance with its responsibility to provide effective communication for individuals with disabilities, would fundamentally alter the service, program, or activity or unduly burden the District shall be made by the School Committee after considering all resources available for use in funding and operating the program, service, or activity. A written statement of the reasons for reaching that conclusion shall accompany the decision.

Notice: The District shall make available to applicants, participants, beneficiaries, and other interested persons information regarding the provisions of Title II of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and its applicability to the services, programs, or activities of the District. The information shall be made available in such a manner as the School Committee and Superintendent find necessary to apprise such persons of the protections against discrimination assured them by the ADA.

Compliance Coordinator: The District shall designate at least one employee to coordinate its efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under Title II of ADA, including any investigation of any complaint communicated to it alleging its noncompliance or alleging any actions that would be prohibited under ADA. The District shall make available to all interested individuals the name, office address, and telephone number of the employee(s) so designated and shall adopt and publish procedures for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action that would be prohibited under the ADA. The school district receives federal financial assistance and must comply with the above requirements. Additionally, the School Committee is of the general view that:

1. Discrimination against a qualified disabled person solely on the basis of disability is unfair; and
2. To the extent possible, qualified disabled persons should be in the mainstream of life in the school community. Accordingly, employees of the school district will comply with the above requirements of the law and policy statements of this Committee to ensure nondiscrimination on the basis of disability.

LEGAL REFS.: Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, as amended
 Education for All Disabled Children Act of 1975
 M.G.L. 71B:1 et seq. (Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972)
 Title II, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992, as amended
 Board of Education Chapter 766 Regulations, adopted 10/74, as amended through
 3/28/78

CROSS REFS.: IGB, Support Services Programs

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

PHILOSOPHY/MISSION/COREVALUES

Philosophy

The Westwood Public Schools are actively shaping the future while honoring a strong tradition of excellence. Our students are well-prepared to meet the challenges of our global society. They develop into self-motivated learners and achieve their potential in supportive and creative environments. The staff, faculty, and administrators form a strong, high performing team. Through innovative collaboration and partnerships, the Westwood Public Schools expand opportunities and resources that benefit the schools and the community.

Mission Statement

Members of the Westwood Public School community will strive to prepare students for college, career, and civic life by providing rich and challenging curriculum, high-quality instruction, and authentic educational experiences.

Core Values

Honoring Tradition

The Westwood Public Schools are actively shaping the future while honoring a strong tradition of excellence.

Inspiring Excellence

Members of the Westwood Public Schools community strive for excellence in academic, co-curricular, and professional endeavors.

Shaping the Future

Our students develop into self-motivated learners and achieve their potential in supportive and creative environments.

Creating Opportunity

Through innovative collaboration and partnerships, the Westwood Public Schools expand opportunities and resources the benefit the schools and the community.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

TOBACCO PRODUCTS/VAPING ON SCHOOL PREMISES PROHIBITED

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

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

A student determined to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to the student discipline code.

This policy shall be promulgated to all staff and students in appropriate handbook(s) and publications.

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

Possession by students of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) and similar devices which may take the form of e-cigarettes or vaporizing products, regardless of whether they contain nicotine, is prohibited at all times.

LEGAL REF: M.G.L. 71:37H; 270:6

CROSS REFS.: GBED, Tobacco use on School Property by Staff Members Prohibited
JICH, Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Use by Students Prohibited

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SAFE SCHOOLS POLICY

I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND COMPLIANCE

This policy is adopted by the Westwood School Committee as required by M.G.L. 71,37H, for purposes of notifying members of the public, students, teachers and other staff of the District's Standards and Procedures to assure school building security and safety of students and school personnel. This policy is intended to be in accordance with standards for classroom safety adopted by the Board of Education pursuant to M.G.L. c.69, 1B which standards are incorporated by reference herein.

II. STANDARDS OF SAFETY AND SECURITY

- A. The community shall encourage the creation and maintenance of a safe and secure learning environment in every school building. The creation of a safe learning environment will be enhanced by the provision of sufficient resources for procurement and maintenance of appropriate safety personnel and devices.
- B. Administration, staff and students in each school building shall strive to create an educational environment, which is reasonably safe and secure in order to:
 - 1. Facilitate learning and teaching.
 - 2. Preserve the physical and mental well-being of all lawful occupants of the building.

III. PROCEDURES TO MEET STANDARDS

A. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

- 1. The Superintendent shall cause to be undertaken an assessment of current safety standards and procedures.
- 2. The assessment of current standards and procedures will be accomplished by the Superintendent, building principals and other district personnel who shall review current practices with appropriate police contacts, the town's insurer and Town Counsel in addition to other parties whom the Superintendent and building principals determine to have relevant information.
- 3. On an ongoing basis, as accidents occur, administrative staff will report the accident immediately to the appropriate Town departments, using required forms, and will review the circumstances of the accident. The administration will immediately implement corrective measures that will reduce the risk of a similar occurrence.

B. COMMITTEE ACTION

1. Prior to adopting recommendations or changes to existing policy the Committee shall receive from the Superintendent or designee an estimate of the costs, if any, associated with the implementation of the policy change or recommendations.
2. The Committee shall annually, as part of its budget process, identify safety and security needs and request appropriations for maintenance of safety or security personnel, devices or equipment for all school buildings.

Factors to be considered in making requests for appropriations for safety and security devices, equipment and personnel include but are expressly not limited to the present system of advising students and staff of safety concerns, placement in school buildings of security devices such as, for example, locking doors, cameras, metal or motion detectors and other devices to monitor or restrict access to school buildings; increased use of personnel such as attendance or security officers, lighting, escort services for evening activities, placement of emergency telephones in designated locations, practices related to the regular inspection of and reporting on the condition of the premises, design or architectural features which advance or inhibit safety, procedures for maintaining an ongoing process for reporting complaints to local law enforcement officials and procedure for reference and criminal records checks of employees.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

BACKGROUND CHECKS

It shall be the policy of the Westwood Public Schools that, as required by law, a state and national fingerprint criminal background check be completed to determine the suitability of full or part-time current and prospective school employees, who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children. School employees shall include, but not be limited to any apprentice, intern, or student teacher or individuals in similar positions, who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children. The school committee shall only obtain a fingerprint background check for current and prospective employees for whom the school committee has direct hiring authority or those employed by the city or town to perform work on school grounds. In the case of an individual directly hired by a school committee, the chair of the school committee shall review the results of the national criminal history check. The Superintendent shall also obtain a state and national fingerprint background check for any individual who provides school related transportation to children. The Superintendent may obtain a state and national fingerprint criminal background check for any volunteer, subcontractor or laborer commissioned by the school committee, school or employed by the city or town to perform work on school grounds, who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children. School volunteers and subcontractors/laborers who may direct and unmonitored contact with children must continue to submit state CORI checks.

There will be a fee charged by the provider to the employee and educator for national fingerprint background checks. The fee may from time to time be adjusted by the appropriate agency. The employer shall continue to obtain periodically, but not less than every 3 years, from the Department of Criminal Justice Information Services (DCJIS) all available criminal offender record information (CORI) for any current and prospective employee or volunteer within the school district who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children.

Direct and unmonitored contact with children is defined in DESE regulations as contact with a student when no other employee who has received a suitability determination by the school or district is present. "Contact" refers to any contact with a student that provides the individual with an opportunity for physical touch or personal communication.

This policy is applicable to any fingerprint-based state and national criminal history record check made for non-criminal justice purposes and requested under applicable federal authority and/or state statute authorizing such checks for licensing or employment purposes. Where such checks are allowable by law, the following practices and procedures will be followed.

Requesting CHRI checks

Fingerprinting-based Criminal History Record Investigation (CHRI) checks will only be conducted as authorized by state and federal law, in accordance with all applicable state and federal rules and regulations and conducted by the Office of Human Resources. If an applicant or employee is required to submit to a fingerprint- based state and national criminal history record check, he/she shall be informed of this requirement and instructed on how to comply with the law. Such instruction will include information on the procedure for submitting fingerprints. In addition, the applicant or employee will be provided with all information needed to successfully register for a fingerprinting appointment.

Access to CHRI

All CHRI is subject to strict state and federal rules and regulations in addition to Massachusetts CORI laws and regulations. CHRI cannot be shared with any unauthorized entity for any purpose, including subsequent hiring determinations. All receiving entities are subject to audit by the Massachusetts Department of Criminal Justice Information Services (DCJIS) and the FBI, and failure to comply with such rules and regulations could lead to sanctions. Federal law and regulations provide that the exchange of records and information is subject to cancellation if dissemination is made outside of the receiving entity or related entities. Furthermore, an entity can be charged criminally for the unauthorized disclosure of CHRI.

Storage of CHRI

CHRI shall only be stored for extended periods of time when needed for the integrity and/or utility of an individual's personnel file. Administrative, technical, and physical safeguards, which are in compliance with the most recent CJIS Security Policy have been implemented to ensure the security and confidentiality of CHRI. The Superintendent and the staff involved in the handling of CHRI is to familiarize themselves with these safeguards. In addition to the above, each individual involved in the handling of CHRI will strictly adhere to the policy on the storage, retention and destruction of CHRI.

Retention and Destruction of CHRI

Federal law prohibits the repurposing or dissemination of CHRI beyond its initial requested purpose. Once an individual's CHRI is received, it will be securely retained in internal agency documents for the following purposes only:

- Historical reference and/or comparison with future CHRI requests;
- Dispute of the accuracy of the record;
- Evidence for any subsequent proceedings based on information contained in the CHRI.

CHRI will be kept for the above purposes in a secure location in the office of the Superintendent. When no longer needed, CHRI and any summary of the CHRI data must be destroyed by shredding paper copies and/or by deleting all electronic copies from the electronic storage location, including any backup copies or files. The shredding of paper copies of CHRI by an outside vendor must be supervised by an employee of the district.

CHRI Training

An informed review of a criminal record requires training. Accordingly, the Superintendent will review and become familiar with the educational and relevant training materials regarding Statewide Applicant Fingerprint Information Services (SAFIS) and CHRI laws and regulations made available by the appropriate agencies, including the DCJIS.

Determining Suitability

In determining an individual's suitability, the following factors will be considered: these factors may include, but not necessarily be limited to: the nature and gravity of the crime and the underlying conduct, the time that has passed since the offense, conviction and/or completion of the sentence, nature of the position held or sought, age of the individual at the time of the offense, number of offenses, any relevant evidence of rehabilitation or lack thereof and any other factors deemed relevant by the district.

A record of the suitability determination will be retained. The following information will be included in the determination:

- The name and date of birth of the employee or applicant;
- The date on which the school employer received the national criminal history check results; and,
- The suitability determination (either "suitable" or "unsuitable").

A copy of an individual's suitability determination documentation must be provided to another school, or to the individual, upon request of the individual for whom the school employer conducted a suitability determination.

Relying on Previous Suitability Determination.

The Westwood Public Schools will not rely on the past suitability determination conducted by a previous entity and will require all CHRI reports for prospective employees to be submitted directly to the Westwood Public Schools from DCJIS. In cases where a prospective employee has been fingerprinted in Massachusetts in the past, the Westwood Public Schools will reimburse the prospective employee the cost of the subsequent fingerprint unless:

- The suitability determination was made longer than seven years; or
- The individual has resided outside of Massachusetts for any period longer than three years since the suitability determination was made; or
- The individual has not been employed continuously for one or more school employers or has gaps totaling no more than two years in his/her employment for school employers.

This aspect of the policy shall remain in effect until such time as the DCJIS has developed a "wrap-back" provision allowing for prior reports to be sent to the Westwood Public Schools without a fingerprint.

Adverse Decisions Based on CHRI

If inclined to make an adverse decision based on an individual's CHRI, the district will take the following steps prior to making a final adverse determination:

- Provide the individual with a copy of his/her CHRI used in making the adverse decision;
- Provide the individual with a copy of this CHRI Policy;

Provide the individual the opportunity to complete or challenge the accuracy of their CHRI; and
Provide the individual with information on the process for updating, changing, or correcting CHRI.

A final adverse decision based on an individual's CHRI will not be made until the individual has been afforded a reasonable time depending on the particular circumstances not to exceed thirty days to correct or complete the CHRI.

Secondary Dissemination of CHRI

If an individual's CHRI is released to another authorized entity, a record of that dissemination must be made in the secondary dissemination log. The secondary dissemination log is subject to audit by the DCJIS and the FBI. The following information will be recorded in the log:

Subject name;
Subject date of birth;
Date and time of the dissemination;
Name of the individual to whom the information was provided;
Name of the agency for which the requestor works;
Contact information for the requestor; and
The specific reason for the request.

Reporting to the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

Pursuant to state law and regulations, if the district dismisses, declines to renew the employment of, obtains the resignation of, or declines to hire a licensed educator or an applicant for a Massachusetts educator license because of information discovered through a state or national criminal record check, the district shall report such decision or action to the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education in writing within 30 days of the employer action or educator resignation. The report shall be in a form requested by the Department and shall include the reason for the action or resignation as well as a copy of the criminal record checks results. The Superintendent shall notify the employee or applicant that it has made a report pursuant to the regulations to the Commissioner.

C.O.R.I. Requirements

It shall be the policy of the Westwood Public Schools to obtain all available Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) from the department of criminal justice information services of prospective employee(s) or volunteer(s) of the school department including any individual who regularly provides school related transportation to children, who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children, prior to hiring the employee(s) or to accepting any person as a volunteer. State law requires that school districts obtain CORI data for employees of taxicab companies that have contracted with the schools to provide transportation to pupils.

The Superintendent, Principal, or their certified designees shall periodically, but not less than every three years, obtain all available Criminal Offender Record Information from the department of criminal justice informational services on all employees, individuals who regularly provide school related transportation to children, including taxicab company employees, and volunteers who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children, during their term of employment or volunteer service.

The Superintendent, Principal, or their certified designees may also have access to Criminal Offender Record Information for any subcontractor or laborer who performs work on school grounds, and who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children, and shall notify them of this requirement and comply with the appropriate provisions of this policy.

Pursuant to a Department of Education regulation: "Direct and unmonitored contact with children means contact with students when no other employee, for whom the employer has made a suitability determination of the school or district, is present. "Contact" refers to any contact with a student that

provides the individual with opportunity for physical touch or personal communication. The school employer may determine when there is potential for direct and unmonitored contact with children by assessing the circumstances and specific factors including but not limited to, whether the individual will be working in proximity with students, the amount of time the individual will spend on school grounds, and whether the individual will be working independently or with others. An individual shall not be considered to have the potential for direct and unmonitored contact with children if he/she has only the potential for incidental unsupervised contact in commonly used areas of the school grounds."

In accordance with state law, all current and prospective employees, volunteers, and persons regularly providing school related transportation to children of the school district shall sign an acknowledgement form authorizing receipt by the district of all available CORI data from the department of criminal justice information services. In the event that a current employee has a question concerning the signing of the acknowledgement form, they may meet with the Superintendent; however, failure to sign the CORI acknowledgement form may result in a referral to local counsel for appropriate action. Completed acknowledgment forms must be kept in secure files. The Human Resources office, certified to obtain information under the policy, shall prohibit the dissemination of school information for any purpose other than to further the protection of school children.

CORI is not subject to the public records law and must be kept in a secure location, separate from personnel files and may be retained for not more than three years. CORI shall be shared with the individual to whom it pertains, pursuant to law, regulation and the following model policy, and in the event of an inaccurate report the individual should contact the department of criminal justice informational services.

Access to CORI materials must be restricted to those individuals certified to receive such information. In the case of prospective employees or volunteers, CORI material should be obtained only where the Superintendent has determined that the applicant is qualified and may forthwith be recommended for employment or volunteer duties.

The hiring authority, subject to applicable law and the model policy, reserves the exclusive right concerning any employment decision.

The Superintendent shall ensure that on the application for employment and/or volunteer form there shall be a statement that as a condition of employment or volunteer service the school district is required by law to obtain Criminal Offender Record Information for any employee, an individual who regularly provides transportation, or volunteer who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children. Current employees, persons regularly providing school related transportation, and volunteers shall also be informed in writing by the Superintendent prior to the periodic obtaining of their Criminal Offender Record Information.

The Superintendent shall amend employment applications to include questions concerning criminal records which the Massachusetts Commission against Discrimination has determined may be legally asked of prospective employees. Any employment application which seeks information concerning prior

arrests or convictions of the applicant shall include the following statement: "An applicant for employment with a sealed record on file with the commission of probation may answer "no record" with respect to an inquiry herein relative to prior arrests or criminal court appearances. In addition, any applicant for employment may answer "no record" with respect to any inquiry relative to prior arrests, court appearances and adjudications in all cases of delinquency or as a child in need of service which did not result in a complaint transferred to the superior court for criminal prosecution."

Records sealed pursuant to law shall not operate to disqualify a person in any examinations, appointment or application for public service on behalf of the Commonwealth or any political subdivision thereof.

LEGAL REFS: 42 U.S.C. ? 16962
 M.G.L. 6:167-178; 15D: 7-8; 71:38R, 151B, 276:100A P.L. 92-544; Title 28
 U.S.C. ? 534; Title 28 C.F.R 20.33 (b)
 603 CMR 51.00 803 CMR 2.00 803 CMR 3.05 (Chapter 149 of the Acts of 2004)
 FBI Criminal Justice Information Services Security Policy Procedure for
 correcting a criminal record
 FAQ - Background Checks

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

DCJIS MODEL CORI POLICY

This policy is applicable to the criminal history screening of prospective and current employees, subcontractors, volunteers and interns, and professional licensing applicants.

Where Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) and other criminal history checks may be part of a general background check for employment, volunteer work, licensing purposes, the following practices and procedures will be followed.

CONDUCTING CORI SCREENING

CORI checks will only be conducted as authorized by the DCJIS, state law, and regulation, and only after a CORI Acknowledgement Form has been completed.

If a new CORI check is to be made on a subject within a year of his/her signing of the CORI Acknowledgement Form, the subject shall be given seventy-two (72) hours notice that a new CORI check will be conducted.

ACCESS TO CORI

All CORI obtained from the DCJIS is confidential, and access to the information must be limited to those individuals who have a "need to know". This may include, but not be limited to, hiring managers, staff submitting the CORI requests, and staff charged with processing job applications. The district must maintain and keep a current list of each individual authorized to have access to, or view, CORI. This list must be updated every six (6) months and is subject to inspection upon request by the DCJIS at any time.

CORI TRAINING

An informed review of a criminal record requires training. Accordingly, all district personnel authorized to review or access CORI will review, and will be thoroughly familiar with the educational and relevant training materials regarding CORI laws and regulations made available by the DCJIS.

USE OF CRIMINAL HISTORY IN BACKGROUND SCREENING

CORI used for employment purposes shall only be accessed for applicants who are otherwise qualified for the position for which they have applied.

Unless otherwise provided by law, a criminal record will not automatically disqualify an applicant. Rather, determinations of suitability based on background checks will be made consistent with this policy and applicable law or regulations.

VERIFYING A SUBJECT'S IDENTITY

If a criminal record is received from DCJIS, the information is to be closely compared with the information on the CORI Acknowledgement Form and any other identifying information provided by the applicant to ensure the record belongs to the applicant.

If the information in the CORI record provided does not exactly match the identification information provided by the applicant, a determination is to be made by an individual authorized to make such determinations based on a comparison of the CORI record and documents provided by the applicant.

INQUIRING ABOUT CRIMINAL HISTORY

In connection with any decision regarding employment, volunteer opportunities, or professional licensing, the subject shall be provided with a copy of the criminal history record, whether obtained from the DCJIS or from any other source, prior to questioning the subject about his/her criminal history. The source(s) of the criminal history record is also to be disclosed to the subject.

DETERMINING SUITABILITY

If a determination is made, based on the verification of identity information as provided in this policy, that the criminal record belongs to the subject, and the subject does not dispute the record's accuracy, then the determination of suitability for the position or license will be made. Unless otherwise provided by law, factors considered in determining suitability may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- a) Relevance of the record to the position sought;
- b) The nature of the work to be performed;
- c) Time since the conviction;
- d) Age of the candidate at the time of the offense;
- e) Seriousness and specific circumstances of the offense;
- f) The number of offenses;
- g) Whether the applicant has pending charges;
- h) Any relevant evidence of rehabilitation or lack thereof; and
- i) Any other relevant information, including information submitted by the candidate or requested by the organization.

The applicant is to be notified of the decision and the basis for it in a timely manner.

ADVERSE DECISION BASED ON CORI

If an authorized official is inclined to make an adverse decision based on the results of a criminal history background check, the applicant will be notified immediately. The subject shall be provided with a copy of the organization's CORI policy and a copy of the criminal history. The source(s) of the criminal history will also be revealed. The subject will then be provided with an opportunity to dispute the accuracy of the CORI record. Subjects shall also be provided a copy of DCJIS' Information Concerning the Process for Correcting a Criminal Record.

SECONDARY DISSEMINATION LOGS

All CORI obtained from the DCJIS is confidential and can only be disseminated as authorized by law and regulation. A central secondary dissemination log shall be used to record any dissemination of CORI outside this organization, including dissemination at the request of the subject.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL DISTRICT WELLNESS PROGRAM

The School Committee recognizes the relationship between student well-being and student achievement as well as the importance of a comprehensive district wellness program. Therefore, the school district will provide developmentally appropriate and sequential nutrition and physical education as well as opportunities for physical activity. The wellness program will be implemented in a multidisciplinary fashion and will be evidence based.

Wellness Committee

The school district will establish a wellness committee that consists of at least one (1): parent/guardian, student, nurse, school food service representative, School Committee member, school administrator, member of the public, and other community members as appropriate. If available, a qualified, credentialed nutrition professional will be a member of the wellness committee. Only employees of the district who are members of the wellness committee may serve as wellness program coordinators. Wellness coordinators, in consultation with the wellness committee, will be in charge of implementation and evaluation of this policy.

Nutrition Guidelines

It is the policy of the school district that all foods and beverages made available on campus during the school day are consistent with School Lunch Program nutrition guidelines. Guidelines for reimbursable school meals will not be less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture pursuant to law. The district will create procedures that address all foods available to students throughout the school day in the following areas:

- guidelines for maximizing nutritional value by decreasing fat and added sugars, increasing nutrition density and moderating portion size of each individual food or beverage sold within the school environment;
- separate guidelines for foods and beverages in the following categories:
 1. foods and beverages included in a la carte sales in the food service program on school campuses;
 2. foods and beverages sold in vending machines, snack bars, school stores, and concession stands;
 3. foods and beverages sold as part of school-sponsored fundraising activities; and
 4. refreshments served at parties, celebrations, and meetings during the school day; and
 5. specify that its guidelines will be based on nutrition goals, not profit motives.

Nutrition and Physical Education

The school district will provide nutrition education aligned with standards established by the USDA's National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program in all grades. The school district will provide physical education training aligned with the standards established by the Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education. The wellness program coordinators, in consultation with the wellness committee, will develop procedures that address nutrition and physical education.

Nutrition Education

The following list contains examples of goals your school district may want to consider for inclusion in its policy. Each school district must determine its own goals and include them in its policy.

- Students receive nutrition education that teaches the skills they need to adopt and maintain healthy eating behaviors.
- Nutrition education is offered in the school cafeteria as well as in the classroom, with coordination between the foodservice staff and other school personnel, including teachers.
- Students receive consistent nutrition messages from all aspects of the school program.
- Division health education curriculum standards and guidelines address both nutrition and physical education.
- Nutrition is integrated into the health education or core curricula (e.g., math, science, language arts).
- Schools link nutrition education activities with the coordinated school health program.
- Staff who provide nutrition education have appropriate training.
- The level of student participation in the school breakfast and school lunch programs is appropriate.

Physical Education Activities

The following list contains examples of goals your school district may want to consider for inclusion in its policy. Each school district must determine its own goals and include them in its policy.

- Students are given opportunities for physical activity during the school day through physical education (PE) classes, daily recess periods for elementary school students, and the integration of physical activity into the academic curriculum where appropriate.
- Students are given opportunities for physical activity through a range of before- and/or after-school programs including, but not limited to, intramurals, interscholastic athletics, and physical activity clubs.
- Schools work with the community to create ways for students to walk, bike, rollerblade or skateboard safely to and from school.
- Schools encourage parents and guardians to support their children's participation in physical activity, to be physically active role models, and to include physical activity in family events.
- Schools provide training to enable staff to promote enjoyable, lifelong physical activity among students.

Other School-Based Activities

The wellness program coordinators, in consultation with the wellness committee, are charged with developing procedures addressing other school-based activities to promote wellness.

The following list contains examples of goals your school district may want to consider for inclusion in its policy. Each school district must determine its own goals and include them in its policy.

- An adequate amount of time is allowed for students to eat meals in adequate lunchroom facilities.
- All children who participate in subsidized food programs are able to obtain food in a non-stigmatizing manner.
- Environmentally-friendly practices such as the use of locally grown and seasonal foods, school gardens, and non-disposable tableware have been considered and implemented where appropriate.
- Physical activities and/or nutrition services or programs designed to benefit staff health have been considered and, to the extent practical, implemented.

Evaluation

The wellness committee will assess all education curricula and materials pertaining to wellness for accuracy, completeness, balance and consistency with the state and district's educational goals and standards. Wellness program coordinators shall be responsible for devising a plan for implementation and evaluation of the district wellness policy and are charged with operational responsibility for ensuring that schools meet the goals of the district wellness policy. Wellness program coordinators will report to the School Committee annually.

[
LEGAL REFS.:	The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, Section 204, P.L. 108 -265 The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 1751 - 1769h The Child Nutrition Act of 1966, 42 U.S.C. §§ 1771 - 1789 M.G.L. 111:223 105 CMR 201
CROSS REFS.:	EFC, Free and Reduced-Cost Food Services IHAMA, Teaching About Alcohol, Tobacco and Drugs KI, Public Solicitations/Advertising in District Facilities

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

COMMITMENT TO ACCOMPLISHMENT

The School Committee accepts ultimate responsibility for all facets of school operations. Because it is accountable to residents of the District, the School Committee will maintain a program of accountability consisting of the following elements:

- Clear statements of expectations and purpose as these relate to operations, programs, departments, and positions.
- Provisions for the staff, resources, and support necessary to achieve stated expectations and purposes, subject to financial support by residents of the District.
- Evaluation of operations and instructional and staff development programs to determine how well expectations and purposes are being met.
- Specific performance objectives to enable individuals to direct their own efforts to the goals and objectives of the District.
- Evaluation of the efforts of employees in line with stated objectives, with the first purpose of evaluation being to help each individual make a maximum contribution to the goals of the District.

Every effort will be made by the School Committee, Superintendent, and staff to fulfill the responsibilities inherent in the concept of accountability.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SECTION B

BOARD GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS

BA	SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPERATIONAL GOALS
BAA	EVALUATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE
BB	SCHOOL COMMITTEE LEGAL STATUS
BBA	SCHOOL COMMITTEE POWERS AND DUTIES
BBAA	SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER AUTHORITY
BBBA/ BBBB	SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER QUALIFICATIONS/ OATH OF OFFICE
BBBC BBBE	SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER RESIGNATION UNEXPIRED TERM FULFILLMENT
BCA	SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ETHICS
BDA	SCHOOL COMMITTEE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING
BDB	SCHOOL COMMITTEE OFFICERS
BDD	SCHOOL COMMITTEE-SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIP
BDE	SUBCOMMITTEES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE
BDF	ADVISORY COMMITTEES TO THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE
BDFA	SCHOOL COUNCILS
BDFA-E-1	SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN
BDFA-E-2	SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL OF THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN
BDFA-E-3	CONDUCT OF SCHOOL COUNCIL BUSINESS

BDG	SCHOOL ATTORNEY
BE	SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS
BEC	EXECUTIVE SESSIONS
BEDA	NOTIFICATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS
BEDB	AGENDA FORMAT
BEDC	QUORUM
BEDD	RULES OF ORDER
BEDF	VOTING METHOD
BEDG	MINUTES
BEDH	PUBLIC COMMENT AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS
BEDH-E	GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC COMMENT
BEE	SPECIAL PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING HEARINGS
BG	SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICY DEVELOPMENT
BGB	POLICY ADOPTION
BGC	POLICY REVISION AND REVIEW
BGD	SCHOOL COMMITTEE REVIEW OF PROCEDURES
BGE	POLICY DISSEMINATION
BGF	SUSPENSION OF POLICIES
BGH	POLICY IMPLEMENTATION
BHC	SCHOOL COMMITTEE-STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

BHE	USE OF ELECTRONIC MESSAGING BY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS
BIA	NEW SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ORIENTATION
BIBA	SCHOOL COMMITTEE CONFERENCES, CONVENTIONS AND WORKSHOPS
BID	SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES
BJ	SCHOOL COMMITTEE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM
BK	SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS

SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPERATIONAL GOALS

The Westwood School Committee's primary responsibility is to establish purposes, programs, and procedures that will best produce the educational achievement needed by students. The Committee must accomplish this while also being responsible for wise management of resources available to the system. The Committee must fulfill these responsibilities by functioning primarily as a legislative body to formulate and adopt policy, by selecting an executive officer to implement policy, and by evaluating the results. Further, it must carry out its functions openly, while seeking involvement and contributions of public, students, and staff in its decision-making processes.

In accordance with these principles, the Committee through its mode of operating, will seek to achieve the following goals:

1. To concentrate the Committee's collective effort on its policymaking and planning responsibilities.
2. To formulate Committee policies which best serve the educational interests of each student.
3. To provide the superintendent with sufficient and adequate guidelines for implementing Committee policies.
4. To maintain effective communication with the school community, the staff, and students in order to maintain awareness of attitudes, opinions, desires, and ideas.
5. To allow those responsible for carrying out objectives to have input in their formation.
6. To conduct Committee business openly, soliciting and encouraging broad-based involvement in the Committee's decision-making process by public, students, and staff.
7. To periodically review its performance against the goals.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

EVALUATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

The School Committee will periodically establish realistic objectives related to Committee procedures and relationships. At the end of a specified length of time, the Committee will measure its performance against the stated objectives.

The following areas of School Committee operations and relationships are representative of those in which objectives may be set and progress appraised:

1. Communication with the public
2. School Committee - Superintendent relationships
3. School Committee member development and performance
4. Policy development
5. Educational leadership
6. Fiscal management
7. School Committee meetings
8. Performance of subcommittees of the School Committee
9. Interagency and governmental relationships

When the Committee has completed its self-evaluation, the members will discuss the results in detail and formulate a new series of objectives. At the same time, the Committee will set an approximate date on which the next evaluation will be conducted.

Implied in the concept of evaluation is an assumption that individuals and Committees are capable of improvement. The School Committee believes that its performance will be improved if evaluation is carried out systematically in accordance with good planning, conscientious follow-through, and careful assessment of results.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE LEGAL STATUS
TO BE REVIEWED WITH TOWN CHARTER**

The Town of Westwood Charter provides that:

A School Committee of five members shall be elected for three year overlapping terms. Members shall serve without compensation. The Committee shall have general charge of all public schools in the Town, in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, this Charter, and bylaw.

The School Committee is the governing board of the town's public school system. Although it functions as a duly elected Committee of town government, the School Committee has, unlike other town boards, autonomous and absolute authority within limitations established by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to carry out the educational policies of the state and guide the educational process.

Established by law

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [41:1](#) and [71:37](#) specifically, but powers and duties of School Committees are established throughout the General Laws of Massachusetts Relating to School Committees Westwood Town Charter Chapter C, Sections 4-1-1 and 4-1-2

CROSS REFS.: [AA](#), School District Legal Status
[BBA](#), School Committee Powers and Duties

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL COMMITTEE POWERS AND DUTIES

The School Committee has all the powers conferred upon it by state law and must perform those duties mandated by the state. These include the responsibility and right to determine policies and practices and to employ a staff to implement its directions for the proper education of the children of the community.

The Committee takes a broad view of its functions. It sees them as:

1. **Legislative or policymaking.** The Committee is responsible for the development of policy as guides for administrative action and for employing a Superintendent who will implement its policies.
2. **Appraisal.** The Committee is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of its policies and their implementation.
3. **Provision of financial resources.** The Committee is responsible for adoption of a budget that will enable the school district to carry out the Committee's policies.
4. **Public relations.** The Committee is responsible for providing adequate and direct means for keeping the local citizenry informed about the schools and for keeping itself and the school staff informed about the needs and wishes of the public.
5. **Educational planning and evaluation.** The Committee is responsible for establishing educational goals and policies that will guide the Committee and staff for the administration and continuing improvement of the educational programs provided by the School District.

Personnel Matters

The Superintendent shall be appointed by vote of the Committee and shall directly report to the Committee as provided by law and perform all the duties that are prescribed by law and such other duties, not inconsistent thereto, as a majority of the Committee may direct.

The School Committee shall appoint, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, Assistant/Associate/Deputy Superintendent(s), School Business Administrator, Special Education Administrator, School Physician, School Nurses, and Supervisor of Attendance. Such positions shall not report directly to the School Committee.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. [71:37](#) specifically, but powers and duties of School Committees are established throughout the Massachusetts General Laws.

CROSS REF.: [BB](#), School Committee Legal Status
BDG, School Attorney

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER AUTHORITY

Authority

Because all powers of the School Committee derived from state laws are granted in terms of action as a group, members of the School Committee have authority only when acting as a Committee legally in session.

In other instances, an individual Committee member, including the chair, has power only when the Committee, by vote, has delegated authority to him/her.

The School Committee will not be bound in any way by any statement or action on the part of an individual member except when such statement or action is a result of specific instructions of the Committee.

No member of the Committee, by virtue of their office, will exercise any administrative responsibility with respect to the schools or command the services of any school employee.

The School Committee will function as a body and all policy decisions and other matters, as required by law, will be settled by an official vote of the Committee sitting in formal session.

Duties

The duties and obligations of the individual Committee member may be enumerated as follows:

1. To become familiar with the General Laws of the Commonwealth relating to education and School Committee operations, regulations of the Massachusetts Board of Education, policies and procedures of this School Committee and School Department.
2. To keep abreast of new laws and the latest trends in education.
3. To have a general knowledge of the goals, objectives, and programs of the town's public schools.
4. To work effectively with other Committee members without trying either to dominate the Committee or neglect their share of the work.
5. To respect the privileged communication that exists in executive sessions by maintaining strict confidentiality on matters discussed in these sessions, except that which becomes part of the public record, once it has been approved for release.
6. To vote and act in Committee impartially for the good of the students.
7. To accept the will of the majority vote in all cases, and to remember that they are one of a team and must abide by, and carry out, all Committee decisions once they are made.
8. To represent the Committee and the schools to the public in a way that promotes interest and support.

9. To refer questions and complaints to the proper school authorities.
10. To comply with the accepted code of ethics for School Committee members.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER QUALIFICATIONS/OATH OF OFFICE

In order to serve on the School Committee, an individual must be a registered voter in the town from which they are elected or appointed and must take an oath of office as required by law.

Each new member will present to the Committee secretary official certification of having sworn the oath before an officer duly qualified to administer oaths prior to entering on their official duties as a member of the Committee.

From the Municipal or District Clerk, newly qualified Committee members, by law, receive, and sign a receipt for, a copy of the Massachusetts open meeting law governing the conduct of Committee meetings in general and executive sessions in particular.

Newly qualified Committee members shall, by law, receive and sign a receipt for, within 30 days of taking office, a copy of the Massachusetts Ethics Commission's Summary of the Conflict of Interest laws. As municipal employees, all School Committee members shall receive a copy of said summary annually. All School Committee members shall, within 30 days of taking office, and every 2 years thereafter, complete the Massachusetts Ethics Commission's online training program. Upon completion of the online training program, members shall provide notice of such completion to be retained for 6 years by the Municipal or District Clerk.

Membership on a School Committee is not limited to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, gender identity or sexual orientation.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [30A:20](#); [41:1](#); [41:107](#); [76:5](#); 268A:27-28;

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER RESIGNATION

A current School Committee member who submits a resignation to the appropriate certifying authority terminates School Committee duties at the time of such resignation unless a later time is stated in the resignation.

Should a School Committee member move out of the town or District in which he or she holds office, that member shall be deemed to have vacated the office.

Established by law

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [41:2](#); [41:109](#)

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

UNEXPIRED TERM FULFILLMENT

When a vacancy on the School Committee occurs for any reason, the Board of Selectmen and the remaining members of the Committee share the responsibility for filling it.

As provided in the law, the School Committee will notify the Selectmen that a vacancy has been created within 30 days after it has occurred. After one week's notice has been given by the Committee to the Selectmen, so that voters of the town may have the opportunity to state their candidacy, the two governing bodies will meet to fill the vacancy by roll call vote.

For election to fill a vacancy, a candidate must receive a majority of the votes of the officers entitled to vote. The person so elected will fill the seat on the Committee until the next town election, at which time a member will be elected to serve the remainder of the term, if any.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. [41:11](#)

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ETHICS
(Massachusetts Association of School Committees Code of Ethics)

Preamble

The acceptance of a code of ethics implies the understanding of the basic organization of School Committees under the Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The oath of office of a School Committee member binds the individual member to adherence to those state laws which apply to School Committees, since School Committees are agencies of the state.

This code of ethics delineates three areas of responsibility of School Committee members in addition to that implied above:

1. Community responsibility
2. Responsibility to school administration
3. Relationships to fellow Committee members

A School Committee member in their relations with the community should:

1. Realize that their primary responsibility is to the children.
2. Recognize that their basic function is to be policy making and not administrative.
3. Remember that they are one of a team and must abide by, and carry out, all Committee decisions once they are made.
4. Be well informed concerning the duties of a Committee member on both a local and state level.
5. Remember that they represents the entire community at all times.
6. Accept the office as a Committee member as means of unselfish service with no intent to "play politics," in any sense of the word, or to benefit personally from his/her Committee activities.

A School Committee member in their relations with his/her school administration should:

1. Endeavor to establish sound, clearly defined policies which will direct and support the administration.
2. Recognize and support the administrative chain of command and refuse to act on complaints as an individual outside the administration.

3. Give the chief administrator full responsibility for discharging their professional duties and hold them responsible for acceptable results.
4. Refer all complaints to the administrative staff for solution and only discuss them at Committee meetings if such solutions fail.

A School Committee in their relations with his/her fellow Committee members should:

1. Recognize that action at official meetings is binding and that they alone cannot bind the Committee outside of such meetings.
2. Realize that they should not make statements or promises of how they will vote on matters that will come before the Committee.
3. Uphold the intent of executive sessions and respect the privileged communications that exists in executive sessions.
4. Not withhold pertinent information on school matters or personnel problems, either from members of their own Committee or from members of other Committees who may be seeking help or information on school issues
5. Make decisions only after all facts on a question have been presented and discussed.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL COMMITTEE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

For the purpose of organizing, the School Committee, at its first regular meeting following the District's annual Town Meeting, will elect from its membership a chair, a vice-chair, and a clerk, all of whom will hold their respective offices for a term of one year or until a successor is elected.

In the event the Chair and Vice-Chair are no longer members of the School Committee, the senior member (years served) will act as the Chair Pro-Tem.

A majority of the members of the School Committee will constitute a quorum. The election will proceed as follows:

1. Nominations for the office of chair will be made from the floor. The chair will be elected by a majority roll-call vote of the members present and voting. If no nominee receives a majority vote, the election will be declared null and void and nominations will be reopened.
2. Upon election, the new chair will preside, calling for the election of a vice-chair and clerk, in order. The procedure used for their election will be the same as that for electing the chair.

Any vacancy among the officers occurring between organizational meetings will be filled by a member elected by the School Committee. The election will be conducted as described above.

Following election of officers at its organizational meeting, the School Committee may proceed into such regular or special business as scheduled on the agenda.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL COMMITTEE OFFICERS

Duties of the Chair

The chair of the School Committee has the same powers as any other member of the Committee to vote upon all measures coming before it, to offer resolutions and to discuss questions. He/she will perform those duties that are consistent with his/her office and those required by law, state regulations, and this Committee. In carrying out these responsibilities, the chair will:

1. Sign the instruments, acts, and orders necessary to carry out state requirements and the will of the Committee.
2. Consult with the Superintendent in the planning of the Committee's agendas.
3. Confer with the Superintendent on crucial matters that may occur between Committee meetings.
4. Appoint subcommittees, subject to Committee approval.
5. Call special meetings of the Committee as found necessary.
6. Be public spokesperson for the Committee at all times except as this responsibility is specifically delegated to others.
7. Be responsible for the orderly conduct of all Committee meetings.

As presiding officer at all meetings of the Committee, the chair will:

1. Call the meeting to order at the appointed time.
2. Announce the business to come before the Committee in its proper order.
3. Enforce the Committee's policies relating to the order of business and the conduct of meetings.
4. Recognize persons who desire to speak and protect the speaker who has the floor from disturbance or interference.
5. Explain what the effect of a motion would be if this is not clear to members.
6. Restrict discussion to the question when a motion is before the Committee.
7. Answer all parliamentary inquiries.
8. Put motions to a vote, stating definitely and clearly the vote and result thereof.

Duties of the Vice-Chair

The vice-chair of the Committee will act in the absence of the chair as presiding officer of the Committee and will perform such other duties as may be delegated or assigned to him/her.

Clerk

The clerk will keep or cause to be kept an accurate journal of all Committee meetings; will comply with state law and Committee policy regarding notification of meetings; and will render such reports as may be required by the state or the town.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [71:36](#)

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

Note: The Treasurer of the Town serves as Treasurer of the School Committee.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE-SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIP

The Committee will leave to the Superintendent all matters of decision and administration that come within his/her scope as executive officer or as professional leader of the school system. While the Committee reserves to itself the ultimate decision of all matters concerning general policy or expenditures of funds, it will normally proceed in these areas after receiving recommendations from its executive officer. Further:

1. The Superintendent may seek guidance from the Committee with respect to matters of operation whenever appropriate. If it is necessary to make exceptions to an established policy, he/she will submit the matter to the Committee for advice and direction.
2. The Superintendent will assist the Committee in reaching sound judgments and establishing policies, and will place before the Committee all relevant facts, information, and reports necessary to keep the Committee adequately informed of situations or business at hand.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SUBCOMMITTEES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The School Committee shall appoint members to subcommittees at their annual organizational meeting for a period of one year. These subcommittees may be created for a specific purpose and to make recommendations for Committee action.

