

Scituate Public Schools

2010-2011 Elementary Handbook

Cushing School
1 Aberdeen Drive
Scituate, MA 02066

Jenkins School
54 Vinal Avenue
Scituate, MA 02066

Hatherly School
72 Ann Vinal Road
Scituate, MA 02066

Wampatuck School
266 Tilden Road
Scituate, MA 02066

Scituate Public Schools Mission Statement

The mission of the Scituate School System is to provide the opportunity for a comprehensive education for all students which focuses on cognitive, emotional, physical, and social development. The education program fosters students' reading, writing, calculating, problem solving, critical thinking skills, and creative expression. The school environment nurtures self-confidence, independence, cooperation, and the physical well being of all students. The schools encourage students to develop a sense of values and responsibilities that enables them to be contributing members of their community and of the multicultural, global society. In partnership with the family, the schools guide students toward becoming lifelong learners with a positive outlook on the world.

A Message to Parents

This handbook has been prepared to acquaint parents and students with school policies, regulations, and procedures. Please take the time to read this handbook carefully. As we are K-6 communities, our handbook reflects a wide range of topics for this wide range in ages. It is our hope that, through an understanding and respect for school policies, members of our school communities will develop a sense of pride in themselves and their school.

We try our best to see our students as people as well as learners. We want children to feel good about themselves, to enjoy the elementary learning experience, and to behave in acceptable ways. All students should read this handbook with their parents and become familiar with the contents, however, the majority of our students will never experience the penalties associated with the misconduct that is specified.

Once you have read this handbook, we ask that you sign and return the last page and return it to your child's teacher as soon as possible. This form is included to indicate your awareness of the specific policies and practices defined in this handbook. **Please sign and return the form at the end of the handbook as soon as possible.**

Scituate Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, disability, national origin, race, or sexual orientation. We look forward to a rewarding elementary experience for your child as we strive to develop the potential in each student who enters our elementary schools.

Mari-An Fitzmaurice

Mary Ohrenberger

Linda Whitney John Willis

ELEMENTARY HANDBOOK

2010-2011

The beginning years of school are a most important time in the life of a child. The home and school should cooperate to help meet this new experience with confidence, success, and happiness.

The Scituate Public Schools comply with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 76, Section 5 ("Chapter 622") and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. These laws prohibit discrimination in, and guarantee access to, all public schools and public school programs, courses, advantages and privileges without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin or sexual orientation. If you would like further information on these laws, please contact the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development, 606 Chief Justice Cushing Highway, Scituate, Massachusetts. The telephone number is 545-8750 ext. 320.

Absence from School

Each elementary school has specific practices regarding the reporting of absences. In all cases, children who are absent from school for any reason must bring a note from home upon their return. These notes must be written and signed by the parent or legal guardian and must be brought to the homeroom teacher. The note should indicate why the student was absent from school.

- If the student is absent five or more consecutive days, a doctor's certificate is also required upon his/her return to school. Furthermore, if a child is repeatedly absent or tardy without an acceptable excuse, the Principal may take necessary action. It is the student's responsibility to make up all assignments and other work within one week of his/her return to school after an absence due to illness.

Although it is understood that family vacations do not always correspond to school vacations, these types of unexcused absences are strongly discouraged because they interrupt the teaching/learning process. Moreover, taking homework on vacation or attempting to complete it upon return is not considered a replacement for classroom instruction. If such absences are unavoidable, the following conditions will apply:

- The parent must notify the school at least two weeks in advance of the planned vacation.
- Teachers are not required to give assignments in advance to students who will be on vacation during school time.
- Parents are urged to schedule vacations during school vacation periods in order that their children not miss the benefit of daily classroom instruction. It is the student's responsibility to make up all assignments and other work within one week of his/her return to school if vacations are taken during school time.
- Teachers are not required to give tutorial assistance to students who have missed class time due to a family vacation.

Accident Insurance

A private insurance coverage is offered to students each year which provides benefits for insured children who are injured while at school, on the playground, walking to and from school, or riding in the bus. This insurance is secondary coverage (benefits cover balances not paid by a student's primary insurer). As a result, the premiums are relatively inexpensive. Application and claim forms are sent home at the beginning of the school year and must be returned whether or not you want to purchase the insurance.

Alcohol/Drug Free Workplace Policy

It is the policy of the Scituate Public Schools to maintain an alcohol-free and drug-free workplace. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, or use of controlled substances or alcohol is prohibited at school functions or on school department property.

Allergies - Life Threatening (LTA)

The number of students with life-threatening allergies has increased substantially over the last several years. As with all students with special health care needs, it is important that children with life-threatening allergies are able to access all education and education related benefits. Therefore, there are designated classrooms throughout the district that have food restrictions where consumption of certain foods will be prohibited. Notification of these restrictions will be communicated as soon as they are determined.

Attendance

State regulations require that the school year be a minimum of 180 days and that each school age child attend school on a daily basis. A student must be in attendance for half the instructional day for the student to be considered "present". According to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 76, Section 2 absences greater than eight days (8) in a marking period are considered excessive. If a child is repeatedly absent or tardy without an acceptable excuse, the Principal may take necessary action.

Kindergarten sessions run as a full day program (tuition based) and half-day programs in the morning and afternoon. The hours for Kindergarten are coordinated with the school bus schedules. Parents will receive information by mail regarding the session their child will attend.

Behavioral Expectations

All elementary students are expected to:

- Treat all adults and schoolmates with respect, both in speech and in action.
- Maintain self-control in physical and verbal expression and refrain from fighting and using profanity.
- Accept responsibility for their own actions and refrain from displaying disruptive conduct and acts of disobedience.
- Recognize that, while in school, their teacher assumes the role of a parent.
- Obey school rules and regulations.
- Walk in areas such as corridors, stairwells, and sidewalks.
- Proceed directly to classrooms upon entering the building.
- Use assigned exits and entrances only.
- Remain within the school boundaries while school is in session.
- Return immediately to the building at the end of recreation periods.
- Avoid throwing any objects, such as rocks or snowballs that will cause injury.
- Display acceptable manners and use cafeteria items properly.
- Take good care of school property and materials, as well as that of others.
- Refrain from bringing anything to school that is potentially harmful to others.
- Plan daily activities that eliminate the need to use the school telephone.

Bicycle, Scooter, Skateboard Use

Students who attend the Scituate Public Schools may ride their bicycles to school at their own risk. The school will not be responsible for the loss or theft of the bicycle, scooter, a skateboard while on school property, therefore, locks are recommended. All bicycles, scooters, or skateboards are not to be ridden on school property. It is recommended that no student be permitted to ride a bicycle, scooter or skateboard to and from school until entering third grade. Any student who rides his/her bicycle, scooter or skateboard to school will be responsible for parking the bicycle in the area designated by the principal of the school. The school district strongly encourages all students, parents, and staff to use bicycle helmets when riding bicycles.

Bullying

Bullying is defined as a verbal, physical, written or electronic action (cyber-bullying) or incident or other direct or indirect behavior that is cruel and repetitive. Bullying is characterized by an imbalance of physical, psychological or emotional power. Such behavior will not be tolerated as we continue on our mission to ensure a safe and secure learning environment for all students. The Scituate Public Schools provide research-based, age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention in each grade.

Child Abuse and Neglect

The school recognizes the need to be aware of and sensitive to children who may be in danger. Effective learning becomes difficult for a child coping with the strain of family turmoil and basic needs that are not being met. School personnel are in a position to notice the needs of a child and have a responsibility under law to make a report if they feel a child is in jeopardy. The goal of intervention is to strengthen family life and use available resources towards this end.

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 119, Section 51A, school personnel are mandated reporters. If child abuse or neglect is suspected, the Department of Social Services must be notified.

Community Use of School Facilities

Scituate community groups shall be permitted and encouraged to use school facilities for meetings and activities that do not interfere with the school programs. Applications for building use may be obtained at the School Department's Business Office and the main office of each school. Responsibility for student safety and supervision during after school programs rests with the sponsoring community group.

Controlled Substance Policy

The Scituate Public Schools aim to provide a safe and orderly environment for the students' education. The elementary schools strive to maintain an educational environment that is safe and free from controlled substances. Although these efforts are extremely successful, it is essential that parents be aware of existing policies regarding substance abuse. The following Controlled Substance Procedure covers Grades K-12.

School policy and state law forbids use, possession, or sale/distribution of alcoholic beverages or controlled substances. The regulations are in effect during the school day and at all extracurricular and school functions. Violations of these regulations will result in the following sanctions:

Alcoholic Beverages - First Offense

- Notification of parents
- Mandatory parental conference
- Five (5) day suspension
- Assessment by school psychologist for counseling
- Restriction from all school events or co-curricular activities for ten (10) school days
- Student will be required to develop a contract with the Principal or his/her designee to perform twenty-five (25) hours of school-related service beyond the school day.

Alcoholic Beverages - Second Offense

- Notification of parents
- Mandatory parental conference
- Suspension from school for a minimum of five (5) days with a possible recommendation for an additional five (5) days
- Assessment by school psychologist for counseling
- Notification of Narcotics Bureau and Police informally
- Restriction from attendance or participation in any school events or co-curricular activities for a minimum of sixty (60) calendar days or the remainder of the academic year, whichever is longer. Summer vacation will not be counted in the sixty days, thus penalties will be carried over to the next academic year.
- Possible recommendation for expulsion
- Student will be required to develop a contract with the Principal or his/her designee to perform twenty-five (25) hours of school-related service beyond the school day.

Controlled Substance - First Offense

- Notification of parents
- Mandatory parental conference
- Minimum five (5) days suspension
- Possible expulsion from school
- Assessment by school psychologist for counseling

- Formal notification of the Narcotics Bureau and Police
- Restricted from all school events or co-curricular activities for ten (10) school days
- Student will be required to develop a contract with the Principal or his/her designee to perform twenty-five (25) hours of school-related service beyond the school day.

