



Student Handbook

	
<p>Lloyd G. Blanchard Middle School 14 West St. Westford, MA 01886 978-692-5582</p>	<p>Stony Brook Middle School 9 Farmer Way Westford, MA 01886 978-692-2708</p>
<p>Timothy Hislop Principal</p> <p>Carolyn Jerzylo Assistant Principal</p>	<p>Christopher Chew Principal</p> <p>Richard McElhinney Assistant Principal</p>

This Student Handbook belongs to:

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Grade _____

Homeroom _____

WESTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS DISTRICT WEBSITE:

A wealth of information and links to all the Westford Schools' websites can be found on the district website. You can access this website by visiting <http://westfordk12.us/>

WESTFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Avery Adam Terence Ryan David Keele Arthur Benoit
Chris Sanders Erika Kohl Tom Clay

The School Committee meets every other Monday, at Millennium in the Multipurpose Room at 7:30 P.M. and is cablecast on Channel 8. (Meetings are not held during the month of July.) Visit their web site at <http://westfordk12.us/> for a complete list of Westford Public Schools Policies. Policies are also available in each school office.

WESTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS ADMINISTRATION

Superintendent	Everett (Bill) Olsen, Jr.	692-5560 x2103
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction	Kerry Clery	692-5560 x2105
Director of School Finance	Kathy Auth	692-5560 x2106
Director of Pupil Services	Courtney Moran	692-5560 x2112
Title VI and Title IX Coordinator	Everett (Bill) Olsen, Jr.	692-5560 x2101
	Courtney Moran	692-5560 x2112

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Disclaimer: Stony Brook and Blanchard Middle School reserve the right to make necessary changes in the student handbook as necessary.

“The Westford Public Schools will comply with all applicable Federal and State Civil Rights Statutes, as they apply to the access of employment, programs, services and facilities by our staff and students.”

Student Information

1. MIDDLE SCHOOL SCHEDULE

The middle school schedule is made up of four subjects on each team, Math, Science, Language Arts, and Social Studies, for 6th, 7th and 8th grades as well as six Integrated Art classes. The middle school curriculum is aligned with the Common Core State Standards and Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. The middle schools run a six-day rotating schedule. Check the school website for details.

2. PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education is required of all students unless excused by a physician in writing. Proper dress is required for all Physical Education classes.

3. MUSIC

Chorus, orchestra and band programs are offered as part of the school curriculum. Band and orchestra instrumental lessons are graded subjects. These programs are open to all students.

4. STUDENT CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

Learning occurs everywhere and at all times. Because many children and adults spend multiple hours together in the school, rules of behavior exist to ensure that everyone can be free of distraction, fear, or discomfort so that learning can take place. We believe that each student and each teacher has the following rights in school:

- To work in pleasant, safe and orderly surroundings
- To be free from insulting or abusive treatment from others
- To have an atmosphere that encourages learning

We realize students will make mistakes and believe in progressive discipline and logical consequences. Self-control and good citizenship are the main objectives of good discipline. Through pupil and staff discussion, reasonable and appropriate guidelines for self-control and good citizenship will be reinforced. The principal will decide each student’s situation on its own merit, act accordingly and make every effort to resolve problems informally. Problems are to be solved through discussion rather than physical contact.

Students are expected to give the maximum in courtesy and respect to all school personnel, other students and school policies. Rules and expectations for conduct apply not only to the school day, but also the school bus and school-sponsored events and activities. While it is not possible to list everything which might be considered misconduct, the following may result in disciplinary action:

- Any act that disrupts the educational process
- Insubordination: It is expected that the directions of a teacher or administrator will be followed immediately
- Profanity
- Continuous violations of dress code
- Disrespect to school personnel or other students
- Damage/disrespect to school property or the property of any other person, i.e. vandalism
- Loitering in hallways or bathrooms
- Bullying/Harassment (refer to specific policies contained herein)
- Excessive tardies(see attendance policy)
- Possession of any of the following prohibited items:
 - Gum chewing
 - Bats or hard balls: The physical education teacher has this equipment and will distribute under his/her supervision
 - Jack-knives or other potential weapons
 - Laser pointers
 - Toys which resemble weapons
 - Any other objects which might be a safety concern
 - Item(s) for sale or exchange
 - Electronic cigarettes other tobacco products