1. The subcommittee will be established through action of the Committee.
2. The Committee Chair, subject to approval by the Committee, will appoint the subcommittee chair and its members.
3. The subcommittee will be provided with a list of its functions and duties.
4. The subcommittee may make recommendations for Committee action, but it may not act for the School Committee.
5. All subcommittees of the School Committee are subject to the provisions of the Open Meeting Law.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 30A:18-25

CROSS REF.: BEC, Executive Sessions

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

ADVISORY COMMITTEES TO THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The following general policies will govern the appointment and functioning of advisory committees to the School Committee other than the student advisory committee, which is governed by the terms of the Massachusetts General Laws.

1. Advisory committees may be created by the School Committee to serve as task forces for special purposes or to provide continuing consultation in a particular area of activity. However, there will be no standing overall advisory committee to the School Committee.
2. If an advisory committee is required by state or federal law, its composition and appointment will meet all the guidelines established for that particular type of committee.
3. The composition of task forces and any other advisory committees will be broadly representative and take into consideration the specific tasks assigned to the committee. Members of the professional staff may be appointed to the committee as members or consultants, as found desirable.
4. Appointments to such committees will be made by the Committee; appointment of staff members to such committees will be made by the School Committee upon recommendation of the Superintendent.
5. Tenure of committee members will be one year only unless the member is reappointed.
6. Each committee will be clearly instructed as to:
 - a. The length of time each member is being asked to serve.
 - b. The assignment the School Committee wishes the committee to fulfill and the extent and limitations of its responsibilities.
 - c. The resources the School Committee will provide.
 - d. The approximate dates on which the School Committee wishes to receive major reports.
 - e. School Committee policies governing citizens, committees and the relationship of these committees to the School Committee as a whole, individual School Committee members, the Superintendent, and other members of the professional staff.
 - f. Responsibilities for the release of information to the press.
7. Recommendations of committees will be based upon research and fact.

8. The School Committee possesses certain legal powers and prerogatives that cannot be delegated or surrendered to others. Therefore, all recommendations of an advisory committee must be submitted to the School Committee.
9. Advisory committees created under this policy are subject to the provisions of the Open Meeting Law.

The Committee will have the sole power to dissolve any of its advisory committees and will reserve the right to exercise this power at any time during the life of any committee.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 30A:18-25

CROSS REFS.: JIB, Student Involvement in Decision-making

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL COUNCILS

The School Committee believes that the school is the key unit for educational improvement and change and that successful school improvement is best accomplished through a school-based decision-making process. By involving those directly affected by any action or decision of the school council in the process of determining that action or decision, it helps to strengthen the commitment to those decisions by those most affected by its implementation.

Under this policy, the Principal shall have primary responsibility for the management of the school. Decisions which are made at the school level must be aligned with the budget, policies, curriculum, and long-range and short-range goals adopted by the School Committee. In addition, decisions must comply with any state and federal laws and regulations and with any negotiated agreements of the school district.

As enacted by the state legislature in the Education Reform Act of 1993, a school council shall be established in each school to advise the Principal in specific areas of school operation. The Principal, except as specifically defined in the law, shall have the responsibility for defining the composition of and forming the group pursuant to a representative process approved by the Superintendent and School Committee.

The following guidelines define the role of the school council: The School Council shall meet regularly with the Principal of the school and shall assist in:

1. Adoption of educational goals for the school that are consistent with state and local policies and standards.
2. Identification of the educational needs of the students attending the school.
3. Review of the school building budget.
4. Formulation of a school improvement plan that may be implemented only after review and approval by the Superintendent.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:38Q, 71:59C

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Principal, in conjunction with the school council, shall be responsible for preparing a written school improvement plan annually. This plan shall be written with the advice of the school council and submitted for approval to the Superintendent and review of the School Committee. The plan should be drafted with the following in mind:

1. The educational goals for the school consistent with the goals and standards, including student performance standards, as adopted by the Massachusetts Board of Education and by the School Committee.
2. An assessment of the needs of the school in light of the proposed educational goals.
3. The means to address student performance.
4. Professional development for the school's professional staff.
5. The enhancement of parental involvement in the life of the school, safety, and discipline.
6. The development of means for meeting the diverse learning needs of every child.
7. Any further subjects as the Principal, in consultation with the school council, shall consider appropriate, except that:
 - a. The council shall have no authority over matters that are subject to Chapter 150E, the collective bargaining law, and
 - b. The council may not expand the scope of its authority beyond that established in law or expressly granted by School Committee policy.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL OF THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The written school improvement plan shall be submitted by the Principal to the Superintendent for approval and the School Committee for review no later than July 1 of the year in which the plan is to be implemented.

Because the implementation of the plan is dependent on Superintendent approval, it is important that the school council be aware of certain expectations regarding the school improvement plan. The school improvement plan should:

1. Focus on improvement of student learning.
2. Specify expected student outcomes and measurable/observable results.
3. Align with the mission of the School District and any goals and policies of the School District.
4. Be consistent with state and federal law, School District policy, established curriculum and negotiated agreements.
5. Clearly identify actions to be taken on how changes will be implemented.
6. Include a plan on how to solicit community support for the changes being developed.
7. Indicate anticipated costs and available funding sources.
8. Delineate the method of evaluating and reporting progress and results.

If the school improvement plan is not approved by the Superintendent, it shall be returned to the Principal with specific comments as to the reason(s). The Principal shall revise the plan in cooperation with the school council, and resubmit it for approval.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

CONDUCT OF SCHOOL COUNCIL BUSINESS

The Principal shall, by law, serve as co-chair of the council. The second co-chair will be elected annually by the council members at its first meeting of the school year subsequent to the elections of new council members. The co-chairs will be responsible for the preparation of the agenda for the council meetings.

The school council shall meet at least once monthly during the school year. Meetings will be held outside of school hours. At its first meeting of the school year, the council will set its calendar of regular meetings for the year. Where circumstances warrant, the council may choose to call additional meetings.

School councils shall use consensus as the primary method to resolve issues and to formulate recommendations. Votes by majority may be taken at the discretion of the Principal and Robert's Rules of Order shall prevail if there are questions of procedure.

All meetings of the school council shall conform to the Open Meeting Law, which stipulate that all meetings be open to the public, that meetings be posted at least 48 hours in advance, and that minutes of the meeting shall be maintained as required. The scope of the school council does not require, and therefore does not qualify for, executive session.

The Superintendent shall receive agendas and minutes of all school council meetings. The Superintendent shall provide copies of these materials to members of the School Committee upon request.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [30A](#)

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL ATTORNEY

It will be the duty of the counsel for the Committee to advise the School Committee and the Superintendent on the specific legal problems submitted to them. They will attend meetings upon request and will be sufficiently familiar with Committee policies, practices, and actions under these policies, and with requirements of the school law to enable them to offer the necessary legal advice.

A decision to seek legal advice or assistance on behalf of the school district will be made by the Committee. The Superintendent may also take such action at the direction of the Committee.

Many types of legal assistance are routine and do not require specific Committee approval or prior notice. However, when the Superintendent concludes that unusual types or amounts of professional legal service may be required, they will advise the Committee and seek either initial or continuing authorization for such service.

The School Committee may use the services provided by the town counsel. The Committee and the Superintendent may seek their services to counsel and represent the school district at various times.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37E; 71:37F

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The School Committee will transact all business at official meetings of the Committee. These may be either regular or special meetings, defined as follows:

1. **Regular meeting**: the usual official legal action meeting, held regularly.
2. **Special meeting**: an official legal action meeting called between scheduled regular meetings to consider specific topics.

Every meeting of the School Committee, regular or special, will be open to the public unless an executive session is held in accordance with state law.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [30A](#)

CROSS REFS.: BEC, Executive Sessions
 BEDA, Notification of School Committee Meetings

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

All meetings of the School Committee are open to attendance by the public and media representatives. However, the Committee has the right to convene in a closed executive session when it meets the following procedural conditions imposed by state law:

1. The Committee will first convene in an open session for which due notice has been given.
2. The Chair (or, in their absence, the presiding member) will state the purpose for the executive session by stating all subjects that may be revealed without compromising the purpose for which the executive session was called.
3. A majority of the members must vote to enter the executive session, with the vote taken by roll call and recorded in the official minutes.
4. The Chair or presiding member will state before entering the executive session whether the Committee will reconvene in open session after the executive session.

The law puts specific limitations on the purposes for which executive sessions may be convened. The Committee may enter executive sessions only to deliberate:

1. The reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than the professional competence, of a single individual, or the discipline or dismissal, including the hearing of charges against, a member of the committee, a school department employee or student, or other individual. The individual has certain rights enumerated in the law including requiring the Committee to hold an open session should the individual so request.
2. Strategy with respect to non-union negotiations or to conduct collective bargaining sessions with non-union personnel.
3. Strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation, if an open meeting might have a detrimental effect. Collective bargaining may also be conducted.
4. The deployment of security personnel or devices.
5. Allegations of criminal misconduct or to discuss the filing of criminal complaints.
6. Transactions of real estate, if an open meeting might be detrimental to the negotiating position of the committee or another party.
7. To comply with the provisions of any general or specific law of federal grant-in-aid requirements.
8. And to consider and interview applicants for employment by a preliminary screening committee (The only position that the School Committee would be involved in that might qualify would be for the position of Superintendent.) This exemption only applies if it can be determined that an open meeting will have a detrimental effect in obtaining qualified applicants. This shall not apply to applicants who have passed a prior preliminary screening.

9. To meet or confer with a mediator with respect to any litigation or public business.
10. To discuss trade secrets or confidential competitively-sensitive or other proprietary information conducted by a governmental body as an energy supplier.

(In the first case, an open meeting will be held if the individual involved so requests.)

Accurate records of the proceedings conducted in executive session will be kept and may remain secret only so long as their publication would defeat the purpose of the session.

The School Committee Chair and the Superintendent will review executive session minutes for possible declassification on, at least, a quarterly basis and, if necessary, will consult with legal counsel. The School Committee Chair will bring minutes recommended for declassification to the School Committee for a vote either as part of a consent agenda or for individual action. In either case, there shall be an announcement of the declassification of minutes.

When a specific set of executive session minutes, not yet declassified, is requested by a member of the public, the School Committee shall render a decision on declassification at its next meeting or within 30 days after the request, whichever occurs first.

All votes taken in executive session will be recorded roll call votes, and will become part of the minutes of executive sessions.

Established by law and Committee policy

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 30A:21; 30A:22

CROSS REFS.: BDE, Subcommittees of the School Committee
BE, School Committee Meetings
KEB, Public Complaints about School Personnel

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

NOTIFICATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

As required by law, a minimum of 48 hours' advance notice (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays) will be given for any meeting of the School Committee, including all subcommittee meetings. The only exception permitted is in case of emergency, which the law defines as "a sudden, generally unexpected occurrence or set of circumstances demanding immediate action."

Notification of the dates, times, and places of regular meetings may be accomplished by periodic publication of the schedule for the ensuing months. However, a minimum of 48 hours prior to each meeting the Committee shall cause to be posted a listing of each subject the Chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed at the meeting (the agenda). Notification of a change in a regular meeting time, place, or agenda and notification, including agenda, of a special meeting will be filed with the town clerk at least 48 hours in advance, as required by law.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [30A:18](#)-25

CROSS REF.: [BE](#), School Committee Meetings

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

AGENDA FORMAT

The Superintendent, conferring with the Chair of the School Committee, will arrange the order of items on meetings agendas so that the Committee can accomplish its business as expeditiously as possible. The particular order may vary from meeting to meeting in keeping with the business at hand.

The Committee will follow the order of business established by the agenda except as it votes to rearrange the order for the convenience of visitors, individuals appearing before the Committee, or to expedite Committee business.

Any School Committee member, staff member, or citizen may suggest items of business. The inclusion of such items, however, will be at the discretion of the Chair of the Committee. A staff member who wishes to have a topic scheduled on the agenda should submit the request through the Superintendent.

The agenda will also provide for time when any citizen who wishes may speak briefly before the School Committee.

The agenda, together with supporting materials, will be distributed to School Committee members no less than three business days prior to the meeting to permit adequate time to prepare for the meeting.

Agendas will be posted and made available to the press.

CROSS REFS: BEDH, Public Comment at School Committee Meetings

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

QUORUM

At all meetings of the School Committee a majority (three) of the entire Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

RULES OF ORDER

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised will govern the proceedings of the Committee, except when those rules are in conflict with the Committee's approved policies and regulations.

In accordance with Robert's Rules, the Committee may suspend parliamentary rules of order by a two-thirds vote.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

VOTING METHOD

Open meeting

Votes of the School Committee will be taken by voice vote or a hand count and shall be recorded in the minutes. If the vote is unanimous only that fact need be recorded. No vote taken at an open session shall be by secret ballot.

All actions will require a majority vote of all members present and voting except as state law, Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, or policies of this Committee require a larger majority. A majority of the members of the School Committee will constitute a quorum.

A two-thirds vote will be required to suspend parliamentary rules of order.

Executive Session

A majority of the members of the School Committee must vote to enter into executive session, with the vote taken by roll call and recorded in the official minutes.

All votes taken in executive session will be recorded roll call votes, and will become part of the minutes of executive sessions. Any votes taken to ratify employment contracts or collective bargaining agreements shall be taken in open session.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 30A:18-25; 71:42; 71:50

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

MINUTES

The minutes of a School Committee meeting constitute the written record of Committee actions; they are legal evidence of what the action was. Therefore, the secretary of the School Committee will be responsible for reporting in the minutes all actions taken by the Committee.

Minutes will include:

1. The date, time, place, the members present or absent, annotated as to arrival and departure times, if during the meeting, a summary of each subject, and a list of documents and exhibits used at the meeting,
2. A complete record of official actions taken by the Committee relative to the Superintendent's recommendations, to communications, and to all business transacted. Resolutions and motions will be given in their exact wording, accompanied by the names of members moving and seconding and a record of the results of the vote. Reports and documents relating to a formal motion may be omitted if they are referred to and identified by title and date.
3. Notation of formal adjournment.

Copies of the minutes will be sent to all Committee members at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting at which the minutes are to be approved. Minutes of all meetings shall be created and approved in a timely manner which is defined in regulation as within the next 3 meetings of the body or within 30 days, whichever is later.

The approved minutes will become permanent records of the Committee. Minutes of public meetings and minutes of executive sessions that have been declassified will be in the custody of the Superintendent who will make them available to interested citizens upon request.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 30A:22; 66:10; 940 CMR 29.00

CROSS REF.: KDB, Public's Right to Know; BEC, Executive Session

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

PUBLIC COMMENT AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

All regular and special meetings of the School Committee shall be open to the public. Executive sessions will be held only as prescribed by the Statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The School Committee desires individuals to attend its meetings so that they may become better acquainted with the operations and the programs of our local public schools. In addition, the Committee would like the opportunity to hear public comment.

Public comment is not a discussion, debate, or dialogue between individuals and the School Committee. It is an individual's opportunity to express an opinion on issues within the School Committee's authority.

To ensure the ability of the School Committee to conduct the District's business in an orderly manner, the following rules and procedures are adopted:

1. At the start of each regularly scheduled School Committee meeting, individuals will sign in for an opportunity to speak during public comment. The public comment segment shall not exceed 30 minutes. All speakers are encouraged to present their remarks in a respectful manner
2. Speakers will be allowed up to three (3) minutes to present their material and must begin their comments by stating their name and city/town. The presiding Chair may permit extension of this time limit, in extenuating circumstances.
3. Topics for discussion should be limited to those items within the School Committee's scope of authority. The authority of the School Committee primarily concerns the review and approval of the budget of the district's public schools, the performance of the Superintendent, and the educational goals and policies of the district's public schools. Comments and complaints regarding school personnel (apart from the Superintendent) or students are generally prohibited unless those comments and complaints concern matters within the scope of School Committee authority.
4. The Chair of the meeting, after a warning, reserves the right to terminate speech which is not constitutionally protected because it constitutes true threats that are likely to provoke a violent reaction and cause a breach of the peace, or incitement to imminent lawless conduct, or contains obscenities.
5. Written comments longer than three (3) minutes may be presented to the presiding Chair before or after the meeting. All remarks will be addressed through the Chair of the meeting. Comments made during the public comment portion of the meeting do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of the Westwood School Committee.
6. Sign up instructions will be provided for those who wish to participate in Public Comment.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 30A: 18-25

CROSS REFS: BE, SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS
BEC, EXECUTIVE SESSIONS
BEDA, NOTIFICATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

A School Committee Meeting is a meeting of a government body at which members of the body deliberate over public business. We welcome the attendance of members of the school district community to view your School Committee as it conducts its regular business meeting.

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 30A Section 20(f) governs public participation at open meetings covering all public bodies.

Chapter 30A:20 [Notice, Remote Participation, Public Participation, Certification]

(f) No person shall address a meeting of a public body without permission of the chair, and all persons shall, at the request of the chair, be silent. No person shall disrupt the proceedings of a meeting of a public body. If, after clear warning from the chair, a person continues to disrupt the proceedings, the chair may order the person to withdraw from the meeting and if the person does not withdraw, the chair may authorize a constable or other officer to remove the person from the meeting.

The School Committee believes that the school district community should have an opportunity to comment to the Committee on issues that affect the school district and are within the scope of the Committee's responsibilities. Therefore, the Committee has set aside a period of time at each School Committee meeting to hear from the public. In addition, if the Committee believes that an issue requires a dialogue with the school district community, the Committee may schedule a separate public hearing on that issue.

Any citizen who wishes to make a presentation to the School Committee on an item which is of interest to them and within the scope of the Committee's responsibilities may request to be placed on the agenda for a particular meeting. Such request should be in writing and should be received by the Superintendent of Schools at least one week prior to the date of the meeting. Such request should contain background statements which would explain the scope and intent of the agenda item. The Chair of the Committee works with the Superintendent to formulate the meeting agendas. Together they will determine whether or not to place an item on the agenda and if the item is to be taken up they will also determine when to place an item on the agenda and all parameters to be required of the presenter.

Here are the general rules for the Committee's public comment period:

1. Public Comment shall be for a period of 30 minutes and shall generally follow the opening of the meeting. The Committee reserves the right to rearrange its agenda to accommodate scheduled presenters.
2. Any citizen wishing to speak before the Committee shall identify themselves by name and address and shall speak for no longer than 3 minutes. No citizen may speak more than once without permission of the Chair. All citizens shall speak to the full Committee through the Chair and shall not address individual members or administrators.
3. Individuals may address topics on the agenda, items specified for public comment, or items within the scope of responsibility of the School Committee. The Chair shall rule out of order any individual who fails to honor the guidelines or who addresses a matter inappropriate for public comment.
4. Any Committee member may direct questions to the speaker through the Chair in order to clarify comments of the speaker.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SPECIAL PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING HEARINGS

In conducting all public hearings required by law, and others, as it deems advisable, the School Committee will:

1. Give due and public notice in line with statutory requirements and seek to publicize the meeting in all local media.
2. Make available printed information on the topic of the hearing.
3. Give all persons an equal opportunity to be heard in accordance with the Committee's policy.

The Chair of the Committee will preside at the hearing.

The public will be informed at the beginning of the hearing the particular procedure that will be followed in regard to questions, remarks, rebuttals, and any time limitations or other rules that must be followed to give everyone an opportunity to be heard.

In conformance with customary hearing procedures, statements and supporting information will be presented first by the Committee, or by others for the Committee; to comment, citizens must be recognized by the Chair, and all remarks must be addressed to the Chair and be germane to the topic. To assure that all who wish get a chance to speak, the Chair will recognize persons who have not commented previously during the hearing before recognizing persons who wish to remark a second time.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The School Committee will develop policies and put them in writing so that they may serve as guides for the discretionary action of those to whom it delegates authority.

The formulation and adoption of these written policies will constitute the basic method by which the School Committee will exercise its leadership in providing for the successful and efficient functioning of the school system. Through the study and evaluation of reports concerning the execution of its policies, the School Committee will exercise its control over school operation.

The School Committee accepts the definition of policy set forth by the National School Boards Association:

Policies are principles adopted by a School Committee to chart a course of action. They tell what is wanted; they may include why and how much. Policies should be broad enough to indicate a line of action to be followed by the administration in meeting day-to-day problems yet be specific enough to give clear guidance.

The policies of the School Committee are framed and are meant to be interpreted in terms of state law, regulations of the Massachusetts Board of Education, and other regulatory agencies of the various levels of government.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

POLICY ADOPTION

Adoption of new policies or changing existing policies is solely the responsibility of the School Committee. Policies will be adopted and/or amended only by the affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the School Committee when such action has been scheduled on the agenda of a regular or special meeting.

To permit time for study of all policies or amendments to policies and to provide an opportunity for interested parties to react, proposed policies or amendments will be presented as an agenda item to the Committee in the following sequence:

1. Information item - distribution with agenda
2. Discussion item - reading of the proposed policy or policies; response from Superintendent; report from any advisory committee assigned responsibility in the area; Committee discussion and directions for any redrafting
3. Action item - discussion, adoption or rejection.

Amendments to the policy at the action stage will not require repetition of the sequence, unless the Committee so directs.

The School Committee may dispense with the above sequence to meet emergency conditions.

Policies will be effective upon the date set by the School Committee. This date will ensure that affected persons have an opportunity to become familiar with the requirements of the new policy prior to its implementation.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

POLICY REVIEW AND EVALUATION

In an effort to keep its written policies up to date so that they may be used consistently as a basis for board action and administrative decision, the School Committee will review its policies on a continuing basis.

The Westwood School Committee will evaluate how the policies have been executed by the school staff and will weigh the results. It will rely on the school staff, students, and the community for providing evidence of the effect of the policies which it has adopted.

The Superintendent is given the continuing commission of calling to the School Committee's attention all policies that are out of date or for other reasons appear to need revision.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL COMMITTEE REVIEW OF PROCEDURES

It is expected that the Superintendent and administrative staff will need to issue procedures implementing policies of the School Committee. Many of these will be routine from year to year; others will arise in special circumstances; some will be drawn up under specific directions from the Committee.

The Committee may review the procedures developed by the Superintendent for the school district whenever they appear inconsistent with policy, goals, or objectives of the District, but it will revise or veto such procedures only when, in the Committee's judgment, they are inconsistent with policies adopted by the Committee.

The Committee will not officially approve procedures except as required by state law or in cases when strong community attitudes, or possible student or staff reaction, make it necessary or advisable for a procedure to have the Committee's advance approval.

Rules Pertaining to Staff and Student Conduct

Under Massachusetts law, the Superintendent is required to publish "rules and regulations pertaining to the conduct of teachers and students which have been adopted." Codes of discipline, as well as procedures used to develop such codes, shall be filed with the Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education for information purposes only. Standards of conduct will be included in staff and student handbooks. These handbooks will be reviewed and approved annually by the School Committee.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:37H

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

POLICY DISSEMINATION

The Superintendent is directed to establish and maintain an orderly plan for preserving and making accessible policies adopted by the School Committee.

Accessibility to these policies should extend to all employees of the Westwood Public Schools, to members of the School Committee and, insofar as conveniently possible, to all residents of the system.

All policy manuals distributed to anyone will remain the property of the Westwood Public Schools.

The School Committee's policy manual will be considered a public record and will be open for inspection at the Superintendent's office.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SUSPENSION OF POLICIES

If the Westwood School Committee wishes to take action contrary to existing policy, it may suspend the policy for one meeting at a time and only in one of the following ways:

1. Upon a majority vote of the full membership of the Committee at a meeting, in the call for which, the proposed suspension has been described in writing and submitted 48 hours in advance.
2. Upon a unanimous vote of the full membership when no such written notice has been given.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The Superintendent has the responsibility for carrying out, through procedures, the policies of the Westwood School Committee.

The policies developed by the Committee and the procedures developed to implement policy will be designed to promote an effective and efficient school system. It is expected that all employees will follow all Committee policies and recommendations.

There are many activities that are common to all schools but procedures for conducting them may vary school to school. School principals will establish procedures for conducting activities in their individual schools within the larger framework of system procedures and committee policies.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL COMMITTEE-STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

The School Committee wishes to maintain open channels of communication between itself and the staff. The basic line of communication will, however, be through the Superintendent.

Staff Communications to the School Committee

All communications or reports to the Committee or any of its subcommittees from Principals, supervisors, teachers, or other staff members will be submitted through the Superintendent. This procedure does not deny the right of any employee to appeal to the Committee for administrative decisions on important matters, except those matters that are outside of the Committee's legal authority, provided the Superintendent has been notified of the forthcoming appeal and that it is processed in accordance with the Committee's policy on complaints and grievances. Staff members are also reminded that Committee meetings are public meetings. As such, they provide an excellent opportunity to observe first hand the Committee's deliberations on problems of staff concern.

School Committee Communications to Staff

All official communications, policies, and directives of staff interest and concern will be communicated to staff members through the Superintendent. The Superintendent will develop appropriate methods to keep staff fully informed of the Committee's problems, concerns and actions.

Visits to Schools

Individual School Committee members interested in visiting schools or classrooms will inform the Superintendent of such visits and make arrangements for visitations through the Principals of the various schools. Such visits will be regarded as informal expressions of interest in school affairs and not as "inspections" or visits for supervisory or administrative purposes. Official visits by Committee members will be carried on only under Committee authorization.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

USE OF ELECTRONIC MESSAGING BY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

As elected public officials, School Committee members shall exercise caution when communicating between and among themselves via electronic messaging services including, but not limited to, electronic mail (e-mail), Internet web forums, and Internet chat rooms.

Under the Open Meeting Law, deliberation by a quorum of members constitutes a meeting. Deliberation is defined as movement toward a decision including, but not limited to, the sharing of an opinion regarding business over which the Committee has supervision, control, or jurisdiction. A quorum may be arrived at sequentially using electronic messaging without knowledge and intent by the author.

School Committee members should use electronic messaging between and among members only for housekeeping purposes such as requesting or communicating agenda items, meeting times, or meeting dates. Electronic messaging should not be used to discuss Committee matters that require public discussion under the Open Meeting Law.

Under the Public Records Law, electronic messages between public officials may be considered public records. Therefore, in order to ensure compliance, the School Committee chair, in consultation with the Superintendent of Schools, shall annually designate a member of the central office staff who shall be copied on all electronic correspondence between and among members of the School Committee. These copies shall be printed and retained in the central office in the same fashion as any other School Committee records. School Committee members who do not have a computer or access to these messages shall be provided copies on a timely basis.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L.4:7; 30A:18; 66:10

NEW SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ORIENTATION

In accordance with the requirements of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 36A as amended on December 24th, 2002, each new School Committee member elected to the Westwood School Committee is required to complete, within one year of their election or appointment, at least eight hours of orientation training. This orientation shall include, but is not limited to, a review of School Finance, the Open Meeting Law, Public Records Law, Conflict of Interest Law, Special Education Law, Collective Bargaining, School Leadership Standards and Evaluations, and the Roles and Responsibilities of School Committee Members.

The School Committee and Superintendent shall assist each new member to understand the Committee's functions, policies and procedures of the Committee as soon after election as possible. Each new member shall be given the following materials:

- A. A copy of the School Committee policy manual
- B. A copy of the Open Meeting Law
- C. A copy of the Conflict of Interest Regulations
- D. A copy of the district's budget
- E. Collective bargaining agreements and contracts
- F. Student and staff handbooks

Each new member shall also receive any other materials the Chair and/or the Superintendent determine to be necessary.

The Chair and/or Superintendent shall also clarify policy:

- A. arranging visits to schools or administrative offices
- B. requesting information regarding school district operations
- C. responding to community requests/complaints concerning staff or programs
- D. handling confidential information

Whether appointed or elected, new members should be advised that they are also members of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, Inc. and should be encouraged to utilize the services and resources MASC provides by attending meetings or workshops specifically designed for new Committee members. Their expenses at these meetings or workshops will be reimbursed in accordance with established School Committee policy.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [71:36A](#)

CROSS REF.: BBBA/BBBB School Committee Member Qualifications/Oath of Office

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL COMMITTEE CONFERENCES, CONVENTIONS, AND WORKSHOPS

To provide continuing in-service training and development for its members, the School Committee encourages the participation of all members at appropriate School Committee conferences, workshops and conventions. However, in order to control both the investment of time and funds necessary to implement this policy, the Committee establishes these principles and procedures for its guidance:

1. The School Committee shall be made aware of School Committee conferences, conventions and workshops. The Committee will periodically decide which meetings appear to be most promising in terms of producing direct and indirect benefits to the school district.
2. Funds for participation at such meetings will be budgeted for on an annual basis. When funds are limited, the Committee will designate which of its members would be the most appropriate to participate at a given meeting.
3. Reimbursement to Committee members for their travel expenses will be in accordance with the travel reimbursement policy.
4. When a conference, convention, or workshop is not attended by the full Committee, those who do participate will be requested to share information, recommendations and materials acquired at the meeting.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. [40:5](#)

CROSS REFS.: [BID](#), School Committee Member Compensation and Expenses
[DKC](#), Expense Reimbursements

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES

The School Committee shall serve without compensation. No member of a School Committee shall be eligible to the position of teacher, or Superintendent of public schools therein, or in any union school or superintendency union or district in which Westwood participates.

Upon submitting vouchers and supporting bills for expenses incurred in carrying out specific services previously authorized by the Committee, members may be reimbursed from school funds.

Reimbursable expenses may include the cost of attendance at conferences of School Committee associations and other professional meetings or visitations when such attendance and expense payment has had prior School Committee approval.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 40:5; 71:52

CROSS REF.: BIBA, School Committee Conferences, Conventions, and Workshops

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL COMMITTEE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

The School Committee, as an agent of the state, must operate within the bounds of state and federal laws affecting public education. If the Committee is to meet its responsibilities to the residents and students of this community, it must work vigorously for the passage of new laws designed to advance the cause of good schools and for the repeal or modification of existing laws that impede this cause.

To this end:

1. The Committee will keep itself informed of pending legislation and actively communicate its concerns and make its position known to elected representatives at both the state and national level.
2. The Committee will work with its legislative representatives (both state and federal), with the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, and other concerned groups in developing an annual, as well as a long-range, legislative program. One of the major objectives of the Committee's legislative program will be to seek full funding for all state and federally mandated programs.
3. The Committee will annually designate a person--who may or may not be a member of the Committee--to serve as its legislative representative. This person will be authorized to speak on the Committee's behalf with respect to legislation being considered by the Massachusetts Legislature or the United States Congress or their respective committees. In all dealings with individual elected representatives, the Legislature or Congress, the Committee's representative will be bound by the official positions taken by the School Committee.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS

The Committee may maintain memberships in the national, state and regional School Committees (boards) associations and take an active part in the activities of these groups.

It may also maintain institutional memberships in other educational organizations, which the executive officer and Committee find to be of benefit to members and personnel.

The materials and benefits of institutional memberships will be distributed and used to the best advantage of the Committee and the staff.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SECTION C

GENERAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

CA	ADMINISTRATION GOALS
CB	SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT
CBD	SUPERINTENDENT'S CONTRACT
CBI	EVALUATION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
CCB	STAFF RELATIONS
CE	ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCILS, CABINETS, AND COMMITTEES
CH	POLICY IMPLEMENTATION
CHA/CHC	DEVELOPMENT AND DISSEMINATION OF PROCEDURES
CHCA	APPROVAL OF HANDBOOKS AND DIRECTIVES
CHD	ADMINISTRATION IN POLICY ABSENCE
CM	SCHOOL DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT

ADMINISTRATION GOALS

The School Committee intends to employ qualified personnel to administer the school district efficiently and to require the Superintendent to organize the administration in a manner that will make clear the functions of each position and the relationships among them.

The Superintendent will establish clear lines of communication, both vertically and horizontally, and will form any staff councils or committees needed to provide for efficient conduct of school business. In order to engage in this process in an orderly and effective fashion, each individual and group will be given particular, clear-cut responsibilities. The Superintendent will establish channels so that the recommendations and decisions of each group can be heard and reviewed by the chief administrative officer concerned, and, where appropriate, by the Superintendent and School Committee.

The organization and administration of the schools will balance responsibility with commensurate authority, subject to the reserved legal powers of the School Committee. This means that a staff member, when assigned a responsibility or a position, will be given the authority to make the decisions necessary to perform the assigned tasks.

For the schools to operate effectively, each administrative officer will be responsible and accountable for making a plan of development for all staff assigned to their area of operation.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:41, 71:42

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT

The Committee shall employ a Superintendent of Schools and fix their compensation. The Superintendent shall act in accordance with Mass. General Laws and shall perform such other duties consistent with this section as the Committee may determine. They shall also prepare such reports as may be required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and shall submit materials for the Committee's annual report to the Select Board in sufficient time for printing in the annual report.

LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. [71:59](#), [72:3](#)

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SUPERINTENDENT'S CONTRACT

The Committee, upon the appointment of a candidate to be Superintendent, will enter into a written contract with the Superintendent which will meet the requirements of law and protect the rights of both the Committee and the Superintendent. In accordance with said contract or, in the absence of specific contract language, by vote of the members, the Committee may choose to negotiate a successor contract with an incumbent Superintendent.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [71:41](#); [71:42](#)

NOTE: Under the laws of the Commonwealth, the School Committee may award a contract to a Superintendent of schools for a period not to exceed six years.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

EVALUATION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

Evaluation can serve the purpose of helping educators and educational leaders continually improve their practice.

Through evaluation of the Superintendent, the School Committee will strive to accomplish the following:

1. Ensure the efforts of the Superintendent are focused on district goals and the standards of professional practice established by state regulation are met by the Superintendent.
2. Ensure all Committee members and the Superintendent are in agreement and clear on the role of the Superintendent and the immediate priorities among their responsibilities.
3. Provide excellence in administrative leadership of the school district.
4. Develop a respectful and productive working relationship between the School Committee and Superintendent.

The School Committee and Superintendent will periodically develop a set of goals based on the needs of the school district and in keeping with state regulations for evaluation of the Superintendent. The Superintendent's performance will be reviewed in accordance with specified goals and standards according to the evaluation cycle agreed upon with the Superintendent.

All School Committee discussion and deliberation related to the Superintendent's performance evaluation shall be conducted in open session in accordance with the Open Meeting Law.

LEGAL REF: M.G.L. 30A:18-25
 603CMR35:00

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

STAFF RELATIONS

The School Committee expects the Superintendent to establish clear understandings on the part of all personnel of the working relationships in the school district.

Personnel will be expected to refer matters requiring administrative action to the administrator to whom they are responsible. The administrator will refer such matters to the next higher administrative authority when necessary.

It is expected that the established lines of authority will serve most purposes, but all personnel will have the right to appeal any decision made by an administrative officer through established grievance procedures.

Additionally, lines of authority do not restrict in any way the cooperative, sensible working together of all staff members at all levels in order to develop the best possible school programs and services. The established lines of authority represent direction of authority and responsibility; when the staff is working together, the lines represent avenues for a two-way flow of ideas to improve the program and operations of the school district.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCILS, CABINETS, AND COMMITTEES

The Superintendent may establish such permanent or temporary councils, cabinets, and committees as deemed necessary for assuring staff participation in decision making, for implementing policies and procedures and for the improvement of the educational program.

Functioning in an advisory capacity, all councils, cabinets and committees created by the Superintendent may make recommendations for submission to the School Committee through the Superintendent. Such groups will exercise no inherent authority. Authority for establishing policy remains with the School Committee and authority for implementing policy remains with the Superintendent.

The membership, composition and responsibilities of administrative councils, cabinets, and committees will be defined by the Superintendent and may be changed at their discretion. However, the School Committee wishes to be kept informed of the establishment and dissolution of these groups as well as their membership and their purpose.

Expenses incurred by such groups for consultative services, materials, and any investigative travel will be paid by the school district, but only within budgetary allotments and when approved in advance by the Superintendent.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The Superintendent has responsibility for carrying out, through procedures, the policies established by the School Committee.

The policies developed by the Committee and the procedures developed to implement policy are designed to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the school system. Consequently, it is expected that all School Committee employees and students will carry them out.

Administrators and supervisors are responsible for informing staff members in their schools, departments, or divisions of existing policies and procedures, and for seeing that they are implemented in the spirit intended.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

DEVELOPMENT AND DISSEMINATION OF PROCEDURES

The Superintendent will be responsible for specifying required actions and designing the detailed arrangements under which the school district will be operated in accordance with School Committee policy. These detailed arrangements will be designed to implement policies, goals, and objectives of the Committee and will be one of the means by which the school district will be governed.

In the development of procedures, the Superintendent may involve at the planning stage those who would be affected by the procedures, including staff members, students, parents/guardians, and the public. They must weigh with care the counsel given by representatives of staff, student, and community organizations. They will inform the Committee of such counsel in presenting pertinent reports of procedures and in presenting procedures for Committee approval.

As long as the Superintendent operates within the guidelines of policy adopted by the Committee, they may issue procedures without prior Committee approval unless Committee action is required by law; or the Committee has specifically asked that certain types of procedures be given Committee approval; or the Superintendent recommends Committee approval in light of strong community attitudes or probable staff reactions.

It will be the responsibility of the Superintendent to see that the procedures developed to implement Committee policies and administer the school district are appropriately coded and included as procedures in the School Committee's policy manual.

A procedure concerning a particular group or groups in the schools will be distributed to the group(s) prior to the effective date of the procedure.

CROSS REF.: BDG, School Attorney

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

APPROVAL OF HANDBOOKS AND DIRECTIVES

The Principal, in consultation with the school council, shall prepare and distribute to each student a handbook setting forth the rules pertaining to conduct of students. The school council shall review the handbook each spring to consider changes in the disciplinary policy to take effect at the beginning of the next school year.

It is essential that the contents of all handbooks conform to School Committee policies. It is also important that all handbooks bearing the name of the school district or one of its schools be of a quality that reflects credit on the school department. Therefore, the Committee expects handbooks requiring approval to be approved prior to publication by the Committee and/or the Superintendent.

Committee approval will be necessary for any handbooks that pertain to required standards of conduct for employees or students so that their contents may be accorded the status of Committee-approved policy or regulation. The Superintendent will use their judgment as to whether other specific handbooks need Committee approval; however, all handbooks published will be made available to the Committee for informational purposes.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37H

CROSS REF.: BGD, School Committee Review of Procedures

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

ADMINISTRATION IN POLICY ABSENCE

In the absence of Westwood School Committee policy the Superintendent may take temporary action which would be in accord with the overall policy of the School Committee. However, the Superintendent will not be free to act when the action involves a duty of the School Committee which by law cannot be delegated.

In each case the Superintendent will present the matter to the School Committee for its consideration at its next meeting.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT

An annual report covering the diversified activities of the school district and the administration's recommendations for their improvement will be prepared by the Superintendent and presented to the School Committee Chair. The report will be made available to the public and used as one means for informing the parents/guardians, citizens, and others of the programs and conditions of the Westwood Public Schools.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 72:4

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SECTION D
FISCAL MANAGEMENT

DA	FISCAL MANAGEMENT GOALS
DB	ANNUAL BUDGET
DBC	BUDGET DEADLINES AND SCHEDULES
DBD	BUDGET PLANNING
DBG	BUDGET ADOPTION PROCEDURES
DBJ	BUDGET TRANSFER AUTHORITY
DD	GRANTS, PROPOSALS, AND SPECIAL PROJECTS
DEC	FEDERAL FUNDS SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT POLICY
DGA	AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES
DH	BONDED EMPLOYEES AND OFFICERS
DIE	AUDITS
DJ	PURCHASING
DJE	PROCUREMENT REQUIREMENTS
DK	PAYMENT PROCEDURES
DKC	EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENTS

FISCAL MANAGEMENT GOALS

As the trustee of local, state, and federal funds allocated for use in public education, the Committee will use these funds wisely in pursuit of the district's goals.

The quantity and quality of the district's educational programs are dependent on the effective, efficient management of allocated funds. Achievement of the district's purposes can best be achieved through excellent fiscal management.

It is imperative that the educational program be held of paramount importance. Decisions made due to resource limitations must center on the educational goals of the district.

This prioritization will be incorporated into all aspects of district management and Committee decision making.

Regarding the district's fiscal management, it is the Committee's intent:

1. To allocate public funding, centering equity while achieving the greatest educational returns and the greatest contributions to the educational program in relation to dollars expended.
2. To engage in thorough advance planning, with staff and community involvement, in order to develop budgets
3. To advocate for levels of funding that will provide high quality education for all students.
4. To support the use of the best techniques for budget development and management.
5. To provide timely and appropriate information to the community.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

ANNUAL BUDGET

The annual budget is the financial expression of the educational program of the school department, and it mirrors the problems and difficulties that confront the school district.

The budget then is more than just a financial instrument and requires on the part of the Committee, the staff, and the community orderly and cooperative effort to ensure sound fiscal practices for achieving the educational goals and objectives of the school district.

Public school budgeting is regulated and controlled by legislation, state regulations, and local School Committee requirements. The operating budget for the school district will be prepared and presented in line with state policy and will be developed and refined in accordance with these same requirements.

The Superintendent will serve as budget officer but may delegate portions of this responsibility to members of the staff, as appropriate. The three general areas of responsibility for the Superintendent as budget officer will be budget preparation, budget presentation, and budget administration.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [71:34](#); [71:37](#) and [71:38N](#)

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

BUDGET DEADLINES AND SCHEDULES

Preparation of the annual budget will be scheduled in stages throughout the school year with attention to certain deadlines established by law and charter.

The calendar year for budget preparation will be determined by calculating backwards from the final adoption date: the annual town meeting. Dependent on the date thus set, the following will be scheduled:

Two weeks or more before the annual town meeting -

Publication of the budget for the meeting, by the Selectmen

Not less than 30 days before the annual town meeting -

Finance committee holds a public hearing on its proposed recommendations for the articles in the budget to be published as above.

Whatever dates assigned the above, the final date for the submission of the budget to the Selectmen will be arranged cooperatively with the School Committee and finance committee. The Selectmen have authority to impose a date as early as December 31.

In reaching its decision on the budget amount that it will submit to the Selectmen, the School Committee will also observe the statutory requirement of holding a public hearing on the proposed budget not less than seven days after the notice for this hearing has been published in a local newspaper.

Established by law and charter

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [71:38N](#)
Town Charter

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

BUDGET PLANNING

A. PLANNING

The budget of the school district shall be an outline of a program of education stated in fiscal terms stretching over varying lengths of time. Groundwork for budget planning is established throughout the year by groups doing planning, research, analysis and evaluation. For most effective planning, programs of spending must be projected into the future for more than one year at a time. Well-defined alternative programs and their costs must be prepared so that intelligent decisions can be made which will provide a proper education for each young citizen of Westwood. All planning should be a product of all the human resources available to the school district and reflect the most advanced thinking of the times.