Controlled Substance - Second Offense

- Notification of parents
- Mandatory parental conference
- Suspension from school for a minimum of five (5) days with a possible recommendation for an additional five (5) days
- Possible expulsion from school
- Assessment by school psychologist for counseling
- Formal notification of the Narcotics Bureau and Police
- Restriction from attendance or participation in any school event or co-curricular activities for a minimum of sixty (60) calendar days, or the remainder of the academic year, whichever is longer. Summer vacation will not be counted in the sixty (60) days, thus penalties will be carried over into the next school year.
- Student will be required to develop a contract with the Principal or his/her designee to perform 25 hours of school-related service beyond the school day.

Delayed Opening

It is the policy of the School Committee to have school when the buses can safely operate. Due to a significant storm or an emergency, the Superintendent of Schools may delay the opening time for up to two hours rather than cancel school for the entire day. In such cases, morning bus pick-ups will coincide with the delay. Dismissal will be at the regular time.

If it is necessary to delay the opening of school, the major radio and television stations will be asked to announce the delayed opening. It is the parent's prerogative to make the final judgment as to whether or not to send students to school in cases of stormy weather. Parents should not call the school, the Fire Department, or the Police Department to verify "Delayed Opening" information. The Alert Now System will also be activated by SPS with "Delayed Opening" information.

Discipline Policy and Procedure

The atmosphere of a school is a reflection of the attitude of its students and staff toward the school and toward each other. It is very important that an atmosphere of order, self-discipline, and mutual respect be encouraged. The administration and staff feel that all students should strive to regulate their own behavior and accept the consequences of their actions.

To maintain a harmonious atmosphere and promote the educational and social well being of all students in the elementary schools, the following Code of Behavior has been established and will be enforced in the elementary schools and on the school buses. The teacher will initially resolve infractions of the rules and regulations. After the teacher has attempted to resolve the problem without success, the student may be referred to the Principal for further disposition.

The consequences within the classroom are as follows:

- A warning may be given.
- A teacher/student discussion regarding the incident, appropriate behavior expected, and any consequence takes place.
- The teacher may request a conference with the student's parent.
- A teacher issued after-school session with twenty-four (24) hour notice given to parent and the parent is responsible for providing transportation home.
- Referral to office after exhausting the above: if a very serious infraction occurs, the teacher may immediately refer the student to the office.

The reasons for administrative referral may include, but are not limited to:

- Bullying
- Disobedience/defiance by a student
- Loud or boisterous conduct anywhere in the school or on school grounds
- Discourtesy or disrespect to any staff member

- Defacing or damaging school property (including textbooks) or the property of another person. Restitution must be made for damages.
- Excessive tardiness to school
- Unacceptable physical behavior such as fighting
- Use of cell phones, video games or other electronic devices during the school day
- Gambling

The administrative consequences (reserved for more serious forms of misconduct or for repeated occurrences of the same misconduct) are as follows:

- Warning to student and contact (oral or written) with parent
- Administrative detention with twenty-four (24) hour notice given to parent: parent is responsible for providing transportation home).
- Conference with parent
- Removal from class for a short period of time and parental contact
- Short-term suspension from school (up to five (5) days: informal hearing) and parental contact
- Long-term suspension from school (beyond five (5) days: formal hearing) and parental conference

It is recognized that each of the above steps and consequences are not always applicable. Therefore, steps and consequences may be adapted depending upon the severity of the behavior. If a student's behavior warrants immediate administrative attention and parental contact cannot be made, the student may be kept out of classes pending such a conference.

The school believes that suspension from school should exist not only as a deterrent to inappropriate behavior but also to assist the majority of students adversely affected by the inappropriate behavior of others. Suspension from school should clearly be used only after all other viable options have been attempted.

Suspension is a very serious form of punishment for violation of school rules. When an out of school suspension is assigned, a student is removed from his/her class and sent home to be supervised by the parent. Parental contact will be made when a student is suspended.

An in-house suspension is a form of punishment which requires the student to remain in an assigned room under the direct supervision of a staff member. During that time, his/her teacher will provide the student with schoolwork. The assigned work must be completed by the end of the day. In the case of either an in-house or out of school suspension, a parental conference is strongly recommended with a school administrator before the student will be readmitted to his/her program.

The Fourteenth Amendment says no person can be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law. The Supreme Court has held that a student's interest in public education is a property right protected by the due process clause. The essential elements of due process are "notice" and "hearing". This means that a student cannot be suspended or expelled unless he/she is informed of the charge against him/her and the basis for the accusation, and unless he/she is given a chance to tell his/her side of the story.

Students may be suspended for a period of up to ten school days at the Principal's discretion for any of the following offenses:

- Disrespectful speech or profanity
- Defacing, destroying, or damaging school property including books belonging to the school or staff members, or other students
- Fighting or threatening to fight (students who encourage others to fight or set up fights between other individuals may also be suspended)
- Forgery, cheating, stealing
- Setting off false alarms (police and fire authorities will also be informed of the name(s) of the individual(s) involved)
- Leaving the school grounds without permission while school is in session
- Vandalism
- Possession of fireworks (including "snaps" or other exploding devices) on school grounds or in the school building (police and fire authorities will also be informed of the name(s) of the individual(s) involved)
- Harassment, hazing or bullying
- Use, possession or sale of controlled substances (drugs/alcohol - see section on Controlled Substances)

- Possession of a weapon (police will also be informed of the name(s) of the individual(s) involved - see section on Weapons)
- Verbal abuse expressed toward or about another student or staff member

The following are subject to immediate suspension and may result in expulsion from school:

- Possession of a weapon, alcohol, controlled substances (drugs), and cigarettes
- Physical/verbal assault on an adult or student assault (includes fighting)

When a student is suspended, the following procedures, and any other procedures required by law will be followed:

- A student will be suspended only to the custody of the parent(s) or guardian(s).
- The Principal prior to any suspension will hold an informal hearing. At this hearing, the student will be informed of the reason(s) for the suspension and will be given the opportunity to present his/her side of the matter. Efforts will be made to notify the parents before this hearing.
- The Principal will make every attempt to notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the student about the suspension and state the cause(s) leading to it. If the suspension is imposed during the school day, the parent(s) or guardian(s) may be required to transport the student home.
- The Principal will send a letter to the parent(s) or guardian(s) confirming the suspension. This notification will contain the reason for the suspension, the number of days for the suspension, the re-admittance date, and the time and date of the readmission conference.
- The Principal will forward a copy of each suspension letter to the Superintendent by the close of the school day following the suspension.
- The student will be given an opportunity to complete any class work, including examinations that may have been missed during the period of suspension. A time limit equal to the number of suspension days will be allowed for the completion of such work.

Students who have been identified as requiring special education services may have additional procedural protections, as required by state and federal laws. Please see Special Education.

Expulsion

For serious misconduct not covered under Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 71, Section 37 or Section 37H 1/2 that warrants an expulsion hearing, the following procedure under M.G.L. C. 76, S. 17 will be followed.

A fair hearing for the student and his/her parents will be held before the School Committee prior to the student being permanently excluded for the alleged misconduct. The procedural rights for the student facing expulsion include:

- Written notification of the charges
- The right to be represented by an attorney or advocate (at the student's expense)
- Adequate time to prepare for the hearing
- Access to documented evidence prior to the hearing
- The right to question witnesses
- A reasonably prompt, written decision including specific grounds for the decision

Expulsion Provisions under the Education Reform Act, Chapter 71, Section 37H

(A) Any student who is found on school property or at school sponsored events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or knife or a controlled substance as defined in Chapter 94C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the Principal.

(B) Any student who assaults a Principal, Assistant Principal, Teacher, Teacher's Aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the Principal.

(C) Any student who is charged with a violation of either (A) or (B) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation (at the student's expense), along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at the hearing before the Principal. After said hearing, the Principal may, in his/her discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the Principal to have violated either paragraph (A) or (B).

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

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

Chapter 71 Section 37H 1/2

Any student who is the subject of a criminal felony complaint or a felony delinquency complaint may be suspended by the Principal following a determination that a student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notice of the charges and the reason for the suspension prior to the suspension taking effect. The student shall also receive written notice of his/her right to appeal this decision to the Superintendent, who, after conducting a hearing, may support, overturn or modify the decision of the Principal, including recommending placement in an alternative education program. The decision of the Superintendent shall be the final decision of the Scituate Public Schools.

If the student is convicted of or admits guilt with respect to a felony or is adjudicated to be guilty of or admits guilt to a felony delinquency, the student may be expelled, if the Principal determines that the student's continued presence would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notice of the decision to expel and the reasons for that decision and shall have the right to appeal this decision in a hearing before the Superintendent who shall render the final decision of the Scituate Public Schools.

Weapons

Many items can be classified as weapons if they are used improperly. Possession of a facsimile weapon also constitutes a violation of school rules and may result in disciplinary action. The Principal has the discretion to determine the consequence for possession of a facsimile weapon and will consider such factors as emotional state and violent intent.

Possession of Weapons - First Offense

- Notification of parents
- Mandatory parent conference
- Five (5) day suspension
- Possible expulsion from school
- Assessment by the school psychologist for counseling
- Notification of police for possible action
- Restricted from all school events or co-curricular activities for ten (10) school days
- Student will be required to develop a contract with the Principal or his/her designee to perform twenty-five (25) hours of school-related service beyond the school day.

Possession of Weapons - Second Offense

- Notification of parents
- Mandatory parent conference
- Suspension from school for a minimum of five (5) days with a possible recommendation for an additional five (5) days
- Possible expulsion from school
- Assessment by school psychologist for counseling
- Notification of police for possible action
- Not allowed to attend or participate in any school event or co-curricular activities for a minimum of sixty (60) calendar days, or the remainder of the academic year. Summer vacation will not be counted in the sixty (60) days, thus penalties will be carried over into the next school year.
- Student will be required to develop a contract with the Principal or his/her designee to perform twenty-five (25) hours of school-related service beyond the school day.