If rules are disregarded, appropriate action will result through parent, teacher and/or principal involvement. The following actions are considered when school rules have been violated at each grade level. Any or all of the following could result:

Discussion involving the school principal, child, teacher, and/or parent/guardian

- Quiet time-out area (office, guidance area, separate class)
- Teacher detention
- Office detention
- Loss of privileges
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension

Student Suspensions

Suspension from school involves the denial of a student's privilege to attend school and its activities. All students should understand that an out of school suspension means that the suspended student may not be in school or on school grounds for any reason, attend any classes, take part in any athletic or other activity until after midnight of the last school day of the suspension without the express permission of the Principal. This action is taken when it is the determination of the Principal (or his designee) that no other action is suitable or likely to result in the correction of a student's unacceptable behavior. If the suspension is the result of a student's behavior at a school-sponsored activity, continued participation and/or attendance in that activity may be suspended for 30 days. A parent-student-counselor-administrator conference is necessary before a suspended student will be allowed to return to school. Suspensions vary in length from one (1) day in-school suspension up to and including long term suspension or exclusion for the balance of the school year and beyond. All students will be provided with due process when subject to suspension in-school, out-of-school or expulsion.

Any school district that suspends or expels a student under this section shall continue to provide educational services to the student during the period of suspension or expulsion, under section 21 of chapter 76. If the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student under an education service plan, under section 21 of chapter 76.

M.G.L. ch. 71; Sec. 37H3/4: Suspension or Expulsion on grounds other than those set forth in c.37H or 37H1/2[MM1] .

Section 37H3/4. (a) This section shall govern the suspension and expulsion of students enrolled in a public school in the commonwealth who are not charged with a violation of subsections (a) or (b) of section 37H or with a felony under section 37H1/2.

(b) Any principal, headmaster, superintendent or other person acting as a decision-maker at a student meeting or hearing, when deciding the consequences for the student, shall exercise discretion; consider ways to re-engage the student in the learning process; and avoid using expulsion as a consequence until other remedies and consequences have been employed.

(c) For any suspension or expulsion under this section, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled, or a designee, shall provide, to the student and to the parent or guardian of the student, notice of the charges and the reason for the suspension or expulsion in English and in the primary language spoken in the home of the student. The student shall receive

the written notification and shall have the opportunity to meet with the principal or headmaster, or a designee, to discuss the charges and reasons for the suspension or expulsion prior to the suspension or expulsion taking effect. The principal or headmaster, or a designee, shall ensure that the parent or guardian of the student is included in the meeting, provided that such meeting may take place without the parent or guardian only if the principal or headmaster, or a designee, can document reasonable efforts to include the parent or guardian in that meeting. The department shall promulgate rules and regulations that address a principal's duties under this subsection and procedures for including parents in student exclusion meetings, hearings or interviews under this subsection.

(d) If a decision is made to suspend or expel the student after the meeting, the principal or headmaster, or a designee, shall update the notification for the suspension or expulsion to reflect the meeting with the student. If a student has been suspended or expelled for more than 10 school days for a single infraction or for more than 10 school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year, the student and the parent or guardian of the student shall also receive, at the time of the suspension or expulsion decision, written notification of a right to appeal and the process for appealing the suspension or expulsion in English and in the primary language spoken in the home of the student; provided, however, that the suspension or expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing. The principal or headmaster or a designee shall notify the superintendent in writing, including, but not limited to, by electronic means, of any out-of-school suspension imposed on a student enrolled in kindergarten through grade 3 prior to such suspension taking effect. That notification shall describe the student's alleged misconduct and the reasons for suspending the student out-of-school. For the purposes of this section, the term "out-of-school suspension" shall mean a disciplinary action imposed by school officials to remove a student from participation in school activities for 1 day or more.