B. PUBLICATION

The School Budget, in the format designated by the School Department when voted by the School Committee, will be included in the Town Meeting warrant to be voted upon by the members of the Town Meeting as one total.

C. PUBLIC REVIEW OF BUDGET

The Education Sub-committee of the Westwood Finance and Warrant Commission will be kept periodically informed on the budget being prepared for the coming year. The School Committee and Superintendent will provide information and special opportunities for the Education Sub-committee to ask questions about the budget. The School Committee will also offer the general public opportunities to ask budget questions at their regular meetings.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

BUDGET ADOPTION PROCEDURES

The district budget is adopted by the School Committee at the cost center level. Cost centers should represent appropriate levels of transparency for the Committee to oversee goal implementation while allowing for administrative day-to-day work. Cost centers will be agreed upon by the Committee and administration.

All revenue sources are subject to adoption by the School Committee. The budget is adopted by a simple majority.

Authority for adoption of the final school budget bottom line lies with the citizens who comprise, and who are entitled to vote at, the town meeting. The school budget is presented as part of the total town budget for action at the annual town meeting.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [71:34](#)
 Town Charter, (See local reference)

CROSS REF.: DBJ, Budget Transfer Authority

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

BUDGET TRANSFER AUTHORITY

In keeping with the need for periodic reconciliation of the school department's budget, the School Committee will consider requests for transfers of funds between salary and non-salary accounts as they are recommended by the Superintendent.

The Committee wishes to be kept abreast of the need for these adjustments so that it may act promptly and expedite financial record keeping for the school district.

All requests for transfers between cost centers as approved during the annual budget deliberation must be submitted to the School Committee for approval as part of the School Business Administrator's quarterly report at the business meetings of the School Committee.

All funds in the general account not expended by the close of the fiscal year will be returned to the municipality.

LEGAL REF.: DOR 94-660

CROSS REFS.: DBG, Budget Adoption Procedures
DI, Fiscal Accounting and Reporting

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

GRANTS, PROPOSALS, AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

In accordance with state law, all grants and gifts to the District shall be reviewed and accepted by the School Committee before expenditure. The School Committee will encourage the administration to seek and secure possible sources of state, federal, and other special funds that will enhance the educational opportunities for the children in alignment with district goals. The superintendent will submit for School Committee approval spending plans at the same cost center level as the district budget.

The Superintendent will be responsible for coordinating the development of proposals for all specially funded projects and for keeping the Committee apprised and updated on all such projects.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. [44:53A](#)

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

FEDERAL FUNDS SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT POLICY

The Westwood Public School District is committed to utilizing federal grant funds to supplement instructional programs funded by local, state and other sources as required by law and regulation. Federal funds will be used to complement and extend district-funded programs, not to take the place of (supplant) programs previously funded by the district, except as provided by the granting program.

The Superintendent or designee will ensure that federal grant funds are disbursed appropriately and that associated record-keeping and reporting complies with required guidelines and mandates.

LEGAL REF: Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES

The Chair of the School Committee or designee and the Superintendent or designee will sign payrolls presented for approval.

The municipal treasurer, who also serves as the school department treasurer, signs all checks drawn against school department funds. No other signature is valid.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 41:41; 41:52

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

BONDED EMPLOYEES AND OFFICERS

Each employee of the school district who is assigned the responsibility of receiving and dispensing school funds will be bonded individually or covered by a blanket bond. The town will pay the cost of the bond.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [40:5](#)

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

AUDITS

As a department of the Town of Westwood, an audit of the school department's accounts shall be conducted annually by external auditors. This review shall be conducted in accordance with the generally accepted accounting principles and the Government Auditing Standards issued by the U. S. Comptroller General.

Upon completion of the external audit, the superintendent will share the resulting documentation with the Committee. The Committee will consider the recommendations made by the auditor for maintaining an efficient system for recording and safeguarding the school department's assets.

Additionally, the district is also subject to the following:

- End of Year Financial Compliance Report: Every Massachusetts school district must submit the results of this report to the Department. This End of Year report must be submitted to the Department on or before September 30 each year.
- Government Accounting Standards Board 34: The District is covered in these government financial statements of revenue and expenditures of the municipality.
- Federal grant audits: As a district that spends about thresholds required, the district is subject to the Single Audit Act.
- Student Activity Account: As required by state law, student activity accounts are audited annually.

In addition, the Committee may request an additional audit of the school district's accounts at its discretion

LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. 44:38-40; 71:47; 72:3

CROSS REF: DI, Fiscal Accounting and Reporting

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

PURCHASING

The School Committee declares its intention to purchase competitively without prejudice and to seek maximum educational value for every dollar expended.

The acquisition of materials, equipment and services will be centralized in the Superintendent's office of the school district.

The Business Manager will serve as purchasing agent, and will develop and administer the purchasing program for the schools in keeping with legal requirements and with the adopted school budget.

School purchases will be made only on official purchase orders approved for issuance by the appropriate unit head and signed by the Superintendent, with such exceptions as may be made by the latter for emergency purchases.

Specific purchasing procedures can be found in the Westwood Administrative and Financial Manual which will be reviewed annually and updated as needed.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [7:22A](#); [7:22B](#); [30B](#); [71:49A](#)

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

PROCUREMENT REQUIREMENTS

All purchases of materials and equipment and all contracts for construction or maintenance will conform to the requirements of the General Law.

When bidding procedures are used, bids will be advertised appropriately. Suppliers will be invited to have their names placed on distribution lists to receive invitations to bid. When specifications are prepared, they will be distributed to all merchants and firms who have indicated an interest in bidding.

All bids will be submitted in sealed envelopes, addressed to the Superintendent or designee and plainly marked with the name of the bid and the time of the bid opening. Bids will be opened in public at the time specified, and all bidders will be invited to be present.

The Committee reserves for the District the right to reject any or all bids and to accept the bid that appears to be in the best interest of the school district. The Committee reserves for the District the right to waive any informality in, or reject, any or all bids or any part of any bid. Any bid may be withdrawn prior to the scheduled time for the opening of the bids.

Any bid received after the time and date specified will not be considered. All bids will remain firm for a period of 30 days after opening.

The bidder to whom an award is made may be required to enter into a written contract with the school district.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. [7:22A](#); [7:22B](#); [30B](#)

CROSS REF.: DJA, Purchasing Authority

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

PAYMENT PROCEDURES

All claims for payment from school department funds will be processed in accordance with procedures developed by the Superintendent. Payment will be authorized against invoices properly supported by approved purchase orders, with properly submitted vouchers, or in accordance with salaries and salary schedules approved by the School Committee.

As an operating procedure, the Committee will receive lists of bills (warrants) for payment from school department funds. The lists will be certified as correct and approved for payment by the School Committee and then forwarded to the Town Accountant for processing and subsequent payment by the Town Treasurer.

Actual invoices, statements, and vouchers will be available for inspection by the School Committee upon request.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 41:41; 41:52; 41:56

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENTS

Personnel and school department officials who incur authorized expenses in carrying out their duties will be reimbursed by the school department upon submission of a properly completed and approved voucher and any supporting receipts required by the Superintendent.

When official travel by a personally owned vehicle is authorized, mileage payment will generally be made at the rate currently approved by the Committee, aligned with the Internal Revenue Service standard mileage rate.

To the extent budgeted for such purposes in the school budget, approval of travel requests by School Committee members must have prior approval of the School Committee. Staff travel requests within budgetary limits may be approved by the Superintendent. Staff travel requests that exceed budgetary limits will require the approval of the School Committee and the identification of funding sources by administration. Each request will be judged on the basis of its benefit to the school district.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 40:5; 44:58

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SECTION E
SUPPORT SERVICES

EB	SAFETY PROGRAM
EBAB	PEST MANAGEMENT POLICY
EBB	FIRST AID
EBC	EMERGENCY PLANS
EBCD	EMERGENCY CLOSINGS
EC	BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS MANAGEMENT
ECA	BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS SECURITY
ECAC	VANDALISM
ECAF	SECURITY CAMERAS IN SCHOOLS
EDC	AUTHORIZED USE OF SCHOOL-OWNED MATERIALS
EE/EE-R	TRANSPORTATION POLICY
EEA	STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES
EEAE	SCHOOL BUS SAFETY PROGRAM
EEAEC	STUDENT CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES
EEAG	STUDENT TRANSPORTATION IN PRIVATE VEHICLES
EEAJ	MOTOR VEHICLE IDLING ON SCHOOL GROUNDS
EF	FOOD SERVICES MANAGEMENT
EFAB	LIFE THREATENING ALLERGY POLICY
EFC	FREE AND REDUCED PRICE FOOD SERVICES
EFD	MEAL CHARGE POLICY

SAFETY PROGRAM

Accidents are undesirable, unplanned occurrences that can result in tragic consequences. The School Committee will guard against such occurrences by taking precautions to protect the safety of all students, employees, visitors and others present on school property or at school-sponsored events.

The Committee will comply with safety requirements established by governmental authorities and will insist that its staff adhere to recommended safety practices as these pertain, for example, to the school facility, special areas of instruction, student transportation, school sports, and occupational safety.

The practice of safety will also be considered a facet of the instructional program of the schools. Instruction will include accident prevention as well as fire prevention; emergency procedures; traffic, bicycle, and pedestrian safety.

The Superintendent will have overall responsibility for the safety program of the school district. It will be the responsibility of the Superintendent to see that appropriate staff members are kept informed of current state and local requirements relating to fire prevention, health, and safety.

Efforts directed toward the prevention of accidents will succeed only to the degree that all staff members recognize that preventing accidents is a daily operational responsibility.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:55C
 603 CMR 36:00

CROSS REFS.: EEAE, School Bus Safety Program
 GBGB, Staff Personal Security and Safety
 IHAM, Health Education
 JLI, Student Safety

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

PEST MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Westwood Public Schools are committed to providing a safe and properly maintained environment for all staff, students and visitors. To achieve this end, the School District will implement integrated pest management procedures for its buildings and grounds.

The integrated pest management procedures shall include implementation of appropriate prevention and control strategies, notification of certain pesticide and herbicide uses, record keeping, education and evaluation.

Integrated pest management procedures will determine when to control pests and what method of control to choose. Strategies for managing pest populations will be influenced by the pest species, location and whether and at what population level its presence poses a threat to people, property or the environment. The full range of action alternatives, including no action, will always be considered.

I. OVERVIEW AND GOALS

- A. The Westwood Public Schools shall develop and implement an integrated pest management program.
- B. An integrated pest management program is a pest control approach that emphasizes using a balanced combination of tactics (cultural, mechanical, biological, chemical) to reduce pests to a tolerable level while using pesticides and herbicides as a last resort to minimize health, environmental and economic risks.
- C. Pesticides and herbicides will be used only as a last resort, based on a review of all other available options.
- D. The integrated pest management program shall strive to:
 - 1. Reduce any potential human health hazard.
 - 2. Reduce loss or damage to school structures or property.
 - 3. Minimize the risk of pests from spreading in the community.
 - 4. Enhance the quality of facility use for school and community.
 - 5. Minimize health, environmental and economic risks.

II. RESTRICTIONS ON USE OF PESTICIDES AND HERBICIDES

- A. When pesticides or herbicides are used, they must be classified as an EPA Category III or IV. Application of any pesticide or herbicide may be performed only by certified applicators.

- B. Application of pesticides and herbicides may only be accomplished during a school break or when the building will be clear of students for at least 48 hours.

III. NOTIFICATION OF PESTICIDE AND HERBICIDE USE

- A. When pesticides or herbicides are used outdoors, notice of their use will be provided to parent/guardians, staff and students and will also be posted in a common area.
- B. When pesticides and herbicides are used in a building, the site will provide a 48-hour pre-notification in the form of posting the product name, purpose, application date, time and method and the Material Safety Data Sheet on all entrance doors. A contact person will also be listed.
- C. In the event of an EPA registered pesticide or herbicide application in or around a building site during the school year or summer session, a notice (including the product name, purpose, contact person, and application date, time and method), will be sent home in writing with students in the affected building at least 5 days prior to application.

IV. RECORD-KEEPING

- A. The District will keep a record of pesticides and herbicides used, amounts and locations of treatments and will keep any Material Safety Data Sheets, product labels and manufacturer information on ingredients related to the application of the pesticides or herbicides.
- B. All records of pesticides and herbicides used and correspondence will be available for public review upon notice and during normal school hours.

V. STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES AND EDUCATION

- A. Designated staff (School Nutrition, Buildings and Grounds, etc.) will participate in sanitation and pest exclusion procedure appropriate to their roles. For example: keeping doors closed, repairing cracks, removing food waste within 12 hours, keeping lids on garbage receptacles and keeping vegetation properly out.
- B. Ongoing education of all appropriate District staff will be a priority to ensure a safe and clean environment.

LEGAL REFS.: Chapter 85 of the Acts of 2000, "An Act to Protect Children and Families from Harmful Pesticides."

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

FIRST AID

The school attempts to provide a safe environment. If an accident or sudden illness occurs, school personnel will administer first aid and, if warranted, call Emergency Medical Services by dialing 911.

First aid is defined as the immediate and temporary care given in case of an accident or sudden illness, which enables the child or staff member to be dismissed safely home or to the appropriate level of care. It does not include diagnosis or treatment. Any care beyond first aid will not be given.

Procedures will be developed for the proper handling of an injury or sudden illness of a child or staff member. These will be made known to the staff and will incorporate the following steps:

1. The school nurse or other school personnel will be responsible for administering first aid.
2. When the nature of an illness or an injury appears in any way serious, every effort will be made to contact the parent and/or activate Emergency Medical Services by dialing 911.
3. A student who is ill or injured will be dismissed to a parent or designated emergency contact.
4. The teacher or other staff member to whom a child is responsible at the time an accident occurs will make out a report on an official form providing details about the accident. This will be required for every accident for which advanced medical care is required.
5. All accidents to students and staff members will be reported as soon as possible to the Principal. If Emergency Medical Services are required and the Principal deems appropriate, he/she may report the accident to the Superintendent and/or the School Committee.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [71:55A](#); [71:56](#)

CROSS REFS.: [JLC](#), Student Health Services and Requirements

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

EMERGENCY PLANS

Advance planning for emergencies and disasters is essential to provide for the safety of students and staff; it also strengthens the morale of all concerned to know that plans exist and that students and staff have been trained in carrying out the plans.

The Superintendent will develop and maintain plans that meet the requirements of state law for preparedness in case of fire, civil emergencies, and natural disasters.

The Superintendent shall develop, in consultation with school nurses, school physicians, athletic coaches, trainers, and local police, fire and emergency personnel, an Emergency Medical Response Plan for each school in the district. Each Plan shall include:

1. A method establishing a rapid communications system linking all parts of the school campus, including outdoor facilities, to local Emergency Medical Services along with protocols to clarify when EMS and other emergency contacts will be called.
2. A determination of EMS response times to any location on the campus.
3. A list of relevant contacts with telephone numbers and a protocol indicating when each person shall be called, including names of experts to help with post-event support.
4. A method to efficiently direct EMS personnel to any location on campus, including the location of available rescue equipment.
5. Safety precautions to prevent injuries in classrooms and on the school campus.
6. A method of providing access to training in CPR and first aid for teachers, athletic coaches, trainers, and other school staff which may include CPR training for High School students; provided that School Committees may opt out of instruction in CPR pursuant to Section 1 of Chapter 71.
7. The location of all available Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs), whether the location is fixed or portable, and a list of personnel trained in its use.

The Superintendent or designee shall annually review the response sequence with local police and fire officials. Plans shall be submitted to local police and fire officials and the DESE at least every 3 years by September 1 or when changes occur. Plans must be updated in the case of new construction or other physical changes to the school campus.

Building Principals will meet all requirements for conducting fire drills and Emergency Response drills (at least once per year) to give students practice in moving with orderly dispatch to designated areas under emergency conditions, and the staff practice in carrying out their assigned responsibilities for building evacuation.

LEGAL REF: M.G.L. 69:8A
Section 363 of Chapter 159 of the Acts of 2000

CROSS REF.: EBCD, Emergency Closings
JL, Student Welfare
JLC, Student Health Services and Requirements

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

The Superintendent may close the schools or dismiss them early in the event of hazardous weather or other emergencies that threaten the health or safety of students and personnel. While it may be prudent, under certain circumstances, to excuse all students from attending school, to delay the opening hour or to dismiss students early, the Superintendent has the responsibility to see that as much of the administrative, supervisory and operational activity is continued as may be possible. Therefore, if conditions affect only a single school, only that school will be closed.

In making the decision to close schools, the Superintendent will consider many factors, including the following principal ones relating to the fundamental concern for the safety and health of the students:

1. Weather conditions, both existing and predicted.
2. Driving, traffic, and parking conditions affecting public and private transportation facilities.
3. Actual occurrence or imminent possibility of any emergency condition that would make the operation of schools difficult or dangerous.
4. Inability of teaching personnel to report for duty, which might result in inadequate supervision of students.

The Superintendent will weigh these factors and take action to close the schools only after consultation with public works as necessary, school officials from neighboring towns. Students, parents/guardians and staff will be informed early in each school year of the procedures that will be used to notify them in case of emergency closings. When schools are closed for emergency reasons, staff members will comply with District policy in reporting for work.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:4; 71:4A
 Collective Bargaining Agreements

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS MANAGEMENT

The School Committee's most important function is to provide for the education of students, and it recognizes that the education of students is dependent upon many factors, including a proper physical environment that is safe, clean, sanitary, and as comfortable and convenient as the facilities will permit or the use requires.

The supervision over the care and safekeeping of property used by the school department will be the general responsibility of the Superintendent. The Superintendent will work with other town departments, as necessary, to develop a comprehensive and well-defined plan for the proper maintenance, cleanliness, and safekeeping of all school buildings and grounds to ensure that each school is equally well maintained, equipped, and staffed.

The Superintendent will establish procedures and employ such means as may be necessary to provide accurate information in regard to the nature, condition, location, and value of all property used by the school department; to safeguard the property against loss, damage, or undue depreciation; to recover and restore to usefulness any property that may be lost, stolen or damaged; and to do all things necessary to ensure the proper maintenance, cleanliness, and safekeeping of school property.

Within the separate schools, the facilities director, in collaboration with building administrators will be responsible for proper care, maintenance, and cleanliness of buildings, equipment, and grounds.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [71:68](#)

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS SECURITY

Public school buildings and grounds are one of the greatest investments of the municipality. It is deemed in the best interest of the school department and town to protect the investment adequately.

Security should mean not only maintenance of a secure (locked) building, but protection from fire hazards and faulty equipment, and safe practices in the use of electrical, plumbing, and heating equipment. The Committee expects close cooperation with fire and law enforcement departments and with insurance company inspectors.

Access to school buildings outside of regular school hours will be limited to authorized groups and personnel whose work requires it.. An adequate key control system will be established, which will limit access to buildings to authorized personnel and will safeguard against the chance of entrance to buildings by unauthorized persons.

Funds and valuable records will be kept in a safe place and under lock and key.

Protective devices designed to be used as safeguards against illegal entry and vandalism will be installed when appropriate to the individual situation. Employment of security personnel may be approved in situations where special risks are involved.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

VANDALISM

The School Committee recognizes that acts of vandalism committed against public and private property are costly.

Every citizen of the town, staff members, students, and members of the police department are urged by the School Committee to cooperate in reporting any incidents of vandalism to property under control of the school department, and the name(s) of the person or persons believed to be responsible. Each employee will report to the Principal of the school every incident of vandalism known to them and, if known, the names of those responsible.

The Superintendent is authorized to sign a criminal complaint and to press the charges against perpetrators of vandalism against school property, and is further authorized to delegate, as they see fit, authority to sign such complaints and to press charges.

Parents/guardians and students will be made aware of the legal implications involved. Reimbursement will be sought for all or part of any damages.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SECURITY CAMERAS IN SCHOOLS

The School Committee works to maintain a safe and secure environment for its students, staff, visitors, and facilities. Security means more than having locks and making certain that doors are locked at the proper times. Security also means minimizing fire hazards, reducing the possibility of faulty equipment, keeping records and valuables in a safe place, protection against vandalism and burglary, the prosecution of vandals, and developing crisis plans.

School facilities and their contents, constitute one of the greatest investments of the community. The School Committee believes it to be in the best interest of students and taxpayers for the district to exert every reasonable means to protect the investment adequately.

In pursuit of this objective, the School Committee authorizes the use of security cameras in school district buildings and on its property to ensure the health, welfare and safety of all students, staff and visitors, to deter theft, vandalism and other negative behavior, to safeguard district buildings, grounds and equipment, and to monitor unauthorized individuals in or on school property. Security cameras may be used in locations as deemed appropriate by the Superintendent of Schools in consultation with school officials as well as local law enforcement and emergency response agencies. They may be used in any area, inside or outside of school buildings where there is no reasonable expectation of privacy.

The district shall notify students and staff through student and employee handbooks and appropriate signage that security cameras have been installed and may be used at any time. Students or staff identified on security cameras in violation of School Committee policies will be subject to disciplinary action.

The Superintendent shall ensure that proper procedures are in place and are followed regarding use, viewing, disclosure, retention, disposal and security of video recordings or photographs from security cameras in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. A video recording used for security purposes in school district buildings and/or on school property shall be the sole property of the school district. All video recordings will be stored in their original format and secured to avoid tampering and to ensure confidentiality in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Access to video recordings from security cameras shall be limited to school administrators (Superintendent/designee, School Principal/designee). Law enforcement and emergency response officials shall be granted access to video recordings or the security system as the situation requires.

The Superintendent may, from time to time, issue further guidance that is consistent with current laws and this policy.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

AUTHORIZED USE OF SCHOOL-OWNED MATERIALS

The School Committee wishes to be of assistance, whenever possible, to other town departments and community organizations. Therefore, permission to use school equipment may be granted by the Superintendent upon request by responsible parties or organizations.

Staff members may use school equipment when the use is related to their school employment, and by students when the equipment is to be used in connection with their studies or extracurricular activities.

Proper controls will be established by the Superintendent to assure the user's responsibility for, and return of, all school equipment.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

The major purpose of school transportation is to get pupils who live beyond the established walking distance from home to school and back in an efficient, safe, and economical manner. Other purposes include the provision of transportation for academic field trips in direct support of the curriculum, transportation for support of the co-curricular program (athletics, music, drama, and the like), and "late bus" transportation for those pupils who stay for school-related activities past the normal dismissal time.

CRITERIA FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

1. Adequacy: Does the program provide both necessary and sufficient transportation to and from school and for all other school programs?
2. Safety: Does the scheduling and operating of the program take into consideration hazards, potential dangers to pupils, and all appropriate safeguards?
3. Economy: Is the program operated in the most efficient manner possible after considering the constraints imposed by the criteria of Adequacy, Safety, State Law, and Financial Limitations?

PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

Once the school boundaries, time schedules and programs have been determined by the Superintendent and approved by the School Committee, specifics of student transportation will be the responsibility of the Assistant Superintendent of Schools. The Assistant Superintendent, working in conjunction with the Coordinator of School Transportation, shall be responsible for scheduling all bus transportation, including the determination of routes, bus stops, rules and regulations, and all other matters relative to the transportation program.

EVALUATION

The school transportation program shall be monitored by the Coordinator of School Transportation daily and subjected to periodic evaluations as necessary by the Assistant Superintendent. An overall evaluation shall be conducted by the Assistant Superintendent each school year.

TRANSPORTATION ELIGIBILITY

The following limits shall apply to all students without exception.

Kindergarten and first grade - All kindergarten and first grade students will be provided with transportation.

(This means that kindergarten and first graders will be required to walk to centralized bus stops.)

Grade 2-12 Students living, by the most direct route, a distance greater than one and a half miles will be eligible for transportation.

** The only exception to this policy will be for students who are not eligible under the rules above but who must travel on streets with no sidewalks and exceptionally heavy vehicular traffic.

BUSING POLICIES

1. Children may be required to walk up to one mile to a scheduled bus stop.
2. Stops will be chosen with concern for numbers and safety of children involved, and also with concern for property of abutters.
3. Bus drivers must pick up only at scheduled stops; they shall not be required to admit students who are not assigned to that particular bus. Drivers are required not to exceed legal bus capacity and must adhere to all School Bus Drivers' Regulations as published by the Westwood School Department.

EXCEPTIONS

1. At the elementary level, an individual pupil may ride another bus with a note from home to the principal if bus capacity will permit. This privilege does not extend to group activities; such as, Scouts, parties and non-school classes.
2. In the case of temporary medical emergency, a walker may be considered for transportation.

STUDENT INSTRUCTION

In accordance with Chapter #878, of the Acts of 1976, all students who ride a school bus, each school year, shall receive classroom instruction in safe riding practices and participate at least twice in an on-going bus evacuation drill. This instruction will be a joint effort between the coordinator of school transportation, principals, and police department.

REGULATIONS FOR TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS (Co-Curricular Programs)

Following are the regulations relative to transportation of team members to and from all athletic events and members of any other school-sponsored co-curricular program to and from all out-of-town functions.

1. The School Department will provide transportation to and from all events, practices or functions whenever transportation is needed for an approved school function.
2. The team members must be transported by the vehicle supplied by the school to and from all athletic events, practices, or other functions when transportation is needed.

3. This means that in order to participate in an athletic contest, a music or drama program, a math team meet or any other school-sponsored activity, the participating pupil must travel to and from the event by school bus or other vehicle provided by the school. This applies to student managers and all other pupils associated with the activity and who are carried on the official roster for the activity.
4. It is the responsibility of the coach, director, or advisor in charge of the specific activity to provide proper supervision for the pupils throughout the entire duration of the activity, including the responsibility to see that pupils are accounted for and ride to and from the activity in the vehicle (usually the school bus) provided by the school.
5. Recognizing that extenuating circumstances may from time-to-time necessitate the parents driving the participating pupil to and from the event, permission may be granted for private transportation by the parents or legal guardians provided that a written request be submitted to the Principal involved with the program prior to the event, at least 48 hours (two days) if possible. This applies only to parents of the child involved. It does not allow for parents to transport someone else's child, or for pupils to drive their own vehicle, or for anyone else to drive. Coaches, directors, advisors, or other school faculty members do not have the authority to make exceptions to these regulations.
6. Staff members are not authorized to release students while the activity or event is in progress. The pupils are to remain at the game, event, concert, etc. and under the direct supervision of the staff member at all times.
7. The School Committee approves parents transporting students on the hockey team to and from school supervised practices and games in privately owned vehicles provided that the following conditions are met:
 - a) Only the father or mother of a student on the hockey team shall drive the vehicle.
 - b) Parents of students to be transported in this manner shall be fully informed as to this means of transportation and shall consent in writing thereto.
8. The following sports are also included in the above exception to school bus transportation: the golf team, practices and games; the swimming, tennis and track teams when only a few members are participating as individuals in Invitational, Tournament, or State Meets.
9. These regulations provide for reasonable and proper safeguards for pupils and parents. They also provide appropriate protection for coaches, directors and other faculty members. Logical and orderly operation of these co-curricular programs dictate that reasonable regulations be established and adhered to by all concerned.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [40:5](#); [71:7A](#), [B](#) and [C](#); [71:37D](#); [71:48A](#); [71:68](#); [71:71A](#); [71B:4](#); [71B:5](#); [71B:8](#); [74:8A](#); [76:1](#); [76:12Bi](#); [76:14](#)

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

The major purpose of the school district's transportation services is to aid students in getting to and from school in an efficient, safe, and economical manner.

The school district will contract for transportation services. The School Committee will award contracts on a competitive bid basis. Bus contractors and taxi contractors, who will be held responsible for the safe operation of school buses, will comply with all applicable state laws and regulations, including but not limited to:

1. Specifications for school bus design and equipment
2. Inspection of buses
3. Qualifications and examinations of bus drivers
4. Driving regulations
5. Small vehicle requirements, if applicable
6. Insurance coverage
7. Adherence to local regulations and directives as specified in bid contracts

The Superintendent, working with the bus contractor and other appropriate administrators, will be responsible for establishing bus schedules, routes, stops, and all other matters relative to the transportation program.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 40:5; 71:7A, B and C; 71:37D; 71:48A; 71:68; 71:71A; 71B:4; 71B:5; 71B:8; 74:8A; 76:1; 76:12Bi; 76:14

CROSS REF.: EE, Transportation Policy

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY PROGRAM

The safety and welfare of student riders will be the first consideration in all matters pertaining to transportation. Safety precautions will include the following:

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

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 90:7b as amended by Ch. 246 Acts of 1986
M.G.L. 90:1 et seq.; 713:2; 713:7

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

STUDENT CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES

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

To ensure the safety of all students who ride in buses, it may occasionally be necessary to revoke the privilege of transportation from a student who abuses this privilege. Parents of students whose behavior and misconduct on school buses endangers the health, safety, and welfare of other riders will be notified that their students face the loss of transportation privileges in accordance with regulations approved by the School Committee.

For specific information regarding Student Conduct on School Buses, refer to the Student Handbook.

REF.: All Student Handbooks

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION IN PRIVATE VEHICLES

Since the Westwood Public Schools will attempt to provide transportation for all school activities, the use of student or family automobiles for such activities is not permitted. In certain circumstances with the prior approval of the Superintendent's office teachers, parents, school employees and, in some cases students, will be authorized to provide their own transportation to school sponsored activities. In emergency cases involving the health and safety of students or school employees, and where prior permission is not feasible, transportation may be provided by private means.

In every case where students are to be transported in private vehicles, the driver must have the following:

- Completed C.O.R.I. check
- Current vehicle registration including personal liability coverage
- Current driver's license

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

MOTOR VEHICLE IDLING ON SCHOOL GROUNDS

No motor vehicle operator shall cause or allow any motor vehicle operated by him or her on school grounds to idle unnecessarily, except for any of the following reasons: traffic conditions; queuing at a school for the purpose of picking up or discharging students; turbo-charged diesel engine cool down or warm up; maintenance of appropriate temperature for school buses when accepting or discharging passengers not to exceed three minutes in any fifteen minute period or one minute in any fifteen minute period for other motor vehicles; for circumstances involving safety or emergencies and for servicing or repairing motor vehicles; and as these exceptions are more completely described in the below referenced regulations.

The term "school grounds" shall mean in, on or within 100 feet of the real property of the school whether or not it is in session, and shall include any athletic field or facility and any playground used for school purposes or functions which is owned by the municipality or school district, regardless of proximity to a school building, as well as any parking lot appurtenant to such school athletic field, facility or playground.

Reasonable efforts shall be made by the district to identify by signage all known and actual air intake systems, which may be within 100 feet of an idling motor vehicle. A motor vehicle operator shall not idle a motor within 100 feet of such air intake system, unless the Westwood School District has determined that alternative locations block traffic, impair student safety or are not cost effective.

The Westwood School District shall erect and maintain in a conspicuous location on school grounds "NO IDLING" signage as described below. All such signage shall contain appropriate sized font so as to be visible from a distance of 50 feet.

NO IDLING

PENALTIES OF \$100 FOR FIRST OFFENSE AND \$500

FOR SECOND AND SUBSEQUENT OFFENSES

M.G.L. C. 90, § 16B AND 540 CMR 27.00

It shall be the responsibility of the school administration to ensure that each school bus driver employed by the Westwood School District and not by a school bus contractor shall, upon employment and at least once per year thereafter, sign a document acknowledging the receipt of copies of M.G.L. c. 90, § 16B and 540 CMR 27.00. The prohibitions contained in M.G.L. c. 90, § 16B shall be enforced by state or local law enforcement agencies.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. c. [71:37H](#), c. [90:16B](#)
540 CMR 27.00

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

FOOD SERVICES MANAGEMENT

The Westwood Public Schools will operate a food service program in its schools. Food preparation will be centralized for elementary, middle, and high schools when appropriate.

The food services staff will cooperate with the principals of the schools in matters essential to the proper functioning of the food services program. The responsibility for control of students using the cafeteria will rest with the building Principal.

The School Committee will approve the prices set for school lunches and milk. A la carte food prices are determined by the food service supervisor and do not require School Committee approval.

LEGAL REFS.: National School Lunch Act, as amended (42 USC 1751-1760)
 Child Nutrition Act of 1966
 P.L. 89-642, 80 Stat. 885, as amended
 M.G.L. [15:1G](#); [15:1L](#); [69:1C](#); [71:72](#)

CROSS REFS.: [ADF](#), School District Wellness Policy

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

LIFE THREATENING ALLERGY POLICY

It is the policy of the Westwood School Committee to set age-appropriate guidelines for students and schools within the Westwood system that minimize the risk for children with life-threatening allergies (LTA). The risk of accidental exposure to foods/allergens may be reduced in the school setting if schools work with students, parents, and physicians to minimize risks and provide a safe educational environment for students with life-threatening allergies. The Westwood School District will establish a school-wide prevention and emergency plan for identifying and addressing student life-threatening allergic (LTA) reactions. The school district shall:

- Develop and implement protocols to minimize the risk of exposure to allergens that pose LTA reactions.
- Educate all members of the school community on management of student LTA allergies.
- Plan for the needs of students with life-threatening allergies.

The Westwood School District is committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for students. Given the increasing prevalence of life threatening allergies among school populations, the district is committed to working with parents, students and physicians to minimize risks and provide a safe educational environment for all students. In order to assist children with LTAs to assume more individual responsibility for maintaining their safety as they grow, it is the policy of the School Committee that the guidelines shift as children advance through the primary grades and through secondary school. The focus of allergy management shall be on prevention, education, awareness, communication and emergency response.

Reference: MA Dept. Public Health Reg. 105 CMR 210.000 to include appendix K, CMR 10.000

Managing Life Threatening Allergies in Schools. Massachusetts Department of Education and Massachusetts Department of Public Health, 2002.

Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network: <http://www.foodallergy.org>

New link

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

FREE AND REDUCED PRICE FOOD SERVICES

The school district will take part in the National School Lunch Program and other food programs that may become available to assure that all students in the schools receive proper nourishment.

In accordance with guidelines for participation in these programs, and in accordance with the wishes of the Committee, no student who a teacher believes is improperly nourished will be denied a free lunch or other food simply because proper application has not been received from their parents or guardians.

As required by state and federal regulations, the School Committee approves this policy statement pertaining to eligibility for free milk, free meals, and reduced price meals.

LEGAL REFS.: National School Lunch Act, as amended (42 USC 1751-1760)
 Child Nutrition Act of 1966
 P.L. 89-642, 80 Stat. 885, as amended
 M.G.L. 15:1G; 15:1L; 69:1C; 71:72

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

MEAL CHARGE POLICY

The School Committee is committed to providing students with healthy, nutritious meals each day so they can focus on schoolwork, while also maintaining the financial integrity of meal programs and minimizing any impact on students with meal charges. However, unpaid meal charges place a large financial burden on the school district, as food services is a self-supporting entity within the district. The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with federal reporting requirements of the USDA Child Nutrition Program, as well as provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances.

The provisions of this policy pertain to regular priced school meals only. The School Committee will provide a regular meal to students who forget or lose their lunch money.

Meal Charges and Balances

Students will pay for meals at the regular rate approved by the School Committee and for their meal status (regular, reduced-price, or free) each day. Payment options will be delineated in student handbooks and provided to parents/guardians of incoming students. After the balance reaches zero and enters the negative, students will not be allowed to purchase a la carte items including but not limited to a second entrée, snack, ice cream, or an additional beverage. The student will still be allowed to take a meal, and that meal will continue to be charged to the account at the standard lunch rate based on their meal status. The parent/guardian is responsible for any meal charges incurred. If there is a financial hardship, a parent/guardian should contact food services directly to discuss payment options such as an individualized repayment plan.

Payments

Parents/Guardians are responsible for all meal payments to the food service program. Notices of low or deficit balances will be sent directly to parent/guardians via email or regular postal mail at regular intervals during the school year. At no time shall any staff member give payment notices to students unless that student is known to be an emancipated minor who is fully responsible for themselves or over the age of 18. If parents/guardians have issues with student purchases, they should contact food services for assistance.

Parents/Guardians may pay for meals in advance. Further details are available on the school district webpage and in student handbooks. Funds should be maintained in accounts to minimize the possibility that a child may be without meal money on any given day. Any remaining funds for a particular student, whether positive or negative, will be carried over to the next school year.

All school cafeterias possess computerized point of sale/cash register systems that maintain records of all monies deposited and spent for each student and those records are available to parents/guardians by setting up an online account (see student handbooks for more details) or by speaking with the school's

food service manager. The point-of-sale system is designed to prevent direct identification of a student's meal status. Parents/guardians will receive automated low-balance emails or mailed notices weekly, if applicable. If notices do not result in payment, parents/guardians will receive a phone call from food services. If the phone call does not result in payment the food service manager shall turn the account over to the business office.

Refunds

Refunds for withdrawn and/or graduating students require a written request (email, postal, or in person) for a refund of any money remaining in their account to be submitted. Graduating students also have the option to transfer funds to a sibling's account or to donate to a student in need with a written request.

Delinquent Accounts/Collections

Failure of a parent or guardian to maintain reasonably current accounts may result in a referral to the Superintendent for their review. The Superintendent shall ensure that there are appropriate and effective collection procedures and internal controls within the school district's business office that meet the requirements of law.

If a student is without meal money on a consistent basis, the administration may investigate the situation more closely and take further action as needed. If financial hardship exists, parents/guardians and families are encouraged to apply for free or reduced-price lunches for their child. Each school handbook shall contain detailed instructions for family assistance.

Policy Communications

This policy shall be communicated to all staff and families at the beginning of each school year and to families transferring to the district during the year.

LEGAL REFS: MGL 71:72; USDA School Meal Program Guidelines May 2017

CROSS REFS: JQ, Student Fees, Fines & Charges

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SECTION F

FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT

FA	FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT GOALS
FB	FACILITIES PLANNING
FCB	RETIREMENT OF FACILITIES
FF	NAMING OF FACILITIES
FFA	MEMORIALS

FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The School Committee believes that educational program is influenced greatly by the environment in which it functions. The development of a quality educational program and of school facilities that help implement that program must go hand in hand.

Therefore, it is the Committee's goal to provide the facilities needed for the number and educational requirements of students in the school district and to provide the kind of facilities that will best support the educational program. To best use local resources, it is the Committee's intent, wherever possible, to partner with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

Recognizing that school facilities are long-term community investments, the Committee will develop projects that reflect cost-effective designs, are consistent with good engineering practice, and use high quality construction, with attention to current and future technological practices for students, faculty, and school staff. Sites will be chosen to meet the educational need, maximize the use of any available community resources, and minimize any possible adverse education, environmental, social, or economic impacts on the community.

LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. 70B
 963 CMR 2.00

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

FACILITIES PLANNING

The Westwood School Committee is responsible for the regular operation and orderly development of its physical plant. For this reason, the School Committee will concern itself with both short and long-range planning as it relates to the properties of the school system.

The School Committee will follow a long-term building program to serve as a guide for capital improvements. This program will be subject to systematic study, revision, and extension from time to time and the respective construction projects will be acted upon individually when proposed for implementation.

The School Committee building program will be designed to provide adequate facilities to conduct educational programs for all students residing in the system. The building program will be based upon specific School Committee policies that have been and will continue to be modified to conform to changes in the curriculum, availability of construction funds, changes in enrollments and the results of annual evaluation of facilities. The School Committee will establish priorities using these and other relevant factors.

Staff Planning

Arrangements will be made by the Superintendent, working through Principals, for the school staff to contribute in the planning of new school buildings. Teachers will be given the opportunity to submit suggestions for possible inclusion in the educational specifications.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [70B](#)
 Massachusetts School Building Authority, Chapter 208 of the Acts of 2004,
 963 CMR 2.00

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

RETIREMENT OF FACILITIES

When a school building becomes inadequate by virtue of age, condition, size of site, lack of need, or other overriding limitations, and cannot reasonably and economically be brought up to the current educational standards, the building should be considered for a comprehensive closing study. The Superintendent will recommend to the School Committee, which facilities appear to justify further analysis.

The School Committee may seek both professional advice and the advice of the community in making its recommendations as to the retirement of any school facility. This will permit the public, which originally acquired the property, to benefit from its recycling or retirement.

A closing study will include direct involvement by those neighborhoods considered in the study and will be concerned with all or some of the following factors:

1. Age and current physical condition of the facilities, its operating systems, and program facilities
2. Adequacy of site, location, access, surrounding development, traffic patterns, and other environmental conditions
3. Reassignment of children, including alternative plans according to Committee policy
4. Transportation factors, including numbers of children bused, time, distance, and safety
5. Alternative uses of the building
6. Cost/Savings
 - a. Personnel
 - b. Plant Operation
 - c. Transportation
 - d. Capital Investment
 - e. Alternative Use
7. Continuity of instructional and community programs

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

NAMING OF FACILITIES

Naming a school facility is an important matter that deserves thoughtful attention. Personal prejudice or favoritism, political pressure, or temporary popularity should not be an influence in choosing a name for a school, a portion of a school, or a portion of school grounds. Whenever possible, the wishes of the community, including parents/guardians and students, should be considered in naming school facilities.

The School Committee has the authority to approve the naming and renaming of buildings, structures, and facilities located on school property. The School Committee also has the authority to name subsections of existing structures or facilities, such as classrooms, auditoriums, and gymnasiums.

Names and/or wording associated with school facilities shall be consistent with school district policies and promote messages aligned with the mission, vision and goals of the school district. To the extent possible, names and/or wording should be designed not to restrict the use of a space or inhibit changing the function of the space should that become necessary in the future.

When the opportunity to name or dedicate a new school or school related property, structure or facility is forthcoming, an orderly procedure will be communicated at the next available School Committee meeting. The Committee's agendas should clearly reflect the intent to consider, review, and vote on naming opportunities.

Submission of a name for a school space may be made by any resident or by the Superintendent, in writing, and should be made to the School Committee Chair. If a name is being initiated at the local school level, the Principal must take reasonable steps to include the School Council and PTA/PTO in the nomination of the name before submission to the School Committee.

The written request should specify the intent of the requestor and the reasons why this particular name would fit the facility. It should offer appropriate background information on the person or organization after which the facility will be named. An offer of a financial contribution to the School District may accompany the naming request, but the School Committee is not obligated to accept or reject a name based upon financial considerations alone. Philanthropic contributions in support of the School District are encouraged by the School Committee. The School Committee may acknowledge generous donors by designating appropriate spaces within the School District's facilities consistent with the level of financial commitment.