Discrimination/Harassment

The staff and students at the elementary schools wish to foster a positive school environment which facilitates learning. Any form of verbal, physical, or sexual harassment interferes with this goal. Verbal harassment may take the form of any hurtful comments or gestures which refer to a person's gender, race, or ethnic background. Physical harassment includes any inappropriate and/or unwelcome physical contact. Sexual harassment may also take the form of any unwanted comments or gestures and/or physical contact. Some examples include, but are not limited to, sexual notes or pictures, spreading sexual rumors, and making suggestive jokes.

Students who feel they have been the targets of any harassment should report the incident to a teacher, guidance counselor, school nurse, or an administrator.

SCITUATE PUBLIC SCHOOLS NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY AND PROHIBITION AGAINST SEXUAL HARASSMENT

I. Introduction

The Scituate Public Schools have a commitment to maintaining an educational environment and workplace where bigotry and intolerance, including discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, disability or age are not tolerated and where any form of intimidation, threat, coercion and/or harassment that insults the dignity of others and interferes with their freedom to learn or work is unacceptable.

The Scituate Public Schools strictly enforce a prohibition against harassment and discrimination, sexual or otherwise, of any of its students or employees by anyone, including any fellow student, teacher, supervisor, co-worker, vendor, or other third party, as such conduct is contrary to the mission of the Scituate Public Schools and its commitment to equal opportunity in education and employment.

Discrimination and harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal or physical, that is based on a characteristic protected by law, such as sex, race, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation. The Scituate Public Schools will not tolerate harassing or discriminatory conduct that affects employment or educational conditions, that interferes unreasonably with an individual's school or work performance, or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or school environment. Discrimination and/or harassment of employees or students occurring in the schools or workplace are prohibited by law and will not be tolerated by the Scituate Public Schools. For purposes of this policy, "workplace" or "school" include school sponsored social events, trips, sports events, work related travel or similar events connected with school or employment. Further, any retaliation against an individual who has complained about discrimination, harassment or retaliation or any retaliation against any individual who has cooperated with an investigation of discrimination, harassment or retaliation complaint, is similarly unlawful and will not be tolerated.

The Scituate Public Schools takes allegations of discrimination and harassment seriously and will respond promptly to complaints. Where it is determined that inappropriate conduct has occurred, the Scituate Public Schools will act promptly to eliminate the conduct and will impose corrective action as necessary, including disciplinary action where appropriate, which may include termination of employment or school-related discipline.

II. Definition of Discrimination and Harassment

"Discrimination" and "harassment" are defined as unwelcome conduct, whether verbal or physical, that is based on race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, disability or age. 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 (as described above) to participate in or benefit from employment or a program or activity of the Scituate Public Schools; or (ii) creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational or working environment.

Many forms of harassment and discrimination have been recognized as violations of the civil rights laws (including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VI and Title IX) by federal courts, state courts, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the U.S. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office for Civil Rights and the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination.

"Sexual harassment" is defined as sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to or rejection of such advances, requests, or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of employment, academic standing, school-related opportunities or as a basis for employment decisions
- Such advances, requests, or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic or work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating, or sexually offensive work or educational environment.

Under the definition stated above, direct or implied requests by a teacher, supervisor or any individual in a position of work or school authority for sexual favors in exchange for actual or promised job or school benefits such as favorable reviews, salary increases, promotions, increased benefits, continued employment, better grades, recommendations or other advantages constitutes sexual harassment.

While it is not possible to list all circumstances that may be considered sexual harassment, the following are examples of conduct that are inappropriate and that, if unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment. In each case, such a determination will depend upon the totality of the circumstances, including the severity of the conduct and its pervasiveness. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual advances, whether they involve physical touching or not
- Unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, suggestive or insulting comments
- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or verbal references to sexual conduct, comments about an individual's body, comments about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess
- Discussions of one's own sexual activities or inquiries into others' sexual experiences
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons

The definitions of discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment are broad. In addition to the above examples, other unwelcome conduct, whether intended or not, that has the effect of creating a school or work environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating, or humiliating to either male or female students or workers also may constitute discrimination, harassment and/or sexual harassment.

III. Reporting Complaints of Discrimination and Harassment

If any Scituate Public Schools' student or employee believes, in good faith, that he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment or any other form of harassment or discrimination described above, the individual has a right to file a complaint with the Scituate Public Schools through the Assistant Superintendent. This may be done verbally or in writing. Teachers or other staff members who observe incidents of harassment involving students should report such incidents immediately to the student's Principal or Assistant Principal. Administrators aware of harassment involving any employee should report such incidents to the Assistant Superintendent.

If you wish to file a complaint, you may do so by contacting your immediate supervisor or the Assistant Superintendent in the case of employees; and your teacher, Principal, Assistant Principal or Assistant Superintendent in the case of students.

IV. Complaint Investigation Reporting Complaints of Discrimination and Harassment

When the Scituate Public Schools receives a complaint of discrimination or harassment, it will investigate the allegation in a fair and expeditious manner. The investigation will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances. The investigation may include an interview with the person filing the complaint and also may include interviews with witnesses or other individuals who the Scituate Public Schools believes would be useful to the investigation. The Scituate Public Schools also will interview the person alleged to have committed the discrimination or harassment. When the Scituate Public Schools has concluded its investigation, the Scituate Public Schools will, to the extent appropriate, inform the person filing the complaint and the person alleged to have committed the conduct of the results of the investigation.

These complaint investigation procedures cover complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, sexual orientation and disability. The procedures are designed to promote the sensitive handling of employee and student issues, the thorough investigation of complaints, and to facilitate a prompt and expeditious internal review and a fair and equitable resolution of complaints alleging discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation, or disability. An employee or student may select any of the routes identified above in Section III or identified below in Section IV.B to discuss a concern or file a complaint of discrimination or harassment. Employees and students are encouraged to attempt resolution within their school or administrative office and may seek advice from appropriate individuals within their school or administrative office or from the Assistant Superintendent without being required to file a formal complaint.

Please note that while these procedures relate to the Scituate Public Schools' policy of promoting a workplace and educational setting free from discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment, as detailed further in this policy, these procedures are not designed nor intended to limit the Scituate Public Schools' authority to discipline or take remedial action for workplace and educational conduct which the Scituate Public Schools deems unacceptable.

A. General Policies

1. No reprisals or retaliation shall be invoked against any employee or any student for processing, in good faith, a complaint, either on an informal or formal basis, or for participating in any way in these complaint procedures.
2. No reprisals or retaliation shall be invoked against any employee or any student who, in good faith, has testified, assisted or participated in any manner in any investigation, proceeding, or hearing of a complaint or for otherwise participating in any way in these complaint procedures.
3. Whenever possible, a conference should be scheduled during a time that does not conflict with regularly scheduled work and/or school programs.
4. The Scituate Public Schools will work with an individual who files a complaint of discrimination or harassment; including conducting an investigation and holding conferences, in order to fairly and expeditiously resolve the complaint.

B. Procedures

1. **Informal Resolution of Discrimination and Harassment Concerns.** Before initiating the formal procedure, the student or employee should, if possible, resolve any complaint regarding an alleged discriminatory practice on an informal basis.
 - a. The student can raise the issue to his or her teacher, Principal, Assistant Principal, or Assistant Superintendent.
 - b. The employee can raise the issue to either his or her supervisor or to the Assistant Superintendent.

The appropriate department or school administrators shall attempt, within his/her authority, to work with the individual to resolve the complaint fairly and expeditiously within ten (10) working days of receiving the complaint.

Whichever option is chosen, attempts will be made to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the employee or student who has made the complaint. If the employee or student is not satisfied with the resolution, or if the employee or student does not choose informal resolution, then the employee or student can begin the formal complaint process.

2. **Formal Resolution of Discrimination and Harassment Concerns.** Both employees and students may direct the complaint to the Assistant Superintendent for investigation. Employees and students are expected to direct the complaint no later than twenty (20) calendar days after the alleged discriminatory practice occurred in order for an expeditious investigation to be conducted, unless extenuating circumstances exist. The employee or student shall submit a written statement that will state the name of the individual and the location of the school/department where the alleged discriminatory practice occurred; the basis for the complaint and the corrective action the employee or student is seeking.

After filing the formal written complaint, the Assistant Superintendent shall promptly give written notification to the appropriate school/department identified in the complaint. This written notification shall be a copy of the complaint filed with the Assistant Superintendent. The Assistant Superintendent will conduct the necessary investigation promptly after receiving the complaint. In the course of the investigation, the Assistant Superintendent shall contact those individuals that have been referred to as having pertinent information related to the complaint. This process shall include, at a minimum, contacting the complainant and the person against whom the complaint was filed and/or the Principal or appropriate authority involved. If further documentation is needed, the Assistant Superintendent shall present to the appropriate authorities written requests for additional information pertaining to the complaint. Strict timelines cannot be set for conducting the investigation because each set of circumstances is different. For example, sometimes the employees or students who are involved in the complaint are not immediately available. The Assistant Superintendent, however, will make sure that the complaint is handled as quickly as is feasible and will strive to complete the investigation within thirty (30) working days. When more than thirty (30) working days is required for the investigation, the Assistant Superintendent shall inform the employee or student who filed the complaint that the investigation is still ongoing.

After completing the formal investigation of the complaint, the Assistant Superintendent shall request a meeting with the person against whom the complaint was filed and/or the Principal or appropriate authority involved to discuss the findings of the Assistant Superintendent and, at the same time, to give the person against whom the complaint was filed and/or the Prin-

cipal, supervisor or appropriate authority involved an opportunity to respond to the findings and to seek to resolve the complaint. When feasible and appropriate, the Assistant Superintendent will make every attempt to resolve the issue within the time parameters of this initial meeting; however, more than one meeting may be necessary. The Assistant Superintendent will strive to complete both the investigation and the resolution of the complaint within thirty (30) working days. When more than thirty (30) working days is required for the investigation and resolution process, the Assistant Superintendent shall inform the employee or student who filed the complaint and the individual against whom the complaint was filed and/or the Principal or appropriate authority involved that additional time is needed for the resolution process.