(e) A student who has been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 school days for a single infraction or for more than 10 school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year shall have the right to appeal the suspension or expulsion to the superintendent. The student or a parent or guardian of the student shall notify the superintendent in writing of a request for an appeal not later than 5 calendar days following the effective date of the suspension or expulsion; provided, that a student and a parent or guardian of the student may request, and if so requested, shall be granted an extension of up to 7 calendar days. The superintendent or a designee shall hold a hearing with the student and the parent or guardian of the student within 3 school days of the student's request for an appeal; provided that a student or a parent or guardian of the student may request and, if so requested, shall be granted an extension of up to 7 calendar days; provided further, that the superintendent, or a designee, may proceed with a hearing without a parent or guardian of the student if the superintendent, or a designee, makes a good faith effort to include the parent or guardian. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to

present oral and written testimony, cross-examine witnesses and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal in writing within 5 calendar days of the hearing. That decision shall be the final decision of the school district with regard to the suspension or expulsion.

(f) No student shall be suspended or expelled from a school or school district for a time period that exceeds 90 school days, beginning the first day the student is removed from an assigned school building.

Disciplinary Due Process

Definitions

Expulsion: the removal of a student from the school premises, regular classroom activities, and school activities for more than ninety (90) consecutive school days.

In-School Suspension: the removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises, for no more than (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions during the school year. ** Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating cumulative days of suspension. .*

Long-Term Suspension: the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days.

Written Notice: Written correspondence sent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent.

Principal: The primary administrator of the school or the Principal's designee for disciplinary purposes.

Due Process

In-School Suspension: Prior to the imposition of an In-School Suspension, the student will be informed of the disciplinary offense and provided with an opportunity to respond. If the principal determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the principal will provide oral

notice to the student and parent of the length of the In-School Suspension and will make reasonable efforts to meet with the parent. On or before the day of the In-School Suspension, the principal will deliver written notice to the parent of the basis for and length of the in-school suspension and inviting the parent to meet to discuss the student's behavior if such a meeting has not already occurred.

Out-of School Suspension: In the case of disciplinary offenses not involving: a) possession of a dangerous weapon; b) possession of a controlled substance; c) assault on a member of the educational staff; or d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, the student and parents will be given oral and written notice of the disciplinary offense with which the student is charged and the opportunity to participate in a hearing prior to the imposition of an out-of-school suspension. Written notice of the date and time for the hearing will be provided in English and in the primary language of the Student's home and will identify the disciplinary offense with which the student has been charged, the basis for the charge, the potential length of the student's suspension, and shall inform the parent and student of the right to interpreter services if necessary to participate in the hearing. Where a student may be subject to a Long-Term Suspension, the Principal will also notify the student and parent of the student's right to legal representation (at private expense), the right to present and examine witnesses, the right to review the student record and documents that may be relied upon by the Principal, and the right to request that the hearing be audiotaped.

For disciplinary offenses involving a) possession of a dangerous weapon; b) possession of a controlled substance; c) assault on a member of the educational staff; or d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, the student will be given oral notice of the violation with which the student is charged and an opportunity to respond thereto prior to the Principal's imposition of a short-term/interim suspension ten (10) consecutive school days or less pending formal disciplinary proceedings. Upon imposition of a short term or interim suspension or an interim suspension of ten (10) consecutive days or less pending further disciplinary proceedings, the student and parents will be provided with written notice of the suspension and the date and time of any formal disciplinary proceedings\ to consider the student's long-term suspension or expulsion.

Principal's Hearing:

Short-Term Suspension:

At the Principal's hearing, the student and parents (if participating) may dispute the charge(s) against the student and present information, including mitigating facts, for the principal's consideration in determining consequences for the student.

Long-Term Suspension:

In addition to the rights afforded a student in a short-term suspension hearing, the student will have the following rights:

- the right of the student and the student's parent to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate;
- the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's/parent's expense;
- the right to review the student's record and the documents upon which the Principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not
- the right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident;
- the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;
- the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the Principal, and to receive a copy of the audio recording upon request.

Principal's Decision:

Based on the evidence presented at the hearing, the Principal will determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense and the remedy or consequences to be imposed. The Principal shall exercise discretion in deciding the consequence for the offense and, in cases not involving possession of a controlled substance, a weapon, an assault on staff or felony charges, shall avoid using long-term suspension from school as a consequence until alternatives have been tried. If the Principal decides to suspend or expel the student, written notice of the Principal's decision will be sent to the student and parents in English and the primary language of the home identifying the disciplinary offense, the factual basis for the Principal's decision, the beginning and end dates of the suspension or expulsion, and the process for appeal. The Principal will also notify the student and parent of the student's opportunity to make academic progress during the period of removal from school in accordance with M.G.L. c. 76, §21.