Following the submission of a naming request, the School Committee Chair will specify a consideration period that allows for public comment, following which the Committee will deliberate and vote on the name.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

MEMORIALS

The School Committee recognizes that the death of a student, member of the staff, or prominent community member is deeply felt by the school community. As places designed primarily to support learning, school sites should not serve as the main venue for permanent memorials.

Permanent memorials within the schools shall be limited in form to perpetual awards or scholarships.

Any permanent memorials in existence before the adoption of this policy can only be removed by a vote of the School Committee.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SECTION G

PERSONNEL

GBA	EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY
GBEA	STAFF ETHICS/CONFLICT OF INTEREST
GBEB	STAFF CONDUCT
GBEBC	GIFTS TO AND SOLICITATIONS BY STAFF
GBEBD	ONLINE FUNDRAISING AND SOLICITATIONS – CROWDFUNDING
GBEC	DRUG FREE WORKPLACE
GBED	TOBACCO USE/VAPING ON SCHOOL PROPERTY BY STAFF MEMBERS (W)
GBED	TOBACCO USE ON SCHOOL PROPERTY BY STAFF MEMBERS PROHIBITED
GBGB	STAFF PERSONAL SECURITY AND SAFETY
GBGE	DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEAVE
GBGF	FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE
GBI	STAFF PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES
GBJ	PERSONNEL RECORDS
GBK	STAFF COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES
GCA	PROFESSIONAL STAFF POSITIONS
GCBA	PROFESSIONAL STAFF SALARY SCHEDULES
GCBB	EMPLOYMENT OF PRINCIPALS
GCE	PROFESSIONAL STAFF RECRUITING/ POSTING OF VACANCIES

GCF	PROFESSIONAL STAFF HIRING
GCG	SUBSTITUTE PROFESSIONAL STAFF EMPLOYMENT
GCIA	PHILOSOPHY OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT
GCJ	PROFESSIONAL TEACHER STATUS
GCK	PROFESSIONAL STAFF ASSIGNMENTS AND TRANSFERS
GCO	EVALUATION OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF
GCQD	RESIGNATION OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF MEMBERS
GCQE	RETIREMENT OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF MEMBERS (W)
GCQF	SUSPENSION AND DISMISSAL OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF MEMBERS
GCRD	TUTORING FOR PAY
GDA	SUPPORT STAFF POSITIONS
GDB	SUPPORT STAFF CONTRACTS AND COMPENSATION PLANS
GDD	SUPPORT STAFF VACATIONS AND HOLIDAYS
GDO	EVALUATION OF SUPPORT STAFF

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The School Committee subscribes to the principle of the dignity of all people and of their labors. Any individual who is responsible for hiring and/or personnel supervision must understand that applicants are employed, assigned, and promoted without regard to their race*, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, active military/veteran status, marital status, familial status, pregnancy, or pregnancy-related condition, homelessness, ancestry, ethnic background, national origin, or any other category protected by state or federal law.

Every available opportunity will be taken in order to assure that each applicant for a position is selected on the basis of qualifications, merit, and ability.

*race to include traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 151B:4;
 603 CMR 26:00
 Acts of 2022, Chapter 117 -
 <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2022/Chapter117>

CROSS REF.: AC, Nondiscrimination

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

STAFF ETHICS / CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The School Committee expects members of its professional staff to be familiar with the code of ethics that applies to their profession and to adhere to it in their relationships with students, parents, coworkers, and officials of the school system.

No employee of the Committee will engage in or have a financial interest in, directly or indirectly, any activity that conflicts or raises a reasonable question of conflict with his duties and responsibilities in the school system. Nor will any staff member engage in any type of private business during school time or on school property.

Employees will not engage in outside employment of any type where information concerning customer, client, or employer originates from any information available to them through school sources.

Moreover, as there should be no conflict of interest in the supervision and evaluation of employees, at no time may any administrator responsible for the direct supervision and/or evaluation of an employee that is a member of their immediate family.

In order to avoid the appearance of any possible conflict, it is the policy of the School Committee that when an immediate family member, as defined in the Conflict of Interest statute, of a School Committee member or district administrator is to be hired into or promoted within the School District, the Superintendent shall file public notice with the School Committee and the Town or District Clerk at least two weeks prior to executing the hiring in accordance with the law.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [71:52](#); [268A:1](#) et seq.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

STAFF CONDUCT

All staff members have a responsibility to familiarize themselves with and abide by the laws and regulations of the State as these affect their work, the policies of the School Committee, and the procedures designed to implement them.

In the area of personal conduct, the Committee expects that teachers and others will conduct themselves in a manner that not only reflects credit to the school district but also sets forth a model worthy of emulation by students.

All staff members will be expected to carry out their assigned responsibilities with conscientious concern.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37H

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

GIFTS TO AND SOLICITATIONS BY STAFF

Gifts

The acceptance of gifts worth \$50 or more by school personnel in a calendar year when the gift is given because of the position they hold, or because of some action the recipient could take or has taken in their public role, violates the conflict of interest law. Acceptance of gifts worth less than \$50, while not prohibited by the conflict of interest law, may require a written public disclosure to be made.

In keeping with this policy, no employee of the school district will accept a gift worth \$50 or more that is given because of the employee's public position, or anything that the employee could do or has done in their public position. Gifts worth less than \$50 may be accepted, but a written disclosure to the employee's appointing authority must be made if the gift and the circumstances in which it was given could cause a reasonable person to think that the employee could be improperly influenced. The value of personal gifts accepted is aggregated over a calendar year (4 gifts of \$20 value is the same as 1 gift of \$80 if given in the same calendar year).

In general, homemade gifts without retail value are permissible because a reasonable person would not expect an employee would unduly show favor to the giver, so no disclosure is required. Such gifts could include homemade food items (cookies, candy, etc), handpicked flowers, and handmade gifts worth less than \$10 (ten) dollars.

Class Gifts

There is a specific exception to the prohibition against accepting gifts worth \$50 or more, when the teacher knows only that the gift is from the class, not from specific donors. A single class gift per calendar year valued up to \$150 or several class gifts in a single year with a total value up to \$150 from parents/guardians and students in a class may be accepted provided the gift is identified only as being from the class and the names of the givers and the amounts given are not identified to the recipient. The recipient may not accept an individual gift from someone who contributed to the class gift. It is the responsibility of the employee to confirm that the individual offering such gift did not contribute to the class gift.

Gifts for School Use

Gifts given to a teacher solely for classroom use or to purchase classroom supplies are not considered gifts to an individual employee and are not subject to the \$50 limit. However, an employee who accepts such gifts must keep receipts documenting that money or gift cards were used for classroom supplies.

Solicitations

In spirit, the School Committee supports the many worthwhile charitable drives that take place in the community and is gratified when school employees give them their support. However, the solicitation of funds from staff members through the use of school personnel and school time is prohibited by the conflict of interest law. Therefore, no solicitations of funds for charitable purposes should be made among staff members. Staff members of course remain free to support charitable causes of their own selection.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 268A:3; 268A:23
930 CMR 5.00

CROSS REFS.: KHA, Public Solicitations in the Schools
 GBEBD, Online Fundraising and Solicitations – Crowdfunding
 KCD, Public Gifts to Schools

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

ONLINE FUNDRAISING AND SOLICITATIONS - CROWDFUNDING

School District employees shall comply with all of the following provisions relating to online solicitations and the use of crowdfunding services for school-related purposes as well as all applicable laws, regulations and district policies. No online fundraising may occur except as provided below.

The Superintendent shall have final authority to approve any online fundraising activities by school district employees and shall determine and communicate to Principals the circumstances under which online fundraising proposals shall require Superintendent or School Committee approval in accordance with law and school district policy. The Principal of each school shall approve all online fundraising activities within their buildings prior to any employee posting any such fundraising solicitation.

Any solicitation shall be for educational purposes only (field trips, supplies, supplemental materials, books, etc.). The solicitation of personal items (coats, nutritional snacks, etc.) shall only be to benefit students directly. To the extent an employee solicits any technology or software, the employee shall secure the prior written approval of the Director of Technology or designee prior to any such solicitation. Any employee seeking to display or post a photograph of a student in conjunction with a fundraising solicitation must first secure the written consent of the student's parent or guardian.

Employees shall not use a crowdfunding source, or set up their appeal in such a way, that they are asking for donations directly from people over whom the employee making the request has authority, or with whom the public employee is having official dealings (such as parents/guardians of student's in a teacher's classroom - the solicitation can say "Classroom X needs tissues and crayons," but it shouldn't be directed to parents/guardians who have shared email addresses with the teacher for purposes of communicating about their student).

Employees using crowdfunding services shall periodically disclose in writing to the Superintendent the names of all individuals whom the employee has directly solicited in any manner including but not limited to oral, written, or electronic solicitation. The Superintendent shall maintain these disclosures as public records available for public review.

Employees may only use crowdfunding services that send the items or proceeds solicited by the employee directly to the employee's school or to the school district. Employees must verify under the crowdfunding service's terms and conditions that they meet all requirements for such solicitation. Items or proceeds directly sent to employees are considered gifts to the employee and may result in violation of state ethics laws.

If an employee's proposal is approved by the crowdfunding service, the employee agrees to use the donated materials solely as stated in the employee's proposal.

If a solicitation is not fully funded within the time period required by the crowdfunding service, or the solicitation cannot be concluded for any reason, every attempt will be made to return donations to the donors. Donations unable to be returned shall only be used as account credits for future solicitations.

Unless otherwise approved by the Superintendent in writing, all goods and/or proceeds solicited and received through any online solicitation shall become the property of the School Committee, and not of the individual employee who solicited the item(s) or funds. The employee is prohibited from taking any such item(s) or funds to another school or location, without the Superintendent's written approval.

LEGAL REFS: MGL 44:53A; 71:37A; 268A:3; 268A:23;
 Ethics Commission Advisory Opinion EC-COI-12-1;

CROSS REFS: GBEA, Staff Ethics/Conflict of Interest;
 GBEBC, Gifts To and Solicitations by Staff;
 KCD, Public Gifts to Schools

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE POLICY

The School District will provide a drug-free workplace and certifies that it will:

1. Notify all employees in writing that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance, is prohibited in the District's workplace, and specify the actions that will be taken against employees for violation of such prohibitions.
2. Establish a drug-free awareness program to inform employees about the dangers of drug abuse in the workplace; the District's policy of maintaining a drug-free work-place; and available drug counseling, rehabilitation, and employee assistance programs; and the penalty that may be imposed on employees for drug abuse violations occurring in the workplace.
3. Make it a requirement that each employee whose employment is funded by a federal grant be given a copy of the statement as required.
4. Notify the employee in the required statement that as a condition of employment under the grant, the employee will abide by the terms of the statement, and will notify the District of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace no later than five days after such conviction.
5. Notify the federal agency within ten days after receiving notice from an employee or otherwise receiving notice of such conviction.
6. Take one of the following actions within 30 days of receiving notice with respect to any employee who is so convicted; take appropriate personnel action against such an employee, up to and including termination; or require such employee to participate satisfactorily in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a federal, state or local health law enforcement, or other appropriate agency.
7. Make a good faith effort to continue to maintain a drug-free workplace through implementation of all the provisions of this policy.

LEGAL REFS.: 41 USC 81

CROSS REFS.: IHAMB, Teaching about Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco
[JICH](#), Drug and Alcohol Use by Students

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

TOBACCO USE/VAPING ON SCHOOL PROPERTY BY STAFF MEMBERS PROHIBITED

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

Staff members who violate this policy will be referred to their immediate supervisor.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:37H

CROSS REFS.: ADC, Tobacco Products on School Premises Prohibited
JICH, Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Use by Students Prohibited

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

STAFF PERSONAL SECURITY AND SAFETY

Through its overall safety program and various policies pertaining to school personnel, the Committee will seek to assure the safety of employees during their working hours and assist them in the maintenance of good health.

The Superintendent may require an employee to submit to a physical examination by a physician appointed by the school district whenever that employee's health appears to be a hazard to children or others in the school district or when a doctor's certificate is legally required to verify need for sick leave.

School employees, their families and members of their household are eligible to use the confidential services provided by the municipality's employee assistance program,

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:54; 71:55C

CROSS REFS.: EB, Safety Program

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEAVE POLICY

It shall be the policy of the school district to permit an employee to take up to 15 days of domestic violence leave from work in any 12 month period. In order to be eligible for said leave:

- (i) the employee , or a family member of the employee must be a victim of abusive behavior;
- (ii) the employee must be using the leave from work to seek or obtain medical attention, counseling , victim services or legal assistance; secure housing; obtain a protective order from court; appear before a grand jury; meet with a district attorney or other law enforcement official; or attend child custody proceedings or address other issues directly related to the abusive behavior against the employee or family member of the employee; and
- (iii) the employee must not be the perpetrator of the abusive behavior against such employee's family member.

The employer shall have the sole discretion to determine whether this leave shall be paid or unpaid. An employee seeking such leave shall exhaust all annual or vacation leave, personal leave and sick leave available to the employee, prior to requesting or taking domestic violence leave, unless the employer waives this requirement.

Except in cases of imminent danger to the health or safety of an employee, advanced notice of domestic violence leave shall be required. If such imminent danger exists the employee shall notify the employer within 3 workdays that the leave was taken. The notification may be communicated to the employer by the employee, a family member of the employee or the employee's counselor, social worker, health care worker, member of the clergy, shelter worker, legal advocate or other professional who has assisted the employee in addressing the effects of the abusive behavior. If an unscheduled absence occurs, an employer shall not take any negative action against the employee if the employee, within 30 days from the unauthorized absence or within 30 days from the employee's last unauthorized absence in the instance of consecutive days of unauthorized absences, provides any of the documentation found in (1) to (7) below. An employer may require documentation that the employee or employee's family member has been a victim of abusive behavior and that the leave is consistent with clauses (i) to (iii) as above referenced; provided, however, that an employer shall not require an employee to show evidence of an arrest, conviction or other law enforcement documentation for such abusive behavior. The documentation shall be provided to the employer within a reasonable period after the employer requests it.

An employee shall satisfy this documentation requirement by providing anyone of the following documents to the employer:

- (1) a protective order, order of equitable relief or other documentation issued by a court of competent jurisdiction as a result of abusive behavior against the employee or employee's family member;
- (2) a document under the letterhead of the court, provider or public agency which the employee attended for the purposes of acquiring assistance as it relates to the employee or family member;

- (3) A police report or statement of a victim or witness provided to police documenting the abusive behavior;
- (4) documentation that the perpetrator of the abusive behavior has admitted to sufficient facts to support a finding of guilt ; or has been convicted of , or has been adjudicated a juvenile delinquent by reason of any offense constituting abusive behavior;
- (5) medical documentation of treatment as a result of the abusive behavior;
- (6) a sworn statement, signed under the penalties of perjury, provided by a counselor, social worker, health care worker, member of the clergy, , shelter worker, legal advocate or other professional who has assisted the employee in addressing the effects of the abusive behavior;
- (7) a sworn statement, signed under the penalties of perjury, from the employee attesting that the employee has been a victim of or is a family member of a victim of abusive behavior.

All information related to the employee's leave shall be kept confidential and shall not be disclosed, except to the extent that disclosure is:

- (i) requested or consented to, in writing, by the employee;
- (ii) ordered to be released by a court of competent jurisdiction;
- (iii) otherwise required by applicable federal or state law;
- (iv) required in the course of an investigation authorized by law enforcement, including, but not limited to, an investigation by the Attorney General; or
- (v) necessary to protect the safety of the employee or others employed at the workplace.

The Superintendent shall ensure that notice is provided to all employees in the next school year and beyond by appropriately amending the district's employee handbooks, by whatever title they may be known, or by direct notice about the Domestic Violence Law and securing the employees signature acknowledging receipt of the handbook/notice. The Superintendent shall be responsible for notifying all current employees, unless they have been notified through the handbook, of this policy in a manner that they deem appropriate.

No employer shall coerce, interfere with, restrain or deny the exercise of, or any attempt to exercise, any rights provided herein or to make leave requested or taken contingent upon whether or not the victim maintains contact with the alleged abuser. No employer shall discharge or in any other manner discriminate against an employee for exercising the employee's rights under law. The taking of domestic violence leave shall not result in the loss of any employment benefit accrued prior to the date of such leave. Upon the employee's return from such leave, they shall be entitled to restoration to the employee's original job or to an equivalent position. Definitions of 'abuse', 'abusive behavior', 'domestic violence', 'employees' and 'family members' may be found in the laws referenced below.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 149:52E

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE

The School System shall comply with the mandatory provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993. The Superintendent shall issue, and from time to time amend, regulations setting forth the rights and procedures granted by the Act and shall ensure compliance with those regulations either personally or by delegation, or by some combination of personal oversight and delegation.

LEGAL REFS.: P.L. 103-3, "Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993"

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

STAFF PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

The School Committee recognizes that employees of the school district have the same fundamental civic responsibilities and privileges as other citizens. Among these are campaigning for an elective public office or ballot initiatives and holding an elective or appointive office.

In connection with campaigning, an employee will not: use school district facilities, equipment or supplies; discuss their campaign with school personnel or students during the working day; use any time during the working day for campaigning purposes. Public employees are prohibited under state law from soliciting funds for political campaigns.

Under no circumstances, will students be pressured into campaigning for any staff member.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 55:11-13; 71:44

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

PERSONNEL RECORDS

Information about staff members is required for the daily administration of the school district, for implementing salary and other personnel policies, for budget and financial planning, for responding to appropriate inquiries about employees, and for meeting the School Committee's education reporting requirements. To meet these needs, the Superintendent will implement a comprehensive and efficient system of personnel records maintenance and control under the following guidelines:

1. A personnel folder for each present and former employee will be accurately maintained in the central administrative office. In addition to the application for employment and references, the folders will contain records and information relative to compensation, payroll deductions, evaluations, and any other pertinent information.
2. The Superintendent will be the official custodian for personnel files and will have overall responsibility for maintaining and preserving the confidentiality of the files within the provisions of the law.
3. Personnel records are considered confidential under the law and will not be open to public inspection. Access to personnel files will be limited to persons authorized by the Superintendent to use the files for the reasons cited above.
4. Each employee will have the right, upon written request, to review the contents of their own personnel file.
5. Employees may make written objections to any information contained in the file. Any written objection must be signed by the staff member and will become part of the employee's personnel file. Further, no negative comment will be placed in a staff member's file unless it is signed by the person making the comment and the staff member is informed of the comment and afforded the opportunity to include their written response in the file.
6. Lists of school district employees' names and home addresses will be released only to governmental agencies as required for official reports or by law.

LEGAL REFS.: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, Sec. 438, P.L. 90-247
Title IV, as amended
88 Stat. 571-574 (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and regulations
M.G.L. 4:7; 71:42C
Teachers' Agreement

CONTRACT REF.: All Agreements

CROSS REF.: KDB, Public's Right to Know

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

STAFF COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

The School Committee will encourage the administration to develop effective means of resolving differences that may arise among employees and between employees and administrators; reduce potential areas of grievances; and establish and maintain recognized channels of communication between the staff, administration, and School Committee.

It is the Committee's desire that grievance procedures provide for prompt and equitable adjustment of differences at the lowest possible administrative level, and that each employee be assured opportunity for an orderly presentation and review of complaints and concerns.

Channels established will provide for the following:

1. That teachers and other school employees may appeal a ruling of a Principal or other administrator to the Superintendent.
2. That all school employees may appeal a ruling of the Superintendent to the Committee, except in those areas where the law has specifically assigned authority to the Principal and/or the Superintendent and Committee action would be in conflict with that law.
3. That all hearings of complaints before the Superintendent or Committee be conducted in the presence of the administrator who made the ruling that is the subject of the grievance.

The process established for the resolution of grievances in contracts negotiated with recognized employee bargaining units will apply only to "grievances" as defined in the particular contract.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [150E:5](#) and [8](#)

CONTRACT REFS.: All Contract Agreements

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

PROFESSIONAL STAFF POSITIONS

All professional staff positions in the school district will be created initially by the School Committee. It is the Committee's intent to activate a sufficient number of positions to accomplish the school district's goals and objectives and to provide for the equitable staffing of each school building. Although such positions may remain temporarily unfilled, only the Committee may abolish a position it has created.

Each time a new position is established by the Committee, or an existing position is modified, the Superintendent will present to the Committee's 1 a job description for the position, which specifies the jobholder's qualifications and the job's performance responsibilities. The Superintendent will maintain a comprehensive set of job descriptions for all positions.

NOTE: Job descriptions for professional staff positions are available for review in the office of the Superintendent.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

PROFESSIONAL STAFF SALARY SCHEDULES

Teachers

The School Committee will adopt a salary schedule for regular teaching personnel as part of the contract negotiated with the teachers' bargaining unit. The schedule will be designed to recognize and reward training and experience and encourage additional study for professional advancement.

Principals and Administrators on Individual Contracts

Salaries will be reviewed annually prior to July 1. The School Committee, with the advice of the Superintendent, will establish levels of compensation through the annual budget for each position based on the circumstances, dynamics, and requirements of each position. It is the responsibility of the Superintendent to present evidence to the School Committee to support recommendations for salary increases.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:40; 71:43

CROSS REF.: GCBB, Employment of Principals

CONTRACT REF.: Teachers' Agreement

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

EMPLOYMENT OF PRINCIPALS

Principals shall be employed by the School District under individual contracts of employment. Said contracts shall be submitted to the School Committee for their approval of all terms concerning compensation/benefits, prior to the presentation of a contract of employment to the Principal. The compensation/benefit levels, above referenced, may be exceeded only with the approval of the School Committee.

Initial contracts issued to Principals may be up to three years in length, and may be reissued by the Superintendent at levels of compensation/benefits, determined by the School Committee, provided that the Superintendent may employ a Principal under the terms and conditions of the previous contract of employment.

The length of second and subsequent contracts of employment for Principals shall be in accordance with state law.

As a condition of employment, each Principal must maintain current licensure, adhere to the policies and goals of the School Committee and the directives of the Superintendent, and annually must submit, with the school council, the educational goals and school improvement plan for the school building(s) under their direction.

LEGAL REF: M.G.L. 71:41; 71:59B

CROSS REF.: GCBA, Professional Staff Salary Schedules

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

PROFESSIONAL STAFF RECRUITING/POSTING OF VACANCIES

It is the responsibility of the Superintendent, with the assistance of the administrative staff, to determine the personnel needs of the school district and it is the responsibility of the Principal, in consultation with the Superintendent, to determine the personnel needs of the individual schools. In addition, school councils may review personnel requirements as a means of evaluating the needs of a school. Any recommendations for the creation or elimination of a position must be approved by the School Committee.

The search for good teachers and other professional employees will extend to a wide variety of educational institutions and geographical areas. It will take into consideration the characteristics of the town and the need for a heterogeneous staff from various cultural backgrounds.

Recruitment procedures will not overlook the talents and potential of individuals already employed by the school district. Any current employee may apply for any position for which they have licensure and meet other stated requirements.

Openings in the schools will be posted in sufficient time, before the position is filled, to permit current employees to submit applications.

LEGAL REFS.: Collective Bargaining Agreements

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

PROFESSIONAL STAFF HIRING

Through its employment policies, the District will strive to attract, secure, and hold the highest qualified personnel for all professional positions. It is the responsibility of the Superintendent, and of persons to whom they delegate this responsibility, to determine the personnel needs of the school district and to locate suitable candidates. No position may be created without the approval of the School Committee. The District's goal is to employ and retain personnel who are motivated, will strive always to do their best, and are committed to providing the best educational environment for the children

It will be the duty of the Superintendent to see that persons considered for employment in the schools meet all licensure requirements and the requirements of the Committee for the type of position in which they will serve.

The following guidelines will be used in the selection of personnel:

1. There will be no discrimination in the hiring process due to race*, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, active military/veteran status, marital status, familial status, pregnancy, or pregnancy-related condition, homelessness, ancestry, ethnic background, national origin, or any other category protected by state or federal law..
2. The quality of instruction is enhanced by a staff with a wide variation in background, educational preparation, and previous experience.
3. The administrator responsible for the hiring of a staff member (in the case of District-wide positions, for the position of Principals, it is the Superintendent; for building-based personnel, it is the Principal) is encouraged to establish a representative screening committee. The administrator has the final say in determining who will be hired but it is expected that the screening committee's input will be a factor in the decision. For those positions where the hiring authority rests with the School Committee, a representative screening committee may be established by the School Committee, or the School Committee may direct the Superintendent to establish a screening committee to assist the Superintendent in making their recommendation to the School Committee.

*race to include traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 69:6; 71:38; 71:38G; 71:39; 71:45
603 CMR 7:00, 26:00, and 44:00
Acts of 2022, Chapter 117 -
<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2022/Chapter117>

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SUBSTITUTE PROFESSIONAL STAFF EMPLOYMENT

The school system will employ as substitute teachers, to the extent possible, persons who meet the requirements for teacher appointments and will assign teachers substitute-teaching positions on the basis of their areas of competence. When the supply of potential substitutes in a particular subject area is too limited to meet school department needs, there will be active recruitment for substitutes in those areas. All substitute teachers will be expected to provide educational services, rather than to assume merely a student-supervisory role. They will be provided with as much support as possible by building administrators and teachers.

The School Committee will set the daily rate of pay for substitute teachers, including long-term substitutes. The latter will be granted such additional benefits as approved by the School Committee.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

PHILOSOPHY OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT

All staff members will be encouraged in and provided with suitable opportunities for the development of increased competencies beyond those they may attain through the performance of their assigned duties and assistance from supervisors.

Opportunities for professional growth may be provided through such means as the following:

1. Planned in-service programs and workshops offered within the school district from time to time; these may include participation by outside consultants.
2. Membership on curriculum development committees drawing personnel from within and without the school district.
3. Released time for visits to other classrooms and schools and for attendance at conferences, workshops, and other professional meetings.

The Superintendent will have authority to approve or deny released time for conferences and visitations and reimbursements for expenses, provided such activities are within budget allocations for the purpose.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

PROFESSIONAL TEACHER STATUS

The Superintendent, upon recommendation of the Principal, may award such status to a teacher who has served in the Principal's school for not less than one year or a teacher who has obtained such status in any other public school district in the Commonwealth. The Superintendent will base his/her decisions on the results of evaluation procedures conducted according to Committee policy.

At the end of each of the first three years of a teacher's employment, it will be the responsibility of the Superintendent to notify each employee promptly in writing of the decision on reappointment. Notification to a teacher not being reappointed must be made by June 15 or at an earlier date if required by a collective bargaining agreement.

A teacher who attains professional teacher status will have continuous employment in the service of the school system. A teacher with professional teacher status whose position is abolished by the School Committee may be continued in the employ of the school system in another position for which he/she is legally qualified.

Nothing in these provisions will be considered as restricting the Superintendent from changing teaching assignments or altering or abolishing supervisory assignments except that, by law, no teacher may be assigned to a position for which he/she is not legally qualified.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [71:38](#); [71:38G](#); [71:38H](#); [71:41](#); [71:42](#); [71:43](#)

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

PROFESSIONAL STAFF ASSIGNMENTS AND TRANSFERS

The basic consideration in the assignment of professional staff members will be the needs of the students and the instructional program.

Therefore, the assignment and transfer of professional staff members will be accomplished by the Superintendent on the basis of the employee's qualifications, the needs of the school system, and the employees' expressed desires.

Care will be exercised by the Superintendent to assure that all schools are staffed with highly-qualified teachers.

Within an individual school, the building administrator will have the authority to assign classes and courses, provided this is done with full regard for the teacher's area of licensure and the policies delineated above.

CONTRACT REF.: Teachers' Agreement

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

EVALUATION OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF

In order to assure a high quality of teacher and administrator performance and to advance the instructional programs of the schools, a continuous program for teacher and administrator evaluation will be established by the School Committee. Regular reports will be made to the Superintendent concerning the outcomes of these evaluations.

The evaluation process will include:

1. The development and periodic review of techniques and procedures for making evaluations.
2. Interpretation of the information gained in the evaluative process in terms of the objectives of the instructional program.
3. The application of the information gained to the planning of staff development and in-service training activities, which are designed to improve instruction and increase teacher competence.

The evaluation process will include self-evaluation, supervisor-initiated observations, and teacher initiated observations.

The formal evaluations will be written and will be discussed by the supervisor and the person being evaluated. The discussions may either precede or follow the writing of the evaluation document. Copies of the written document will be signed by both parties and incorporated into the personnel files of the teacher or administrator. In addition, the individual and his department chairman (if applicable) will receive a signed copy. The signature should indicate that the evaluation has been read and discussed.

The written evaluation should be specific in terms of the person's strengths and weaknesses. Those areas where improvement is needed should be clearly set forth and recommendations for improvement should be made. Subsequent evaluations should address themselves to any improvement or to any continuing difficulty that is observed.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [69:1B](#); [71:38](#); [71:38Q](#); [150E](#); [152B](#)
603 CMR [35:00](#)

CONTRACT REF.: Teachers' Agreement

RESIGNATION OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF MEMBERS

Professional staff members may discontinue their service in the school system during the school year by submitting a written notice of intent to resign to the appropriate hiring authority.

Such written notice of intent to resign will be given to the Superintendent. The staff member will be notified in writing of the Superintendent's action on the resignation.

When a resignation is accepted by the Superintendent the employee may be expected to continue in service at his or her assigned duties for a period of 30 days after submission of the resignation.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SUSPENSION AND DISMISSAL OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF MEMBERS

The Superintendent will strive to assist personnel to perform their duties efficiently. However, the Superintendent may dismiss any employee in accordance with state law. Further, the Committee recognizes the constitutional rights of the District's employees and assures them the protection of due process of law. To guarantee such rights, a system of constitutionally and legally sound procedures will be followed in each case of suspension or dismissal of an employee.

When the Superintendent or a Principal determines that sufficient cause exists that a professional employee be suspended or dismissed from service in the school system, he or she will:

1. Be certain that each such case is supported by defensible records.
2. Determine if the individual is to be suspended immediately with the understanding that the suspension will be subject to restoration of salary and position if an appeal is decided in favor of the individual.
3. Follow the procedures for dismissal or suspension that are contained in applicable laws as well as those included in the current agreement with the teachers' bargaining unit.
4. Provide the individual involved with a written statement that will:
 - a. Indicate whether the action the Superintendent is taking is dismissal or suspension.
 - b. State the reason for the suspension or dismissal.
 - c. Guarantee that all procedures will be in accordance with due process of law.
 - d. Inform employees who have a right to request a hearing under appropriate laws that they may be represented at such a hearing by counsel of their choice.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [71:42](#); [71:42D](#)

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

TUTORING FOR PAY

Definition: "Tutoring" means giving private instruction or help to an individual or group for which the teacher receives remuneration other than through the School Committee.

A teacher cannot recommend that one of their own students get tutoring, and then be paid to tutor that same student in a second job.

A teacher may not tutor students who are currently in their class. Even if the teacher does not recommend that the current student receive private tutoring, the teacher should not tutor current students.

Teachers and other public employees may not approach a student, or the student's parents/guardians, seeking private tutoring work. A teacher may provide tutoring when the relationship is initiated by the parents/guardians or a student, but, if the student is, or in the future may be, under the teacher's authority, the teacher will need to provide a written disclosure.

A teacher cannot use school resources such as classrooms or materials in connection with a private tutoring business. A public school employee cannot use a school or district website to advertise private tutoring services. Schools cannot send home brochures for a particular tutoring service with the children.

Tutoring is not to be recommended for a student unless the appropriate teacher of the student involved is consulted and agrees that it will be of real help. If tutoring seems advisable, the Principal may give the parents/guardians a list of persons who are willing to tutor. This list may include teachers, but not the student's teacher of the subject in which they are to be tutored.

Tutoring for pay is not to be done in the school building.

LEGAL REF: M. G. L. 268A Mass. Ethics Commission FAQs for Public School Teachers

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SUPPORT STAFF POSITIONS

Education is a cooperative enterprise in which all employees of the school system must participate intelligently and effectively for the benefit of the children. This school system will employ support staff members in positions that function to support the education program.

All support staff positions will be established initially by the Committee. In each case, the Superintendent will submit for the Committee's consideration and action a job description or job specifications for the position.

Although positions may remain temporarily unfilled or the number of persons holding the same type of position reduced in event of de-staffing requirements, only the Committee may abolish a position it has created.

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SUPPORT STAFF CONTRACTS AND COMPENSATION PLANS

In establishing rates of pay and levels of compensation for support staff personnel, the School Committee will take into account the responsibilities of the position, the qualifications needed, past experience of the individual, and years of service in the school department.

Compensation plans will be reviewed annually for all categories of staff. Such review, where applicable, will be carried out in connection with negotiations with representatives of recognized bargaining units. The master agreements with these units will have the full force of School Committee policy.

The School Committee will set the rates of pay for personnel not covered by collective bargaining agreements.

Overtime

Support staff employees will be paid overtime wages for work performed in excess of 40 hours in a work week.

In counting hours for the purpose of allowing overtime work and pay, supervisors will consider sick leave, vacation time, and holidays as time worked.

Every effort must be made to minimize overtime by scheduling duties during the regular workday. Overtime will be authorized only by the Superintendent or designee. All such work will be assigned on a fair and equitable basis.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:38

CONTRACT REFS.: All Contracts

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SUPPORT STAFF VACATIONS AND HOLIDAYS

Holidays

The school calendar, as adopted by the School Committee, establishes holidays and school recess periods for the employees who work on teacher and/or student days.

Employees who work on a 12-month basis will be granted paid holidays on all legal holidays and such other holidays as designated by the School Committee. They will also be expected to report to work during school recess periods unless days during these periods are considered official and designated as paid holidays by the Committee.

To qualify for holiday pay, the employee must be at work on the day before and the day following the holiday, unless their absence is approved on the basis of current leave policies.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 4:7; 136:12

CONTRACT REFS. All support staff contracts

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

EVALUATION OF SUPPORT STAFF

A program of continuous observation and evaluation will be developed to find the right employees to fill vacancies, determine assignments and equitable workloads, and establish wage and salary policies that encourage employees to put forth their best efforts.

The evaluation will cover the major areas of the employee's responsibilities and their job descriptions.

Each employee will be informed of the basis upon which they are to be evaluated in advance of evaluation.

CONTRACT REFS.: All support staff agreements

Approved by the Westwood School Committee on July 13, 2023

SECTION H
NEGOTIATIONS

HA	NEGOTIATIONS GOALS
HB	NEGOTIATIONS LEGAL STATUS
HF	SCHOOL COMMITTEE NEGOTIATING AGENTS
HG	SUPERINTENDENT'S ROLE IN NEGOTIATIONS

NEGOTIATIONS GOALS

The School Committee recognizes that education is a public trust; it therefore is dedicated to providing the best possible educational opportunities for the students of this community. In negotiations, this objective may be best attained if there is a climate of mutual trust and understanding between the negotiating parties.

The School Committee believes that the best interests of public education will be served by establishing procedures that provide an orderly method for the School Committee, or its representatives, and representatives of the staff to discuss matters of common concern.

It is further recognized that nothing in negotiations will compromise the School Committee's legal responsibilities, nor will any employee's statutory rights and privileges be impaired.

LEGAL REF: M.G.L. 150E

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

NEGOTIATIONS LEGAL STATUS

All negotiations between the School Committee and recognized employee groups are conducted subject to Massachusetts General Laws. The legal status of negotiations is defined in part by Section 1 of that chapter, as follows:

“In the case of school employees, the municipal employer shall be represented by the school committee or its designated representative or representatives.”

Basic to all employer/employee negotiations is the concept of "bargaining in good faith." It is the legal responsibility of both the School Committee and employee organizations to bargain in good faith as they conduct negotiations. However, such obligation does not compel either party to agree to a proposal or make a concession.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 150E:1 et seq.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL COMMITTEE NEGOTIATING AGENTS

The School Committee is responsible for negotiations with recognized employee bargaining units. However, because of the expertise and time required for negotiations, the Committee may hire a negotiator to bargain in good faith with recognized bargaining units to help assure that mutually satisfactory agreements on wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment will be developed.

The School Committee will appoint the negotiator and the fee or salary for their services will be established in accordance with the law at the time of appointment.

The duties of the negotiator will be as follows:

1. To negotiate in good faith with recognized bargaining units to arrive at a mutually satisfactory agreement on wages, hours, working conditions of employees, and all other mandated subjects of bargaining, represented by the units.
 - a. The negotiator may recommend members of the administration to serve on the negotiation team. They will not be members of any unit that negotiates with the Committee, and their participation in negotiations must be recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the Committee.
 - b. They will direct accumulation of necessary data needed for negotiations, such as comparative information.
 - c. They will follow guidelines set forth by the Committee as to acceptable agreements and will regularly report on the progress of negotiations in a properly posted executive session.
 - d. They will make recommendations to the Committee as to acceptable agreements.
2. The negotiator will interpret the signed negotiated contracts to administrators and may be called upon to offer advice on various aspects of contract administration during the terms of the contracts with employee organizations.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:37E

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

SUPERINTENDENT'S ROLE IN NEGOTIATIONS

To the extent determined by the Westwood School Committee and permissible by law the Superintendent should be closely involved in planning, preparation, and participation in the bargaining process.

The direct nature of involvement by the Superintendent at the bargaining table shall be determined by the School Committee in close communication with the Superintendent.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

SECTION I
INSTRUCTION

IB	ACADEMIC FREEDOM
IC/ICA	SCHOOL YEAR/SCHOOL CALENDAR
ID	SCHOOL DAY
IE	ORGANIZATION OF INSTRUCTION
IGA	CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT
IGB	STUDENT SERVICES PROGRAMS
IGD	CURRICULUM ADOPTION
IHAM	HEALTH EDUCATION
IHAM-R	HEALTH EDUCATION
IHAMA	PARENTAL NOTIFICATION RELATIVE TO SEX EDUCATION
IHAMB	TEACHING ABOUT DRUGS, ALCOHOL, AND TOBACCO
IHB	SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AND ACCOMMODATIONS
IHBA	PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
IHBAA	OBSERVATIONS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS
IHBD	COMPENSATORY EDUCATION
IHBEA	ENGLISH LEARNER EDUCATION
IHBF	HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION
IHBG	HOME SCHOOLING
IHBHE	REMOTE LEARNING
IHBHE-E	REMOTE LEARNING ADDENDUM

IHCA	SUMMER SCHOOLS
IIB	CLASS SIZE
IJ	INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS
IJ-R	RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES
IJJ	TEXTBOOK SELECTION AND ADOPTION
IJK	SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION
IJL	LIBRARY MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION
IJLA	LIBRARY RESOURCES
IJM	SPECIAL INTEREST MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION
IJND	ACCESS TO DIGITAL RESOURCES
IJNDB	ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY
IJNDC	INTERNET PUBLICATION
IJOA	FIELD TRIPS
IJOB	COMMUNITY RESOURCE PERSONS/SPEAKERS
IJOC	SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS
IK	STUDENT PROGRESS REPORT TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS
IKB	HOMEWORK
IKE	PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS
IKFA	GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS
IL	EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS
ILC	STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND TESTING
ILD	STUDENT SUBMISSION TO EDUCATIONAL SURVEYS AND RESEARCH

IMA	TEACHING ACTIVITIES/PRESENTATIONS
IMB	TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES/ CONTROVERSIAL SPEAKERS
IMBD	LEARNING ABOUT DIVERSITY
IMD	SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES
IMG	ANIMALS IN SCHOOL

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The School Committee seeks to educate students in the democratic tradition, to foster recognition of individual freedom and social responsibility, to inspire meaningful awareness of and respect for the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

Fairness in procedures will be observed both to safeguard the legitimate interests of the schools and to exhibit by appropriate example the basic objectives of a democratic society as set forth in the Constitutions of the United States and the Commonwealth.

LEGAL REF.: Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL YEAR/SCHOOL CALENDAR

The school calendar for the ensuing year will be prepared by the Superintendent and submitted to the School Committee for approval annually. The number of days or instructional hours scheduled for the school year will be determined in accordance with the following standards set by the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education:

1. The School Committee shall schedule a school year which includes at least 185 school days for each school in the District.
2. Elementary school will operate for a minimum of 180 days. Schools shall ensure that every elementary school student is scheduled to receive a minimum of 900 hours per school year of structured learning time, as defined in regulation. Time which a student spends at school breakfast and lunch, passing between classes, in homeroom, at recess, in non-directed study periods, receiving school services, and participating in optional school programs shall not count toward meeting the minimum structured learning time requirement for that student.
3. Secondary schools will operate for a minimum of 180 days. Schools shall ensure that every secondary school student is scheduled to receive a minimum of 990 hours per school year of structured learning time, as defined in regulation. Time which a student spends at school breakfast and lunch, passing between classes, in homeroom, at recess, in non-directed study periods, and participating in optional school programs shall not count toward meeting the minimum structured learning time requirement for that student.

For the information of staff, students, and parents/guardians, the calendar will set forth the days schools will be in session; holidays and vacation periods; in service days; and parent conferences.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 4:7; 69:1G; 71:1; 71:4; 71:4A; 71:73; 136:12
603 CMR 27.00

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL DAY

The length of the work day is established in the collective bargaining agreements with the various school unions. The specific opening and closing times of the schools will be recommended by the Superintendent and set by the Committee.

The Superintendent is authorized to make minor changes in opening and closing times to simplify transportation scheduling; however, major changes in schedules will be subject to Committee approval.

Parents and guardians will be informed of the opening and closing times set by the Committee. To help insure the safety of all children, parents/guardians will also be notified that students will not be admitted into the school building until the start of the official day unless circumstances require earlier admittance.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 15:1G; 69:1G; 71:59
 603 CMR 27.00

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

ORGANIZATION OF INSTRUCTION

The District offers a diversified educational program compatible with the needs of the community and state standards.

The organizational plan is designed to facilitate the philosophy of educating every student, each to his/her fullest potential.

The structure will consist of multiple levels (for example, Primary/Elementary, Middle and Secondary levels).

The Primary/Elementary level includes schools with kindergarten through grade five. The Middle level consists of schools for grades six, seven and eight. The Secondary level consists of schools with grades nine, ten, eleven, and twelve. *

Special education services are integrated across each grade level in all schools.

The organization is designed to meet the standards established within the Curriculum Frameworks as required by the State Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education and to serve the needs of all students.