If the Assistant Superintendent finds that there is reasonable cause for believing that a discriminatory or harassing practice has occurred, the Assistant Superintendent will refer the matter to the Superintendent of Schools for the Scituate Public Schools and/or his or her designee for appropriate action, up to and including termination for employees or expulsion for students.

If no satisfactory resolution can be reached through either the informal or formal resolution procedures detailed above, the student or employee has the right to take the complaint to an appropriate state or federal agency. Moreover, it should be noted that using the Scituate Public Schools' complaint process does not prohibit you from filing a complaint with these agencies. For students, complaints may be taken to the Office for Civil Rights, John W. McCormack Building, Post Office and Court House, Boston, MA 02109-4557; the Bureau of Equal Education Opportunity, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5023; or other appropriate state or federal agencies. For employees or applicants for employment, complaints may be taken to the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108; Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, One Congress Street, 10th Floor, Boston, MA 02109; or other appropriate state or federal agencies.

V. Disciplinary Action

If it is determined that inappropriate conduct has been committed by a Scituate Public Schools employee or student, the Scituate Public Schools will take action that is appropriate under the circumstances. Action may range from counseling to termination of employment or discipline, up to and including expulsion.

VI. State and Federal Remedies

In addition to the above, employees who believe they have been subjected to discrimination and/or harassment may file a formal complaint with the respective state agency and/or the EEOC. Using the Scituate Public Schools' complaint process does not prohibit you from filing a complaint with these agencies. Each agency has a specific time period for filing a claim. The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) allows at least one hundred eighty (180) days (may be longer in some circumstances) to file a complaint, and the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD) allows at least three hundred (300) days to file a complaint.

1. The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) - You can reach an EEOC field office by calling toll free: (800) 669-4000 TDD (800) 800-3302

JFK Federal Building Room 475 Boston, MA 02203 TTY (617) 565-3204	or	1801 L Street, NW Washington, DC 20507
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2. Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD)

Boston Office: One Ashburton Place Room 601 Boston, MA 02108 (617) 994-6000	or	Springfield Office: 436 Dwight Street - Room 220 Springfield, MA 01103 (413) 739-2145
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3. Students may also file complaints with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination at the addresses listed above, and with the United States Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office for Civil Rights, J. W. McCormack Building, Room 701, Boston, MA 02109; (617) 223-9662.

Dismissal

Early dismissal is to be kept to an absolute minimum. The only acceptable dismissals are doctor/dentist appointments, family emergencies, and illness.

No student will be released during the school day, unless given written permission by the School Nurse, the Principal, or someone she/he designates to have that authority. No release will be given unless the Nurse determines that the student should return home or unless a written note from the parent or legal guardian is brought in on the day of dismissal. This note must explain the reason for dismissal and the time the pupil is to be dismissed. Only a note signed by a parent or a legal guardian is acceptable. A parent/guardian must be present when the pupil is released from school, unless the signed note allows the release of the child to another adult (identification may be required). Every student must be signed out from the school office, or Nurse's Office, before leaving school. Parent(s)/guardian(s) must report to the office where the student will be called from the classroom for dismissal. The fewer times a child is released early from school, the better for his/her education.

Dress

Students' appearance should be neat at all times. There is a very distinct difference between self-expression reflecting a personality and deliberate offensiveness. Any apparel that makes reference to drugs, alcohol, sex, or profanity is not considered appropriate school attire. The following items are not appropriate for school:

- Shoes or clothing that damage school property (including sneakers with wheels)
- Unsafe footwear such as flip-flops, sandals, shoes without back and shoes with high heels are not safe for running or using playground equipment. Students will not be allowed to participate in physical education, group sports, or use playground equipment when wearing this type of footwear.
- Sneakers must be worn during physical education class.
- Hats, bandanas, sweatshirt hoods and other headgear are to be removed in the school setting at teacher or administrator discretion (exceptions include religious and or health related headgear)
- Outerwear jackets inside the school building
- Halter tops
- No "spaghetti-strap" jerseys or tank tops or any shirt or jersey which exposes the midriff
- Strapless, backless, see-through garments, tube tops, and muscle shirts
- Low cut tops that expose cleavage
- Obscene, profane language or pictures on clothing and/or jewelry that may cause disruption or disorder within the school are not permitted
- Pants that expose underwear
- Shorts and skirts that are shorter than mid thigh in length
- Pajama bottoms and/or slippers (except when sponsored by special school activity)
- Chains hanging from an article of clothing or any piece of jewelry that may be considered unsafe in any particular class or during any class activity

The courts have ruled that the schools have the authority to regulate students' dress and in some cases, hairstyling. Students who are dressed inappropriately for school will be requested to change their clothing. Parents may be called and requested to bring in appropriate attire for their child. Health regulations require that shoes must be worn at all times in a public building.

Due Process

See Discipline Procedures on pages 3-6.

Electronic Devices (Including Cell Phones)

Students are not allowed to use personal electronic devices during the academic day. All personal electronic devices are to be turned off and secured in backpacks. If a student uses it during the school day, the device will be taken and returned at the end of the day. If there is a second offense, the device will be held for parent pick up.

Emergency Card

Emergency cards for each student must be on file in the School Office so that parent(s)/legal guardian(s) or designated emergency contacts may be reached in case of illness or injury. Every attempt will be made to contact parent(s) first before calling the emergency contact. It is the family's responsibility to keep contact information up to date. Please remember to contact the office if your home or cell phone numbers change during the school year as well as any changes in emergency contact information.

Emergency School Closing

In the event that there is a storm or an emergency develops during the school day that necessitates closing the school, there will be an early dismissal. Should this occur, parents are advised to have a plan in place directing their child or children where to go when there is no one at home.

If it becomes necessary to close a school during normal school hours due to weather conditions or any other emergency situation, the following procedure will be used:

- The decision to close a school will be made as soon as possible by the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee.
- The emergency school closing announcement will be carried on local cable television (Channel 22), radio station WATD 95.6 FM, and the Alert Now Call System.

Entrance Regulations

- **Kindergarten and Grade 1:** A child who will be five years of age on or before September 1 is eligible to attend Kindergarten in September of that school year. A child who will be six years of age on or before September 1 is eligible to attend Grade One in September of that school year.
- **Birth Certificate:** A certified copy of the child's birth certificate must be presented for entrance to school.
- **Health Requirements:** The Massachusetts Department of Health requires that all children attending public or private school (Kindergarten through Grade 12) be immunized against Hepatitis B, diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella, and screened for lead poisoning. In addition, all students must have been immunized against the varicella virus (chicken pox) or have a physician's note stating that the student has had the disease. In compliance with the School Immunization Laws, the child will not be able to attend school in September unless all required immunizations are on file in the School Nurse's Office. The certification must be in the form of a written record that specifies the type of immunization and indicates the month, day, and year of each vaccine. In the absence of an emergency or epidemic declared by the Department of Public Health, any child whose parent or legal guardian can demonstrate evidence that immunization conflicts with his/her religious beliefs shall be required to present a physician's certificate to be admitted to school (Chapter 76, Section 15).
- **Records from a Prior School:** A complete copy of a new student's records from any school from which they are transferring must be provided to the receiving school.

Equity in the Scituate Public Schools

Federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin (**Title VI** of the Civil Rights Act of 1964); sex (**Title IX** of the Education Amendments of 1972); or disability (Section **504** of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) in educational programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. Pursuant to this, the following information is provided for use by the Scituate Public School System, parents, students, and other interested parties.

Contact Information

Dr. James Kelleher, Assistant Superintendent
District Equity Coordinator
606 Chief Justice Cushing Highway
Scituate, MA 02066

jkelleher@sps.scit.org
(781) 545-8759 x.321

The complete policy can be found on line at www.scituate.k12.ma.us or a hard copy can be obtained by calling the Superintendent's Office.

Expulsion Procedure

See Discipline Procedures on pages 3-6.

Field Trips

Student trips of significant educational value shall be encouraged under rules established by the Superintendent. Student safety shall be a primary consideration. No student shall be denied the privilege of making a trip due to an inability to meet the financial obligations for such trips. No student will be allowed to attend a field trip unless he/she is present in school on the day of the trip.

Fire Drills

The safety of students and school personnel is a paramount concern. Students should pay strict attention to the rules and regulations that are posted in each room. These rules will be reviewed periodically by the homeroom teacher. When the alarm rings, students must leave the building in a single file and follow the directions of the teacher. Talking is not allowed. If a student is not with a teacher when the alarm is sounded, he/she should go to the nearest exit and report to the first teacher the student sees.

Hazing

Hazing is defined as any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which wilfully endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to weather, forced consumption (of any food, liquor, beverage, drug, or other substance) or any other brutal treatment or forced 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. Hazing may result in suspension or expulsion.

Home Instruction

The Scituate Public Schools continues to respect the right of parents to educate their children at home. Home instruction is subject to the prior approval of the Superintendent following specific procedures. Further information may be obtained from the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development.

Home/School Communication

Parents are an integral part of our school and as such we strive to keep them involved and informed.

- An Open House is scheduled at the beginning of the school year.
- A calendar of school activities can be found on-line at www.scituate.k12.ma.us
- Parents are encouraged to communicate with their child's teachers.
- Parents and teachers may request conferences at any time.
-

Home/Hospital Instruction

Tutoring in the home or in a hospital setting is available when the school receives written confirmation from the student's physician that the student 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 fourteen school days in any school year. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has developed a form for physicians to complete when making requests for home or hospital instruction. (Department of Education Form 28/R). This form may be found at www.doe.mass.edu/sped/28mr/28r3.doc or obtained from the High School Guidance Department. The form must be completed and returned to the Director of Guidance, Scituate Public Schools before any tutoring can be authorized.