Appeals:

Where the student is excluded in accordance with M.G.L. c.71 §37H, the student shall have ten (10) calendar days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the superintendent of schools. For exclusions imposed pursuant to M.G.L. c.71 §37H1/2, the student

shall have five (5) school days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the superintendent. And for exclusions imposed pursuant to M.G.L c.71, §37H3/4, the student shall have five (5) calendar days from the effective date of the suspension imposed by the Principal but shall be granted an extension of seven (7) calendar days upon request.

Academic Progress:

Any student who is serving an in-school or out of school short-term suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion shall have the opportunity to earn credits, as applicable, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of his or her removal from the classroom or school. Any student who is expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days, whether in school or out of school, shall have an opportunity to receive education services and to make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, in accordance with the school's education service plan. M.G.L. c.76, §21.

Discipline and Students with Disabilities

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in this handbook. In addition to those due process protections afforded to all students, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and related regulations require that additional provisions be made for students who have been found eligible for special education services or who the school district knows or has reason to know might be eligible for such services. Students who have been found to have a disability that impacts upon a major life activity, as defined under §504 of the Rehabilitation Act are, generally, also entitled to increased procedural protections prior to imposing discipline that will result in the student's removal for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or where there is a pattern of short term removals exceeding ten (10) school days in a given year. The following additional requirements apply to the discipline of students with disabilities:

1. Students with disabilities may be excluded from their programs for up to ten (10) school days to the extent that such sanctions would be applied to all students. Before a student with a disability can be excluded from his/her program for more than ten (10) consecutive school days in a given school year or subjected to a pattern of removal constituting a "change in placement", building administrators, the parent/guardian, and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team will meet to determine the relationship between the student's disability and behavior (Manifestation Determination). In most instances, during disciplinary exclusions exceeding ten (10) school days in a single school year, the student shall have the right to receive the services identified as necessary by the Team to provide him/her with a free appropriate public education during the period of exclusion.

2. If building administrators, the parent/guardian, and relevant members of the IEP or 504 Team determine that the student's conduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, the school may discipline the student in accordance with the procedures and penalties applicable to all students but will continue to provide a free appropriate public education to those students with IEPs. The student's IEP TEAM will identify the services necessary to provide a free appropriate public education during the period of exclusion, review any existing behavior intervention plan or, where appropriate, conduct a functional behavioral assessment.
3. If building administrators, the parent/guardian, and relevant members of the IEP or 504 Team determine that the conduct giving rise to the disciplinary action was a manifestation of the student's disability, the student will not be subjected to further disciplinary removal or exclusion from the student's current educational program based on that conduct (except for conduct involving weapons, drugs, or resulting in serious bodily injury to others) until the IEP or 504 Team develops, and the parent/guardian consent to a new placement, or until the District obtains an order from court or from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA) authorizing a change in the student's placement. The student's Team shall also review, and modify as appropriate, any existing behavior intervention plan or arrange for a functional behavioral assessment.
4. If a student with a disability possesses or uses illegal drugs, sells or solicits a controlled substance, possesses a weapon, or causes serious bodily injury to another on school grounds (including transportation) or at a school function, the District may place the student in an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) for up to forty-five (45) school days. A court or BSEA Hearing Officer may also order the placement of a student who presents a substantial likelihood of injury to self or others in an appropriate interim setting for up to forty-five (45) school days.

5. PERSONAL APPEARANCE

The basic premise for the governing of student appearance should be based upon the rules of common sense. The rules should relate to the common good of all students. The common good of all students is best served through personal and group safety.