CROSS REFS: IC/ICA School Year / School Calendar

LEGAL REFS: 603 CMR 27.00

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Constant adaptation and development of the curriculum is necessary if the District is to meet the needs of the students in its schools. To be successful, curriculum development must be a collaborative enterprise involving staff and administrators utilizing their professional expertise.

The Committee expects the faculty and administration to regularly evaluate the education program and to recommend modifications of practice, changes in curriculum content, and the addition or deletion of courses to the instructional program.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 69:1E
 603 CMR 26:05

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

STUDENT SERVICES PROGRAMS

The Student Services staff will work in cooperation with District building staff and administration to coordinate and supervise the implementation of curriculum, the instructional program, and support services to meet the needs of all students.

The *Director of Student Services* shall be responsible for all services for students including special education services and such services as psychological , speech and language , homebound and hospital teaching and such other programs as may be assigned.

CROSS REF.: ACE, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

CURRICULUM ADOPTION

The School Committee will rely on the professional staff to design and implement instructional programs and courses of study that will forward the educational goals of the school district.

The Superintendent will have authority to approve new programs and courses of study after they have been thoroughly studied and found to support educational goals. The Committee itself will consider, and officially adopt, new programs and courses when they constitute an extensive alteration in instructional content or approach.

The Committee wishes to be informed of all new courses and substantive revisions in curriculum. It will receive reports on changes under consideration. Its acceptance of these reports, including a listing of the high school program of studies, will constitute its adoption of the curriculum for official purposes.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 15:1G; 71:1; 69:1E

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

HEALTH EDUCATION

The School Committee believes that the greatest opportunity for effective health education lies within the public schools because of their potential to reach children at the age when positive, lifelong health habits are best engendered and because the schools are equipped to provide qualified personnel to conduct health education programs.

The School Committee is committed to a sound, comprehensive, research-based health education program as an integral part of each student's general education. **Health education will be taught as a separate class in other grades.6, 9, and 10.and integrated through the other grades.**

The health education program will emphasize a contemporary approach to the presentation of health information, skills, and the knowledge necessary for students to understand and appreciate the functioning and proper care of the human body. Students also will be presented with information regarding complex social, physical and mental health problems, which they might encounter in society. In an effort to help students make healthy choices, health education will examine the potential health hazards of social, physical and mental health issues existing in the larger school-community environment.

In order to promote a relevant, dynamic approach to the instruction of health education, the School Committee will continue to stress the need for curricular, personnel, and financial commitments that are necessary to assure the high quality of the district's health education program.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:1

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

**HEALTH EDUCATION
(Exemption Procedure)**

Exemption will be granted from a specific portion of health education curriculum on the grounds that the material taught is contrary to the religious beliefs and/or teachings of the student or the student's parent/guardian.

A request for exemption must be submitted in writing to the Principal in advance of instruction in that portion of the curriculum for which the exemption is requested. The request must state the particular conflict involved.

The Principal will confer with the teacher to determine the length of time a student will be exempt. The teacher will develop an alternative activity for which the student will receive credit.

The Principal will inform the parent/guardian of disposition of the request within a reasonable number of school days of receipt of the request.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [71:1](#)

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

PARENTAL NOTIFICATION RELATIVE TO SEX EDUCATION

In accordance with law, the Westwood School Committee has adopted this policy on the rights of parents and guardians of our students in relation to curriculum that substantially involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues.

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

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

1. exempt their child from any portion of the curriculum that substantially involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues, without penalty to the student, by sending a letter to the school Principal requesting an exemption. Any student who is exempted by request of the parent/guardian under this policy will be given an alternative assignment.
2. inspect and review program instruction materials for these curricula, which will be made reasonably accessible to parents/guardians and others to the extent practicable. Parents/guardians may arrange with the Principal to review the materials at the school, and may also review them at other locations that may be determined by the Superintendent of Schools.

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

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

LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. 71:32A
 603 CMR 5

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

TEACHING ABOUT ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND DRUGS

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

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

The objectives of this program, as stated below, are rooted in the Committee's belief that prevention requires education, and that the most important aspect of the policies and guidelines of the District should be the education of children and youth on healthy decision-making:

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

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

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

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:1 ;71:96

CROSS REFS: GBEC, Drug Free Workplace Policy
JICH, Drug and Alcohol Use by Students

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

**SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AND ACCOMMODATIONS
(PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS)**

The goals of this school district's special education program are to allow each child to grow and achieve at their own level, to gain independence and self-reliance, and to return to the mainstream of school society as soon as possible.

The requirements of law and regulation will be followed in the identification of children with special needs, in referrals for their evaluation, in prescribing for them suitable programs and in assessing their educational progress. In keeping with state requirements, all children with special needs between the ages of three to twenty-two who have not attained a high school diploma or its equivalent will be eligible for special education.

The School Committee believes that most children with special needs can be educated in the regular school program if they are given special instruction, accommodations and the support they need. These children should also be given the opportunity to participate in the school district's non-academic and extracurricular activities.

The Committee recognizes that the needs of certain children are so great that special programs, special classes or special schools may be necessary. When appropriate programs, services, or facilities are not available within the public schools, the Committee will provide these children with access to schools where such instruction and accommodations are available.

It is the desire of the Committee that the schools work closely with parents/guardians in designing and providing programs and services to children with special needs. Parents/guardians will be informed, and conferred with, whenever a child is referred for evaluation. In event of any disagreement concerning diagnosis, program plan, special placement, or evaluation, the parents/guardians will be accorded the right of due process.

The Committee will secure properly trained personnel to work with the children with special needs. Since the financial commitment necessary to meet the needs of all of these children is extensive, the Committee will make every effort to obtain financial assistance.

LEGAL REFS.: The Individuals with Disabilities Ed. Act (PL 108-446, adopted 12/03/04)
 Rehabilitation Act of 1973
 M.G.L. 71B:1 et seq.
 603 CMR 28:00 inclusive

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In keeping with the intention of the state of Massachusetts to offer educational opportunities to all students that will enable them to lead fulfilling and productive lives, the District shall provide appropriate educational opportunities to all resident students in accordance with the requirements of state and federal statutes.

LEGAL REF.: Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

OBSERVATIONS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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

12. A school administrator, or designee, also will observe at the same time and take notes as to what is observed, paying particular attention to note anything that is non-typical concerning the period. This observation summary will be placed in the student's file and provided to the parent/guardian(s) prior to any follow-up TEAM meeting.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [71B:3](#)
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2009-2 dated January 8, 2009

CROSS REFS.: [KI](#), Visitors to Schools

NOTE: The following quotes from the DESE Advisory are important points of understanding to the implementation of this policy.

"School districts and parent/guardians have reported that, typically, observations are between one and four hours. While useful as a general rule, the Department recommends that district policies and practices specify that the duration and extent of observations will be determined on an individual basis. Districts should avoid rigid adherence to defined time limits regardless of the student's needs and settings to be observed. The complexities of the child's needs, as well as the program or programs to be observed, should determine what the observation will entail and what amount of time is needed to complete it. Discussion between school staff and the parent/guardian or designee is a good starting point for resolving the issue."

"The observation law states that districts may not condition or restrict program observations except when necessary to protect:

- the safety of children in the program during the observation;
- the integrity of the program during the observation; and
- children in the program from disclosure by an observer of confidential or personally identifiable information he or she may obtain while observing the program."

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

**COMPENSATORY EDUCATION
(Title 1)**

Title 1 funds shall be used to provide educational services that are in addition to the regular services provided for District students. By adoption of this policy, the School Committee ensures equivalence in the provision of curriculum materials and supplies.

LEGAL REF.: Title 1, Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

ENGLISH LEARNER EDUCATION

The District shall provide suitable research-based language instructional programs for all identified English learners in grades Kindergarten through 12 in accordance with the requirements of state and federal statutes and Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) regulations and guidance.

The District shall identify students whose dominant language may not be English through

- home language surveys that identify a primary home language is other than English
- observations
- intake assessments
- recommendations of parents/guardians, teachers and other persons.

Identified students shall be assessed annually to determine their level of proficiency in the English language.

The District shall certify to DESE each year those students whose dominant language is not English, including specification of the number of non-English languages identified as dominant languages and the number and percent of students who speak each non-English language as their dominant language.

The District shall provide additional information as required by DESE to comply with federal law.

LEGAL REFS.: Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended
 42 U.S.C. 2000d (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964)
 603 CMR 14.00

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

The schools may furnish homebound instruction to any student who must remain at home or in a hospital on a day or overnight basis, or any combination of both, for medical reasons and for a period of not less than 14 school days in any school year. The instruction is designed to provide maintenance in the basic academic courses so that when a student returns to school they will not be at a disadvantage because of the illness or the hospitalization.

To qualify for the program, the student needs a written statement from a medical doctor requesting the homebound instruction, stating the reasons why, and estimating the time the student will be out of school. This statement needs to be sent to the Director of Student Services.

Homebound instruction is offered in basic elementary subjects and in secondary subjects which do not require laboratories and special equipment, subject in all cases to the availability of qualified teachers. Certified teachers shall be assigned to homebound instruction by the Superintendent or designee.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 28.03 (3)(c)

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

HOME SCHOOLING

1. Requirements for approval of home instruction will include:
 - a. The parent or legal guardian must request permission to hold home instruction on an annual basis.
 - b. A home instruction application form will be provided to the parents or legal guardian. This form must be completed and returned to the Superintendent before approval may be granted.
 - c. The Committee delegates the approval of home instruction to the Superintendent. Any approval or rejection of an application by the Superintendent is subject to review by the Committee.
2. A student being educated in a home-based program within the District may have access to public school activities of either a curricular or extracurricular nature upon approval of the Superintendent.
3. Parents or a legal guardian in charge of home instruction should make provision for regular testing or use of other indicators of student progress such as standardized achievement tests. The home instruction summary form must include a summary of home testing results for each required subject for each child.
4.

The Superintendent will prepare for the Committee an annual summary of the home instruction programs. This report will also summarize, in general, the appropriateness or possible deficiencies of home education situations.
5. Within one week of the ending date of the home instruction, as indicated on the home instruction application form, the School District will mail the parents or legal guardian a home instruction summary form. The completed form should be returned to the School District within 30 days. This summary form must be returned to the School District office before annual approval of home instruction can be made for any succeeding years.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [69:1D](#); [76:1](#), Care and Protection of Charles
Care and Protections of Charles - MASS. Supreme Judicial Court 399 Mass. 324 (1987)

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

REMOTE LEARNING

In the event of a district-specific emergency requiring the use of remote learning, the superintendent of schools may declare such emergency and shall, as soon as possible, obtain the approval of the school committee. The remote learning plan below will be applicable in cases of disease, weather emergencies, destruction or damage to schools rendering them inaccessible, or other extraordinary circumstances, including emergencies declared by government officials, the school committee, or the superintendent.

When it becomes necessary for the school district to provide support to students who are unable to attend classes or access appropriate services due to an extended closure, the superintendent shall establish a plan and procedures to ensure that such services are provided. The provision of educational services may include the use of technology and devices, and strategies designed to support student learning away from school.

The remote learning plan will, to the extent possible:

- Ensure the safety of all students and faculty in coordination with appropriate local and state departments and agencies;
- Provide support for student social and emotional wellbeing and address the implications of trauma experienced by students or faculty as a result of the emergency;
- Identify goals and strategies for maintaining standards of student achievement and school improvement plans;
- Ensure instruction and services are delivered by district educators and personnel as much as practicable;
- Utilize the most effective tools and resources available for students and faculty, including the skills and talents of district personnel, in the delivery of instruction and services and share resources as needed;
- Provide resources and services equitably to meet the needs and circumstances of all students;
- Identify remedial strategies necessary after the emergency to advance student achievement (i.e. after-school, extended day, summer school, and contingency scheduling to cancel vacations.);
- Gather information both during and after the period of emergency regarding the most effective means of remote learning to implement as appropriate.

In developing a remote learning plan, the superintendent will:

- Identify and prepare effective means for communicating with faculty, students, parents and community stakeholders.
- Collaborate with municipal agencies that support the schools and community.
- Consult with the school committee to identify any extraordinary actions necessary or authority required to administer emergency and remote learning plans. This includes any changes to district policies on the school calendar, grading, promotions and retentions, local graduation requirements, testing, and standards and accountability.

- Consult with administrators and principals to ensure the continuing education of students at all levels, including:
 - use of the most appropriate resources, tools and strategies to deliver the curricula given local circumstances and conditions;
 - equitable access to appropriate content for all students;
 - specific accommodations for students at high risk, including clients of special education, students with disabilities, English learners, students at economic disadvantage, homeless students, students in foster care and students of military families.
- Utilize available technological resources suitable for serving students at all levels. This inventory will be prepared in advance in anticipation of an emergency.
- Ensure the privacy rights of students, faculty and families are protected, including assessing the security of district technology.
- Consult with bargaining units to determine if modifications to collective bargaining agreements need to be established for the period of the emergency.
- Identify the financial implications of the emergency plan and recommend transfer of funds as may be necessary.

LEGAL REFS.: 20 U.S.C. §1232g Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
 15 U.S.C. §§ 6501–6506 Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)

CROSS REFS.: EBCD – Emergency Closings
 IGA – Curriculum Development
 IGB – Support Services Programs
 IHBEA – English Learner Education
 IJND – Access to Digital Resources
 IJNDB – Empowered Digital Use
 IJNDC – Internet Publication
 IJNDD – Policy on Social Media
 IHBEA – English Language Learners
 JB – Equal Educational Opportunities
 JBB – Educational Equity

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

REMOTE LEARNING ADDENDUM

Issues to consider when developing remote learning plans:

- Which of these issues requires policy or policy changes?
- What are the policy implications and what should school committees delegate to the superintendent for operating protocols?
- Do we learn anything from earlier experiences in emergencies?
- What can we learn from our current services to students who are unable to attend school because of illness or other disability or for disciplinary reasons?

Specific items to consider in developing a plan:

- When is remote learning appropriate?
- Designating a remote learning point person
- Reviewing the various models for remote learning
- Equity – how to ensure that students have access to tools to learn remotely.
- Internal vs. external resources.
- Collective bargaining implications
- Responsibilities of remote educators
 - Evaluating remote educators and programs
 - Who may observe remote instruction
 - Teacher professional development to incorporate various elements of remote learning
 - Common planning time
- Identifying cost implications and approving spending
- Special constituencies:
 - Special education students
 - English Language Learners
 - Physically challenged students
 - Homeless students
 - Students in foster care
 - Students of military families
 - Pregnant and parenting students
- Facilitating collaboration/removing barriers to collaboration.
- Protecting privacy rights of students and parents
 - FERPA (Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act and COPPA (Children's On Line Privacy Protection Act)
 - What privacy protections do vendors and districts/schools have in place.
- Health and nutrition issues that may impact student wellness and/or privacy
- Internet security for students and faculty.
- Protecting educators and others who identify threats to student wellbeing via remote learning.
- Engaging district partners including companies, consultants, media (i.e., public television).

- Impact on decisions to retain or grant professional status educators.
- Academic implications (testing, grading, educator accountability, curriculum adaptations)
- Parental rights (opting in or opting out)
- Data gathered remotely or on-line (who gathers, aggregates, or analyzes).

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

SUMMER SCHOOLS

The school system may make available summer sessions as a supplement to the instruction offered during the school year, when funding for such programs is available. The focus of the program will be remedial work.

Students at all instructional levels may attend approved summer schools for remedial, enrichment, or make-up purposes. Credit towards graduation requirements may be granted high school students in line with regulations of the School District.

All summer programs will be subject to annual approval by the School Committee.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [71:28](#)

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

CLASS SIZE

The Westwood School Committee is committed to favorable class sizes at all grade levels as one important element of the learning experience for students. To the extent possible, the School Committee will maintain reasonable class sizes in all classrooms throughout the system. Recommended class sizes are listed below, with the understanding that these are guidelines rather than absolute limits requiring strict, literal adherence, and should serve as a guide for budgeting purposes and in response to the enrollment of new students into classes that are near or at the numbers listed below:

<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>Class Size</u>
K-3	18-22
4-5	18-24
6-12	Reasonable class sizes (18-24), ideally not higher than 28, with the exception of traditionally large group classes (e.g. band)

In the event that a class in grades K-3 reaches 23 students or a class in grades 4-5 reaches 25 students, or if a principal believes that a particular class is not functioning properly, the superintendent in consultation with the building principal may recommend one of the following actions:

1. Reallocate or increase literacy or math specialist support
2. Reallocate or increase literacy paraprofessional support
3. Assign an instructional assistant to the class for part or all of the day
4. Provide an additional teacher in a co-teaching model
5. Open an additional class section at that grade
6. Use other practical solutions as may be deemed appropriate

If, in the judgment of the superintendent, it is necessary to take action that would affect the budget, such as increasing professional staffing, a recommendation will be brought to the School Committee for approval.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

The School Committee believes that materials appropriate to the needs of the school program must be available to each student and teacher. These will be furnished by the School Committee subject to budgetary constraints.

The task of selecting instructional materials for programs will be delegated to the professional staff of the school district. Because instructional programs and materials are of great importance, only those that meet the following criteria will be approved by the Committee:

1. They must present balanced views of international, national, and local issues and problems of the past, present and future.
2. They must provide materials that stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary and aesthetic appreciation and ethical reasoning.
3. They must help students develop abilities in critical reading and thinking.
4. They must help develop and foster an appreciation of cultural diversity in the United States and throughout the world.
5. They must provide for all students an effective basic education that does not discriminate on the basis of race*, age, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, physical disabilities or sexual orientation, and any other categories protected by law..
6. They must allow sufficient flexibility for meeting the special needs of individual students and groups of students.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 30B:7; 71:48; 71:49; 71:50
BESE regulations 603 CMR 26.00

CROSS REF.: KE, Public Complaints

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

Material that is challenged usually belongs to one of the three basic categories: religion, ideology, or profanity/obscenity. Board policies regarding these areas shall be as follows:

Religion -- Factual, unbiased material on religions has a place in school libraries.

Ideologies -- Libraries should, with no thought toward swaying reader judgment, make available a balanced collection of primary and factual material, appropriate to the developmental level of their students on various ideologies or philosophies which exert or have exerted a strong force, either favorably or unfavorably, in government, current events, politics, education and other phases of life.

Profanity/obscenity -- Materials shall be subjected to a test of literary merit and/or reality in context using the criteria established.

When a problem concerning instructional resources in a school arises, the disposition of the problem will be made in a reasonable period of time using District adopted procedures.

In accordance with the statement of philosophy, no questioned materials shall be removed from the school pending a final decision. Pending the outcome of the request for reconsideration, however, access to questioned materials can be denied to the students of the parents/guardians making the complaint, if they so desire.

If the decision of the School Committee is that the questioned instructional resource be retained, the District will not convene a Review Committee relative to the same complaint for a period of three years. If a substantially different point of view is advanced, it will be investigated. (The period of three years does not apply in this instance).

If an individual or a group undertakes action to keep material from the shelves by checking it out and failing to return it, or by taking turns in keeping it checked out so that it is not available for student use, the Superintendent shall request, in writing, the return of the material. If it is not returned within thirty (30) days, a bill for the current replacement cost of the item shall be rendered to the party holding the item.

After the School Committee has adopted new materials or approved certain methods, that decision will not be reconsidered for a period of three years beginning with the end of the school year when the adoption is made.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

TEXTBOOK SELECTION AND ADOPTION

Responsibility for the review and selection of textbooks to be purchased shall rest with the Superintendent or designee. The Superintendent or designee is encouraged through the School Committee to establish a review committee to assist in the process to determine the textbooks that best meet the curriculum guidelines of the District. The review committee should include teachers who will use the texts and other staff members as found desirable. Students and parents will be encouraged to serve.

Principles that apply generally to the selection of instructional materials and library materials shall apply to textbooks. Additionally, basic textbooks and textbook support materials shall be chosen:

- To advance the educational objectives of the school system and particular objectives of the course program;
- To contribute toward continuity, integration, and articulation of the curriculum; and
- To establish a general framework for the particular course or program.

Because the instructional purposes of textbooks, as stated above, are of such importance, particular care shall be taken in their selection as to content.

Although many points must be examined, the School Committee directs the staff to be mindful of the following considerations:

- The identity and diverse needs of all learners must be considered.
- The textbook and textbook support materials should lead the student and teacher beyond the textbook into a wide variety of other materials and educational experiences.
- If the textbook deals with problems and issues of our times, it should present and encourage examination of varied points of view.
- Because textbooks are selected for several years' use, special attention also shall be given their physical characteristics, durability, format and price.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [71:48](#); [30B:7](#); [71:50](#)
603 CMR [26:05](#)

CROSS REFS.: KEC, Public Complaints about the Curriculum or Instructional Materials

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION

The School Committee recognizes that knowledge is changing and expanding and that it may be necessary to use various types of supplementary materials in addition to the basic and fundamental textbooks.

The School Committee believes that teachers and administrators should have a large role in selection and recommendation of supplementary materials. Teachers are encouraged to use a wide range of learning aids, provided the expense incurred in purchasing these aids remains within the limits of the budget.

LEGAL REFS.: 603 CMR [26:05](#)

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

LIBRARY MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION

The School Committee endorses the School Library Bill of Rights, as adopted by the American Library Association, which asserts that the responsibility of the school library is to:

1. Provide materials that will enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the students served.
2. They must provide materials that stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary and aesthetic appreciation, and ethical reasoning.
3. s.
4. Provide a background of information that will enable students to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives.
5. Provide materials on differing perspectives on controversial issues so that young citizens may develop under guidance the practice of critical reading and thinking.
6. Provide materials representative of America's many religious, ethnic, and cultural groups and their contributions.
7. Place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality in order to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate for the users of the library.

Initial purchase suggestions for library materials may come from all personnel--teachers, coordinators, and administrators. Students will also be encouraged to make suggestions. The librarian will recommend materials to be included in the school library. Final approval and authority for distribution of funds will rest with the Superintendent or designee.

Gifts of library books will be accepted in keeping with the above policy on selection. Complaints about library books will be handled in line with Committee policy on complaints about instructional materials.

LEGAL REFS.: 603 CMR [26:05](#)

CROSS REF.: KE, Public Complaints

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

LIBRARY RESOURCES

The primary objective of the library/media center is to implement its resources to enrich and to support the educational program of the school.

Definition of Library Resources

Library resources are those print, non-print, and digital materials found in school libraries which support curricular and personal information needs.

Criteria for Selection of Library Resources

The criteria for selection of library resources in the District are:

- Needs of students
Based on knowledge of students
Based on requests of parents/guardians and students
- Needs of the school
Based on knowledge of the curriculum of the school
Based on requests from the professional staff
- Provision of a wide range of materials on many levels of difficulty with a diversity of appeal and the presentation of different points of view.
- Provision of materials of high artistic quality.
- Provision of materials with superior format.
- Reputable, unbiased, professionally prepared selection aids are consulted as guides.

In accordance with the District's policy of providing instructional materials on differing perspectives of controversial issues, it should be noted that neither the media centers nor the District serve as advocates for the ideas expressed in any materials, nor does the presence of any material indicate automatic endorsement of the ideas expressed therein.

Disclosure of Information/Privacy of Circulation Records

Circulation records shall not be made available to anyone except pursuant to such process, order, or subpoena as may be authorized by law.

Re-evaluation (Weeding) of Library Resources

The continuous review of library/media center materials is necessary as a means of maintaining a useful and active collection. As new materials are selected and added, some older materials are withdrawn. The responsibility for determining which materials are to be withdrawn rests with the professional staff.

Among the reasons for withdrawing an item are the following:

- Curricular changes have rendered superfluous some materials (or multiple copies of materials) formerly used but no longer in demand.
- Some materials contain factual material that is no longer accurate nor current.
- Some materials intended for recreational reading have become dated and are no longer in demand.
- Some materials have become worn out, damaged or physically deteriorated and have lost utility and/or appeal.
- Some materials have been superseded by newer items, which present the same information, but in superior format.

Withdrawn library/media center materials are processed in one or more of the following ways:

- Made available to be used as resource or supplementary material by teachers.
- Offered to other media centers in the District, as it is possible that a material, which lacks utility in one building, may have some usefulness in another.
- Contributed to appropriate charitable or educational agencies.
- Discarded, when warranted.

Continuing evaluation is closely related to the goals and responsibilities of library/media centers and is a valuable tool of collection development. This procedure is not to be used as a convenient or expedient means to remove materials presumed to be controversial or likely to be disapproved by segments of the community. Materials are not to be proscribed or removed because of actual or potential partisan or doctrinal disapproval, nor because of the origin, background or views of those contributing to their creation.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

SPECIAL INTEREST MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION

Organizations, institutions, and individuals at times develop materials that are offered to schools free or inexpensively. As a general rule, sponsored materials present a particular point of view, and extreme care must be exercised in evaluating and using them. The responsibility for using sponsored materials rests with the certified staff member who recommends its use. In any questionable instance, the Principal should be informed and shall decide whether its use is in the best interests of the students.

Sponsored materials must meet the same basic selection criteria as any other learning material, as well as the following special criteria.

Any expression of a point of view should be clearly identified.

Any advertising that appears on or with any material should be in good taste and unobtrusive.

The source of all material should be clearly identifiable.

LEGAL REFS.: 603 CMR [26:05](#)

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

ACCESS TO DIGITAL RESOURCES

The School Committee supports the right of students, employees, and community members to have reasonable access to various information formats and believes it is incumbent upon users to utilize this privilege in an appropriate manner.

Safety Procedures and Guidelines

The Superintendent, in conjunction with the Director of Technology, shall develop and implement appropriate procedures to provide guidance for access to digital resources. Guidelines shall address teacher supervision of student computer or tablet use, ethical use of digital resources and issues of privacy versus administrative review of electronic files and communications. In addition, guidelines shall prohibit utilization of digital resources for prohibited or illegal activities and for the use of other programs with the potential of damaging or destroying programs or data.

Internet safety measures shall be implemented that effectively address the following:

- Controlling access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet as defined by the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA);
- Safety and security of minors when they are using e-mail, instant messaging applications, and other forms of direct electronic communications;
- Preventing unauthorized access, including hacking, viruses, and other unlawful activities by minors online;
- Unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal information regarding minors.

The School District shall provide reasonable public notice to address and communicate its internet safety measures.

Empowered Digital Use

All students and faculty must agree to and sign an Empowered Digital Use form prior to the student or staff member being granted independent access to digital resources and district networks. The required form, which specifies guidelines for using digital resources and district networks, must be signed by the parent or legal guardian of minor students (those under 18 years of age) and also by the student. This document shall be kept on file as a legal, binding document. In order to modify or rescind the agreement, the student's parent/guardian (or the student who is at least 18 years old) must provide the Director of Technology with a written request.

Employee Use

Employees shall use district email, district devices, and district networks only for purposes directly related to educational and instructional purposes.

Community Use

On recommendation of the Superintendent in conjunction with the Director of Technology, the district shall determine when and which computer equipment, software, and information access systems will be available to the community. All guests will be prompted to, and must accept the district's Access to Digital Resources Policy before accessing the district network.

Disregard of Rules and Responsibility for Damages

Individuals who refuse to sign required Empowered Digital Use documents or who violate district rules governing the use of district technology or networks shall be subject to loss or restriction of the privilege of using equipment, software, information access systems, and network.

Individuals shall reimburse the district for repair or replacement of district property lost, stolen, damaged, or vandalized while under their care.

LEGAL REFS: 47 USC § 254

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

WESTWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOL ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

1. Purpose

The Westwood Public Schools provides technology resources to support the District's educational, instructional, administrative and operational activities. The use of these resources is a privilege that is extended to members of the Westwood Public Schools community. As a user of these services and facilities, you have access to valuable district resources, to sensitive data, and to internal and external networks. This policy explains the District's expectations for using these resources in a productive, responsible, ethical, and legal manner.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all users of technology resources owned or managed by the Westwood Public Schools. Individuals covered by this policy include but are not limited to employees, students, members of the School Committee, volunteers, guests, and external individuals and organizations accessing the District's technology resources whether on school grounds or in another location. Computing resources include all District-owned, licensed, or managed hardware and software or any use of the district network via a physical, wireless, or remote connection, regardless of the ownership of the computer or device connected to the network.

2.1 Consequences

If a user violates this policy, the District will take appropriate action, which may include restriction and loss of technology privileges, payments for damages or repairs, and discipline under appropriate District policies up to and including suspension, termination of employment, and referral to legal authorities. Users may also be held personally liable under applicable state and federal civil or criminal laws. Employee discipline procedures will be in accordance with the terms of applicable collective bargaining agreements. Users are encouraged to report misuse or violations of this policy to appropriate personnel, including building administrators and the Director of Technology, Learning, and Innovation.

2.2 Definitions

The Massachusetts Public Record Law is a law that gives the public the right to request access to information from a Massachusetts governmental agency. The **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)** is a law that gives the public access to information from the federal government. A public records request can be made to the Westwood Public Schools for electronic documents/communications stored or transmitted through district systems unless that information is specifically exempted from disclosure by law.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects the privacy of student education records. Personal information stored or transmitted by the Westwood Public Schools

must abide by FERPA. The Westwood Public Schools also are required to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and security of student records under MA law and Board of Education regulations.

Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) requires schools that receive federal funding through the E-Rate program to protect students from content deemed harmful or inappropriate. The Westwood Public Schools is required to filter Internet access for inappropriate content, monitor the internet usage of minors, and provide education to students and staff on safe and appropriate online behavior.

Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) imposes certain requirements on operators of websites or online services directed to children under 13 years of age, and on operators of other websites or online services that have actual knowledge that they are collecting personal information online from a child under 13 years of age. The primary goal of COPPA is to place parents in control over what information is collected from their children online.

3. Policy

3.1 Responsible Use - General Principles

We expect users to conduct business in accordance with the letter, spirit, and intent of all relevant laws and to not do anything that is illegal, dishonest, or unethical. By using Westwood Public Schools technology resources the user agrees to follow all District policies, regulations, and guidelines and state and federal law. Students are expected to and employees are required to report misuse or breach of protocols to appropriate District personnel.

- All technology resources furnished to employees are property of the Westwood Public Schools and are intended for educational or business use that is consistent with the mission of the District.
- We expect users to exercise good judgment in the use of these resources and to have the highest standards of conduct and personal integrity. Users are responsible for knowing and complying with the regulations and policies and laws that apply to the appropriate use of District technology and resources. If you are not sure if an action is legal, ethical, or appropriate, you should discuss the matter with your teacher or supervisor.
- All federal, state, and local laws and District policies and behavior guidelines that cover student and employee conduct on school premises and at school-related activities similarly apply to the online environment in those same venues.
- District computing resources are intended for job and education related activities. We permit brief personal use, or use for reasons permitted by state law, within reasonable limits as long as such activities don't interfere with employee work tasks.

- Any use of the District's computing resources in ways that disrupt the school environment, is inappropriate and/or unprofessional, contributes to creating a harassing workplace, or creates a legal risk to the District is prohibited.
- Access to view, edit, or share personal data of students and employees must be by authorized individuals only, who must abide by federal and state laws and regulations, including ensuring privacy. When educational records, personal information, or other private data is transmitted or shared electronically, staff are expected to protect the privacy of data. Staff must also ensure records are sent to individuals with a right to said records and ensure that only the intended recipient(s) are able to access the data.
- Using computing resources to create or disseminate content that could be considered discriminatory, obscene, threatening, harassing, defamatory, retaliatory, or intimidating to any other person is not allowed and could lead to disciplinary action by the District as well as legal action by those who are the recipient of these actions.
- District computing resources may not be used to access, post, or send items with sexually obscene content. Similarly, images exhibiting or advocating the illegal use of drugs or alcohol is prohibited.
- Users must not photograph or make audio/video recordings without the consent of those being recorded and/or permission granted by a parent/guardian of those being recorded. This shall not apply to "directory information" or other fair use authorized under federal or state student records law.
- District computing resources may not be used to solicit and/or promote others for commercial ventures or personal economic gain, for religious or political causes, for outside organizations, or other non- District matters.
- All activity that is composed, transmitted, or received via our technology resources is considered the property of the Westwood Public Schools and part of our records and may be subject to disclosure to law enforcement or other third parties.
- Nothing in this policy will be read to limit an individual's constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression or to restrict an employee's ability to engage in concerted, protected activity with fellow employees regarding the terms and conditions of their employment. Notwithstanding this, when staff members speak through social media on matters concerning their work, they should be aware that they are speaking as employees of the Westwood Public Schools.

3.1.2 Student and Staff Records Privacy

The District has a legal obligation to protect the personal data of students, families, and staff. Personal information for students/families and staff must be stored and transmitted using approved practices and systems.

The Westwood Public Schools complies with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), as well as state law and regulations concerning the security and confidentiality of employee information and to protect against unauthorized access to or use of such information.

Employees who use third-party software/applications/cloud-storage services to facilitate student learning must verify that the District has approved the use of said resources. Approved resources are vetted for compliance with all relevant student data privacy laws and regulations. This information can be found on the District's Database of Online Resources web site. If the resource is not listed in the database, staff can utilize the Digital Resource Request procedure to obtain authorization to use the resource.

3.1.3 Copyright and Intellectual Property

The Westwood Public Schools does not allow the unauthorized use, installation, copying, or distribution of copyrighted, trademarked, or patented software or material (including music, videos, games, images, text and other media) or any other unauthorized software or material on the Internet.

As a responsible user of the District's computing and network resources, you must abide by all applicable copyright laws and licenses and observe copyright laws. As a general rule, if you did not create the material, you do not own the rights to it, or if you have not received authorization for its use, you may not put the material on the Internet, including works created by students and staff.

3.1.4 Online Communication

The Westwood Public Schools encourages the appropriate use of online communication, including social media, to increase student and staff learning, parent and community engagement, and operational efficiency.

When using online tools, members of the Westwood Public Schools community when acting as representatives or employees of the Westwood Public Schools will use appropriate behavior when the communication impacts or is likely to impact the classroom or working environment in the Westwood Public Schools.

- Employees should model and actively practice positive digital citizenship and help students use new technologies in a safe, and responsible way. Employees utilizing online communication platforms with students are expected to educate students about digital citizenship, which includes appropriate and safe online behavior, interacting with individuals on social networking websites, and cyber-bullying awareness.
- Employee activities on District-affiliated social media or social networking websites should not reflect negatively on students, staff, or the District.

- Employees who use internal or external social media sites are expected to maintain professionalism at all times. This includes refraining from discussing confidential information and/or discussing specific students. Content that can be traced back to a specific student or could allow a student to be publicly identified should not be posted on any social media sites.
- Employees and students are provided with online tools to support teaching and learning and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of communication, both within the organization and with the broader community. Staff and students in grades 6 through 12 are also provided with District email accounts. Employee communication over email should be consistent with professional practices used for all correspondence.
- All communication sent by an employee using District resources or regarding District business could be subjected to public record requests. Users need to be aware that emails, chats, data and other material/files maintained on the District's systems or the cloud may be subject to review, disclosure, or discovery.
- Employee use of personal email accounts and communication tools to conduct school business is strongly discouraged and may, in turn, cause an individual's personal account to be subject to public records requests under state and federal law.
- The District maintains a database of approved online resources that facilitate student learning and enhance work productivity. Before using an online resource, staff are required to refer to this database and verify it has been approved for use. Approval indicates that the resource meets Westwood's standard for student data privacy and aligns with Westwood's curriculum and instruction standards.
- New online resources are continuously being developed and marketed to educators. Staff are required to utilize the Digital Resource Request procedure to obtain approval to use any resource that is not currently listed in the District's database of online resources.
- Unapproved third-party sites are prohibited.
- Employees are prohibited from exchanging personal contact information and/or friending/following on social media with current students of any age without explicit written permission of the Principal.
- Coaches or club/activity advisors should refrain from exchanging personal contact information with student team, club/activity members, or their parents/guardians. Rather, coaches and advisors shall use District approved communication platforms for the purpose of communicating with these individuals. It is strongly recommended that

electronic or telephone contact by coaches and club/activity advisors with students will be sent to two or more team members, except for messages that would compromise confidential information, such as medical or academic privacy matters.

- The Westwood Public Schools has established a comprehensive set of Social Media Guidelines. Members of the Westwood Public Schools community are required to follow these guidelines, along with the expectations contained within this Acceptable Use Policy.
 - The Westwood Public Schools has established a comprehensive set of Email Guidelines. Members of the Westwood Public Schools community are required to follow these guidelines, along with the expectations contained within this Acceptable Use Policy.
- .1 Team, class, or student organization pages, accounts, or groups will be created only in conjunction with the coach or faculty advisor. All groups must include the appropriate administrator as a member. Access to the page will remain with the coach or faculty advisor.

3.1.5 System Security

Users should not share their password or use another person's password, another user account, access a file, or retrieve any stored communication without authorization from the building Principal or Central Office.

Hacking or attempting to access computer systems without authorization, vandalism (including the uploading or creation of computer viruses, worms, or malware), fraud, phishing, spamming, and/or unauthorized tampering with computer systems is prohibited and may result in District disciplinary action as well as legal action. Users may not use proxy or VPN services to negate or otherwise bypass the District's filtering and monitoring of content.

Users must take responsible measures to prevent a device from being lost or stolen. In the event an electronic device is lost or stolen, the user is required to notify appropriate school staff. The District will attempt to recover the lost property and ensure the security of any information contained on the device.

4. Monitoring

All technologies that we furnish are the property of the Westwood Public Schools, and users should have no expectation of privacy. We reserve the right to monitor local network and Internet traffic, including information sent or received through our online connections or stored on our computer systems for any reason, including but not limited to ensuring quality control and investigate system problems, ensuring student and employee safety and district security, ensuring appropriate use, or as may be necessary, ensuring that the District is not subject to claims of misconduct.

The Superintendent or designee will approve access to files on District-owned equipment or information only when there is a valid reason to access those files. Authority to access user files can only come from the Director of Technology in conjunction with requests and/or approvals from the Superintendent or designee. External law enforcement agencies may request access to files through valid subpoenas and other legally binding requests. The District's legal counsel will review all such requests. Information obtained in this manner can be admissible in legal proceedings or in a District discipline hearing.

5. User Compliance & District Liability

Students are not permitted to use school-based technology resources without yearly parent sign-off in our student information system. Likewise, staff are required to electronically agree to the terms of this Acceptable Use Policy during the new-hire onboarding process.

When you use District computing services and accept any District-issued computing accounts, you agree to comply with this policy and all other computing-related policies. You have the responsibility to keep up-to-date on changes in the District computing environment via District electronic and print publication mechanisms, and to adhere to those changes.

The Westwood Public Schools and its representatives do not encourage or endorse access to inappropriate materials or persons. The Westwood Public Schools makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the technology-related services it provides and will not be responsible for any damages resulting from delays or service interruptions caused by its own negligence or the user's errors or omissions information obtained via the Internet is at the user's own risk. The Westwood Public Schools specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its computer services.

4. Policy Review and Notice

The Director of Technology or designee will review this policy annually.

District administration will provide written notice annually to staff, students and parents/guardians of this policy. Such notification will include, but not be limited to, student/parent handbooks, and the District website.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. [66 §10](#): Massachusetts Public Record Law;
M.G.L. [71 §34D](#) and 603 CMR [23.00](#): Mass. Student Records Law and Regulations;
M.G.L [71. §37H](#): Publication of School Committee Rules and Regulations Relative to the Conduct of Teachers and Students; Freedom of Information Act (FOIA); Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA); Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA); Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)

INTERNET PUBLICATION

I. PURPOSE

The School District has established a district-wide web page that links users to web pages for the district's individual schools. The School District maintains these web pages for educational purposes only, in furtherance of the educational mission of the School District. All published pages and corresponding links to other sites must relate to the district's educational mission.

II. SUPERVISION AND APPROVAL OF WEB PAGES

The Superintendent (or their designee) may select the person or persons ("the Webmaster") responsible for overseeing the school district's web pages and maintaining the web pages in a manner consistent with this policy and the school district's Access to Digital Resources Policy. The Webmaster must approve all links from the district web pages to other sites on the Internet. The Webmaster will review the links to ensure that the links are related to the district's educational mission.

Staff members may publish web pages related to their class projects or courses on their school's web site. Staff members must submit their material to the Webmaster for approval before the material can be published. Staff members may not publish or link to personal web pages as part of the school district web site.

Student or staff work (e.g. voice, likeness, quotes, written material, musical pieces and graphic or other artwork) may be published on the district's web pages, as detailed below. All work that is published will be accompanied by a copyright notice written by the Webmaster that prohibits copying the work without the written consent of the copyright holder.

III. CONTENT STANDARDS

All web page materials are expected to be accurate, grammatically correct and free of spelling errors. Student work may deviate from this standard depending upon the age and grade level of the student. Web pages should be well-organized and professional in appearance. Web pages must not contain copyrighted or trademarked material belonging to others unless written permission to display such material has been obtained from the owner and the owner is credited on the school's web page.

IV. SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

A. In general

Identifying information about students, such as first and last names, personal phone numbers or home addresses, will not be published. First names or first names and the first letter of the student's last name may be used where appropriate.

B. Student photographs

- Student photographs may be published only with the written consent of the student's parent or guardian.
- Student photographs will not be accompanied by identifying information about the student(s).

C. Student work

Student work, e.g. voice, likeness, quotes, written material, musical pieces, and graphic or other artwork, may be published only with the written consent of the student's parent or guardian.

D. Staff photographs, identifying information and work

- Photographs of staff members, accompanied by the staff member's full name, may be published only with the staff member's written consent.
- Staff work, e.g. voice, likeness, quotes, written material, musical pieces and graphic or other artwork, may be published only with the staff member's written consent.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips can bring the school and the community closer together, which can result in real life experiences that enrich the curriculum for students and also bring about better public relations. The School Committee will also encourage field trips as an integral part of the instructional programs in the schools.

The Superintendent will establish regulations to assure that:

1. All students have permission from a parent or guardian for trips.
2. All trips are properly supervised.
3. All safety precautions are observed.
4. All trips contribute substantially to the educational program.
5. All class trips allow student access without regard of family ability to pay.

All out-of-state or extended (overnight) trips and excursions, except those required for student participation in tournament competition or contests, must have advance approval of the School Committee. Fundraising activities for such trips will be subject to approval by the appropriate Administrator.