Holidays

Appropriate ceremonies and observances of national holidays and events of national, state, and local significance shall be encouraged and shall conform to statutory requirements of the Commonwealth. In addition, at various times throughout the school year, classes set may aside time for activities that celebrate certain holidays (e.g., Halloween, Thanksgiving, and so on). However, it is recognized that not all families wish to observe or have their children observe these holidays. These activities are ordinarily planned in advance and parents should assume that some sort of celebration might occur during these times of the year. If you do not wish your child to participate in any holiday celebration, please write a note to the classroom teacher.

Homework

Homework is an extension of the student's daily instructional program and is assigned to meet the following educational goals and activities:

- To review, reinforce and refine the skills and concepts taught in the classroom
- To pursue independent studies of the curriculum
- To develop a sense of responsibility and accountability and to include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following areas: language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

The homework component of the grade should not exceed the following:

- Grades 1-3: No more than 10%
- Grades 4-6: No more than 20%

Homework should be assigned with increasing frequency beginning in Grade 1 through Grade 12. It is recommended that homework assignments, including independent reading and projects, fall within the following frequency and time guidelines:

- Grades 1 - 2: Average 3-4 nights per week, average 40 minutes per night
- Grade 3: Average 3-4 nights per week, average one hour per night
- Grade 4: Average 4-5 nights per week, average 1.5 hours per night
- Grades 5 - 6: Average 4-5 nights per week, average less than two hours per night

These policies are recommended as guidelines to establish consistency within the school system. They should not be interpreted as a constraint upon a teacher's academic freedom, nor upon any departmental policies about homework that would further refine or clarify these policies. The students and parents should be made aware of each teacher's grading philosophy in the first few weeks of school each year.

Homework assignments missed because of absenteeism due to illness, family emergencies, and vacations taken during school time must be made up within one week of the student's return to school. Extra help and make-up sessions do not replace attendance for the regular daily instruction. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the student or parent to request homework assignments when a student is absent from school.

Teachers are not required to give assignments in advance to students who will be on vacation during school time. Parents are urged to schedule vacations during planned school vacation periods to ensure that their child does not miss the daily classroom instructions. It is the student's responsibility to make up all assignments and other work within one week of his/her return to school if vacations are taken during school time.

Parental involvement in the homework process is encouraged. It is recommended that parents provide a setting conducive to doing homework and a definite time period during which homework must be done. Parents can also act as a resource person to their children when requested. By assuming this role, parents can be in a position to check their child's progress and the quality of their homework assignments.

It is recognized that long-term assignments may increase a student's homework load over and above the normal time recommendations. Teachers make every effort to avoid concurrent long-term assignments.

The Scituate Public Schools strongly supports and encourages the use of computer technology in the teaching/learning process. However, parents and students are advised to give careful consideration toward the balance of using this technology and practicing independent critical thinking and problem solving skills.

Hours

The elementary school hours are listed on the Scituate School Calendar which is posted on the Scituate Public Schools Web Site (www.scituatek12.ma.us) and available in all school offices. Students should not arrive at any school earlier than 10 minutes before the starting time. The Scituate Schools will not provide supervision during hours prior to the beginning of and following the end of the posted school hours.

Internet Use

I. Acceptable Use

The Internet is a global network linking computers around the world. Internet use provides valuable opportunities for research, curriculum support, and career development. The Scituate Public School System offers Internet access to its students and staff. The primary purpose of providing access to the Internet is to support the educational mission of the Scituate Public Schools. The Scituate Public Schools expects that students and staff will use this access in a manner consistent with this purpose.

While the Internet is a tremendous resource for electronic information, it has the potential for abuse. Scituate Public Schools make no guarantees, implied or otherwise, regarding the factual reliability of data available over the Internet. Users of the Scituate Internet service assume full responsibility for any costs, liabilities, or damages arising from the way they choose to use their access to the Internet. The Scituate Public Schools has installed special filtering software in an effort to block access to material that is not appropriate for children.

II. Unacceptable Use: The following is a list of prohibited behaviors. The list is not exhaustive but illustrates unacceptable uses of the Scituate Internet Service.

- Disclosing, using or disseminating personal identification information about self or others
- Accessing, sending or forwarding materials or communications that are defamatory, pornographic, obscene, sexually explicit, threatening, harassing, or illegal
- Using the Internet service for any illegal activities such as gaining unauthorized access to other systems, arranging for the sale or purchase of drugs or alcohol, participating in criminal gang activity, threatening others, transferring obscene material, or attempting to do any of the above
- Using the Internet service to receive or send information relating to dangerous instruments such as bombs or other explosive devices, automatic weapons or other firearms, or other weaponry
- Vandalizing school computers by causing physical damage, reconfiguring the computer system, attempting to disrupt the computer system, or destroying data by spreading computer viruses or by any other means
- Copying or downloading of copyrighted material without authorization from the copyright holder, unless the copies are used for teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship, or research. Users shall not copy and forward or copy and upload any copyrighted material without prior approval of the building administrator and/or Director of Technology
- Plagiarizing material obtained from the Internet. Any material obtained from the Internet and included in one's own work must be cited and credited by name or by electronic address or path on the Internet. Information obtained through E-mail or news sources must also be credited as to sources
- Using the Internet Service for commercial purposes
- Downloading or installing any commercial software, shareware, freeware or similar types of material onto network drives or disks without prior permission of the Director of Technology
- Overriding the Internet filtering software.

III. Safety Issues

Use of the Internet has potential dangers. Users are encouraged to read two brochures regarding Internet safety that the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office has prepared. The brochures are entitled *The Internet, Your Child and You: What Every Parent Should Know* and *Internet Safety: Advice from Kids Who Have Faced Danger Online*. Copies of these brochures are available at www.ago.state.ma.us.

The following are basic safety rules pertaining to all types of Internet applications:

- Never reveal any identifying information such as last names, ages, addresses, phone numbers, parents' names, parents' employers or work addresses, or photographs.
- Use the "back" key whenever you encounter a site that you believe is inappropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable.

- Immediately tell the teacher and/or building administrator if you receive a message that you believe is inappropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable.
- Never share your password or use another person's password. Internet passwords are provided for each user's personal use only. If you suspect that someone has discovered your password, you should change it immediately and notify the building administrator and/or Director of Technology.

IV. Privacy

Users should not have an expectation of privacy or confidentiality in the content of electronic communications or other computer files sent and received on the school computer network or stored in the user's directory or on a disk drive. The Scituate Public School System reserves the right to examine all data stored on diskettes involved in the user's use of the Scituate Internet service.

Internet messages are public communication and are not private. All communications including text and images may be disclosed to law enforcement or other third parties without prior consent of the sender or the receiver. Network administrators may review communications to maintain integrity system wide and ensure that users are using the system responsibly.

V. Violations

Access to the Scituate Internet Service is a privilege not a right. The Scituate Public Schools reserves the right to deny, revoke or suspend specific user privileges and/or to take other disciplinary action, up to and including suspension, expulsion (students), or dismissal (staff) for violations of this policy. The district will advise appropriate law enforcement agencies of illegal activities conducted through the Scituate Internet Service. The district also will cooperate fully with local, state, and/or federal officials in any investigation related to any illegal activities conducted through the service.

Please refer to the back of the student handbook for the sign-off agreement, which must be completed and returned to school prior to any Internet use.

Lost and Found

Each elementary school designates a specific area for lost and found articles. Periodically, unclaimed articles are forwarded to Goodwill or a similar cause. Parents are advised to be certain that all of their child's possessions are labelled (such as clothing, backpacks, lunch boxes, etc.).

Lunch Programs/Menu

All schools serve lunch and milk to children in Grades 1-12 daily at a minimum cost. (A schedule of lunch prices is sent home with each student in September). Milk may also be purchased separately. For students who qualify, the lunch offering is available on a free or reduced-price basis. Applications for free and reduced lunch programs are distributed to all students in September and may be obtained at other times during the school year at the school office. Lunches are planned to be appealing to children and meet nutritional needs. Menus are posted on line and published in local newspapers.

The menu for the school cafeteria includes the following lunch selections:

- Hot entree, vegetable/fruit, bread, milk
- Sandwich or hot dog, vegetable/fruit, milk
- Peanut butter and jelly sandwich, vegetable/fruit, milk
- A-la-carte milk, fresh fruit, sandwiches, fruit juices, dessert

Students may pay in cash for their lunches in advance from the school Cafeteria Manager. Tickets may be purchased by check made payable to Scituate Food Services. Charging lunch is not allowed.

Lunch Rules may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Talk quietly.
- Sit in your own seat.
- Respect other adults and children in the cafeteria.
- Children must comply with allergy provisions and restrictions as they relate to cafeteria policies and procedures.

No School Announcements

It is the policy of the School Committee to have school when the buses can safely operate. The major radio and television stations will be asked to announce the cancellation of school. It is the parent's prerogative to make the final judgment as to whether or not to send students to school in cases of stormy weather.

Parents should not call the school, the Fire Department, or the Police Department to verify "NO SCHOOL" information. There may be days when the opening of school will be delayed due to inclement weather. Please listen to the major radio and television stations. Also, SPS will activate the Alert Now Call System for this information (see Delayed Opening).

Non-Discrimination Policy

The complete policy can be found on line at www.scituate.k12.ma.us or a hard copy can be obtained by calling the Superintendent's Office.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

The Parent-Teacher Conference is used by the Scituate Elementary Schools in addition to formal report cards to inform parents of a student's growth and progress. A minimum of two conferences are scheduled during the school year. Parents are encouraged to communicate with their child's teachers. Parents and teachers may request conferences at any time.