1. Health and personal hygiene – students should observe the basic rules of good personal hygiene and health. Appearance of body and clothes should be neat and clean.
2. Decency – Students should be dressed appropriately for the school environment. Clothing that may disrupt the educational process, distract, intimidates or provokes is prohibited. This may include (but is not limited to) clothing upon which any of the following is displayed: obscenities, language that promotes alcohol and/or drugs, words or symbols that will predictably upset others, or words or symbols which defame the beliefs or heritage of

others. Students should refrain from wearing the following: midriff shirts, low-cut shirts, tube tops or off-the-shoulder shirts. Undergarments should not be visible under any articles of clothing such as tank tops, shorts or pants. Skirts and shorts should be of an appropriate length; it is recommended that the length not rise above the end of the fingertips when the student's arms are placed by his or her sides. Students not adhering to the dress code may be sent to administration and asked to change or cover his or her clothing. While this is not intended to be an issue of discipline, it is viewed that these rules relate to the common good of all students.

3. Safety – Students must dress so that they will not endanger themselves or other students. Appropriate footwear should be worn.
4. No hats or hoods of any type should be worn in school. Outdoor clothing, such as coats, should be removed in school.
5. Clothing that can mar or damage furniture or floors should not be worn.

6. ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Cell phones and other electronic devices may be confiscated if used in school without the permission of a teacher or administrator. A parent/guardian may be asked to retrieve device.

7. ELECTRONIC CONDUCT / HARASSMENT

All restrictions against inappropriate language, conduct, and/or harassment apply to public messages, private messages, and material posted on webpages. No images of school personnel or facsimiles may be posted online without written consent of the individual. Recording, videoing or photographing students or staff without permission is prohibited.

8. FIRE DRILLS

Several times during the year a fire drill will be conducted. Please adhere to these guidelines; failure to comply is a serious offense.

1. Follow the directions posted in the classroom or from the teacher in charge.
2. Be absolutely silent and exit the building in an orderly manner.
3. Stand with the members of your class in the assigned area away from the building.
4. Re-enter the building silently and only when instructed to do so.

9. VISITORS

All visitors to the building must immediately check in with the Main Office upon arrival. Please sign in the Visitors' Log and pick up and keep a visitor's badge visible at all times.

10. TRANSITION MEETING

After extended absence due to suspension or hospitalization, parents/guardian and student will meet with school administration, guidance counselor, and other appropriate school personnel to create a plan for reintegration.

11. HOMEWORK AND GRADING

Westford Public Schools Policy #6112

Homework should be a useful adjunct to in-school learning. It should be an application or adaptation of a classroom experience; it should not be assigned for disciplinary purposes.

Discretion should be used by teachers in the assigning of homework prior to weekends, vacations, and holidays. Homework and projects should not be assigned so that the due dates will conflict with the celebration of religious holidays. Parents will be informed at the start of the school year the percentage weight each staff member assigns to homework.

See religious observances Westford Public School policy #5114.

Student Responsibilities for Homework

- Homework is the student's responsibility.
- Students are expected to use the homework assignment book given to them or some organized method to record assignments.
- Students should make every effort to clarify homework assignments before leaving school.
- Students should complete homework assignments independently. Cooperative initiatives, however, can be beneficial when appropriate for instruction. If difficulties develop, a student should seek guidance from a teacher or parent.
- Students should complete homework assignments on time and according to teacher guidelines.
- Students are responsible for obtaining any missed assignments and class work from their teachers. This work should be made up within a week.
- Students who are absent may check for assignments on the school website.

Parent Responsibilities for Homework

- Homework is a responsibility that rightfully belongs to the child, not the parents.
- Direct parental participation should be minimal; the younger the student, the more likely the need for parental involvement.
- Parents should provide a place to study, free from distractions and provide appropriate materials, such as pencils, pens, erasers, rulers, etc.

- Parents should monitor the time spent on homework and confer with the teacher if the amount of time appears to be consistently excessive or too little.
- Parents should confer with the teacher if assignments seem consistently unclear or too difficult.
- Parents should notify the teacher if an unforeseen occurrence prevents the student from completing an assignment.
- Parents should make every attempt to schedule vacation time during those blocks provided within the school calendar. Missing classroom instruction cannot be replaced with homework assignments. Homework is designed to reinforce instruction.

Teacher Responsibilities for Homework

- Assignments will be at the student’s level of understanding.
- Assignments will be purposeful and related to the curriculum.
- Assignments will not be given until expectations have been explained.
- Consideration will be given to space long-term assignments, as well as tests.
- Grade level teams will strive not to exceed the time-related guidelines.
- The teacher will communicate with parents about homework expectations, as well as any problems that arise.
- The teacher will provide timely feedback to students.