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CROSS REF.: JJH, Policy Relating to Field Trips Involving Late Night or Overnight Travel
JJH-E, International/Out-of-Country Field Trips

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

COMMUNITY RESOURCE PERSONS/ SPEAKERS

Community resources are those individuals or groups who are invited into the schools to present supplementary information and ideas to the classroom course of study. These experiences afford students the opportunity to benefit from community viewpoints. Care should be taken in selecting these speakers so that they are individuals who respect diversity in thinking and varying views.

CROSS REF.: ADDA, Background Checks

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

It is the policy of the School Committee to encourage volunteer efforts in the schools. Parents/guardians, business representatives, senior citizens, and other community volunteers are recognized as important sources of support and expertise to enhance the instructional program and vital communication links with the community. The volunteer program will be coordinated in cooperation with building administrators.

CROSS REF.: ADDA, Background Checks
 [KI](#), Visitors to the Schools

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

STUDENT PROGRESS REPORTS TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

The School Committee recognizes the school's obligation to give periodic reports of a student's progress and grades. The School Committee further recognizes that these reports are a vital form of communication between the schools and parents. The School Committee also believes that all progress reports must be based upon full information, accurately and honestly reported with the proper maintenance of confidentiality.

A report depicting the student's progress will be issued periodically following an evaluation by the appropriate teacher, teachers, or other professional personnel.

In addition to the periodic reports, parents will be notified when a student's performance requires special notification.

Grading and promotion will be based on improvement, achievement, capability of the student, and the professional judgment of the teacher and Principal.

Major changes in the reporting system shall be preceded by a cooperative study and evaluation under the direction of the Superintendent or designee, who will submit the proposal to the School Committee for consideration and approval.

CROSS REFS.: [KBBA](#), Non-Custodial Parents Rights

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

HOMEWORK

The Westwood School Committee affirms its belief in the value of homework as a means of promoting independent study habits and responsibility. Homework is defined as activities that include review and/or practice and/or application of concepts and skills. Homework assignments are determined by the classroom teacher. Homework should be tailored to fit the educational needs of individual students.

Homework is one way that parents can learn about classroom programs and individual student's progress. Parents are encouraged to read aloud to youngsters throughout the elementary grades. Starting in first grade, students are expected to read at home every day.

Students will be provided an exemption or extension from homework that interferes with the observance of religious holidays.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS

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

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

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

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

The College Preparatory Program of Studies is a pattern of courses designed to prepare students for admission to a four-year college or university. Almost all students spend four years completing this program. A student following this program may opt for more difficult classes in his or her areas of strength. Please see the Program of Studies Booklet for specific course suggestions.

To receive a Westwood High School diploma, a student must earn a minimum of 115 credits (meeting minimum credit requirements in subject areas listed below) and pass the MCAS examination in Math, English Language Arts, and Science and Technology.

Of these credits, the following subject area requirements must be met:

20.00	Credits of English
15.00	Credits of Mathematics
17.00	Credits of Science
10.00	Credits of Social Studies (including United States History)
7.00	Credits of Wellness
5.00	Credits of Fine Art (Art, Music, or Performing Arts courses)
10.0	Credits of World Language (must complete a 2 year sequence in one language)
2.5	Civics and Public Speaking

Credits necessary to advance to the next grade level:

To advance to the 11th grade:	52.5 credits
To advance to the 12th grade:	85 credits
Graduation Requirement	115

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

The School Committee considers comprehensive and objective evaluation of the effectiveness of the curriculum to be of primary importance. The Superintendent will provide for the translation of the stated instructional goals into objectives and for appraisal of their implementation in order to:

1. Determine educational needs and provide information for planning.
2. Indicate instructional strengths and weaknesses.
3. Check on the suitability of programs in terms of community requirements.
4. Show the relationship between achievement and the district's stated goals.
5. Provide data for public information.

Elements of this evaluation process may include:

1. Testing programs such as nationally standardized general achievement tests, nationally standardized tests in specific subject areas, and tests administered by other agencies.
2. Study of school achievement records.
3. Study of students' high school and drop-out records.
4. Use of outside services, participation in regional research studies, contracted evaluation services; evaluation services at cost to the school district must be approved in advance by the School Committee.
5. Teacher and parent/guardian evaluation of student behavior.
6. State Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education specialists and services.
7. Evaluation by the regional accrediting association.
8. Evaluation by other agencies.

An evaluation of the curriculum and its effectiveness will be made periodically and reported to the Committee by the Superintendent.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND TESTING

The Westwood Public Schools believe that the purpose of assessment should be to provide a description of student performance in order to enhance learning, to evaluate progress and to provide staff, administration and parents with information with which to make decisions about individual students, curricula, and programs.

Assessments allow us to do the following:

1. to determine how well a student is understanding classroom lessons and is developing skills,
2. to assess the strengths and weaknesses of individual students and determine need,
3. to gauge the individual student's progress over time,
4. to see how Westwood's students are performing in relation to students in other districts,
5. to evaluate the effectiveness of our program and,
6. to provide a means to provide feedback to parents regarding their child's progress,
7. to provide accountability to the public regarding the quality and equity of our school system.

Appropriate methods of assessment shall include the following:

1. Classroom tests which shall include quizzes, weekly tests, unit tests, end of term tests, book reports, oral presentations, essays, demonstrations of certain skills, observations, journals, portfolios, projects and exhibitions in accordance with Administrative Regulation ILC-R.
2. Individual testing of children referred for special instruction and special services.
3. Standardized norm referenced general achievement tests given at certain grades annually.
4. State mandated Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)) tests given annually.
5. Encouraged participation in the College Entrance Examination Boards (CEEB) testing program which may include, but not limited to, the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and Advanced Placement (AP) tests.

A comprehensive assessment program shall provide students with opportunities to demonstrate the ability to integrate their knowledge, skills, and concepts. It is important that assessment information and results are communicated clearly and on a regular basis to parents and students.

Assessment methods shall be continuously reviewed to determine consistency and effectiveness in light of the school system's mission, philosophy and goals.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

STUDENT SUBMISSION TO EDUCATIONAL SURVEYS AND RESEARCH

In this policy, "surveys, analyses, or evaluations" refer to methods of gathering data for research purposes.

Without the prior written consent of the student's parent/guardian, or of the student if they are at least 18 years of age, no student shall be required as part of any program wholly or partially funded by the U.S. Department of Education to submit to any survey, analyses, or evaluation that reveals information concerning:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent/guardian;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents/guardian; or
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine eligibility for school programs or for receiving financial assistance under such program.

All instructional materials, including teachers' manuals, films, tapes, or other supplementary material which will be used in connection with any such survey, analysis, or evaluation shall be available upon request for inspection by the student's parent/guardian. For the purpose of this policy, "instructional material" does not include academic tests or assessments.

A parent/guardian may inspect, upon request, a survey created by a third party before the survey is administered or distributed to a student.

The Superintendent or designee will be responsible for implementing any procedures necessary to protect the privacy of participating students and to provide parents/guardians with access to surveys within a reasonable time before administration or distribution.

The School District will notify parents/guardians of this policy at least annually at the beginning of the school year and within a reasonable time of any substantive change in policy. Where practical, the District will also directly notify parents/guardians annually at the beginning of the school year when surveys, analyses, or evaluations are scheduled or anticipated. Parents/guardians shall have the opportunity to opt their child out of participation in any survey, analysis, or evaluation. Students who are 18 years of age or older may opt out of such surveys, analyses, or evaluations.

Parents/guardians or eligible students who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with the Family Policy Compliance Office of the U.S. Department of Education.

LEGAL REF.: Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment, 20 U.S.C. § 1232h

CROSS REF.: JRA, Student Records

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

TEACHING ACTIVITIES/PRESENTATIONS

It is the desire of the School Committee that the best available strategies for bringing about learning be utilized in the District's schools. The instructional staff shall be expected to keep abreast of new and promising instructional ideas and practices developed in schools throughout the nation and to apply those which have potential for improving the learning program in the District's schools.

An educational climate shall be established which shall be conducive to rational thought, inquiry, and respect for the dignity of the individual. This educational climate will assist students in learning how to think rather than what to think and shall provide students the opportunity to identify, express, and defend their opinions without penalty or fear of reprisal or ridicule.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES/CONTROVERSIAL SPEAKERS

An important goal of the schools is to help prepare students for intelligent and conscientious participation as citizens in our democratic society. One step toward meeting this goal is to introduce students to reasoned and dispassionate approaches to the analysis of contemporary social and political issues. To insure that these issues can be examined in an atmosphere as free from emotion and prejudice as the times permit, the School Committee establishes the following guidelines for discussion of controversial issues in the schools.

Teacher-Planned Classroom Discussions

1. Controversial issues selected by teachers for classroom discussion must relate directly to the objectives and content of courses approved by the School Committee for inclusion in the curriculum.
2. The teachers' right to introduce controversial issues in classroom presentations does not include the right of advocacy. Teachers must refrain from using their positions to express partisan points of view.
3. The approach to discussion of these issues in the classroom must be objective and scholarly with minimum emphasis on opinion and maximum emphasis on intelligent analysis.
4. Teachers must ensure that the reasoned arguments of all sides of an issue are given equal presentation and emphasis in classroom discussions.
5. Teachers may invite visitors from outside the schools to give presentations on controversial issues when the visitors offer qualifications and resources not available in the schools. All visitors are to be guided by the standards of language usage that prevail in the classrooms and by the standards of scholarly inquiry set forth above. Whenever possible, teachers who invite visitors to present one side of an issue will also invite visitors to present the other side(s).
6. In all cases teachers must obtain from the appropriate Principal permission to invite visitors for classroom presentations. Permission must be requested at least 48 hours before the scheduled time of presentation.

Student-Initiated Forums on Controversial Issues

Student groups may request permission to conduct forums on controversial issues in the schools. The Principal may grant such requests under the following conditions:

1. Preparation for presentation of a forum will not cause any student or teacher to miss class and will not cause the cancellation of any class.

2. Adequate advance planning must be conducted for each forum. A request to hold a forum must be received by the Principal at least three weeks before the scheduled date of presentation. For each request the Principal will appoint, after consultation with the requesting student group, an adult advisory group.
3. The standards for approach to discussion, style of presentation, and use of visitors as defined above will apply to student-initiated forums.

Requests from Groups or Individuals Outside the Schools

No permission will be granted non-school groups or individuals to make presentations on controversial issues in the schools during school hours. Requests for after-school or evening use will be processed in accordance with the Committee's policy on community use of school facilities.

No permission will be granted outsiders for distribution of literature on controversial issues to students in general or to class groups.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

LEARNING ABOUT DIVERSITY

The Westwood School Committee believes that part of its educational mission is to prepare students for life in a society that is diverse. Students must learn that the society in which they live is composed of numerous ethnic groups, races and cultures. Through its educational program the Westwood Schools will allow students to develop an awareness of and respect for all members of society, regardless of their differences in values, beliefs, practices, etc. As members of a diverse society, students should appreciate what they have in common with, and what is unique to, each other member of that society. The Westwood School Committee supports the hiring of staff members who reflect the diversity of our society.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES

The United States Constitution and the Constitution of the State of Massachusetts and related court rulings clearly establish the concept of "church and state separation" and the "preclusion of sectarian instruction in public schools."

In order to help staff members abide by the spirit and letter of the law, and to avoid compromising any student's religious or conscientious beliefs or freedoms, the following guidelines have been established:

The observance of religious holidays is not the responsibility of the public schools.

Students shall not be expected to take tests, or complete major assignments, on a holiday or the day after the holiday. Observance of a religious holiday may have an impact on the next school day and teachers should be sensitive to this possibility.

School sports and extracurricular activities should be scheduled so that students will not be penalized for being unable to participate due to their observance of a religious holiday.

While it is recognized that many activities are initiated with the approach of major holidays in order to capitalize on the readiness and interest that is generated at these times, it should be understood that such occasions frequently have religious underpinnings. Care should be taken to relate only to secular aspects of these holidays.

Music programs given at times close to religious holidays should not use religious aspect of these holidays as the underlying motive or theme. Although religious music is appropriate in the schools to the extent that it is sung or presented for musical rather than religious content, its use should not violate the secular nature of the school. Pageants, plays, recitals, and other literary or dramatic activities should not be used to convey religious messages. While the holidays represent a valid source of ideas for meaningful school art experiences, teachers should avoid assigning or encouraging art work that promotes religious aspects of such holidays. If, however, individual students choose to use a religious personage, event, or symbol as the vehicle for an artistic expression, they should be allowed to take this action.

The above statements should not be interpreted to preclude the factual and objective teaching about religions, religious holidays, and religious differences. Such instruction will be permitted in the schools since insights in this area can enhance the mutual understanding needed by all the people in a pluralistic society.

LEGAL REFS.: 603 CMR [26:05](#)

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

ANIMALS IN SCHOOL

No animal shall be brought to school without prior permission of the building Principal.

The Westwood School District is committed to providing a high quality educational program to all students in a safe and healthy environment.

School Principals, in consultation with the Health Services Providers in each building, shall utilize the Department of Public Health publication "Guidelines for Animals in Schools or on School Grounds" and review student health records to determine which animals may be allowed in the school building. The decision of the Principal shall be final.

Educational Program

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

Student Health

The health and well-being of students is the District's highest priority. Animals may cause an allergic reaction or otherwise impair the health of students. No animals may be brought to school or kept in the school, classroom, office or common area that may negatively impact the health of any student who must utilize that area. Animals that cause an allergic reaction or impair the health of students shall be removed from the school immediately so that no student shall have his/her health impaired and each student shall have full access to available educational opportunities.

Animals Prohibited from School

Rabies is a growing problem and any fur-bearing animal is susceptible to this very serious fatal disease. Infected animals can transmit this disease to students and staff. Based on the Massachusetts Departments of Health and Education recommendations the following animals are prohibited from schools within the Westwood School District.

Wild Animals and Domestic Stray Animals - Because of the high incidence of rabies in bats, raccoons, skunks, foxes and other wild carnivores, these animals should not be permitted in school buildings under any circumstances (including dead animals).

Fur-Bearing Animals (pet dogs,* cats, wolf-hybrids, ferrets, etc.,) - These animals may pose a risk for transmitting rabies, as well as parasites, fleas, other diseases and injuries.

Bats - Bats pose a high risk for transmitting rabies. Bat houses should not be installed on school grounds and bats should not be brought into the school building.

Poisonous Animals - Spiders, venomous insects and poisonous snakes, reptiles and lizards are prohibited for safety reasons.

***Exception: Guide, Hearing and Other Service Dogs or Law Enforcement Dogs** - These animals may be allowed in school or on school grounds with proof of current rabies vaccination.

Exceptions may be made with the prior approval of the Superintendent of Schools.

Service Animals (Guide or Assistance Dogs)

The Westwood School Committee does not permit discrimination against individuals with disabilities, including those who require the assistance of a service animal. The District will comply with Massachusetts law concerning the rights of persons with guide or assistance dogs and with federal law and will permit such animals on school premises and on school transportation.

For purposes of this policy, a "service animal includes any dog that has been individually trained to do the work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability." The regulations further state that "a public entity shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures to permit the use of a miniature horse by an individual with a disability if the horse has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of the individual with the disability."

Service animals perform some of the functions and tasks that individuals with disabilities cannot perform themselves. Service animals are not pets. There are several kinds of service animals that assist individuals with disabilities. Examples include, but are not limited to, animals that:

- assist individuals who are blind or have severe sight impairments as "seeing eye dogs" or "guide dogs;"
- alert individuals with hearing impairments to sounds;
- pull wheelchairs or carry and pick-up items for individuals with mobility impairments; and
- assist mobility-impaired individuals with balance.

The District shall not assume or take custody or control of, or responsibility for, any service animal or the care or feeding thereof. The owner or person having custody and control of the animal shall be liable for any damage to persons, premises, property, or facilities caused by the service animal, including, but not limited to, clean up, stain removal, etc.

If, in the opinion of the School Principal or authorized designee, any service animal is not in the control of its handler, or if it is not housebroken, the service animal may be excluded from the school or program. The service animal can also be excluded if it presents a direct and immediate threat to others in

the school. The parent or guardian of the student having custody and control of the animal will be required to remove the service animal from District premises immediately.

If any student or staff member assigned to the classroom in which a service animal is permitted suffers an allergic reaction to the animal, the person having custody and control of the animal will be required to remove the animal to a different location designated by the Building Principal or designee and an alternative plan will be developed with appropriate District staff. Such plan could include the reassignment of the person having custody and control of the animal to a different classroom. This will also apply if an individual on school transportation suffers an allergic reaction. In this case, an alternate plan will be developed in coordination with appropriate school, District, and transportation staff including the involvement of the parents/guardian of the student.

When a student will be accompanied by a service animal at school or in other District facilities on a regular basis, such staff member or such student's parent or guardian, as well as the animal's owner and any other person who will have custody and control of the animal will be required to sign a document stating that they have read and understood the foregoing.

The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee shall be responsible for developing procedures to accommodate a student's use of an assistance animal in District facilities and on school transportation vehicles.

LEGAL REF.: 28 CFR, Part 35

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

SECTION J

STUDENTS

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EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

In recognition of the diverse characteristics and needs of our students and with the keen desire to be responsive to them, the School Committee will make every effort to protect the dignity of the students as individuals. It also will offer careful consideration and sympathetic understanding of their personal feelings, particularly with reference to their race*, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, active military/veteran status, marital status, familial status, pregnancy, or pregnancy-related condition, homelessness, ancestry, ethnic background, national origin, or any other category protected by state or federal law.

To accomplish this, the Committee and its staff will make every effort to comply with the letter and the spirit of the Massachusetts equal educational opportunities law which prohibits discrimination in public school admissions and programs.

This will mean that every student will be given equal opportunity in school admission, admissions to courses, course content, support services, and extracurricular and athletic activities.

All implementing provisions issued by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in compliance with this law will be followed.

*race to include traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles.

LEGAL REFS.: Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964
Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972
Executive Order 11246, as amended by E.O. 11375
Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972
M.G.L. 76:5; 76:16 (Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971)
603 CMR 26:00
603 CMR 28.00
The McKinney-Vento Act and Title I Part A, as Amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015
Acts of 2022, Chapter 117 -
<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2022/Chapter117>

CROSS REF.: AC, Nondiscrimination

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

The School Committee's goal is to strive to address the needs of every student in each of our schools, subject to budgetary, space and other limitations.

Educational equity for the purpose of this policy is defined as providing all students, as reasonably practical, the high quality instruction and support they need to reach and exceed a common standard.

To achieve educational equity the district will commit to:

1. Systematically, when appropriate, use districtwide and individual school level data, disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender/gender identity, national origin, language, special education, socioeconomic status and mobility to inform district decision making.
2. Raise the achievement of all students.
3. Graduate all students ready to succeed in a diverse local, national and global community.

In order to reach the goal of educational equity for each and every student, the District shall:

1. Provide every student with access to high quality curriculum, support, and other educational resources.
2. Seek to promote educational equity as a priority in professional development and educator evaluation.
3. Endeavor to create schools with a welcoming and inclusive culture and environment.
4. Provide multiple pathways to success in order to meet the needs of the diverse student body and actively encourage, support and expect high academic achievement for each student.

The Superintendent shall include equity practices in the district's strategic plan and goal strategies to implement this policy. The Superintendent, upon request, will periodically report to the Committee the progress of the implementation of this policy.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

ATTENDANCE AREAS

Attendance areas for the various schools of the town will be drawn up by the Superintendent and approved by the School Committee. The primary considerations that govern the establishment of a school attendance area are school capacity and transportation considerations. Generally, students will attend the school in the attendance area in which they live.

In establishing an attendance area, the Committee will take into consideration safe walking conditions consistent with the Committee's transportation policies.

From time to time an overcrowded condition in an existing school, the development of new residential areas, or the opening of a new school may require the establishment or change of previously established school attendance areas.

The Committee will confer with community representatives prior to setting new attendance lines. However, the Committee's primary basis for judgment must be equality of educational opportunity for all students rather than the personal desires of any one group.

The Superintendent is authorized to make exceptions to attendance lines for individual children in the best interests of the student and/or the school.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37C; 71:37D; 71:37I; 71:37J
 603 CMR 17.00
 603 CMR 26.00

CROSS REF.: JCA, Assignment of Students to Schools

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

ASSIGNMENT OF STUDENTS TO SCHOOLS

Generally, students will be required to attend school in the attendance area in which they reside, unless the Superintendent has granted special permission.

Special permission may be granted for the following reasons:

1. If the change involves a hardship case or if there are medical considerations.
2. If the change appears to be in the interests of the child, of the schools, or for disciplinary and administrative reasons.
3. If the legal residence of a child changes from one attendance area to another during the school year and the parents/guardians wish the child to remain in their former school; permission will not extend beyond the current school year.
4. To permit school students to take courses not offered in their assigned schools.

School bus transportation will not be provided for students attending schools outside their attendance area unless they can be accommodated on existing bus routes and schedules or a hardship is involved; or unless specific permission is granted by the Superintendent.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37C; 71:37D; 71:37I; 71:37J
603 CMR 17.00
603 CMR 26.00

CROSS REF.: JC, Attendance Areas

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

ENTRANCE AGE

In an attempt to permit children to enter kindergarten or first grade at the time most appropriate for them individually, the School Committee establishes the following policy on entrance age:

1. Children who will be five years of age before September 1 of the school year during which they wish to enroll will be eligible to enter kindergarten in September.

The admission of children whose birthdays fall after September 1 will be solely at the Superintendent's discretion.

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

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 76:1
 603 CMR 8.00

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

A student is considered a resident of the town if he/she actually resides in a dwelling within the boundaries of the school system. No child may attend or receive educational services from the Westwood Public Schools unless he/she actually resides within the boundaries of the town and school system.

Students whose parents or guardians have entered into a contract for real estate (purchase and sale agreement) in Westwood and who present such purchase and sale agreement to the Superintendent shall be admitted to the Westwood Public Schools on a no fee basis provided that the property under purchase is intended to be the principal residence of the family. Such a waiver of tuition shall be granted for up to six months. If the child is not living in Westwood after six months, the parents or guardians will be charged tuition on a monthly basis until the end of school. If the child still does not live in the town after the school year ends, the child will not be permitted to enroll the following September.

New construction - non-residents may attend upon receipt, by the Superintendent of Schools, of a certified building permit or a signed Purchase & Sales with occupancy to occur no later than at the end of the current school year.

New entrants at all grade levels will be required to present at the time of enrollment a birth certificate or other evidence of birth, proof of having received or being in the process of receiving required immunizations, a record of physical examination by a licensed physician, and proof of residency within the town of Westwood.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [15:1G](#); [76:1](#); [76:5](#); [76:15](#); [76:15A](#)
603 CMR [26:01](#); [26:02](#); [26:03](#)

CROSS REFS.: JLCA, Physical Examination of Students
JLCB, Immunization of Students
JFBB, School Choice
JFABD, Homeless Students: Enrollment Rights and Services
JFABE, Educational Opportunities for Military Children
JFABF, Educational Opportunities for Children in Foster Care

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

ACCEPTANCE OF INTERNATIONAL AND EXCHANGE STUDENTS

In order to provide students at Westwood High School with the opportunity to engage with students from diverse cultures, the School Committee may support the enrollment of international students in the Westwood Public Schools as provided for in this section.

The Westwood Public Schools may accept tuition-free, on a space-available basis, enrollment of international students fluent in the English language who (1) reside within the boundaries of Westwood; (2) meet age, schooling, and English language fluency requirements as outlined below; and (3) participate in an officially recognized high school student exchange program.

Westwood Public Schools requires all international students to be formally affiliated with a program and/or agency that places international students in American high schools, monitors their academic progress, and provides support to host families. At a minimum, the host organization will:

- A. Be responsible for placing the student with a host family for the duration of the enrollment period and provide logistical support throughout the period, including obtaining a visa, registering the student in Westwood Public Schools, and ensuring that the student is properly immunized.
- B. Provide a point person during the school year who acts as a liaison between the school, host's home, student's home, and/or the placement organization.

International students must be at least 16 years of age on or before September 1 of the school year of their intended attendance. New entrants at all grade levels will be required to present at the time of enrollment a birth certificate or other evidence of birth; proof of having received or being in the process of receiving required immunizations; a record of physical examination by a licensed physician; and proof of residency within the town of Westwood.

An international student is considered a resident of Westwood if they reside in a dwelling within the boundaries of the town. Verification of local residence and pertinent records must be reviewed by the Principal before presented to the Superintendent and before permission is granted. The town resident with whom the international student will live shall be responsible for all immigration and sponsorship matters.

No student who has received a diploma or equivalent certificate from a secondary school or its foreign counterpart shall be eligible to attend Westwood High School under this section. No student will be admitted who has already graduated from the equivalent of twelfth grade or who will reach the age of nineteen years on or before September 1 of that school year.

Students participating in an exchange may be required to complete the same work as their fellow students. They may receive a grade for this work, and WPS will generate an official transcript as needed upon the conclusion of the school year. Students who complete their senior year at WHS may receive a certificate of completion and participate in graduation activities, unless they are disqualified according to existing handbook policy.

If it is believed that an international student meets this criteria, families should contact the Principal to begin the process for enrollment approval. Once enrollment is accepted by the Superintendent, the District Administration and High School Guidance offices will work with the student, family, and agency to finalize registration.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

ADMISSION OF TRANSFER STUDENTS

The school district will enroll and place students who have left Commonwealth charter schools by adhering to the same policies and procedures in place for any other student enrolling in the school district including, but not limited to, examination of the course of study and level of academic attainment of the student when determining the student's appropriate grade placement or eligibility for high school graduation.

To the same extent provided for other students enrolling in the school district, students who enroll in the school district from a Commonwealth charter school shall be subject to the graduation requirements of the school district, may have certain graduation requirements waived, and may make-up certain graduation requirements.

LEGAL REFS.: Chapter 12, Section 11 of the Acts of 2010

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

HOMELESS STUDENTS: ENROLLMENT RIGHTS AND SERVICES

As required by law, the district will work with homeless children and youth and unaccompanied youth¹(collectively, "homeless students") as well as their families or legal guardians to provide stability in school attendance and other services. Special attention will be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless students not currently attending school. Homeless students will be provided district services for which they are eligible, including Head Start and comparable pre-school programs, Title I, similar state programs, special education, bilingual education, vocational and technical education programs, gifted and talented programs, school nutrition programs, summer programming and extracurricular activities.

Homeless students are defined as lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, including:

1. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason;
2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
3. Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
4. Being abandoned in hospitals;
5. Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
6. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings; and
7. Migratory children living in conditions described in the previous examples.

Students Remaining in Schools of Origin

It is presumed to be in the best interest of homeless students to remain in their schools of origin, i.e. the school that the student was attending at the time he or she became homeless, or the last school the student attended prior to becoming homeless. Homeless students may continue to attend their school of origin for as long as they remain homeless or until the end of the academic year in which they obtain permanent housing. For homeless students who complete the final grade level served by the school of origin, the term "school of origin" shall also include the receiving school in the same school district educating students at the next grade level.

Homeless students are entitled to transportation comparable to that provided for all other students attending school in the district. The district will transport students who are sheltered or temporarily residing within the district to the students' school of origin. For homeless students attending a school of origin located outside the district in which the student is sheltered or temporarily residing, the district in which the school of origin is located will coordinate with the district in which the student is sheltered or temporarily residing to provide the transportation services necessary for the student, and these districts will divide the cost equally. Formerly homeless students who find permanent housing mid-school year will continue to receive transportation services until the end of the school year.

¹ A homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian." 42 USC §11434a

Students Enrolling in District Where Sheltered or Temporarily Residing

Parents or guardians may elect to enroll homeless students in the school district in which the student is sheltered or temporarily residing, rather than having the student remain in the school of origin. Enrollment changes for homeless students should take place immediately.

If homeless students are unable to provide written proof of their shelter or temporary residence in the district, the homeless liaison will work with the family seeking enrollment to determine homelessness. Information regarding a homeless student's living arrangement shall be considered a student education record, and not directory information. Records containing information about the homeless student's living arrangement may not be disclosed without the consent of the parent or satisfaction of another student-privacy related exemption.

If the student does not have immediate access to immunization records, the student shall be permitted to enroll under a personal exception. Students and families should be encouraged to obtain current immunization records or immunizations as soon as possible, and the district liaison is directed to assist. Emergency contact information is required at the time of enrollment consistent with district policies, including compliance with the state's address confidentiality program when necessary. After enrollment, the district will immediately request available records from the student's previous school.

Attendance rights by living in attendance areas, other student assignment policies, or intra and inter-district choice options are available to homeless families on the same terms as families who reside in the district. Accordingly, the district will provide transportation services to school in a manner comparable to the transportation provided for all other students in the district.

Dispute Resolution

If the district disagrees with a parent or guardian's decision to keep a student enrolled in the school of origin and considers enrollment in the district where the student is sheltered or temporarily residing to be in the student's best interest, the district will explain to the parent, in writing and in a language the parent can understand¹, the rationale for its determination and provide parent with written notice of their rights to appeal the district's determination to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education². During the pendency of any such appeal, the student should remain enrolled in the school selected by the parent or guardian, receiving transportation to school and access to other available services and programs.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Advisory on Homeless Education Assistance contains additional information about educating homeless students and the appeal process. This advisory is available at the following link: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mv/haa/mckinney-vento.docx>

¹ Translation of communications of this type is required by Title I, among other laws. See, e.g. 20 USC § 6312.

² Information about the dispute resolution process managed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education can be located here: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mv/haa/03-7.html>

Homeless Liaison

The Superintendent shall designate an appropriate staff person to be the district's liaison for homeless students and their families. The district's liaison for homeless students and their families shall coordinate with local social service agencies that provide services to homeless children and youths and their families; other school districts on issues of transportation and records transfers; and state and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies. This coordination includes providing public notice of the educational rights of homeless students in locations such as schools, family shelters and soup kitchens. The district's liaison will also review and recommend amendments to district policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless students. The liaison shall ensure district staff receive professional development and other support on issues involving homeless students.

LEGAL REFS.: The McKinney-Vento Act and Title I, Part A, as Amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MILITARY CHILDREN

To facilitate the placement, enrollment, graduation, data collection, and provision of special services for students transferring into or out of the District because of their parents or guardians being on active duty in the U.S. Armed Services, the District supports and will implement its responsibilities as outlined in the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. The district believes it is appropriate to remove barriers to educational success imposed on children of military families resulting from frequent moves required by parents' or guardians' military deployment.

Definitions

Children of military families: School aged children, enrolled in kindergarten through 12th grade, in the household of an active duty member of the uniformed service of the United States, including members of the National Guard and Reserve serving on active duty.

Deployment: The period one month before the service members' departure from their home station on military orders through six months after return to their home station.

Education(al) records: Official records, files, and data directly related to a student and maintained by the school including, but not limited to, records encompassing all the material kept in the student's cumulative folder.

Eligible students are children of military families as well as the children of veterans who have been severely injured and medically discharged, and children of active duty personnel who died on active duty. Children of retired active duty personnel are also eligible to receive services for one year following the discharge due to severe injury, or the retirement or death of an active military parent. The Compact does not apply to children of inactive Guard or Reserves, veterans and retired personnel not included above, or U.S. Department of Defense personnel and other federal civil service employees and contract employees.

The District's responsibilities to eligible students include the following:

- Sending schools must send either official or unofficial records with the moving students and District receiving schools must use those records for immediate enrollment and educational placement.
- Upon enrollment of an eligible student, the receiving school must request official records and the sending schools shall respond within 10 days with the records.
- Immunization requirements of the District may be met within 30 days from the date of enrollment (or be in progress).

- Receiving schools must initially honor placement of students in all courses from the sending school. These include, but are not limited to, Honors, International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement, vocational-technical, and career pathway courses if those courses are offered in the receiving school and space is available. The receiving schools must also initially honor placement of like programs to those of the student in the sending state, including, but not limited to, Gifted and Talented programs, and English as a Second Language programs. Receiving schools are not precluded from performing subsequent evaluation to ensure the appropriate placement and continued enrollment of the student in courses and programs.
- In compliance with federal law, the district will assume financial and programmatic responsibility for the special education programs of students with existing IEPs drafted in other states.
- As appropriate, the District will exercise the right to waive prerequisites for all courses and programs, while also maintaining its right to re-evaluate the student to ensure continued enrollment, also as deemed appropriate.
- Students of active duty personnel shall have additional excused absences, as necessary, for visitations relative to leave or deployment.
- An eligible student living with a noncustodial parent or other person standing in loco parentis shall be permitted to continue to attend the school in which he or she was enrolled while living with the custodial parent or guardian, without any tuition fee imposed.
- The District high school will accept exit or end-of-year exams required from the sending state, national norm-referenced tests, or alternate testing instead of testing requirements for graduation in the District (receiving state.) If this is not possible, the alternative provision of the Interstate Compact shall be followed to facilitate the on-time graduation of the student in accordance with Compact provisions.

LEGAL REFS: M.G. L. 15E;
 M.G.L. Part I, Title II, Chapter 15E

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the educational stability of students in foster care. Educational stability has a lasting impact on students' academic achievement and wellbeing, and the School Committee is committed to supporting all efforts to ensure that students in foster care have equal access to high-quality, stable educational experiences from preschool (if offered) through high school graduation.

Irrespective of the location of a foster care placement, students in foster care will continue to attend their school of origin, unless after a collaborative decision-making process, it is determined to be in the student's best interest to enroll in and attend school in the district in which the student resides in foster care. Enrollment of students in the district where they reside in foster care will take place immediately upon such a determination.

The district has designated a point of contact for students in foster care. The district and the point of contact will collaborate with the Department of Children and Families to ensure that students can access transportation and the other services to which they may be entitled.

Best Interest Determination

Decisions about whether a student in foster care should continue to attend the school of origin should be made collaboratively by DCF, the student (as appropriate), the student's family and/or foster family (or, if different, the person authorized to make educational decisions on behalf of the student), the school and district of origin, and (when appropriate) the local district where the student is placed. Best interest determinations should focus on the needs of each individual student and account for unique factors about the student and his or her foster care placement. Every effort should be made to reach agreement regarding the appropriate school placement of a student in foster care; however, DCF will finalize the best interest determination if the relevant parties cannot agree on the best school for the student to attend.

The district can seek review of DCF's decision by utilizing a Foster Care School Selection Dispute Resolution Process established by DESE and DCF. Decisions made through this process are not subject to review. To the extent feasible and appropriate, the district will ensure that a child remains in his or her school of origin while the disputes are being resolved to minimize disruptions and reduce the number of moves between schools.

Transportation

The district of origin must collaborate with DCF on how transportation will be arranged and provided to ensure that students in foster care who need transportation to remain in their school of origin will receive such transportation while they are in foster care.

Transportation options may include using Title I funds, establishing regional collaborations among districts, coordinating with existing routes for transportation, seeking help from foster parent(s), etc. Absent other agreements between the district and DCF, the district of origin is responsible for providing transportation to and from the school of origin.

Immediate Enrollment

If it is in the best interest of a student in foster care to leave the school of origin, the student must be immediately enrolled in the district in which he or she resides in foster care. During enrollment of students in foster care, DCF representatives will present the district with a form indicating that the student is in foster care, along with a state-agency identification badge.

If the student does not have immediate access to immunization records, the student shall be permitted to enroll under a personal exception. Students and families should be encouraged to obtain current immunization records or immunizations as soon as possible, and the district liaison is directed to assist. Emergency contact information is required at the time of enrollment consistent with district policies, including compliance with the state's address confidentiality program when necessary. After enrollment, the district will immediately request available records from the student's previous school.

Attendance rights by living in attendance areas, other student assignment policies, or intra and inter-district choice options are available to students in foster care (homeless families) on the same terms as families who reside in the district. Accordingly, the district will provide transportation services to school in a manner comparable to the transportation provided for all other students in the district.

LEGAL REFS: Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA);
 Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Fostering
 Connections Act)

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

INTRA-DISTRICT TRANSFER POLICY

Students are required to attend school in the attendance area in which they reside, unless special permission has been granted by the Superintendent. The Superintendent will consider each intra-district transfer request individually and will approve or deny the request based on the specific circumstances related to that request. When reviewing the transfer request, the Superintendent will consider the total needs of the receiving school and the ability of the receiving school to meet the student's needs.

The following conditions apply to all intra-district transfer requests unless overridden by the Superintendent.

1. Parents or legal guardians requesting an intra-district transfer for their child must obtain an application from the Superintendent of Schools and return it no later than June 1 of the prior school year for which the transfer is requested. No requests will be considered after the June 1st deadline, and parents will be notified of the Superintendent's decision by July 31st.
2. Intra-district transfer requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis (*i.e. not first-come, first served*).
3. No intra-district transfer requests will be considered after the start of the school year, with the following exception: If a student starts the school year in one attendance area and moves to another attendance area mid-year, the student is entitled to remain in the original attendance area for the remainder of the school year without approval from the Superintendent.
4. Intra-district transfer requests will only be considered when the receiving school has class sizes below the minimum range of class size guidelines established by the Westwood School Committee.
5. If a particular receiving school is requested by the parents or guardians, the Superintendent will consider the request. However, final placement will be determined by the Superintendent after considering the total needs of the receiving school and the student, and the ability of the receiving school to meet the student's needs.
6. Intra-district transfers expire at the end of the school year, and families must reapply annually. A student may be required to revert back to his/her home school at any time after his/her intra-district transfer is approved.
7. Siblings of students not attending their home school via an intra-district transfer must also complete an application, and are not guaranteed a transfer and/or the same placement.
8. Students not attending their home school via an intra-district transfer are not entitled to school bus transportation. The parent or legal guardian accepts responsibility for providing transportation to and from school. If space is available on an existing route, a transfer student may be allowed to ride the bus; however, no special bus routing will be established.

9. The Superintendent's decision to approve or deny an intra-district request is final, and is not subject to appeal.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL CHOICE

It is the policy of this school district **not** to admit non-resident students under the terms and conditions of the Interdistrict School Choice Law. This decision must be reaffirmed annually prior to June 1st by a vote of the School Committee following a public hearing. In the event the School Committee votes to participate, the following local conditions would apply:

1. That by May 1 of every school year, the administration will determine the number of spaces in each school available to choice students.
2. That by June 1 of every school year, a public hearing will be held to review participation in the school choice program.
3. That the selection of non-resident students for admission when the number of requests exceeds the number of available spaces be in the form of a random drawing. There will be two drawings for this purpose. The first will take place during the last week of the current school year but no later than July 1st. The second will be conducted during the week immediately preceding the opening of the next school year and will be based on the possibility of unexpected additional openings.
4. Any student who is accepted for admission under the provisions of this policy is entitled to remain in the district until graduation from high school except if there is a lack of funding of the program.
5. The School Committee affirms its position that it shall not discriminate in the admission of any child on the basis of race*, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, active military/veteran status, marital status, familial status, pregnancy, or pregnancy-related condition, homelessness, ancestry, ethnic background, national origin, or any other category protected by state or federal law, athletic performance, academic performance, or proficiency in the English language.

*race to include traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:6; 71:6A; 76:6; 76:12; 76:12B
603 CMR 26.00
Acts of 2022, Chapter 117 -
<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2022/Chapter117>

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential for success in school. The Committee recognizes that parents/guardians of children attending our schools have special rights as well as responsibilities, one of which is to ensure that their children attend school regularly, in accordance with state law.

Therefore, students may be excused temporarily from school attendance for the following reasons: illness or quarantine; bereavement or serious illness in family; weather so inclement as to endanger the health of the child; and observance of major religious holidays.

A student may also be excused for other exceptional reasons with approval of the Principal or designee.

Accordingly, parents/guardians will provide a written explanation for the absence or tardiness of their child. This will be required in advance for types of absences where advance notice is possible.

In instances of chronic or irregular absence reportedly due to illness, the school administration may request a physician's statement certifying such absences to be justified.

Student Absence Notification Program

Each Principal or designee will notify a student's parent/guardian within 3 days of the student's absence in the event the parent/guardian has not informed the school of the absence.

Each Principal or designee shall make a reasonable effort to meet with any student, and that student's parent/guardian, who has missed five (5) or more unexcused school days (a school day shall be equal to two (2) or more class periods in the same day) in a school year. The meeting shall be to develop action steps to improve student attendance and shall be developed jointly by the Principal or designee, the student, and the student's parent/guardian. The parties may seek input from other relevant school staff and/or officials from relevant public safety, health and human service, housing, and nonprofit agencies.

Dropout Prevention

A student who has not graduated from high school and has been absent from school for ten (10) consecutive days of unexcused absence shall not be considered permanently removed from school unless the Principal has sent notice to the student, and that student's parent/guardian. The notice shall be sent within five (5) days of the tenth consecutive day of absence and shall offer at least 2 dates and times within the next ten (10) days for an exit interview with the Superintendent or designee, the student, and the student's parent/guardian. The notice shall be in both English and the primary language of the home, if

applicable. The notice shall include contact information for scheduling the exit interview and shall indicate the parties shall reach an agreement on the date/time of the interview within the ten (10) day timeframe. The timeframe may be extended at the request of the parent/guardian and no extension shall exceed 14 days.

The Superintendent or designee may proceed with any interview without a parent/guardian present, provided the Superintendent has documented a good faith effort to include the parent/guardian.

The Superintendent or designee shall convene a team of school staff to participate in the exit interview and shall provide information to the student and, if applicable, the student's parent/guardian on the detrimental effects of early withdrawal from school and the alternative education programs and services available to the student.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [76:1](#); 76:1A; 76:1B; [76:16](#); 76:18; 76:19; [76:20](#)

NOTE: [DESE'S minimum requirements for policies and protocols](#) include the following items which are most appropriate for inclusion in student handbooks so that Districts can most effectively meet student and family needs.

- When and how absences will be reported by parents or guardians to the school, by the administrative designee to classroom teachers, and by teachers to the administrative designee for classroom attendance.
- Parent/guardian responsibilities for reporting a child's absence including method of reporting (e.g., phone, email, text), expected time of notification, any required documentation verifying the reason for the absence, and deadline for submitting said documentation.
- Timeline for school notification to parents of an absence in the event the parent or guardian did not report the absence.
- When and who from the school will check-in and follow-up with students and families (e.g., after 1 unexcused absence; after 5 excused absences) and how this will take place.
- Any academic consequences for excessive absenteeism (e.g., loss of credit).
- Interventions and services the school may use to encourage consistent student attendance and reengagement.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

EXCLUSIONS AND EXEMPTIONS FROM SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Denial of Admission

Denial of admission means the withholding of the privilege of enrolling in a school of the District.