The objectives of the parent-teacher conference are:

- To enable the teacher and parent to work together to find specific ways to help the child gain the most from his/her educational experience
- To give parents a thorough appraisal of the child's progress and relationships
- To acquaint parents and teachers with the strengths and weaknesses of the child

Parent-Teacher Organizations (PTO)

EVERY parent of an elementary school child is a member of that school's PTO. The Elementary PTO's are support groups that enrich the children's educational environment. Through the interaction of parents, students, faculty, administration, and the entire community, the PTO is able to enhance the quality of education. Families are encouraged to become involved in their school's PTO programs and activities which may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Cultural enrichment programs
- Classroom and school wide volunteer support
- Fund Raising
- Social Events (fairs, family meals, shows, etc.)
- Field Trips
- Book Fairs

Pets

For the safety and security of all, pets are not allowed on school property.

Plagiarism/Cheating

Cheating is intolerable in an academic institution and will be dealt with seriously. Cheating involves the intentional attempt to pass off the work of another as one's own. Cheating includes (but is not limited to):

- Illicit sharing or learning of specific questions on an exercise before it is given
- Illicit sharing or obtaining information during an exercise (this includes homework, accessing information from a disk, etc.)
- Plagiarism, i.e., submitting another's work or ideas as one's own. This includes copying from another student's work from books, or from any electronic source including the Internet.
- Stealing quizzes or tests

Consequences:

- First Offense: Conference with teacher and student, parent notified. Grade may be affected
- Second Offense: Principal, teacher, and student conference, parent notified, grade will be affected

Restraint of Students in Scituate Public Schools

The Scituate Public Schools complies with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) restraint regulations, 603 CMR 46.00 et seq. ("Regulations"), to the extent required by law. According to their terms, the Regulations apply not only at school but also at school-sponsored events and activities, whether or not on school property. A brief overview of the Regulations is provided below.

Methods and Conditions for Implementation:

- School staff may use physical restraint¹ only (1) when non-physical interventions would be ineffective and the student's behavior poses a threat of imminent, serious harm to self and/or others or (2) pursuant to a student's IEP or other written plan developed in accordance with state and federal law and approved by the school and parent or guardian.
- Physical restraint may not be used as a means of punishment or as a response to property destruction, disruption of school order, a student's refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive, or verbal threats that do not constitute a threat of imminent, serious, physical harm. Chemical² and mechanical restraints³ may only be used if explicitly authorized by a physician and approved by a parent or guardian. Seclusion⁴ is prohibited.
- The Regulations do not prevent a teacher, employee or agent of the District from using reasonable force to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent serious harm or from restraining students as otherwise provided in the Regulations.

Staff Training: All school staff must receive training with respect to the district's restraint policy (i.e., following the Regulations), including receiving information about interventions that may preclude the need for restraint, types of restraint and related safety considerations, and administering physical restraint in accordance with known medical or psychological limitations and/or behavioral intervention plans applicable to an individual student. Additionally, the school must identify specific staff to serve as school-wide resources to assist in ensuring proper administration of physical restraint. These individuals must participate in in-depth training with respect to restraint and implementation of the Regulations.

Reporting Requirements and Follow-Up: In instances where a physical restraint (1) lasts more than five minutes or (2) results in injury to a student or staff member, the school staff must report the physical restraint to the Principal or a designee. The Principal/designee must maintain an ongoing record of all such reported instances, which will be made available in accordance with state and federal law and regulations. The Principal/designee must also verbally inform the student's parent or guardian of the restraint as soon as possible, and by written report postmarked no later than three school working days following the use of the restraint. The written restraint report must be provided to the parent or guardian in the language in which report cards and other necessary school-related information are customarily provided. In the event that a physical restraint (1) lasts longer than 20 minutes or (2) results in serious injury to the student or staff member, the school must, within five school working days of the reported restraint, provide a copy of the written report to DESE along with a copy of the school's record of physical restraints covering the thirty-day period prior to the date of the restraint.

For students who require the frequent use of restraint because they present a high risk of frequent dangerous behaviors, school staff may seek and obtain the parent or guardian's consent to waive reporting requirements for restraints administered to an individual student that do not result in serious injury to the student or staff member or constitute extended restraint (longer than 20 minutes). Follow-up procedures for restraint include not only the reporting requirements set forth above, but also reviewing the incident with the student, staff and consideration of whether follow-up is appropriate for students who witnessed the incident.

Complaints. A student or representative who has a complaint regarding the District's restraint practices may report the matter to the building Principal. In the event the Principal is alleged to have engaged in improper restraint practices, the report should be made to:

Dr. James Kelleher, Assistant Superintendent
Scituate Public Schools
606 Chief Justice Cushing Highway
Scituate, MA 02066
781-545-8759

Complaints must be filed in writing within 30 school days of the event giving rise to the complaint and must include (1) a description, in as much detail as possible, of the alleged events; (2) the date and location of occurrence; and (3) all persons who have knowledge of the events (witnesses) as can be reasonably determined.

District personnel will investigate the reported events including interviewing witnesses deemed necessary and appropriate to determine the facts relevant to the complaint. Such investigation will generally be completed and a written disposition made within twenty school days of receiving the complaint. If this time line is not met, the reason(s) for not meeting will be documented. Employees should note that violation of this policy (i.e., the Regulations) can result in disciplinary action, subject to applicable procedural requirements. It is understood that in the event a resolution contemplated by the Scituate Public Schools involves disciplinary action against an employee, the complainant will not be informed of such disciplinary action, unless it directly involves the complainant (i.e., a directive to cease specific conduct with respect to the complainant).

If the complaint is not satisfied with an initial disposition, the grievant may appeal to the Superintendent, who can be contacted as follows:

Susan Martin, Superintendent
Scituate Public Schools
606 Chief Justice Cushing Highway
Scituate, Massachusetts 02066
781-545-8759

Additional information, including a copy of the Regulations, can be obtained from the Superintendent of Schools who can be reached as stated above. A copy of the Regulations may also be obtained at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr46.html?section=all>

¹ Physical restraint is the use of bodily force to limit a student's freedom of movement and does not include touching or holding a student without the use of force for the purpose of directing the student. The Scituate Public Schools uses a variety of physical restraint methods, including but not limited to Children's Control Position, Team Control Position, and Transport Technique.

² Chemical restraint is the administration of medication for the purpose of limiting the student's freedom of movement.

³ Mechanical restraint is the use of a physical device to restrict the movement of a student or the movement or normal function of a portion of his or her body and does not include a protective or stabilizing device ordered by a physician.

⁴ Seclusion is defined as physically confining a student alone in a room or limited space without access to school staff and does not include the use of "time out" procedures during which a staff member remains accessible to the student

Recess

Weather permitting, children may be outdoors for recess. Safety considerations are also taken under advisement when the feasibility of outdoor recess is being determined. Students should dress appropriately. During winter months this would include coats, hats, mittens and/or gloves and boots.

Religious Holy Day Policy (Testing, Social Events, Athletic Contests, Field Trips)

The Scituate School Committee adopts the following policy in order to accommodate the religious needs of our students who observe religious holy days during the school year:

- No student shall be penalized because he/she was absent from school for religious observance.
- Teachers will not give tests or quizzes nor announce forthcoming tests or quizzes nor plan field trips or have programs that would place absent students at a disadvantage on religious holy days. Tests or quizzes shall not be administered on the day following a religious holy day unless the teacher has provided notice of such test or quiz at least four school days prior to the religious holy day.
- A list of the religious holy days, which shall include, but not be limited to Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Passover (which will be included on the school calendar each year) shall be provided to each teacher at the start of the school year. Such lists shall include the notation that the Jewish holy days begin at sundown on the day before the holy day.
- Scituate Public Schools shall consider religious holy days in the preparation of the annual school calendar and these shall be listed on the calendar. Every effort will be made to avoid scheduling school sponsored school functions e.g. "Back-to-School Nights", concerts, plays, school photos, and athletic contests on religious holy days.

Report Cards

The report card is one way to indicate a student's progress. The school staff strongly encourages all parents to get to know their child through contact with the school personnel as often as necessary.

Report cards are issued on a scheduled basis as indicated on the school calendar. Parent conferences are scheduled after the report cards are issued. At any time, however, parents are encouraged to communicate with their child's teacher. Often this communication provides a means for overcoming obstacles that may interfere with a child's progress in school.

School Councils

Through the passing of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993, each public school is responsible for the establishment of a site-based School Council. This Council (made up of parents, teachers, community representatives, and the Principal) serves as an advisory Council to the Principal. Areas under the realm of these Councils pertain to the specific language of the Education Reform Act. Annual school improvement plans are created reflecting the needs of individual school communities.

School Health Services

Scituate School Nurses strive to maximize each student's potential to learn and grow by providing the best possible care and ensuring healthy learning environments.

- **In the school setting they:**
 - Conduct health screenings: vision, hearing, and scoliosis.
 - Assess for growth, health, and development.
 - Provide emergency first aid.
 - Control communicable diseases.
 - Provide counselling for students and staff regarding health matters.
 - Serve as a resource for student health issues and in health education.
 - Assist in maintaining a safe school environment.
 - Monitor required daily medication administration.
 - Maintain safe environments for students with specific health concerns.
 - Collaborate With Special Education Services.
 - Serve as education team members.
 - Develop and implement the health components of a student's IEP (Individualized Education Plan).
 - Provide in-service education to staff in special health care procedures.
 - Meet with counselors and school psychologists to provide the best environment for students.
 - Act as an active participant in 504 processes (needs not covered under special education services).
 - Serve as members of Crisis Team.
- **In the home setting they:**
 - Act as liaison between home and school regarding health concerns.
 - Make home visits when necessary.
 - Take health histories.
 - Monitor long term illnesses.
 - Participate in parent-nurse conferences.
- **In the community setting they:**
 - Act as liaison between home, school, and community resources.
 - Act as liaison between health care provider and schools.

Immunization Requirements

All students must be completely immunized in order to attend school. Massachusetts' immunization regulations specify minimum immunization requirements for enrollment in school (105CMR 220.00). Those students with documented medical contraindications or documented religious beliefs are the only ones exempt from the immunization regulation. However, any student who is not properly immunized will be excluded from school if there is a vaccine-preventable disease outbreak. The length of exclusion is determined by Department of Public Health guidelines and may vary according to disease.