Guidelines for Time and Frequency

The amount and type of homework provided is determined by the teacher’s judgment of student ability to profit from the experience. Middle school students usually receive assignments four nights per week in core subjects and foreign language and occasionally in integrated arts classes with the total daily time of approximately:

<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>Time</u>
Six	up to 90 minutes
Seventh	up to 2 hours
Eighth	up to 2 1/2 hours

Promotion/Retention

Promotion to the next grade is not automatic. A student must pass Language Arts and two other academic subjects as a minimum for consideration for promotion. A student who fails two or more subjects for the year will be considered for retention.

Marking/Grading

Reports are issued three times yearly.

Grading is as follows:

Demonstrates in-depth understanding, high quality work, independence, consistency Advanced skill application Goes beyond assignment Demonstrates independence in all categories	A+ = 97-100 A = 93-96 A- = 90-92
Demonstrates solid understanding, needs consistency and or independence Able to apply skills Working towards independence Working towards consistent application	B+ = 87-89 B = 83-86 B- = 80-82
Demonstrates developing understanding Does expected work Understands basic concepts Moving towards independence Needs support	C+ = 77-79 C = 73-76 C- = 70-72
Demonstrates minimal understanding Inconsistent work Can not work independently Shows minimal understanding Substantial gaps in learning	D+ = 67-69 D = 63-66 D- = 60-62
Demonstrates inability to make skills progress on a basic level No independent work Work lacks quality Work shows no consistency Student unable to progress to more difficult tasks	F = 59 and below I = Incomplete

I = Incomplete – a student receiving an incomplete grade in any subject must make up his or her work within four weeks. If the work is not made up, the grade will become an “F”. The student is expected to initiate the make-up arrangements with the teacher.

The report card will indicate a grade for student conduct and effort. These grades will be on a scale of 4 to 1. The highest score for conduct and effort is 4.

Code of Conduct Effort Description/Codes

EFFORT	CONDUCT	CONDUCT & EFFORT RUBRIC
Works independently Uses time efficiently Participates in class Arrives prepared for class Produces quality class work Completes homework thoroughly	Follows school rules Maintains a safe environment Contributes positively to the classroom community Shows tolerance for others Respects the learning environment of others Cooperates with others Shows respect for property	4 - Consistently meets all expectations 3 - Consistently meets most expectations 2 - Inconsistently meets expectations 1 - Rarely meets expectations

Questions concerning grades or progress should be addressed with the individual teacher. A student’s grade is based on his/her ability to demonstrate mastery of the Massachusetts frameworks and the Westford grade level curriculum. Copies of Westford’s curriculum guides are available at:

<http://westfordk12.us/pages/curric/benchmarks>

Honor Roll

To be placed on the Honor Roll, a student must earn B’s or higher in every subject with a “3” or “4” in effort and conduct in every subject. To be placed on High Honors, a student must earn all A’s, with no more than one B, and a “3” or “4” in effort and conduct in every subject. Honor rolls will be noted on the report card.

Cheating/Plagiarism

Whenever a student is guilty of cheating/plagiarism, the teacher shall confiscate the student’s paper and notify the parent and the administrative office. Examples of cheating may include, but are not limited to, the following: providing materials (tests, quizzes, projects or papers) to another student from a current or previously taken course, copying another student’s work or working with other students to complete an assignment when not instructed to do so by the teacher, purposeful communication of information or use of unauthorized resources during a testing environment, and purposeful distribution of work/answers via printed, electronic, or verbal format to other students when such work will be considered for grading purposes. Incidence of cheating/plagiarism will also be subject to disciplinary action by administration on a case-by-case basis.

Extra Help Sessions

Teachers on occasion will recommend that students stay for after-school extra help sessions. Every teacher is available for extra help. If the student feels that he/she needs help, the student is strongly encouraged to seek help by contacting the teachers to make arrangements.

12. LOCKERS

Westford Public School Policy #5310

Lockers are assigned to each student in August. Students are responsible for keeping their lockers neat and clean at all times. School property may be inspected by school authorities in the interest of maintenance, health and safety. Lockers, though assigned to pupils, are school property and may reasonably be inspected. The parent/legal guardians of any student involved in an individual locker search will be informed of the locker search.

13. MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETICS

Interscholastic Athletic Philosophy

Westford's Middle School Athletic program is dedicated to fostering improved individual self-esteem through positive reinforcement, sportsmanship, developing the positive aspects of team unity by requiring a season-long commitment, and improving the development of individual skills through regular practice and games. Inherent in this philosophy is the belief that winning is not the major goal of the middle school athletic program.

Academic Eligibility

Any student participating on a middle school interscholastic team, club or other co-curricular activity, including the school play, must maintain satisfactory academic, disciplinary and attendance standing. The administrative team will make the final determination when deciding eligibility.

The middle school administrative team has determined the following:

- A student is not eligible to participate with a 1 in conduct or effort, or F on his/her Progress Report or Report Card.
- A student who receives two or more Ds and/or two 2s in conduct or effort would be identified as on “probation.” He/she may practice with the team but may not play in games until the next school-home report.
- Students with one D or one 2 will be considered on “warning.” The coach will be in contact with the student’s academic team to insure adequate progress is being made. At this time, these students may practice and play with the team.
- Sixth graders are eligible for cross-country and track & field. Seventh and eighth graders are eligible for all sports.
- The activity fee is \$225 per season.

- The following sports are offered at the middle schools:
 - Fall – boys/girls soccer, field hockey, cross country
 - Winter – boys/girls basketball
 - Spring – baseball, softball, outdoor track

Co-Curricular Activities

All school rules and regulations are in effect for all school activities, field trips, assemblies and after-school programs. Students who have displayed repeated irresponsible behavior may be excluded from field trips and after-school activities. All incidents will be reviewed on an individual basis. Students must be in attendance on the day of any after-school activity. Academic requirements and disciplinary commitments take precedence over intramural and interscholastic commitments. Coaches will review specific rules, regulations and disciplinary actions.

Intramural athletic programs, clubs and activities are provided for all students throughout the school year for an annual fee of \$50. There is an additional fee for ski club. Depending on interest, funds and available time, these activities change from year to year. Please see the school website for a complete listing of middle school co-curricular activities.

Supervision Before and After School

Students may only stay after school for an authorized school activity. Students may not be in the building before or after school without supervision. There is no supervision for students prior to the start of the school day at 7:25 and after the late bus leaves at 3:10 PM. Athletes in the building for practices or games may only be in the building if supervised by an adult or staff member.

14. FIELD TRIPS

Westford Public School Policy #6120

Field trips are organized in conjunction with team or classroom activities. They are an extension of the educational program that expand and reinforce concepts learned in the classroom; all students are encouraged to attend. Students not attending a field trip are expected to be in school working on alternative assignments related to the objectives of the field trip. Parents will be asked to make a donation to cover the cost of their child's attending.

15. ATTENDANCE

Parents or Guardians are legally responsible for ensuring that a child under their control attends school daily. If a child fails to attend school for seven (7) day sessions or fourteen (14) half day sessions within the school year, the school will address the situation. When the student exceeds the above mentioned , including, five (5) or more unexcused absences in a school year, the school will notify the parent/guardian of the attendance record. Following, a meeting will be conducted with the parents and student to develop a plan to address the student's attendance.

Absence

If you are absent from school, a parent/guardian should call the school office the night before or by 8:30 AM on the day of your absence. To report an absence or tardiness, please call 978-692-2708 for Stony Brook or 978-692-5582 for Blanchard. If we do not hear from your parents or guardian, school personnel will make efforts to contact them. It is important to stress, however, that it is the responsibility of the parents/guardian to contact the school. A student must be present at least 1/2 day to be recorded as present. Regular attendance is critical for academic success and absenteeism will negatively affect a student's grades. For extended absences due to illness, medical documentation should be provided to the clinic.

Religious Observances – Westford Public School Policy #5114

Observance of a religious holiday shall be viewed as valid justification for student absence, late homework/project submission and delayed testing, only when the teacher has been notified of the observance date no later than two weeks in advance. It is the responsibility of the student's parent/guardian to notify the teacher of these dates at the beginning of the school year.