The following shall be the grounds for denial of admission to school or diversion to an appropriate alternative program:

Graduation from the twelfth grade of any school or receipt of any document evidencing completion of the equivalent of a secondary curriculum;

Failure to meet the requirements of age for beginning school, as fixed by the School Committee as provided in Massachusetts General Law.

Not being a resident of the District and the District has opted not to participate in the School Choice Law;

Failure to comply with the provisions of the Massachusetts School Entry Immunization Law.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [71:37H](#); [76:12](#); [76:12A](#); [76:12B](#)
603 CMR [26:00](#)

CROSS REF: JEB, Entrance Age

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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

Among these rights and responsibilities are the following:

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

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

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

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

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

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING

As appropriate to the age of students, class or school organizations and school government organizations, such as student councils, may be formed to offer practice in self-government and to serve as channels for the expression of students' ideas and opinions.

The Committee will take into consideration student opinions in establishing policies that directly affect student programs, activities, privileges and other areas of student sensitivity.

Students will be welcomed at Committee meetings and granted privileges of speaking in line with the privileges extended to the general public.

Student Advisory Committee

As required by state law, the Committee will meet at least once every other month while school is in session with its student advisory committee, which is composed of five students elected by the high school student body. The chair of the student advisory committee shall be an ex-officio nonvoting member of the School Committee without the right to attend executive sessions unless such right is expressly granted by the School Committee.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:38M

CROSS REF.: BDF, Advisory Committees to the School Committee

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

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

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

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

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

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

Suspension

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

Notice of Suspension:

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

Emergency Removal

A Principal may remove a student from school temporarily when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the Principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption. The Principal shall immediately notify the Superintendent in writing of the removal including a description of the danger presented by the student.

The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days following the day of the emergency removal, during which time the Principal shall: Make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student's parent/guardian of the emergency removal, the reason for the need for emergency removal, and the other matters required in the notice as referenced in the applicable regulation; Provide written notice to the student and parent/guardian as required above; Provide the student an opportunity for a hearing with the Principal that complies with applicable regulations, and the parent/guardian an opportunity to attend the hearing, before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for hearing is otherwise agreed to by the Principal, student, and parent/guardian; Render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day, which meets the requirements of applicable law and regulation.

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

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

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

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

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

The hearing with the Principal shall be to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequences for the infraction.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The hearing with the Principal shall be to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequences for the infraction.

At a minimum, in addition to the rights afforded a student in a short-term suspension hearing, the student shall have the following rights: In advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the Principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not; The right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's/parent's/guardian's expense; The right to produce witnesses on their behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so; The right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district; The right to request that the hearing be recorded by the Principal, and to receive a copy of the audio recording upon request. If the student or parent/guardian requests an audio recording, the Principal shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made and a copy will be provided to the student and parent/guardian upon request.

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

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

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

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

Superintendent's Hearing

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

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

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

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

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

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

Expulsion

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

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

Academic Progress

Any student who is suspended or expelled shall have the opportunity to earn credits, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of their removal from the classroom or school. The Principal shall inform the student and parent/guardian of this opportunity in writing, in English and in the primary language of the home, when such suspension or expulsion is imposed.

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

The Principal shall develop a school-wide education service plan describing the education services that the school district will make available to students who are expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days. The plan shall include the process for notifying such students and their parents/guardians of the services and arranging such services. Education services shall be based on, and be provided in a manner consistent with, the academic standards and curriculum frameworks established for all students under the law.

The Principal shall notify the parent/guardian and student of the opportunity to receive education services at the time the student is expelled or placed on long-term suspension. Notice shall be provided in English and in the primary language spoken in the student's home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate. The notice shall include a list of the specific education services that are available to the student and contact information for a school district staff member who can provide more detailed information.

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

Reporting

The school district shall collect and annually report data to the DESE regarding in-school suspensions, short- and long-term suspensions, expulsions, emergency removals, access to education services, and such other information as may be required by the DESE.

The Principal of each school shall periodically review discipline data by selected student populations, including but not limited to race and ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, English language learner status, and student with a disability status in accordance with law and regulation.

LEGAL REF: M.G.L. [71:37H](#); [71:37H ½](#); 71:37H ¾; 76:17
603 CMR 53.00
[Chapter 222 An Act Relative to Student Access to Educational Services and Exclusion from School](#)

REFS.: [Supporting Students with Disabilities and Avoiding the Discriminatory Use of Student Discipline under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#) - <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/504-discipline-guidance.pdf>
[Questions and Answers Addressing the Needs of Children with Disabilities and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act's \(IDEA's\) Discipline Provisions.](#) - <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/qa-addressing-the-needs-of-children-with-disabilities-and-idea-discipline-provisions.pdf>

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

STUDENT DRESS CODE

The responsibility for the dress and appearance of the students will rest with individual students and parents/guardians.

They have the right to determine how the student will dress providing that attire is not destructive to school property, complies with requirements for health and safety, and does not cause disorder or disruption. The administration is authorized to take action in instances where individual dress does not meet the stated requirements.

This does not mean that student, faculty, or parent groups may not recommend appropriate dress for school or special occasions. It means that students will not be prevented from attending school or a school function, or otherwise be discriminated against, so long as their dress and appearance meet the requirements set forth above.

LEGAL REF.: Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair Act of 2022
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/2116/text>
M.G.L. 71:83

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

STUDENT CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES

The School Committee and its staff share with students and parents/guardians the responsibility for student safety during transportation to and from school. The authority for enforcing School Committee requirements of student conduct on buses will rest with the Principal.

To ensure the safety of all students who ride in buses, it may occasionally be necessary to revoke the privilege of transportation from a student who abuses this privilege. Parents/guardians of children whose behavior and misconduct on school buses endangers the health, safety, and welfare of other riders will be notified that their children face the loss of transportation privileges in accordance with regulations approved by the School Committee.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

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

Student publications will be encouraged to comply with the rules for responsible journalism. Students shall affix their names to all articles or editorials written by or contributed to by them. The Superintendent will establish guidelines that are in keeping with this policy and provide for review of student publications prior to their distribution, to address matters that are not protected forms of expression.

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

Non-school-Sponsored Publications

Students who edit, publish, and/or wish to distribute non-school-sponsored handwritten, printed, or duplicated matter among their fellow students within the schools must assume responsibility for the content of the publication. Students may be restricted as to the time and place of distribution, or may be prohibited from distribution in accordance with administrative regulations approved by the School Committee.

Distribution of Literature

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

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:82

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

PROHIBITION OF HAZING

No student, employee or school organization under the control of the School Committee shall engage in the activity of hazing a student while on or off school property, or at a school sponsored event regardless of the location. No organization that uses the facilities or grounds under the control of the School Committee shall engage in the activity of hazing any person while on school property.

Any student who observes what appears to them to be the activity of hazing another student or person should report such information to the Principal including the time, date, location, names of identifiable participants and the types of behavior exhibited. Students and employees of the District are obligated by law to report incidents of hazing to the police department.

Any student who is present at a hazing has the obligation to report such an incident. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action by the school against that student and could involve suspension from school for up to three days.

Any student who participates in the hazing of another student or other person may, upon the approval of the Superintendent of Schools, be suspended from school for up to ten (10) school days.

Any student determined by the Principal to be the organizer of a hazing activity may be recommended for expulsion from school but will receive no less disciplinary action than that of a participant.

In all cases relating to hazing, students will receive procedural due process.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. [269:17](#), [18](#), [19](#)

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

HAZING

CH. 269, S.17. HAZING; ORGANIZING OR PARTICIPATING; HAZING DEFINED

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 other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

CH. 269, S.18. FAILURE TO REPORT HAZING

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

CH. 269, S.19. COPY OF SECTIONS 17 TO 19; ISSUANCE TO STUDENTS AND STUDENT GROUPS, TEAMS AND ORGANIZATIONS; REPORT

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 acknowledgement 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 institutions, 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 higher education 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.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

BULLYING PREVENTION

The School Committee is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive educational environment where students can achieve the highest academic standards. No student shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyber-bullying.

"Bullying" is the repeated use by one or more students or school staff members of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

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

"Cyber-bullying" means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the creation of electronic medium in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Bullying and cyber-bullying may occur in and out of school, during and after school hours, at home and in locations outside of the home. When bullying and cyber-bullying are alleged, the full cooperation and assistance of parents/guardians and families are expected.

For the purpose of this policy, whenever the term bullying is used it is to denote either bullying, or cyber bullying.

Bullying is prohibited:

- On school grounds;

- On property immediately adjacent to school grounds;
- At school-sponsored or school-related activities;
- At 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 school district; or,
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school district;

Bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited 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 act or acts in question:

- create a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringe on the rights of the target at school, and/or
- materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Prevention and Intervention Plan

The Superintendent and/or their designee shall oversee the development of a prevention and intervention plan, in consultation with all district stakeholders, which may include teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians, consistent with the requirements of this policy, as well as state and federal laws. The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be reviewed and updated at least biennially.

The Principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the bullying prevention and implementation plan within his or her school.

Reporting

Students, who believe that they are a target of bullying, observe an act of bullying, or who have reasonable grounds to believe that these behaviors are taking place, are obligated to report incidents to a member of the school staff. The target shall, however, not be subject to discipline for failing to report bullying.

Each school shall have a means for anonymous reporting by students of incidents of bullying. No formal disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

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

Parents or guardians, or members of the community, are encouraged to report an incident of bullying as soon as possible.

A member of a school staff shall immediately report any instance of bullying the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the school principal or their designee.

Investigation Procedures

The Principal or their designee, upon receipt of a viable report, shall promptly contact the parents or guardians of a student who has been the alleged target or alleged perpetrator of bullying. The actions being taken to prevent further acts of bullying shall be discussed.

The school Principal or a designee shall promptly investigate the report of bullying, using a Bullying/Cyber bullying Report Form which may include interviewing the alleged target, alleged perpetrator, staff members, students and/or witnesses.

Support staff shall assess an alleged target's needs for protection and create and implement a safety plan that shall restore a sense of safety for that student.

Confidentiality shall be used to protect a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or is witness to or has reliable information about an act of bullying.

If the school Principal or a designee determines that bullying has occurred they shall take appropriate disciplinary action and if it is believed that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator, the school's resource officer and the Superintendent to determine if criminal charges are warranted. If it is determined that criminal charges are warranted, the local law enforcement agency shall be notified.

The investigation shall be completed within fourteen school days from the date of the report. The parents or guardians shall be contacted upon completion of the investigation and informed of the results, including whether the allegations were found to be factual, whether a violation of this policy was found, and whether disciplinary action has or shall be taken. At a minimum the Principal or their designee shall contact the parents or guardians as to the status of the investigation on a weekly basis.

Disciplinary actions for students who have committed an act of bullying or retaliation shall be in accordance with district disciplinary policies.

Each school shall document any incident of bullying that is reported per this policy and a file shall be maintained by the Principal or designee. A monthly report shall be provided to the Superintendent.

Confidentiality shall be maintained to the extent consistent with the school's obligations under law.

Retaliation

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

Target Assistance

The school district shall provide counseling or referral to appropriate services, including guidance, academic intervention, and protection to students, both targets and perpetrators, affected by bullying, as necessary.

Training and Assessment

Annual training shall be provided for school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students in preventing, identifying, responding to, and reporting incidents of bullying.

Age-appropriate, evidence-based instruction on bullying prevention shall be incorporated into the curriculum for all K to 12 students.

Publication and Notice

Annual written notice of the relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to students and their parents or guardians, in age-appropriate terms.

Annual written notice of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to all school staff. The faculty and staff at each school shall be trained annually on the bullying prevention and intervention plan applicable to the school.

Relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff shall be included in the school employee handbook.

The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be posted on the school district website.

LEGAL REFS.: Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended
Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO Commission
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
603 CMR [26:00](#)
M.G.L. [71:37O](#); [265:43](#), [43A](#); [268:13B](#); [269:14A](#)

REFERENCES: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

CROSS REFS.: AC, Nondiscrimination
[ACAB](#), Sexual Harassment JIC, Student Discipline
[JICFA](#), Prohibition of Hazing

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND DRUG USE BY STUDENTS PROHIBITED

A student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use or consume, possess, buy or sell, or give away any beverage containing alcohol; any tobacco product, including vapor/E-cigarettes; marijuana; steroids; or any controlled substance. The School Committee prohibits the use or consumption by students of alcohol, tobacco products, or drugs on school property, at any school function, or at any school sponsored event.

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

Verbal Screening

- The school district shall utilize, in accordance with law, a verbal screening tool approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to screen students for substance abuse disorders. The tool shall be administered by trained staff on an annual basis at grades 7 and 9.
- Parents/guardians shall be notified prior to the opening of school each year. Parents/guardians shall have the right to opt out of the screening by written notice prior to or during the screening.
- All statements made by a student during a screening are confidential and shall not be disclosed except in the event of immediate medical emergency or in accordance with law. De-identified results shall be reported to the Department of Public Health within 90 days of the completion of the screening process.

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

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L.71:2A; 71:96; 71:97; 272:40A

CROSS REFS.: ADC, Tobacco Products on School Premises Prohibited
GBEC, Drug Free Workplace Policy
GBED, Tobacco use on School Property by Staff Members Prohibited
IHAMB, Teaching About Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

PROHIBITION AGAINST ALCOHOL OR DRUGS OR VAPING AT SCHOOL - SPONSORED EVENTS

The Westwood School Committee specifically prohibits the use and /or possession by students of alcohol, any illegal drug, vaping or possession of drug or vaping paraphernalia at any school-sponsored event. This policy applies whether the event is held on or off school property and includes transportation to and from such an event in any form of conveyance that is paid for, in whole or in part, by the school department or any school-sponsored organization.

Further, in the interest of establishing positive role models, the Westwood School Committee prohibits the use and or possession by adults of alcohol or any illegal drug while attending school-sponsored events at which students of the Westwood Schools are present.

The Westwood Schools do not guarantee that all persons attending school-sponsored events will act in conformance with this policy, or any other policy standard set by the School Committee.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [272:40A](#)

CROSS REFS.: [IHAMA](#), Teaching About Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco
[GBEC](#), Drug Free Workplace Policy

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

PREGNANT STUDENTS

The Westwood Public Schools wishes to preserve educational opportunities for those students who may become pregnant and/or take on parenting responsibilities.

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

The Westwood Public Schools 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.

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.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [71:84](#)
 Title IX: 20 U.S.C. § 1681
 34 CFR § 106.40(b)

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

SEARCHES AND INTERROGATIONS

Searches by Staff

The right of inspection of students' school lockers is inherent in the authority granted school committees and administrators. This authority may be exercised as needed in the interest of safeguarding children, their own and school property. A student's person, personal belongings and automobile/bicycle/or other form of transportation are subject to search when a staff member has reasonable suspicion to believe that the student is in possession of anything, the possession of which is a violation.

Nevertheless, exercise of that authority by school officials places unusual demands upon their judgment so as to protect each child's constitutional rights to personal privacy and protection from coercion and to act in the best interest of all students and the schools.

Searches by school officials of students' automobiles or the student will be conducted in a way that protects the students' rights consistent with the responsibility of the school system to provide an atmosphere conducive to the educational process.

Interrogations by Police

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

1. When law enforcement officials find it necessary to question students during the school day or periods of extracurricular activities, the school Principal or his/her designee will be present when possible. An effort will be made to contact the student's parent or guardian so that the responsible individual may be notified of the situation.
2. If custody and/or arrest are involved, the Principal will request that all procedural safeguards, as prescribed by law, be observed by the law enforcement officials.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

The School Committee recognizes that there may be conditions in the school district that are in need of improvement and that students should have some means by which their concerns may be effectively expressed, considered, and dealt with fairly. Such means, if well-conceived and understood in advance, can do much to maintain harmonious relationships among the schools and the students and community. Every attempt will be made to seek a satisfactory solution to any concerns in a friendly and informal manner.

Students and their parents and/or guardians who believe that a student has received unfair treatment may bring forward their grievance through the appropriate channels. Appeals of disciplinary cases will be required to follow the district's policy on student discipline. Any applicable provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws or federal law will be followed by school officials in conducting hearings.

CROSS REF: JIB, Student Involvement in Decision Making
JIC, Student Discipline

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

CO-CURRICULAR AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The School Committee believes that student activities are a vital part of the total educational program and should be used as a means for developing social emotional competencies, and knowledge and skills. Therefore, the schools will provide a broad and balanced program of activities geared to the various ages, interests, and needs of students.

The following will serve as guides in the organization of student activities:

1. The goal for each student will be a balanced program of appropriate academic studies and activities to be determined by the school, the parents/guardians, and the student. This should be a shared responsibility.
2. Guidance will be offered to encourage participation of all students in appropriate activities and to prevent over-emphasis on extracurricular activities at the cost of academic performance.
3. All activities will be supervised; all clubs and groups will have a staff advisor.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:47
 603 CMR 26.00

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Student Organizations

Student organizations in the District shall be encouraged when they meet the criteria of contributing to student learning and growth and should operate within the framework of state statutes, School Committee policies, and administrative procedures.

Each building Principal shall develop general guidelines for the establishment and operation of student organizations within the particular school. Among other provisions, such guidelines shall require the approval of the Principal prior to the formation of any club or organization in the school and the assignment of at least one faculty or designated adult advisor to each approved student organization. Within such guidelines will be provisions for a periodic review of all student organizations.

The formation of any student organization that may engage in activities of a controversial nature shall require approval by the board.

All student organizations shall be required to open membership to all interested and/or eligible students. Disruptive groups, secret societies, and/or gangs shall not receive recognition in any manner under this policy.

All forms of hazing in initiations shall be prohibited in a student organization. No initiation shall be held for a student organization which will bring criticism to the school system or be degrading to the student.

The faculty or designated adult advisor must attend every meeting of the student organization whether conducted on school premises or at another location.

Student Organizations - High Schools

In addition to the above requirements, all clubs or organizations at the high school level will relate to the subject matter covered by the curriculum. The Principal is responsible for determining that the purpose of a student organization is related to the curriculum. The Principal is authorized to deny requests by unauthorized student organizations desiring to meet or form in a particular school, the Principal shall inform the group of the reasons for the denial. The students and/or group may submit a written request to the appropriate District administrator for review of the Principal's decision.

LEGAL REFS.: 603 CMR [26.06](#)

CROSS REF: JICF, Gang Activities/Secret Societies

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

STUDENT SOCIAL EVENTS

All school functions held in the name of the school must be approved by the Principal and supervised by one or more faculty members or approved advisors.

All school functions such as dances, parties, etc., will be held in the school building, unless otherwise approved by the Principal and/or Superintendent.

Nonstudents will not be permitted to attend such functions unless so permitted by the building Principal.

Pupils present will be held liable for proper care of the facilities they use. It is understood that all existing rules of student conduct shall apply to social events.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

STUDENT FUND-RAISING ACTIVITIES

While the School Committee recognizes that fundraising activities have become a part of the school environment at all levels, the Committee wishes to ensure that students are not exploited by the process. The Committee further recognizes that families have different resources; those differences should, as much as possible, not be highlighted by school activities, including fundraising.

The Committee supports student involvement in the sale of tickets to scheduled athletic events, school dramatic and musical performances, and other school events where sales are required. Also, student publications which require the sale of advertising to sustain themselves and serve the student body and/or the community may involve students in such sales.

Charitable fundraising activities, especially those that are part of a community service event or program are encouraged provided such proposals are submitted to and approved by both the building Principal and the Superintendent.

Other fundraising activities that would involve students in the fundraising process shall be submitted to the Superintendent for approval.

For safety reasons and because the School Committee recognizes that community members receive requests for support from many worthy causes, activities such as canning and door-to-door sales are strongly discouraged.

Fundraising activities may not involve competitions among students. Students may not be rewarded with additional recess, snacks, activities or any type of prize for having raised larger amounts of funds or reaching fundraising goals.

No money collections of any kind may be held in the schools without the specific consent of the Superintendent or designee.

CROSS REFS.: KHA, Public Solicitations in the Schools

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

STUDENT ACTIVITY AGENCY ACCOUNTS

Student funds may be raised to finance the activities of authorized student organizations. Student activity funds are considered a part of the total fiscal operation of the District and are subject to policies established by the School Committee and the Office of the Superintendent. The funds shall be managed in accordance with sound business practices and will adhere to the procedures outlined in the Westwood Public Schools Student Activity Policies and Procedure Manual.

In compliance with Massachusetts General Law Chapter [71, Section 47](#), the School Committee:

1. Authorizes the Superintendent to approve the establishment of all club/student organizations based on the procedures outlined in the Westwood Public Schools Student Activity Policies and Procedure Manual.
2. Authorizes the Principals and the Principals' designee to accept money for recognized student activity organizations, which currently exist, or as from time to time may be revised. A Student Activity Agency Account(s) shall only be used for monies raised by approved student club/organizations and expended by those students for their direct benefit.
3. Authorizes the Town Treasurer to establish and maintain a Student Activity Agency Account(s) which is to be audited as part of the Town's annual audit.
 - A. The interest earned and any audited undesignated fund balance in each school's student activity fund shall remain in the account and be recorded as a separate line item by the building principal. These funds shall be used to cover the following expenditures without requiring further approval from the School Committee:
 - a. To cover the cost of periodic outside audits of the accounts;
 - b. To purchase forms and supplies related to maintaining the Student Activity Agency Account by the school;
 - c. To pay for any banking fees associated with the accounts, or the acceptance of credit cards, or other online payment option that may become available; and
 - d. To cover the cost of a student(s) attending a class or school function when students are charged for such but the district financial assistance policy determines the family is unable to cover such expenses.
4. Authorizes Student Activity Checking Accounts for use by the Principals with specific maximum balances established for each school by School Committee policy.
 - A. Each school principal will be provided with a checking account for expenditure purposes.
 - B. The maximum balance a school is allowed to have in its checking account at any time is as follows:
 - a. Elementary School - \$15,000

- b. Middle School - \$40,000
- c. High School - \$50,000

Deposits into the checking account shall be made under the direction of the Town Treasurer.

Principals may delegate to Assistant Principals, Dean, or other designee the authorization to sign withdrawal forms from various clubs and activities or other forms or permissions. However, the Principal may not delegate signature authority on the checking account. The Principal must sign all checks and their corresponding withdrawal authorizations with an original signature. Signature stamps are not permitted.

- 5. Directs Principals to provide the Treasurer with a bond in an amount agreeable to the Treasurer.
- 6. Authorizes the disposition of class funds as follows:

Funds raised by and for a particular class as defined by their high school graduation date, shall remain in a sub-account designated for that class through the last day of school of the class's graduation year.

Any money raised by and for the Senior Class that is unencumbered and/or undesignated after the last day of school, or unspent after September 30 of the following school year, shall be placed in the Westwood Public Schools High School Donation Account for use at Westwood High School.

Such transfer of available balances from outdated graduated class accounts shall occur after: a) documented efforts have been made to contact at least two of the four class officers, and b) written permission from at least one class officer has been received authorizing the transfer, or c) if after failing to receive any type of response from either class officer that a notice is posted in a local newspaper that said transfer will be completed within thirty (30) days.

- 7. Authorizes the disposition of student activity funds as follows:

Any student activity organization inactive for a period of three (3) years or more, and for which there has been no receipts or disbursements recorded on their behalf, shall require the following action:

Written notification by the advisor or student officer/treasurer to the Principal or other authorized administrator that the particular activity will cease to be a viable account. If an advisor or student officer/treasurer is not available, the Superintendent shall authorize such discontinuance.

All assets of the student activity organization shall be determined and stated in writing.

The Superintendent shall determine any disposition of assets of an inactive student activity organization, but in no case shall the disposition benefit specific individuals. The primary goal in disposition should be to benefit the students.

8. Authorizes the Principals to take remedial action whenever a deficit in a Student Activity Agency Account exists. Deficits in Student Activity Agency Accounts are not permitted under this policy and should be avoided. If unforeseen circumstances result in a deficit, funds from either the school's interest income account or general student activity fund may be used to cover the shortfall. If there are insufficient funds in either of these accounts to cover the deficit than the Superintendent may approve the use of budgetary funds to cover the deficit.

LEGAL REFS: MGL 71:47
CROSS REFS: JJA, Student Organizations
 DIE, Audits

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

STUDENT LATE NIGHT OR OVERNIGHT TRAVEL

All out-of-state or extended (overnight) trips and excursions, except those required for student participation in tournament competitions or contests must have prior approval of the School Committee. Initial approval by the School Committee is required before engaging students in fundraising activities. The School Committee will also consider the educational value of the trip in relation to the cost prior to granting initial approval. Overnight trips should offer significant educational benefits to students that clearly justify the time and expense of the trip. Such trips should be appropriate for the grade level.

Final approval will not be granted until all preparations for the trip have been completed including, but not limited to, all logistical details involving transportation, accommodation arrangements and fundraising efforts. The School Committee requires that final approval be sought no less than 30 days prior to the scheduled trip dates.

Teachers and other school staff are prohibited from soliciting for privately run trips through the school district and in the schools. The School Committee will only review for approval school-sanctioned trips. The School Committee will not review or approve trips that are privately organized and run without school sanctioning.

CROSS REFS.: IJOA, Field Trips

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 69:1B; 71:37N

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

STUDENT TRAVEL REGULATIONS

1. Transportation

The use of vans or private automobiles for trips planned to include late night or overnight student travel is prohibited. Late night or overnight trips will use commercial motor coaches.

Trips planned to include late night or overnight student travel will include a pre-trip check of companies, drivers, and vehicles. CORI and/or background checks will be conducted in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws and School Committee Policy.

The Superintendent or designee will ensure that the selected carrier is licensed for passenger transportation by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). The district will not contract with any carrier that has a safety rating of “conditional” or “unsatisfactory”. FMCSA ratings are available at <https://ai.fmcsa.dot.gov/SMS/>.

The contract with the carrier will prohibit the use of subcontractors unless sufficient notice is given to the district that allows verification of the subcontractor’s qualifications.

2. Trip Scheduling

Overnight accommodations should be made in advance with student safety and security in mind. Whenever possible, trip schedulers should avoid planning student travel between the hours of midnight and 6:00 a.m., due to the increased risk of vehicular accidents during this time period.

Whenever possible, overnight trips should be scheduled on weekends or during school vacations to minimize lost classroom time. Non-academic field trips are considered “optional school programs” and do not count toward meeting structured learning time requirements. (Refer to the Massachusetts Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education publication Student Learning Time Regulations Guide)

Trip itineraries must leave enough time for drivers to rest in conformity with federal hour-of-service requirements and common sense.

Trip scheduling should take into account the likelihood of delays due to weather, traffic, stragglers, and other unanticipated factors.

If substantially all members of a class are participating in a trip, the school should provide appropriate substitute activities for any students not participating.

3. Fundraising

The amount of time to be devoted to fundraising should be reasonable and commensurate with students’ obligations for homework, after-school activities, and jobs.

Group fundraising activities are preferred. Students should not be assigned individual fundraising targets.

If students are charged individual fees for participation, every effort should be made to provide scholarships where needed.

Additional Resources

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)

www.fmcsa.dot.gov

United Motorcoach Association – Student Motorcoach Travel Safety Guide (includes “Motorcoach Safety Checklist)

www.uma.org/consumer/student-transportation/

Department of Defense’s approved list of motor carriers

www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/BusAgreementPOCs.pdf

CROSS REFS.: IJOA, Field Trips
ADDA Background Checks

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 69:1B; 71:37N; 71:38R
603 CMR 27.00

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

INTERNATIONAL/OUT-OF-COUNTRY FIELD TRIPS

The Westwood School Committee believes in the educational value of occasional field trip experiences for students. These experiences enrich a student's understanding of the course of study and the world. Specifically, international field trips expose students to different cultures and allow them to develop as global citizens.

A. Trip Approval Process

1. Teachers who sponsor international field trips must choose travel vendors that have been pre-approved by Central Administration and also obtain School Committee approval, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, six (6) months prior to the trip. Only those international trips approved by the School Committee shall be construed as officially school-sponsored.
2. International trips must have at minimum 2 teachers who will serve as chaperones. In addition, on all such trips there must be at least a chaperone-student ratio of 1 to 10.
3. Trips must offer significant educational benefits to students that clearly justify the time and expense of the trip. Such trips must be appropriate for the grade level and take into account safety considerations
4. Teachers and other school staff are prohibited from soliciting privately run trips through the school system. The trip approval process only applies to school-sanctioned trips. The School Committee will not approve trips that are privately organized and run without school sanctioning. [1](#)
5. Policies and procedures for trip approval should take into account all logistical details involving transportation, accommodations, fundraising required of students, and the educational value of the trip in relation to its costs.
6. The School Committee and/or the Superintendent reserves the right to cancel or recall an international trip at any time. The parent/guardian will sign to acknowledge and affirm that he/she may lose any and/or all of the funds expended for the trip
7. Pursuant to state law, District employees organizing international travel must make written disclosures to the Superintendent if they have a financial interest in the trip. The disclosure must describe any arrangements, including but not limited to, free or discounted travel, lodging, or meal expenses. The Superintendent must make a written determination in advance that the interest is "not so substantial to be deemed likely to affect the integrity of the services that the school district may expect from the employee". The forms for such disclosure should be requested from the Superintendent's office.

B. International Trip Scheduling

1. International accommodations must be made in advance with student safety and security in mind. The trip schedulers are not to plan student travel between the hours of midnight and 6:00 a.m. due to the increased risk of vehicular accidents during this time period.
2. International trips should be scheduled on weekends or during school vacations to minimize lost classroom time. No more than three school days may be missed as it relates to an overnight trip. Non- academic field trips are considered "optional school programs" and do not count toward meeting structured learning time requirements under 603 CMR [27.00](#).
3. International trip scheduling is to take into account the likelihood of delays due to weather, traffic, stragglers and other unanticipated factors.

C. Fundraising

1. The approval process must be completed prior to engaging students in any fundraising activities or other preparations for the trip.
2. The amount of time to be devoted to fundraising must be reasonable and commensurate with students' obligations for homework, after-school activities and jobs.
3. Group fundraising activities are preferred. Students must not be assigned individual fundraising targets.

D. Student Supervision

1. Students must be accompanied by a sufficient number of teacher chaperones, (as outlined in subsection A.2) taking into account the trip scheduling and logistics, but all trips must have at least 2 teacher chaperones
2. All chaperones, including parents and volunteers, must have a CORI check in accordance with M.G.L. [71 S.38R](#).
3. All chaperones must solicit and receive documentation of completed background checks for any tour guides provided on the international trip.
4. A teacher chaperone must always be present whenever students are on the bus.
5. Teacher chaperones and all adults are expected to observe all school rules and policies while on the trip.
6. All participating students must submit a signed parent/guardian permission form. Such form must include appropriate authorization for emergency medical care and administration of medication.

E. International Trip Preparation and Expectations/Rules

1. Teacher Chaperones must meet with all students participating in the trip and conduct at least one parent/guardian meeting to review the purpose of the trip, itinerary, travel procedures, security provisions, rules of conduct, expectations and other relevant information.
2. All school rules and disciplinary consequences in the District's policies and student handbook are in effect for all students and teacher chaperones on the trip. Parent/guardian and students will sign a document indicating that they agree to abide by all rules for the trip before they will be able to participate.
3. Drugs and/or alcohol are prohibited on the trip for both students and chaperones. Drug and alcohol use is prohibited even if otherwise permitted in the location.
4. Parent/guardian are notified that they are responsible for any medical expenses incurred on the trip or any expenses associated with the violation of a school rule or host country law while on the trip.

F. Transportation

1. International trips planned to include late night student travel must involve pre-trip checks of companies, drivers and vehicles.
2. In general, late night student travel should generally be avoided and such trips must use commercial motor coaches. Overnight bus, van or car travel is not permitted except in those instances when the students are returning to local accommodations from evening events or traveling to and from transportation terminals, (i.e. traveling between the hours of midnight and 6:00 a.m.)
3. The contract with the carrier will prohibit the use of a subcontractor unless sufficient notice is given to the District to allow verification of the subcontractor's qualifications.

CROSS REFS. [IJOA](#) Field Trips;
 [JJH](#) Student Overnight Travel;
 JJH-R Student Travel Regulations.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS

The School Committee believes that students will benefit from the experiences in self-discipline and team effort made possible through participation in inter-school sports.

District participation in interscholastic athletics will be subject to approval by the School Committee and will be in accordance with regulations and recommendations of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association.

At the high school level, interscholastic athletic competition will include a variety of sports. Students will be allowed to participate in individual sports on the basis of their abilities and desire. Additionally, intramural athletic activities may be offered as an outgrowth of class instruction in physical education.

The School Committee is aware that team participation in athletic contests by members of the student body requires that "away games" be scheduled. It also recognizes that there is a need to regulate certain aspects of student participation in such contests. Therefore, the Superintendent will establish regulations to ensure the safety and well being of students and staff members who participate in these activities.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [71:47](#); [71:54A](#)
 603 CMR [26.06](#)

CROSS REFS.: AC, Nondiscrimination (and subcodes)

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT IN EXTRACURRICULAR ATHLETICS

Purpose

To provide information and standardized procedures for Westwood Public Schools in the prevention, training, management and return to activities decisions regarding students who incur head injuries while involved in extracurricular athletic activities, including but not limited to interscholastic sports, in order to protect their safety, in compliance with Commonwealth regulations (MA DPH 105 CMR 201.000; "Head Injuries and Concussions in Extracurricular Activities").

Scope

Pursuant to 105 CMR 201.000, this policy encompasses members of the Westwood High School and Thurston Middle School community including students who participate in any extracurricular athletic activity. Review and revision of this policy is to be completed every two years.

Definitions

All terms used in this policy are defined by the Department of Public Health, 105 CMR 201.005.

Responsibilities

Students who participate in an extracurricular athletic activity, along with: their parents/guardians, teachers, guidance counselors, school administrative staff, school nurses, athletic director, certified athletic trainer and coaches all have specific responsibilities as delineated in this policy.

Student-Athletes: Must provide the school with documentation of the student's medical history, including previous head injury(ies) and previous concussion(s). Specifically, students must complete and/or sign a WHS/TMS Medical Consent Form via online registration. All students must complete the DPH Pre Participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting Form, prior to the start of each sports season via online registration. All student athletes must also provide annual documentation of a physical exam prior to his/her participation in extracurricular activities, and student athletes must complete and provide documentation of annual DPH-approved training in concussion awareness as specified in 105 CMR 201.009 (See "Training", below)

Parents/Guardians: Provide the school with documentation of their child's medical history, including previous head injury(ies) and previous concussion(s). Specifically, parents must complete and/or sign a WHS/TMS Medical Consent Form and complete and sign the DPH Pre Participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting Form, prior to the start of each sports season. All parents/guardians must complete and provide documentation of annual training in concussion awareness as specified in 105 CMR 201.009 (See "Training", below). All this is done via online registration.

If a student sustains a head injury or concussion during the season but not while participating in an extracurricular athletic activity, the parents shall complete the Report of Head Injury Form or notify the school nurse of the injury.

Teachers: Cooperate with the implementation of accommodations and/or modifications with respect to academics, course requirements, homework, testing, scheduling and other aspects of school activities consistent with a graduated reentry plan for a return to full academic and extracurricular activities after a student has suffered a head injury or concussion.

Guidance Counselors: Cooperate with the implementation of accommodations or modifications with respect to academics, course requirements, homework, testing, scheduling and other aspects of school activities consistent with a graduated reentry plan for a return to full academic and extracurricular activities after a student has suffered a head injury or concussion.

School Administrative Staff: The principal or their designee maintains records of student's/parent's completion of the annual concussion awareness form via an online registration process. The principal or designee will provide students and parents access to information and necessary forms to all parents and athletes via the student handbook and the school website.

The High School Nurse:

In collaboration with the athletic trainer and the athletic director, will participate in the development and biannual review of the policy and procedures.

Complete annual educational training as required by 105 CMR 201.008.

Review Pre Participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting Form for all students so as to identify those athletes who are at greater risk for repeated head injuries.

Review of Report of Head Injury During Sports Season forms as they are submitted by the athletic trainer. Maintain records of physical examination forms submitted by all students and student-athletes.

In collaboration with the student, parent(s)/guardian(s), teachers, and coach, the nurse will develop and implement post-concussion graduated reentry plans.

Maintain and submit annual statistics required by the DPH.

Contact parent/guardian(s) of concussed student-athletes to discuss any accommodations and/or modifications with respect to academics, course requirements, homework, testing, scheduling and other aspects of school activities consistent with a graduated reentry plan for a return to full academic and extracurricular activities after a student has suffered a head injury or concussion.

Coordinate with guidance counselors and teachers to implement any accommodations and/or modifications with respect to academics, course requirements, homework, testing, scheduling and other aspects of school activities consistent with a graduated reentry plan for a return to full academic and extracurricular activities after a student has suffered a head injury or concussion.

Monitor recuperating students with head injuries during the school day.

Collaborate with the athletic trainer regarding all matters of documented head injuries and concussions including: injury incidence, nature, duration of symptoms, physician referral, parental contact, academic accommodations and/or modifications, return to full academics, return to play, and documentation.

The Middle School Nurse:

In collaboration with the athletic trainer and the athletic director, will participate in the development and biannual review of the policy and procedures.

Complete annual educational training as required by 105 CMR 201.008.

Maintain records of physical examination forms submitted by all students and student-athletes.

Review Pre Participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting Form for all students so as to identify those athletes who are at greater risk for repeated head injuries.

In collaboration with the student, parent(s)/guardian(s), teachers, and coach, the nurse will develop and implement post-concussion graduated reentry plans.

Maintain and submit annual statistics required by the DPH.

Coordinate with guidance counselors and teachers to implement any accommodations and/or modifications with respect to academics, course requirements, homework, testing, scheduling and other aspects of school activities consistent with a graduated reentry plan for a return to full academic and extracurricular activities after a student has suffered a head injury or concussion.

Contact parent/guardians(s) of concussed student-athletes to discuss any accommodations and/or modifications with respect to academics, course requirements, homework, testing, scheduling and other aspects of school activities consistent with a graduated reentry plan for a return to full academic and extracurricular activities after a student has suffered a head injury or concussion.

Communicate with TMS coaches regarding concussed athletes status along a graduated reentry and return to play plan as advised by the athletes' physicians, including final clearance of athlete in order to return to play.

The Athletic Director:

Responsible for the implementation of this policy and its' protocols per designation by the superintendent, including the development and biannual review of the policy and procedures.

Complete annual educational training as required by 105 CMR 201.008.

Ensure that the training requirements for staff, parents/guardians, volunteers, coaches and student-athletes are met and recorded, and that records are maintained in accordance with 105 CMR 201.015.

Ensure that all athletes participating in extracurricular activities have completed and submitted a current physical examination form and completed the online registration.

In collaboration with the school nurse and athletic trainer, ensure that parents and coaches complete Report of Head Injury Forms when necessary.

Work with coaches to ensure that they are teaching techniques aimed at minimizing sports-related head injury; discourage and prohibit student-athletes from engaging in any unreasonably dangerous athletic technique that endangers the health or safety of a student.

Develop and implement a procedure to reach out to parents who do not return completed forms, including situations wherein the student completes annual training but the parent has not.

Inform coaches of the penalties for failure to comply with provisions of the school's concussion policy, including teaching form, technique, skills, and use of protective equipment to minimize sports-related head injury (including using sports equipment - such as a helmet - as a weapon). Penalties include but are not limited to personnel sanctions and/or the forfeiture of games.

Collaborate with coaches, the school nurse, the athletic trainer, the student, and the parent(s)/guardian(s), and physician (or neuropsychologist) in the consideration of a student's head injury or concussion as a factor to determine whether to allow the student to participate in an extracurricular athletic activity or whether to allow such participation under specific conditions or modifications.

Ensure that annual statistics are reported to the Department of Public Health.

The High School Certified Athletic Trainer:

In collaboration with the school nurse and the athletic director, will participate in the development and biannual review of the policy and procedures.

Initial evaluation and documentation of any on-site head-injuries and potential concussions sustained by a WHS or competing student-athlete.

Removal from play of any high school student-athlete, who during practice or competition, suffers a head injury or suspected concussion or exhibits signs and symptoms of a concussion.

Review Pre Participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting Form for all students so as to identify those athletes who are at greater risk for repeated head injuries.

Identify athletes with head injuries or suspected concussions that occur in practice and play and remove them from play.

Administration of all Sway and ImPACT testing at WHS, including preseason baseline testing, initial and subsequent post-injury testing and post-exertional testing.

Complete annual educational training as required by 105 CMR 201.008.

Collaborate with the High School Nurse regarding all matters of documented head injuries and concussions including: injury incidence, history, nature, duration of symptoms, Sway testing, ImPACT testing, physician referral, parental contact, academic accommodations and/or modifications, return to full academics, return to play, documentation.

Collaborate with High School Coaches regarding student-athletes with head injuries or suspected concussions, maintain discussion regarding student-athletes' progress with respect to his/her status in the WHS Concussion Management (Return to Play) protocol, up to and including final authorization of full return to play.

All Coaches:

Complete annual educational training as required by 105 CMR 201.008 (See "Training", below).

Review pre participation Forms so as to identify those athletes who are at greater risk for repeated head injuries.

Teach techniques aimed at minimizing sports-related head injury; discourage and prohibit student-athletes from engaging in any unreasonably dangerous athletic technique that endangers the health or safety of a student; identifying student-athletes with head injuries or suspected concussions that occur in play or practice and removing them from play.

Removal from play of any student-athlete, who during practice or competition, suffers a head injury or suspected concussion or exhibits signs and symptoms of a concussion; coaches complete Report of Head Injury Form for each of these cases.

Communicate promptly with parents of students removed from practice or competition due to a head injury or suspected concussion.

WHS Coaches:

Communicate with the High School Athletic Trainer regarding head injuries and suspected concussions. The WHS nurse should be notified by the start of the next school day.

TMS Coaches:

Communicate promptly with the parent(s) of any student athlete removed from play due to a suspected concussion;

Communicate with the TMS principal's/nurse's office regarding the removal of play of MS student-athletes with suspected concussions, maintain discussion regarding student-athletes' progress with respect to his/her status, up to and including full return to play.