Physical Exam Requirement

The State of Massachusetts DPH regulation 200.100 requires a physical examination within one year prior to entrance to school or within 30 days after a student transferred from another school system. The elementary physical schedule in Scituate is as follows; Kindergarten, Third and Sixth Grade.

Communicable and Infectious Diseases

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health has identified the following as being particular problems among the school population. This list is not all-inclusive. Please contact the school nurse if you have any questions.

- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Impetigo
- Streptococcal Infections (strep throat)
- Pediculosis (head lice)
- Scabies
- Chicken Pox

If the school nurse suspects the presence of one of these, or any other contagious disease, the parent will be contacted and requested to seek the advice of his/her physician. In the case of a confirmed diagnosis of a communicable disease or infestation, the student will be required to stay out of school until the condition is treated and rendered non-communicable. Parents are asked to report all cases of communicable disease to the school nurse.

Absence/Dismissals from School

Parents are advised to keep their child home if they have a temperature of 100 degrees or greater, have vomited, diarrhea and persistent respiratory or flu symptoms. Students who are prescribed antibiotics for strep throat need to be taking the medication for a full 24 hours before returning to school.

- In the event that your student becomes ill during the school day, a parent or guardian will be contacted to pick up the student. With parent permission, the student may be dismissed to another family member or friend provided proper identification is shown. If the school is unable to reach the parent, the emergency contact (designated each September on the emergency card) will be called to pick up the student.
- Children who are absent from school must bring a note from home upon returning to school. If the child is absent for 5 consecutive days due to a communicable and/or infectious disease (or for any health reason), she/he must bring a note from the doctor and check with the School Nurse.

Student Medication Policy

The responsibility of giving medicine belongs to the parents. On occasion, medication is required during school hours. For the safety of all children, no child is allowed to transport his/her medication to school. This includes over the counter as well as prescription medication. If a child needs medication during school hours, the School Nurse can only administer medication if it is brought to school by a parent or designated adult in its original container accompanied by a doctor's order. When medication is delivered to the School Nurse by the parent, a letter stating the type of medication, prescribed dosage, and time to be given is required and kept on file. Exclusions to students carrying their medications are on a case-by-case basis and are currently applicable to individuals with Asthma, Life Threatening Allergies and Diabetes.

First Aid

First aid is treatment given to protect the life and comfort of the student until authorized treatment is secured and is limited to first treatment ONLY; following first aid, the student is to be placed under the care of his/her parent or guardian, upon whom rests the legal responsibility for subsequent treatment. If a student becomes ill or injured at school, first aid will be administered in accordance with school policy. In the event a student becomes seriously ill or injured, every effort will be made to reach the parent. If a parent cannot be reached, the student will be transported via ambulance to the nearest hospital emergency room. Any illness or injury that occurs at home or after school hours should be evaluated by the student's own physician, urgent care or in a hospital emergency room.

Life Threatening Allergies

The number of students with life-threatening allergies has increased substantially over the last several years. As with all children with special health care needs, it is important that students with life-threatening allergies are able to access all education and education related benefits. For these children, every allergic reaction has the possibility to develop into a life-threatening and potentially fatal anaphylactic reaction. This can occur within minutes of exposure to the allergen. Some students who are very sensitive to their allergen may react to just touching or inhaling the allergen. For others, ingesting even the tiniest portion of their allergen or an insect sting can cause death.

The School Nurse is responsible for coordinating the management of students with life threatening allergies (LTA) in school. The management of LTA takes a multidisciplinary approach of collaboration between the family, student, principal/administrator, nurse, classroom teacher(s)/specialists, school psychologist/guidance counselor, food services/cafeteria staff, lunch/recess paraprofessionals, transportation department, and custodial staff. Awareness, prevention and emergency preparedness are crucial elements in the management of a student with LTA.

Postural Screening

Postural screening is conducted yearly for all children in Grade 5 through Grade 9. This is not a diagnostic service but does provide screening for postural problems prevalent in this age group which sometimes need medical attention. Postural screening is required by M.G.L. c. 71, sec. 57. It is the responsibility of the school to see that each child is screened and referred as appropriate unless the parent makes a written request for exemption on religious grounds.

Vision Screening

In accordance with M.G.L.,c. 71, s. 57, upon entering Kindergarten or within thirty days after Kindergarten entry, the parent or guardian of each child shall present certification that the student within the previous 12 months has passed a vision screening. For children who fail the screening and for children diagnosed with neurodevelopmental delay, evidence of a comprehensive eye examination meeting the requirements of c. 71, s. 57 shall be provided to the school. In accordance with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Laws and Regulations 105 CMR 200.400, Scituate Nurses will screen students in the year of school entry, and annually through Grade 5. The vision screening is repeated in Grade 7 and Grade 9.

Hearing Screening

In accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, s. 57, Scituate School Nurses will screen students in the year of school entry and annually through Grade 3. The hearing screening is repeated in Grade 7 and Grade 9.

Growth and Development Screenings

Massachusetts DPH and DESE Laws and Regulations 200.500, April 8, 2009. Each school committee or board of health shall adopt policies and procedures to ensure that the Body Mass Index (BMI) and corresponding percentile of each student in Grades 1, 4, 7, and 10 (or, in the case of ungraded classrooms, by a student's 7th, 10th, 13th and 16th birthday) is calculated and reported directly and confidentially to a parent or legal guardian

- A report of each student's BMI and percentile, along with easily understood informational and explanatory materials provided or approved by the Department of Public Health on BMI, healthy eating and physical activity shall be mailed or otherwise directly communicated in writing to the parent or legal guardian of the student, in accordance with guidelines of the Department. The materials shall indicate that questions about healthy weight should be discussed with the student's primary care provider.
- Measurement of weight and height shall be done by trained school personnel or others approved by the Department for this purpose, in accordance with guidelines of the Department. Prior notice of the screening and the benefits of the screening shall be provided to the parent or legal guardian by any reasonable means. Every effort shall be made to protect the privacy of the student during the screening process and in the communication of information about the student's BMI

School Sponsored Events

The school's discipline and dress policies are to be adhered to at all school sponsored events at all Scituate Public Schools. School sponsored events include but are not limited to, dances, field trips, assemblies, class or team activities. Grade level attendance will be determined by the administration. Tickets may be sold at the door. While it is intended that all students take part in these activities, there may be some instances in which those who are supervising will recommend to the principal that certain students be excluded. Students, whose behavior or attitude is considered to be a threat to his/her safety or the safety of those involved in the activity, may be excluded. A student may also be excluded if:

- He/she has been referred to the office for a violation of school rules three or more times in each grading term
- He/she has been truant (absent without documented excuse) during the grading term
- He/she has been suspended from class or school during the grading term or more than two times during the entire school year
- He/she is absent on the day of the event

Decisions regarding a student's participation in an activity will be made after consultation with the teachers involved in the activity, the student's guidance counselor, parents, administration, and the student. The Principal will make the final decision.

- Students who choose not to participate in an activity and those excluded from the activity are responsible for completing assignments left behind by their teachers.
- When a student is excluded from an event, that student and his/her parents must confer with an administrator to determine a plan of action that will help the student to improve his/her behavior and allow the student to participate in future events.

Outdoor Education Program:

Every year, the sixth graders may participate in the Outdoor Education Program, which is a privilege and not a right. The purpose of the program is two-fold: to increase the students' awareness of the natural world and to provide students with a chance to live together in an environment where, hopefully, they will learn to appreciate friends' abilities and talents more than they normally would within a regular school setting. Every year, a fundraiser is held to reduce the per pupil cost. The PTOs and School Staff give generously of their time and energy to make this program an annual success.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is an Act which prohibits discrimination against persons with a handicap in any program receiving Federal financial assistance. The Act defines a person with a handicap as anyone who:

- Has a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities (major life activities include activities such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working)
- Has a record of such an impairment
- Is regarded as having such an impairment

In order to fulfill its obligation under Section 504, the Scituate Public School District recognizes a responsibility to avoid discrimination in policies and practices regarding its personnel and students. No discrimination against any person with a handicap will knowingly be permitted in any of the programs and practices in the school system.

The school district has specific responsibilities under the Act, which include the responsibility to identify, evaluate, and if the child is determined to be eligible under Section 504, to afford access to appropriate educational services. If the parent or guardian disagrees with the determination made by the professional staff of the school district, he/she has a right to a hearing with an impartial hearing officer.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) also specifies rights related to educational records. This Act gives the parent or guardian the right to:

- Inspect and review his/her child's educational records
- Make copies of these records
- Receive a list of all individuals having access to those records
- Ask for an explanation of any item in the records
- Ask for an amendment to any report on the grounds that it is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the child's rights
- A hearing on the issue if the school refuses to make the amendment

Behavioral Expectations – S.504 Students

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as prescribed in this handbook. Additional requirements concerning the discipline of a student on a S. 504 Plan are as follows:

- The S. 504 Plan will indicate whether the discipline code must be modified due to the student's disability.
- When it is known that a student on a S. 504 Plan is likely to be excluded from his/her program for more than 10 cumulative days in a school year, the S. 504 Team will convene to determine whether the student's misconduct that leads to the change in placement is a manifestation of the student's disability.
 - If the misconduct was a manifestation, the school will conduct a functional behavior assessment and implement a behavior intervention plan, provided the school did not already conduct the assessment before the behavior resulted in the discipline. If such an assessment was already conducted, the behavior intervention plan will be reviewed and modified as necessary. Additionally, if the behavior was a manifestation, the student will return to the placement from which he/she was removed unless the school and the parent agree otherwise.

- If the behavior was not a manifestation, the school may apply the relevant disciplinary procedures to the extent they would be applied to a student not eligible for special education, except that a student eligible for special education, who is removed from his/her current educational placement, is entitled to continue receiving educational services to enable the student to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, and to make progress toward meeting the goals set out in the student's S. 504 Plan.
- In special circumstances, the school may move students to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than 45 days without regard to whether the behavior that led to the removal was a manifestation of the student's disability. These special circumstances are:
 - A student carries or possesses a weapon to or at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a State or local educational agency
 - A student knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a State or local educational agency
 - A student has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a State or local educational agency.