Exclusion from Play

1. Any student, who during a practice or competition, sustains a head injury or suspected concussion, or exhibits signs and symptoms of a concussion, or loses consciousness, even briefly, shall be removed from the practice or competition immediately and may not return to the practice or competition that day.
2. The student shall not return to practice or competition unless and until the student provides medical clearance and authorization.
3. The coach shall communicate the nature of the injury directly to the parent as soon as possible. The coach also must provide this information to the parent in writing, whether paper or electronic format, by the end of the next business day.
4. The coach shall communicate, by the end of the next business day, with the Athletic Director and school nurse that the student has been removed from practice or competition for a head injury, suspected concussion, signs and symptoms of a concussion, or loss of consciousness.
 - a. Each student who is removed from practice or competition and subsequently diagnosed with a concussion shall have a written graduated reentry plan for return to full academic and extracurricular athletic activities.
 - i. The plan shall be developed collaboratively by the student's teachers, the student's guidance counselor, school nurse, the athletic trainer, neuropsychologist if available or involved, parent, in consultation with the student's health care provider.
 - ii. The plan shall include instructions for students, parents and school personnel, addressing but not be limited to:
 1. Physical and cognitive rest as appropriate;
 2. Graduated return to extracurricular athletic activities and classroom studies as appropriate, including accommodations and/or modifications as needed;
 3. Estimated time intervals for resumption of activities;
 4. Frequency of assessments, as appropriate until full return to classroom activities and extracurricular athletic activities are authorized; and
 5. A plan for communication and coordination between and among school personnel and between the school, the parent, and the student's health care provider.
 - iii. The student must be completely symptom free and medically cleared in order to begin graduated reentry to extracurricular athletic activities.

Medical Clearance and Authorization to Return to Play

Each student who is removed from practice or competition for a head injury or suspected concussion shall obtain and present to the Athletic Director a Department Post Sports-Related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization Form (Medical Clearance and Authorization Form) prior to resuming the extracurricular athletic activity. This form must be completed by a physician or another authorized individual. The ultimate return to play decision is a medical decision that may involve a multidisciplinary approach, including consultation with parents, the school nurse and teachers as appropriate.

1. Only the following individuals may authorize a student to return to play:
 - a. Physician;
 - b. The athletic trainer in consultation with a licensed physician;
 - c. A nurse practitioner in consultation with a licensed physician; or
 - d. A neuropsychologist in coordination with the physician managing the student's recovery.

Use of Balance and Neurocognitive Testing

Sway: The Sway Medical platform is an all-in-one accessible mobile solution that collects rapid objective data for balance testing, cognitive testing and symptom tracking. Sway utilizes smartphone technology where both baseline and follow-up testing can be administered in the field.

ImPACT: ImPACT (Immediate Post-Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing) is a scientifically validated computerized concussion evaluation system that can help to objectively evaluate the concussed athlete's post- injury condition and track recovery for safe return to play.

Participants in all contact/collision sports are administered baseline Sway tests. These include but are not limited to:

- Football
- Boys Soccer
- Girls Soccer
- Volleyball
- Field Hockey
- Boys Ice Hockey
- Girls Ice Hockey
- Boys Basketball
- Girls Basketball
- Boys Lacrosse
- Girls Lacrosse
- Baseball
- Softball

Baseline tests are valid for 2 years. Follow-up Sway testing can be administered on the field immediately post- injury or when appropriate based on the Athletic Trainer's initial evaluation of the student athlete. ImPACT testing will be utilized in cases of definitive, diagnosed concussions to provide more data for the Athletes' safe return to play.

Protocols

Pre-Season Protocols

Submission of WHS/TMS Medical Consent Forms via online registration
Submission of current physical examination form
Submission of Concussion Awareness Forms via online registration
Sway Baseline testing for collision/contact sports (WHS only)
Submission of pre-season concussion screening form via online registration

Concussion Management (Return to Play) Protocol

Training

Annual Concussion Awareness Training: The DPH has approved two online courses to provide annual pre- season concussion awareness training: The Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) *Heads Up Concussion* training or the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) *Concussion in Sport: What You Need To Know* training.

The following staff will complete one of the training sessions annually:

- Coaches
- Volunteer coaches
- School nurses
- Athletic Director
- Parents of students participating in extracurricular activities
- Students participating in extracurricular activities

www.cdc.gov/concussion
www.nfhslearn.com/electiveDetail.aspx?courseID=15000

Documentation/Appendices

WHS Medical Consent (Pre-Participation) Form

Annual Concussion Awareness Training Form - Students and Parents Current Physical Examination Form

Annual Concussion Awareness Training Form - Coaches

Initial Injury Evaluation / Standardized Assessment of Concussion (SAC) Form

Report of head injury form

Pertinent Concussion Information Document, shared by School Nurse and ATC (Example) DPH Post

Sports-Related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization Form

105 CMR 201.000 Head injuries and Concussions in Extracurricular Athletic Activities

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

STUDENT CONDUCT

The Massachusetts General Laws require the School Committee to adopt written policies, rules and regulations not inconsistent with law, which may relate to study, discipline, conduct, safety and welfare of all students, or any classification thereof, enrolled in the public schools of the District.

The implementation of the general rules of conduct is the responsibility of the Principal and the professional staff of the building. In order to do this, each school staff in the District shall develop specific rules not inconsistent with the law nor in conflict with School Committee policy. These building rules shall be an extension of the District policies by being more specific as they relate to the individual schools.

The purpose of disciplinary action is to restore acceptable behavior. When disciplinary action is necessary, it shall be administered with fairness and shall relate to the individual needs and the individual circumstances.

Students violating any of the policies on student conduct and control will be subject to disciplinary action. The degree, frequency, and circumstances surrounding each incident shall determine the method used in enforcing these policies. Most of the situations which require disciplinary action can be resolved within the confines of the classroom or as they occur by reasonable but firm reprimand, and/or by teacher conferences with the student and/or parents or guardians.

If a situation should arise in which there is no applicable written policy, the staff member shall be expected to exercise reasonable and professional judgment.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37H; 71:37H ½; 71:37H ¾; 71:37L; 76:16; 76:17
603 CMR 53.00

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OF STUDENTS

Maintaining an orderly, safe environment conducive to learning is an expectation of all staff members of the school district. Further, students of the district are protected by law from the unreasonable use of physical restraint. Such restraint shall be used only in emergency situations of last resort after other lawful and less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate, and with extreme caution.

When an emergency situation arises, and physical restraint is the only option deemed appropriate to prevent a student from injuring themselves, another student or school community member, a teacher or employee or agent of the school district may use such reasonable force needed to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

The definitions of forms of restraint shall be as defined in 603CMR 46.02.

The use of mechanical restraint, medical restraint, and seclusion is prohibited.

The power of the School Committee or of any teacher or other employee or agent of the Committee to maintain discipline on school property shall not include the right to inflict corporal punishment upon any student.

Physical restraint, including prone restraint where permitted under 603 CMR 46.03, shall be considered an emergency procedure of last resort and shall be prohibited except when a student's behavior poses a threat of assault, or imminent, serious, physical harm to themselves and/or others and the student is not responsive to verbal directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions are deemed inappropriate.

The Superintendent will develop procedures identifying:

- Appropriate responses to student behavior that may require immediate intervention;
- Methods of preventing student violence, self-injurious behavior, and suicide including crisis planning and de-escalation of potentially dangerous behaviors among groups of students or individuals;
- Descriptions and explanations of alternatives to physical restraint as well as the school's method of physical restraint for use in emergency situations;
- Descriptions of the school's training and procedures to comply with reporting requirements; including, but not limited to making reasonable efforts to orally notify a parent/guardian of the use of restraint within 24 hours of its imposition;
- Procedures for receiving and investigating complaints;
- Methods for engaging parents/guardians in discussions about restraint prevention and use of restraint solely as an emergency procedure;
- A statement prohibiting: medication restraint, mechanical restraint, prone restraint unless permitted by 603 CMR 46.03(1)(b), seclusion, and the use of physical restraint in a manner inconsistent with 603 CMR 46.00,
- A process for obtaining Principal approval for a time out exceeding 30 minutes.

Each building Principal will identify staff members to serve as a school-wide resource to assist in ensuring proper administration of physical restraint. These staff members will participate in an in-depth training program in the use of physical restraint.

In addition, each staff member will be trained regarding the school's physical restraint policy and accompanying procedures. The Principal will arrange training to occur in the first month of each school year, or for staff hired after the beginning of the school year, within a month of their employment.

Physical restraint is prohibited as a means of punishment, or as a response to destruction of property, disruption of school order, a student's refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive, or verbal threats that do not constitute a threat of imminent, serious physical harm to the student or others.

Physical restraint is prohibited when it is medically contraindicated for reasons including, but not limited to, asthma, seizures, a cardiac condition, obesity, bronchitis, communication-related disabilities, or risk of vomiting;

The use of "time out" procedures during which a staff member remains accessible to the student shall not be considered "seclusion restraint".

This policy and its accompanying procedures shall be reviewed and disseminated to staff annually and made available to parents/guardians of enrolled students. The Superintendent shall provide a copy of the Physical Restraint regulations to each Principal, who shall sign a form acknowledging receipt thereof.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:37G; 603 CMR 46.00

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

STUDENT WELFARE

Supervision of Students

School personnel assigned supervision are expected to act as prudent adults in providing for the safety of the students in their charge.

In keeping with this expected prudence, no teacher or other staff member will leave his/her assigned group unsupervised except when an arrangement has been made to take care of an emergency.

During school hours or while engaging in school-sponsored activities, students will be released only into the custody of parents or other persons authorized in writing by a parent or guardian, with the exception of high school students who have signed permission to leave campus during school.

Reporting to Authorities - Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

Any school official or employee shall report any suspected child abuse or neglect as required by M.G.L. Ch. [119, S 51A](#).

In accordance with the law, the District shall establish the necessary regulations and procedures to comply with the intent of the Act consistent with the District's responsibility to the students, parents, District personnel, and the community.

Student Safety

Instruction in courses in industrial arts, science, homemaking, art, physical education, health, and safety will include and emphasize accident prevention.

Safety instruction will precede the use of materials and equipment by students in applicable units of work, and instructors will teach and enforce all safety rules set up for the particular courses. These include the wearing of protective eye devices in appropriate activities.

Safety on the Playground and Playing Field

The District shall provide safe play areas. Precautionary measures, which the District requires, shall include:

- A periodic inspection of the school's playground and playing fields by the Principal of the school and others as may be deemed appropriate;
- Instruction of students in the proper use of equipment;
- Supervision of both organized and unorganized activity.

Fire Drills and Reporting

The District shall cooperate with appropriate fire departments in the conduct of fire drills. The Principal of any public or private school, containing any of grades 1 to 12, shall immediately report any incident of unauthorized ignition of any fire within the school building or on school grounds, to the local fire department. Within 24 hours, the Principal shall submit a written report of the incident to the head of the fire department on a form furnished by the Department of Fire Services. The Principal must file this report whether or not the fire department responded.

LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. [71:37L](#); [148:2A](#)

CROSS REFS.: EB, Safety Program
 EBB, First Aid

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES AND REQUIREMENTS

Activities may include identification of student health needs, health screening tests (including eye and hearing screening tests), communicable disease prevention and control, promotion of the correction of remediable health defects, emergency care of the ill and injured, health counseling, health and safety education, and the maintenance of a healthful school environment.

The District recognizes that parent/guardian(s) have the primary responsibility for the health of their students. The school will cooperate with appropriate professional organizations associated with maintaining individual and community health and safety.

The District shall provide the services of a medical consultant who shall render medical and administrative consultative services for personnel responsible for school health and athletics.

Procedures for Emergency at School

School personnel shall give only emergency care to students who become ill or injured on school property, buses, or while under school supervision.

Each year parent/guardian(s) shall supply information indicating where the student is to be taken in case of an emergency; the name, address, and phone number of a family member or other individual to be contacted in case the parent/guardian is not available; and any allergies or diseases the student might have.

The District shall maintain a Medical Emergency Response Plan, as required by law, and an Emergency Procedures Handbook, which shall be utilized by District personnel for handling emergencies. Emergency procedures shall include the following:

- Provision for care beyond First Aid, which would enable care by the family or its physician or the local Emergency Medical Services agencies. In instances when the EMS is required, every effort shall be made to provide the unit with the student's Emergency Card which lists any allergies or diseases the student might have;
- Information relative to not permitting the administration of any form of medicine or drugs to students without written approval of parent/guardian(s). Requests made by parent/guardian(s) for such administration of medication shall be reviewed and approved by the Principal or designee;
- Provisions for reporting all accidents, cases of injury, or illness to the Principal. Provisions shall be made (in all cases of injury or illness involving possible legal or public relations implications) for reporting such to the appropriate administrator of education immediately;
- Prompt reporting by teachers to the Principal or designee of any accident or serious illness and such reports will be filed with the Business Office.

Student Illness or Injury

In case of illness or injury, the parent or guardian will be contacted and asked to pick up the student.

Transportation of an ill or injured student is not normally to be provided by the school. If the parent/guardian cannot provide transportation and the student is ill or injured, an ambulance may be called. Expense incurred as a result of emergency ambulance use will not be borne by the District.

Transportation of a student by school personnel will be done only in an emergency and by the individual so designated by the school administrator.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:53;54;54A;54B;55;55A;55B;56; 57; 69:8A

CROSS REF.: EBB, First Aid
EBC, Emergency Plans
JLCD, Administration of Medications to Students

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION AND PUBLIC HEALTH SCREENING OF STUDENTS

Every student will be examined and/or screened for physical and public health issues in sight, hearing, BMI, and for other physical problems as provided in the laws. A record of height, BMI, Postural, Vision and Hearing screenings will be kept by the school nurse. Anonymous aggregated data for BMI and postural screenings will be shared to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MADPH) annually, as required by law. Anonymous data for Substance Use Brief Treatment (SBIRT) screenings will be shared to the DPH as required by law and not kept by any school staff.

Screenings will be conducted between the months of October to February of each school year.

Parents will be notified in advance of screenings via a letter to parents and other outreach methods, such as school newsletters and school websites.

Screenings will be conducted at various grade levels, as follows:

Type	Grade Levels
Postural	5, 6, 7, 8, 9
Height and Body Mass Index (BMI)	1, 4, 7, 10
Vision	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10
Hearing	1, 2, 3, 7, 10
Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral for Treatment (SBRT)	7, 10
Signs of Suicide (SOS)	7, 9, 12

Postural screenings will be completed by nurses.

If a parent elects to provide current outside medical documentation of a required screening, the student will be exempt from school-based screening by school staff. Parents may opt their student out of screening at any time by providing written notice to the school nurse.

In addition to the screenings referenced above, every student is required to provide the school with documentation of a current physical upon admission, and at grades 3, 6, and 9. Physicals must be submitted by February 1, of the identified school year and be less than one year old. The results of examinations will be a basis for determining what corrective measures or modifications of school activities, if any, should be recommended. A record of all examinations and recommendations will be kept by the school nurse.

If a student is unable to be seen by his/her own health care provider, in a timely fashion, the school physician, with signed consent of the parent/guardian, can be available to perform the physical exam. The school physician will not prescribe for or treat any student.

Every candidate for a school athletic team will present a written report, signed by the student's health care provider, stating that the student was thoroughly examined and is determined to be fit to participate. In the event that the student is unable to be examined by their health care provider, the school physician, with signed consent of the parent/guardian, can be available to perform the physical exam. A written report stating the fitness of the student to participate, signed by the student's health care provider, will be sent to the school nurse.

Whenever the school nurse finds a child suffering from any disease or medical problem, the situation will be reported to the parent or guardian. The findings will be noted in the student's health record.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [71:53](#); [71:54](#); [71:56](#); [71:57](#)
[Chapter 52 An Act Relative to Substance Use, Treatment, Education and Prevention \(2016\)](#)
[Chapter 284 An Act Relative to the Reduction of Gun Violence \(2014\)](#)

CROSS REFS.: [JF](#), School Admissions

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

IMMUNIZATION OF STUDENTS

Students registering in the district, will be required to present a physician's certificate attesting to immunization against communicable diseases as may be specified from time to time by the Department of Public Health. The only exception to these requirements will be made on receipt of a written statement from a doctor that immunization would not be in the best interests of the child, or by the student's parent or guardian stating that vaccination or immunization is contrary to the religious beliefs of the student or parent/guardian.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 76:15

CROSS REF.: JF, School Admissions

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

The District is required to provide educational services to all school age children who reside within its boundaries. By law, however, admission to school may be denied to any child diagnosed as having a disease whereby attendance could be harmful to the welfare of other students and staff, subject to the District's responsibilities to students with disabilities under the law.

The School Committee recognizes that communicable diseases which may afflict students range from common childhood diseases, acute and short-term in nature, to chronic, life-threatening diseases.

Management of common communicable diseases shall be in accordance with Massachusetts Department of Health guidelines. A student who exhibits symptoms of a communicable disease may be temporarily excluded from school attendance. The District reserves the right to require a physician's statement authorizing the student's return to school.

The educational placement of a student who is medically diagnosed as having a life-threatening communicable disease shall be determined on an individual basis in accordance with this policy and accompanying administrative procedures. Decisions about the proper educational placement shall be based on the student's behavior, neurological development, and physical condition; the expected type of interaction with others in school setting; and the susceptibility to other diseases and the likelihood of presenting risks to others. A regular review of the placement decision shall be conducted to assess changes in the student's physical condition, or based on new information or research that may warrant a change in a student's placement.

In the event a student with a life-threatening communicable disease qualifies for services as a disabled child under state and federal law, the procedures for determining the appropriate educational placement in the least restrictive environment shall be used in lieu of the procedures designated above.

Neither this policy nor the placement of a student in any particular program shall preclude the administration from taking any temporary actions including removal of a student from the classroom as deemed necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the student, staff, and others.

In all proceedings related to this policy, the District shall respect the student's right to privacy. Only those persons with a direct need to know shall be informed of the specific nature of the student's condition. The determination of those who need to know shall be made by the Superintendent.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:55

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

ADMINISTERING MEDICINES TO STUDENTS

Medication may not be administered to students while at school unless such medicine is given to them by the school nurse acting under specific written request of the parent or guardian and under the written directive of the student's personal physician (see below for exceptions). If a student has been approved for self-administration, a student who needs medication during the school day may be reminded to take the medicine by the school nurse or other individual designated by the school nurse in the student's medical administration plan. This provision only applies when the school nurse has a medical administration plan in place for the student. No one but the school nurse, and those others listed in the medical administration plan acting within the above restriction, may give any medication to any student.

Exceptions:

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

The school district may, in conjunction with the School Physician and the School Nurse Leader, stock nasal naloxone (Narcan) and trained medical personnel and first responders may administer nasal naloxone to individuals experiencing a life threatening opiate overdose in a school setting.

If the school district wishes medical personnel to train non-medical staff in the administration of nasal naloxone, the School Committee shall vote to approve such training and the Superintendent shall ensure that medical personnel have a written protocol which complies with medical directives and regulations from the Dept. of Public Health.

Following consultation with the school nurse, students who fall into the following exceptions may self-administer medications:

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

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. [71:54B](#)

Dept. of Public Health Regulations:
105 CMR 210.00; 244 CMR 3.00

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

NALOXONE ADMINISTRATION POLICY

In order to recognize and respond to a potential life-threatening opioid overdose, the Westwood Public Schools has established the following policy.

Training:

- (1) In consultation with the district's prescribing physician, school nurses and the athletic trainer will be trained and tested for competency in accordance with standards established by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health on the proper response to life threatening opioid overdoses. A school nurse, as defined by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, may be trained by approved trainers to administer naloxone by nasal administration in a life-threatening situation when first responders are not immediately available. An athletic trainer may be trained to administer nasal naloxone under the Good Samaritan Law and may be trained by approved trainers to administer naloxone by nasal administration in a life threatening situation when first responders and school nurse are not immediately available.
- (2) The training, at a minimum, will include:
 - (a) Procedures for risk reduction;
 - (b) Recognition of the symptoms in an individual with an opiate overdose;
 - (c) The importance of following the prescribed method of medication administration;
 - (d) Proper use of the nasal administration method;
 - (e) The requirement to call local emergency services prior to administration, and
 - (f) Requirements for proper storage and security, notification of appropriate persons following administration, and record keeping.

Administration:

The school nurses and, when the school nurse is not available, the athletic trainer will respond to any member of the school community when on school property with a life threatening opioid overdose in the school setting by implementing the following protocol:

- Call 911
- Perform rescue breathing to provide oxygen Administer Naloxone
- Stay with the person until help arrives

Storage:

Nasal naloxone hydrochloride will be kept in the emergency first aid bag when the school nurse is in the building and then placed into the locked medication cabinets in each school nurse's office when the school nurse is not in the building. The nasal naloxone hydrochloride will be kept in the athletic trainer's first aid bag when attending athletic events and then will be secured in the athletics trainer's locked room at Westwood High School at all other times.

Record Keeping:

The Director of Student Services shall maintain and make available upon request by the Department of Public Health a list of all licensed individuals trained to administer nasal naloxone hydrochloride by nasal administration, if any.

The Director of Student Services will be notified of any administration of nasal naloxone hydrochloride by trained staff as soon as practicable after the administration.

All other medication administration procedures will hold forth including:

- (a) reporting of any medication errors per 105 CMR 210.00
- (b) proper disposal of a used naloxone administration delivery system

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

STUDENT FEES, FINES, AND CHARGES

The School Committee recognizes the need for student fees to fund certain school activities. It also recognizes that some students may not be able to pay these fees. No student will be denied access into any program because of inability to pay these supplementary charges.

A school may exact a fee or charge only upon School Committee approval. The schools, however, may:

Charge students enrolled in certain courses for the cost of materials used in projects that will become the property of the student.

Charge for lost and damaged books, materials, supplies, and equipment.

Students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch are exempt from paying fees. However, these students are not exempt from charges for lost and damaged books, locks, materials, supplies, and equipment.

All student fees and charges, both optional and required, will be listed and described annually in each school's student handbook or in some other written form and distributed to each student. The notice will advise students that fees are to be paid and of the penalties for their failure to pay them. . Permissible penalties include the denial of participation in extra class activities and graduation exercises and activities while the student is enrolled in this District.

Any fee or charge due to any school in the District and not paid at the end of the school year will be carried forward to the next succeeding school year, as such debts are considered to be debts of the student to the District and not to a particular school.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

STUDENT RECORDS

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

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

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

LEGAL REFS: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974,
 P.L. 93-380, Amended
 P.L. 103-382, 1994
 M.G.L. 66:10; 71:34A, B, D, E, H
 603 CMR 23.00

CROSS REF: KDB, Public's Right to Know

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHS

Individual schools may arrange, in cooperation with the school's parent organization, student council, designated student committee, or a staff committee, to take individual student and/or class group pictures.

Individual and/or class group pictures may be taken at the school facility and during the regular school day hours. The pictures shall be made available for purchase by students and/or parents/guardians on a voluntary basis. The building Principal or designee shall have final authority in authorizing the picture-taking program and will be responsible for overseeing the process.

Students may be required to have an individual picture taken for the cumulative file or identification purposes; however, no student shall be pressured or required to purchase photographs.

The purpose of the policy is to:

Enhance the safety of students through visual identification in an emergency situation.

Facilitate the social, educational, and administrative activities conducted in the school.

Provide a service to parents/guardians and students.

Allow the profits gained from the picture-taking program to be used by the sponsoring group and authorized by the building Principal.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 30B:1(b)(31)

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

SECTION K

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

KA	SCHOOL/COMMUNITY RELATIONS GOALS
KBA	SCHOOL-PARENT/GUARDIAN RELATIONS GOALS
KBBA	NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS' RIGHTS
KBE	RELATIONS WITH PARENT ORGANIZATIONS
KCDA	SCHOOL GIFTS
KDB	PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW
KDD	NEWS MEDIA RELATIONS/NEWS RELEASES
KE	PUBLIC COMPLAINTS
KF	COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES
KF-R	COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES
KFA	PUBLIC CONDUCT ON SCHOOL PROPERTY
KHA	PUBLIC SOLICITATIONS IN THE SCHOOLS
KHB	ADVERTISING IN THE SCHOOLS
KI	VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY RELATIONS GOALS

The School Committee believes that the District is an integral part of the community, and that community support is necessary for the District's operation and achievement of excellence. The School Committee and District staff members recognize that community support is based on a mutual exchange, a dynamic process in which the District contributes to the community's success and, in turn, benefits from the community's resources.

In order to maintain productive relationships with the community, the District is committed to sustaining:

Effective, accurate, and meaningful communications that facilitate dialogue, encourage involvement in District programs, and create community advocacy for its public schools.

Volunteer programs that provide mutually enriching experiences for our students, staff, and community volunteers.

Recognition programs that publicly honor the contributions of our students, employees, and community partners and express pride in our individual and collective accomplishments.

Community service efforts which enable the students to express their commitment to the community.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL/PARENT/GUARDIAN RELATIONS GOALS

It is the general goal of the District to foster relationships with parents/guardians, which encourage cooperation between the home and school in establishing and achieving common educational goals for students.

While parents/guardians are individually responsible for their children, the District provides direct services of education and indirect services of childcare for students during the time when they are within the supervision of school personnel. Consistent with these shared responsibilities and as appropriate to the maturity of the student, members of the school staff will consult with parents/guardians regarding student progress and achievement, methods to enhance student development, and matters of student conduct.

Additionally, parental/guardian involvement in the schools is encouraged through regular communication with the school Principal and staff, the parent/teacher organizations, the school volunteer program, and other opportunities for participation in school activities and District programs.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS' RIGHTS

As required by Massachusetts General Law, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with law and Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education Regulations. The school district will follow the law and the regulations developed by the Massachusetts Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education to standardize the process by which public schools provide student records to parents who do not have physical custody of their children ("non-custodial parents").

As required by law, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with the following provisions.

- a. A non-custodial parent is eligible to obtain access to the student record unless the school or district has been given documentation that:
 1. The parent has been denied legal custody or has been ordered to supervised visitation, based on a threat to the safety of the student and the threat is specifically noted in the order pertaining to custody or supervised visitation, or
 2. The parent has been denied visitation, or
 3. The parent's access to the student has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record, or
 4. There is an order of a probate and family court judge which prohibits the distribution of student records to the parent.
- b. The school shall place in the student's record documents indicating that a non-custodial parent's access to the student's record is limited or restricted pursuant to regulation.
- c. In order to obtain access, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student record to the school principal.
- d. Upon receipt of the request the school must immediately notify the custodial parent by certified and first class mail, in English and the primary language of the custodial parent, that it will provide the non-custodial parent with access after 21 days, unless the custodial parent provides the principal with documentation that the non-custodial parent is not eligible to obtain access as set forth in regulation.
- e. The school must delete all electronic and postal address and telephone number information relating to either work or home locations of the custodial parent from student records provided to non-custodial parents. In addition, such records must be marked to indicate that they shall not be used to enroll the student in another school.

- f. Upon receipt of a court order which prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to law the school shall notify the non-custodial parent that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial parent.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [71:34D](#); [71:34H](#)
603 CMR 23.07 (5) Access Procedures for Non-Custodial Parents
20 U.S.C. §1232g Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

RELATIONS WITH PARENT/BOOSTER ORGANIZATIONS

To enhance communications between parents/guardians and school officials, the Committee encourages the maintenance of formal parent/guardian organizations, including booster organizations, at each school building. For this purpose, the Committee will officially recognize parent/guardian organizations. These procedures will be observed:

1. Organizations will be officially recognized upon request by the building Principal who will file a copy of the organizational papers with the Superintendent.
2. A vote, open to all parents/guardians of children enrolled, will designate the organization to be recognized if more than one organization with the same purpose makes the request.
3. All parent/guardian organizations shall obtain 501C3 status and file appropriate paperwork with state authorities and make proof of such status available to school district administration.
4. All parent/guardian organizations need to recognize that spending on student activities must comply with federal law relating to equity among student genders.

LEGAL REFS: Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972

CROSS REFS: ACA – Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

SCHOOL GIFTS

The Westwood School Committee has a responsibility to provide comparable educational opportunity for all students. Gifts that are accepted by the School Committee will ordinarily be accepted without condition or restriction, and subsequent use of the gifts will be at the sole discretion of the School Committee or as delegated to the district's administrative staff. Gifts should enhance and strengthen the ability of the schools to carry out their missions and implement the curriculum and program objectives previously approved by the School Committee. The School Committee is not inclined to accept gifts that tend to result in recurring annual costs to the schools, such as salary for a staff position or a piece of equipment with potentially high annual maintenance requirements, since these are matters that impact directly on the annual school budget.

Gifts will automatically become the property of the school district. Any gift of cash, regardless of donor intent, will be accepted by vote of the School Committee kept separate from the general fund, and expended at the discretion of the Committee, as provided by law.

To assist the administration and public with respect to gift related matters, the School Committee hereby establishes the following policy guidelines:

1. All gifts accepted by the School Committee become the property of the Westwood School district, and are subject to the same controls and regulations that govern the use and disposal of other school owned property.
2. All gifts of services, equipment and materials must meet the same standards of selection as those applied to the purchase of other school services, equipment and materials.
3. The School Committee reserves the right to review proposed gifts (including money, services, securities, products, and other things of economic value) for appropriateness as to content and scale, and will decline gifts that it determines, in its sole discretion, would not suitably serve the best interests of the district.
 - a. All gifts to the Westwood School System (including gifts to individual schools or classrooms) that have a fair market value in excess of \$5000 must be submitted in writing to the School Committee for acceptance.
 - b. It shall be the responsibility of the Business Office to maintain accurate receipt and expenditure records of all cash donations, and to report them in the Department of Education's end-of-the-year report at the close of each academic year.
 - c. Propositions giving funds, equipment, or materials to the school with a "matching" agreement or restriction are discouraged.
 - d. Gifts from school support organizations shall be excepted from paragraphs (a) and (b) and may be made directly to the school, but must be reported by the school Principal to the Superintendent for completion and annual reporting to the School Committee.

The Committee recognizes that any policy statement on this topic will not be comprehensive in its resolution of all questions and solutions. The Committee expects, from time to time, to render specific decisions, including policy exceptions, when it deems circumstances so warrant.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW

The School Committee is a public servant, and its meetings and records will be a matter of public information except as such meetings and records pertain to individual personnel and other legally confidential matters.

The School Committee supports the right of the people to know about the programs and services of their schools and will make every effort to disseminate information. All requests for information will be acted on fairly, completely and expeditiously.

All commonly available public record documents of the School District shall be posted on the district's website. The length of time such records shall remain posted on the district website shall be in accordance with the Municipal Record Retention Manual. In addition, the official minutes of the Committee, its written policies and regulations, and its financial records will be open for inspection at the office of the Superintendent by any citizen desiring to examine them during hours when the office is open. No records pertaining to individual students or staff members will be released for inspection by the public or any unauthorized persons by the Superintendent or other persons responsible for the custody of confidential files. The exception to this will be information about an individual employee (or student) that has been authorized in writing for release by the employee (or student, or student's parent/guardian).

Each building administrator is authorized to use all means available to keep parents/guardians and others in the particular school's community informed about the school's program and activities.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 4:7; 66:10; 30A:18-25

CROSS REFS.: BEDG, Minutes
GBJ, Personnel Records
JRA, Student Records

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

NEWS MEDIA RELATIONS/NEWS RELEASES

Every effort will be made to assist the press and other communications media to obtain complete and adequate coverage of the successes, challenges, programs, planning, and activities of the school system.

All representatives of the media will be given equal access to information about the schools. General releases of interest to the entire community will be made available to all the media simultaneously. There will be no exclusive releases except as media representatives request information on particular programs, plans or problems.

In order that school system publicity is given wide coverage and is coordinated into a common effort and purpose, the following procedures will be followed in giving official information to the news media:

1. The School Committee Chair will be the official spokesman for the Committee, except as this duty is delegated to the Superintendent.
2. News releases that are of a system-wide or a sensitive nature or pertain to established Committee policy are the responsibility of the Superintendent.
3. News releases that are of concern to only one school, or to an organization of one school, are the responsibility of the Principal of that particular school. All statements made to the press by other staff members of the particular school must be cleared with the Principal.

While it is impossible to know how news releases will be treated by the press, every possible effort should be made to obtain coverage of school activities that will create and maintain a dignified and professionally responsible image for the school system.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

Although no member of the community will be denied the right to bring their complaints to the Committee, they will be referred through the proper administrative channels for solution before investigation or action by the Committee. Exceptions will be made when the complaints concern Committee actions or Committee operations only.

The Committee believes that complaints are best handled and resolved as close to their origin as possible, and that the professional staff should be given every opportunity to consider the issues and attempt to resolve the problem prior to involvement by the Committee. Therefore, the proper channeling of complaints involving instruction, discipline or learning materials will be as follows:

1. Teacher
2. School building administrator
3. Superintendent
4. School Committee

If a complaint, which was presented to the Committee and referred back through the proper channels, is adjusted before it comes back to the School Committee, a report of the disposition of the matter will be made to the Committee and then placed in the official files.

Complaints about school personnel will be investigated fully and fairly. However, before any such complaint is investigated, the complainant must submit their complaint in writing. Anonymous complaints will be disregarded.

Matters referred to the Superintendent and/or School Committee must be in writing and should be specific in terms of the action desired.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 76:5
 603 CMR 26.00

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

It is the School Committee's desire that maximum use of school property be enjoyed by the townspeople. It is the Committee's intent that such use will maintain safe conditions and preserve the property for school program use.

Use of school buildings and other facilities by organizations will be permitted only when a worthy educational, civic, or charitable purpose will be served; or a substantial group of citizens from the community will be benefited.

School facilities will be used according to the procedures and rental fee schedules recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the School Committee.

Permission for the use of facilities must be obtained through the office of the Superintendent of Schools, where applications are available for this purpose.

Eligibility

School facilities will be available for the following:

1. Public school activities
2. Parent/guardian-teacher activities
3. Official town public hearings and political activities
4. Meetings and activities sponsored by the School Committee and school personnel
5. Town Recreation activities
6. Local nonprofit and noncommercial organization activities
7. Metropolitan civic, educational, social, and religious organization activities if a substantial portion of the members are residents of the town
8. The activities of other organizations when approved by the School Committee

School and Town Preference

The priority given requests for use of school facilities will be as follows:

1. School activities
2. Town meetings and elections
3. Town Recreation Department
4. Other Community Activities

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:71; 71:71B; 272:40A

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

The use of school buildings, grounds, equipment, and facilities will be authorized by the Superintendent in conformity with the following regulations, which have been approved by the School Committee.

1. Requests for the use of school facilities will be made at the office of the Superintendent at least 14 days prior to the date of use.
2. Requests for school facilities must be cleared with the building Principal or the Superintendent or both, should the nature of the request so justify.
3. School-related groups will be permitted reasonable use of school facilities without charge.
4. All activities must be under competent adult supervision approved by the Superintendent and the Principal of the building involved. In all cases, an assigned school employee will be present. The group using the facilities will be responsible for any damage to the building or equipment.
5. Groups receiving permission are restricted to the dates and hours approved and to the building area and facilities specified, unless requested changes are approved by the Superintendent.
6. Groups receiving permission are responsible at all times for the observance of fire and safety requirements.
7. Proper liability insurance will be required of all groups given permission to use school facilities.
8. The Committee will approve and periodically review a fee schedule for the use of school facilities.
9. In situations where there is no cost factor to the school system, or in situations where a mutual exchange of facilities is possible between the school system and the organization, rates may be modified or eliminated by the Superintendent. In situations where extended usage for a long period of time is required, rates may be set at a contract price.
10. The School Committee reserves the right to cancel any permission granted.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

PUBLIC CONDUCT ON SCHOOL PROPERTY

All persons on school grounds will be expected to abide by applicable laws, local ordinances, Westwood Public Schools' policies, and building regulations.

No person on school property will assault, strike, threaten, menace, haze, or use improper, indecent, or obscene language toward a teacher, instructor, other employees of the schools or students.

No person will disrupt, disturb, or interfere with the teaching of any class of students, or any other activity conducted in a school building or upon the campus or grounds.

Whoever violates the above policy and building regulations will be asked to leave the property by whomever is in charge. Should that person refuse, the police will be called. If the offender should be a student, the person in charge should report the student to the appropriate Principal. The school will cooperate in any prosecution pursuant to the criminal law of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and local ordinances.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

PUBLIC SOLICITATIONS IN THE SCHOOLS

The School Committee will place limits on commercial activities and fund-raising activities in the schools for the following reasons:

1. The school system should provide students, parents/guardians, and employees some measure of protection from exploitation by commercial and charitable fund-raising organizations.
2. The school system should not give the public the impression of generally endorsing or sanctioning commercial and fund-raising activities.
3. Commercial and fund-raising activities may disrupt school routine and cause loss of instructional time.

Following these guiding statements, the Superintendent and Principals may permit occasional commercial or fund-raising activities related to the objectives of the schools with the following exceptions:

1. No direct solicitation of students or employees may take place without School Committee permission.
2. No general or class distribution of commercial or fund-raising literature may take place without School Committee permission.

For the purposes of this policy, local PTA and PTO groups and groups representing school system employees will be considered "school groups" and will be governed by the Committee's policy on staff solicitations.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [44:53A](#)

CROSS REFS.: [GBEBC](#), Staff Gifts and Solicitations
JJE, Student Fund-Raising Activities
JP, Student Gifts and Solicitations
[KHB](#), Advertising in the Schools

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

ADVERTISING IN THE SCHOOLS

The School Committee may grant permission for advertising of commercial products or services in school buildings or on school property under guidelines or regulations it may approve. Otherwise, no advertising of commercial products or services will be permitted in school buildings or on school property. Publications of the school district will not contain any advertising. However, this will not prevent advertising in student publications that are published by student organizations, subject to administration controls, or the use of commercially-sponsored, free teaching aids if the content is approved by the administration.

Solicitation of sales or use of the name of the school district to promote any product will not be permitted by the Committee.

CROSS REF.: KHA, Public Solicitations in the Schools

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS

The School Committee welcomes parents/guardians and guests to visit classrooms to observe and learn about the instructional programs taking place in our schools. Such visits can prove most beneficial in promotion of greater school-home cooperation and community understanding of how we carry out the school district's mission and goals.

The following guidelines to classroom and school visits should be followed:

1. Request for classroom visitations by parents/guardians will be welcomed as long as the educational process is not disrupted. To this end we request that such requests be made at least two school-days in advance to allow for proper arrangements to be made.
2. The building Principal has the authority to determine the number, times, and dates of observations by visitors. This will be done in consultation with staff members so as to give adequate notice to the staff members of the impending visits.
3. For security purposes it is required that all visitors report to the Principal's office upon entering and leaving the building and sign a guest log showing arrival and departure times. Teachers are encouraged to ask visitors if they have registered in the Principal's office.
4. Classroom observations will be strongly discouraged during the first three weeks of school in September and during the month of June.
5. Ordinarily students will not be permitted to bring guests to school. If a guests' visit has clear educational value, a family may request permission from the Principal for a guest visit. Such permission should be sought at least one week in advance. If permission is granted, the guest is expected to follow the standards of behavior expected of all students. Upon arrival the guest must register in the office. Any guest who fails to comply with student regulations will be asked to leave the school building and grounds immediately.

CROSS REF.: IHBAA, Observations of Special Education Programs

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

SECTION L

EDUCATION AGENCY RELATIONS

LA	EDUCATION AGENCY RELATIONS GOALS
LB	RELATIONS WITH OTHER SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS
LBC	RELATIONS WITH NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS
LDA	STUDENT TEACHING AND INTERNSHIPS

EDUCATION AGENCY RELATIONS GOALS

The School Committee appreciates the place and importance of an educational system in its greater environment, which includes other organizations and institutions dedicated to education. It believes that much is gained through cooperative endeavors with other agencies.

In order to make a maximum contribution to education, within the school system and to other educational agencies, the Committee establishes these broad goals:

1. To encourage liaison with other educational agencies.
2. To supply educational services to and/or share with other educational agencies.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

RELATIONS WITH OTHER SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The School Committee will cooperate with other schools and with local, state, and regional agencies and organizations to:

1. Seek solutions of educational problems of common concern.
2. Offer support services of high quality to our children.
3. Equalize educational opportunities for all children.
4. Acquire federal and state grants.
5. Promote local school system involvement in state and federal decision-making.

This cooperation may extend to research, providing transportation for children to special schools and hospitals, coordination of curriculum, exchange of information and data, construction of facilities that may be efficiently used on a cooperative basis, and the coordination of school calendars and activities.

Before joining any cooperative programs, education collaborative, or participating in any joint educational services with other school systems, the School Committee wants to be sure that in all instances the best interests of our school children will be served. In carrying out this policy the Superintendent will include in reports to the Committee an evaluation of the desirability and feasibility of cooperation with other schools and agencies on matters of mutual interest.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [40:4E](#); [71:48](#); [71:71D](#); [71B:4](#); [74:4](#) through [74:7A](#); [76:1](#)

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

RELATIONS WITH NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS

In accordance with state law, the School Committee will approve a private school when it is satisfied that the school equals that of the municipality's public schools in thoroughness, efficiency, and progress made.

All of the following steps are required for approval of a private school:

1. The school submits a letter of application to the Superintendent of Schools.
2. The school completes all items on the "Checklist for Approval of a Private School" and submits required documentation.
3. The Superintendent or designee reviews the submitted materials.
4. The Superintendent or designee visits the school.
5. The school makes a presentation to the School Committee.
6. The Superintendent makes a recommendation to the School Committee.
7. The School Committee takes formal action on the recommendation.
8. The school is notified of the School Committee's decision.

The School Committee will act reasonably and in good faith to carry out its statutory approval function.

If substantial changes are made in the private school's program, the school must seek renewed approval.

The School Committee recognizes that many worthwhile contributions are made to this community by parochial and other private schools. Therefore, it will cooperate with these schools in matters of mutual benefit when law does not expressly prohibit this cooperation.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 40:4E; 71:48 and 71D; 71B:4; 74:4-7A; 76:1

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023

STUDENT TEACHING AND INTERNSHIPS

The Committee encourages the administration to cooperate with teacher-training institutions in the placement of student teachers in the school system. All initial arrangements with the colleges and universities will be subject to Committee approval.

The Committee authorizes the administration to honor the reasonable rules and training guidelines of the sending institution.

In all arrangements made with colleges and universities, the school system will be given the privilege of interviewing and accepting or rejecting individual candidates for student teaching and internships.

The school administration will devise procedures for evaluating the performance of student teachers that meet requirements of the sending institution and fit with the Committee's policies.

Approved by School Committee on July 13, 2023