Additional information concerning special education including the right to receive an evaluation, the procedural protections afforded to parents and students, a more detailed description of the special rules relating to suspension and expulsion, and access to special education records may be obtained from the District S. 504 Coordinator.

If there are questions, please feel free to contact the Guidance Chairperson, Scituate Public Schools.

Special Education

Both the state special education law (MGL 603 CMR 28.00, formally Chapter 766) and the federal special education law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or "IDEA", require a broad range of special education programs. The provisions of these laws are designed to help students between the ages of 3 and 22 years of age who have not received a high school diploma and who are not making effective progress in the regular classroom due to the existence of a disability. This law gives the students, parents, and teachers a chance to learn the cause of these problems and to discover the best way to work together to overcome them.

The purpose of special education is to help children who have disabilities make effective progress in school. In accordance with the provisions of the state and federal special education laws, after receiving parental permission, an evaluation is conducted to determine whether a child has a special need that requires special education and, if so, what form will that special education take. The following questions must be answered as part of that evaluation:

- Is there a disability?
- If so, is the student unable to make effective progress in the regular classroom because of the existence of that disability?
- If so, what special education services are required?

Those services are described in an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for that student. Additional information may be obtained from the Director of Special Education.

Behavioral Expectations - Special Education Students

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as prescribed in this handbook. State and Federal Laws require that additional provisions be made for students who have been found by an evaluation team to have special needs and whose program is described in an Individual Education Plan (IEP). State and federal special education laws prescribe additional requirements concerning the discipline of a student with special needs.

- The IEP will indicate whether the student is expected to conform to the school's regular discipline code or if the code must be modified due to the student's disability.
- When it is known that a student with special needs is likely to be excluded from his/her program for more than 10 cumulative days in a school year, the TEAM will convene to determine whether the student's misconduct that leads to the change in placement is a manifestation of the student's disability.
 - If the misconduct was a manifestation, the school will conduct a functional behavior assessment and implement a behavior intervention plan, provided the school did not already conduct the assessment before the behavior resulted in the discipline. If such an assessment was already conducted, the behavior intervention plan will be reviewed and modified as necessary. Additionally, if the behavior was a manifestation,

the student will return to the placement from which he/she was removed unless the school and the parent agree otherwise.

- If the Behavior was not a manifestation, the school may apply the relevant disciplinary procedures to the extent they would be applied to a student not eligible for special education, except that a student eligible for special education, who is removed from his/her current educational placement, is entitled to continue receiving educational services to enable the student to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, and to make progress toward meeting the goals set out in the student's IEP.
- In special circumstances, the school may move students to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than 45 days without regard to whether the behavior that led to the removal was a manifestation of the student's disability. These special circumstances are:
 - A student carries or possesses a weapon to or at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a State or local educational agency
 - A student knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a State or local educational agency
 - A student has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a State or local educational agency.

Additional information concerning special education including the right to receive an evaluation, the procedural protections afforded to parents and students, a more detailed description of the special rules relating to suspension and expulsion, and access to special education records may be obtained from the Director of Special Education.

Student Possessions

Toys, baseball caps worn inside the building, and other items that may be considered fads pose a distraction to the educational process. Students are asked not to bring these to school. The teacher may ask the student to place the object in his/her backpack and not return it to school. A second offense may result in the teacher and/or building administrator taking temporary possession of the object(s) until the parent can retrieve it.

Student Records

The Massachusetts and United States Departments of Education have adopted regulations governing access to and confidentiality of student records. These regulations can be found at 603 CMR 23.00 and 34 CFR 99.00, respectively. In short, any information kept by a school system that personally identifies a student can be accessed by that student's parent and by school personnel in the course of their professional duties, but is protected from disclosure to unauthorized third parties. These records are kept on file in the office of the school attended by the student, with the exception of the special education records, which are kept in the Special Education Office, and medical records, which are kept in the Office of the School Nurse. Authorized school personnel of any school to which a student seeks or intends to transfer will have access to such student's complete record without further notice to, or receipt of consent from, the eligible student or parent.

Tobacco-Free Schools Policy

The Scituate Public Schools prohibits the use of any tobacco products within the school buildings, school facilities or grounds, or on school buses by any individual, including students, school personnel and parents.

Transportation

Bus Safety

When students are assigned to a bus, they should ride only on that bus. Students should go home on their assigned bus and leave the bus at the neighborhood bus stop.

Students should remember that the bus is an extension of the school and that the same rules of good behavior, consideration, respect, and cooperation are always in effect. Students reported for misconduct may have their transportation privileges revoked.

Parents should completely review the following rules with their children:

- Arrive at the bus stop 10 minutes before the anticipated pick-up.
- Keep pets and large toys off the bus.
- Please keep the family pets at home; pets should not be at the bus stop.
- Stand as far off the road as possible until the bus has arrived, stopped, and opened its doors. Do not run or fool around while waiting for the bus. If you have to cross the street to board the bus: 1) wait for the bus to come to a complete stop; 2) wait for the driver to signal you that it is ok to cross the street, and; 3) look both ways before crossing.
- Board the bus in single file; allow the younger children to board the bus first. Do not push anyone.
- Take a seat quickly and remain seated until the bus reaches its destination.
- Do not throw any objects in or out of the bus. Do not hang out of the windows.
- Pay attention to the bus driver's instructions and do not distract the driver's attention from driving the bus.
- Be courteous at all times to the driver, fellow students, and passers-by.
- Do not use profane, loud or abusive language, boisterous talk or other noises that might distract the driver.
- Do not smoke, light matches or chew tobacco.
- Keep clear of the area around the bus where the driver may not be able to see you. If you drop something under the bus, don't try to get it. Report your problem to the bus driver.
- Keep the area around the bus and bus stop neat and acceptable.
- Exit the bus in a single file.
- After you exit the bus, go directly home.
- Students may only ride their assigned buses. If there is a family emergency or medical situation, parents should notify the school Principal and other transportation arrangements might be made.

Students are expected to behave in a manner which will provide for optimum safety of the individual student as well as the safety of other students aboard the bus. When a student is reported for violating a safety rule in and around a school bus, school officials will review the situation with the student. Parents will be notified of the behavior. Depending on the severity of the offense and the frequency of violations, the student may receive a warning, a brief suspension from the bus or suspension for the balance of the school year. If a student is participating in the "Fee Based Transportation Program" and is suspended from the bus, the fee **WILL NOT BE REFUNDED**.

Fee-Based Transportation Program

Students in **Grades K-6** who reside over 2 miles from their assigned school are eligible for town-paid (free) bus transportation. This determination is mandated by the State of Massachusetts (Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71 Section 68). All other students in Grades K-12 will have the option to participate in the fee-based transportation program. The two mile distance is measured from the end of the driveway of the student's home to the closest entranceway of the school, using the shortest means by public roadway. All students who are NOT eligible for town-paid busing will have the option to purchase a bus pass through the "Fee-Based Transportation Program." (i.e., K-6 students living two miles or less from their assigned school and all students Grades 7-12, regardless of distance.) Information about the fee-based transportation program can be found on the Scituate Public Schools website: www.scituate.k12.ma.us.

Scheduling/Routing/Bus Stops

The Transportation Office is responsible for establishing the schedules and bus routes and are evaluated annually. Routes are posted on the Scituate Public Schools website and published in the Scituate Mariner one week before school starts.

Students will walk to a common bus stop. Students are not entitled to street-by-street or door-to-door pickup or delivery. All stops will be at corners, whenever possible, as to make them fair and consistent for all. Bus stops are set up in accordance with School Committee policy and State law. In the case of new residents, you may be in an area that might require issuing a new bus stop. Until the area is reviewed and, if a new stop needs to be added, students should go to the closest bus

stop until a new one is established by the Transportation Office. Parents are responsible to assure their child is at the correct bus stop. Any child standing at unauthorized locations or bus stops may not be picked up.

Daycare Transportation

Requests for transportation to a stop other than the student's home address must be approved by the Principal and forwarded to the Superintendent for daycare/babysitting on a five-day-a-week basis. On other than a five-day-a-week basis, transportation is only provided when the requested location is on the same bus route as the student's home route and the student is NOT a kindergarten student.

Visitors and Volunteers

Visitors and volunteers are welcome to our schools. While we as a school district welcome and encourage parent participation in their child's education, there are policies governing parent visitations and volunteer opportunities in our schools.

While our elementary schools strive to create child friendly and welcoming environments, volunteers are reminded that the presence of younger siblings in a classroom during regular instruction can pose a distraction to the educational process. If childcare is unavailable, parents/volunteers are requested to postpone volunteering in a classroom until childcare is no longer a concern.

All classroom volunteers and visitors must give reasonable advance notification to the teacher and the Principal before visiting a district classroom or visiting their child during the lunch period or recess period. Usually, this is considered a minimum of 24-hour notice before the proposed visit. There are many reasons for this notification. Among those are to limit both the number of visitors and number of visitations a classroom might reasonably expect so that there is not a disruption to the educational environment. Visitations during the lunch period or the recess period are also a possible disruption. While parent volunteers are certainly encouraged, numerous volunteers and frequent visitations can be distracting and have the effect of substantially altering the educational environment.

At the discretion of the building Principal, visits to individual classrooms as well as recess and lunch periods may be denied. There must be a specific reason for the visit and the frequency and duration of any visit must be within reasonable and customary ranges.

In order to maintain a safe and secure school environment, visitors and volunteers must report to the school office immediately upon entering the school building to sign-in. All visitors and volunteers must wear a "Visitor" or "Volunteer" badge. This badge must be returned to the Office before leaving the building. This policy is in place to limit the number of non-school personnel on campus at any time, and to insure the safety of our students and staff.

Weapons

See Discipline Procedures on pages 3-6.