Dismissal

Dismissal from school at the request of a student's parent or guardian will be granted only for serious reasons. No student will be dismissed from school unless the student's parent contacts the office directly by telephone or letter. Students will not be allowed to leave the building without a parent or guardian's signature. Parents or guardians must come into the office and sign their child out for early dismissal. In the event of an illness, Parents or guardians will be contacted to provide transportation for students dismissed by school authorities.

Tardiness

Students are expected to be in their classrooms at 7:35 AM. Students arriving after that time will be considered tardy and must sign in at the office. Parents do not need to sign their child in. Throughout the day, students are expected to arrive at each class on time. Students consistently late to class without an acceptable excuse may be subjected to disciplinary action. Parents will be notified if tardiness to class or school is excessive.

Vacation During School Time

While recognizing and appreciating that vacation experiences may offer a student valuable learning opportunities, the staff believes that classroom instruction, class discussions and class activities cannot be replicated. Indeed it is our responsibility to note that a student's grades may be affected by his/her absence from school. When a student leaves for a vacation not scheduled during a school vacation week, it is our policy that the student will receive his/her missed assignments upon returning to school.

Prior to any planned travel which will result in a student's absence for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, a parent/guardian must: (a) un-enroll their child from school; and (b) either complete a Homeschool Application, or identify the school in which they will enroll their child during said absence.

16. TRANSPORTATION

Obtaining a Bus Pass

All students who plan to ride the bus will need to register for a bus pass. Parents must register all children who plan to ride the bus, whether they qualify for fee-based transportation or not. All registrations for bus transportation will require online registration. Please visit <http://westfordk12.us/Pages/transportation/index> for information on obtaining a Westford Public School bus pass.

Bus Rules

Westford Public School Policy #5319

Students must ride their assigned bus. Because many of our buses are at or near capacity, we cannot honor requests to ride a different bus. In the event a bus change is needed in an emergency, Parents are to contact Dee Bus for approval at 978-392-8639.

The following rules of bus conduct are essential to the safe transportation of all students:

- Talking between driver and any passenger will be kept to a minimum.
- Smoking or lighting of matches on a school bus is prohibited.
- Consumption of food on a school bus to and from school is prohibited.
- The bus will not wait for students who are not ready to board it when it stops for them in the morning.
- "Missing the bus" is not an acceptable excuse for tardiness or absence from school. If a student misses the bus, other arrangements for transportation to school should be made.
- Students will board and leave bus in an orderly manner. Students who cross streets must pass in front of bus while flashing lights are on.
- Excessive noise, fighting, profanity, or other behavior distracting to the bus driver or endangering the safety or morals of students on the bus will not be tolerated.

- Students will stand clear of bus after leaving it, or will cross street in front of bus where the driver can observe them.
- Students who damage private property or act to endanger the safety of classmates risk loss of privilege to ride the bus.
- The rear door of a school bus is an emergency door and will be used as such. When it is used for other than an emergency, the bus driver will directly supervise it.
- Students will stay behind the white lines in front of the building while waiting for buses.
- Students will not throw any objects on or from the bus.
- Students will not put any part of their body out of the bus window.
- Students will observe the rule of courteous, considerate behavior on the bus at all times.
- It must be borne in mind that bus transportation for all pupils eligible because of distance from school is a privilege, which is extended only while proper bus conduct is observed.
- No standing or moving from seat to seat.
- Suggested seating for students on the bus is as follows: 6th at the front, 7th in the middle and 8th in the back.

Any student on a bus who creates a problem will be reported to the Assistant Principal for disciplinary action, which may include suspension of the privileges of riding the bus. Parents will be notified of the problems that students cause on the bus.

Bus Discipline – Westford Public School Policy #5320

- A first offense referral for misbehavior on the school bus will result in a student conference with the building Administrator. At that time appropriate disciplinary action will be administered, and parents will be notified regarding each written report from the driver.
- A **second** referral may result in bus suspension of up to **three days**.
- A **third** referral may result in a bus suspension of at least **five days**.
- Chronic or severe behavior may result in permanent bus suspension or loss of bus privileges for the remainder of the school year. The Superintendent of Schools will be notified.

Bus Stop Safety Review – Changing a Bus Stop

The Director of School Finance is responsible for establishing proper standards of safety in the operation of buses and shall ensure their enforcement by the bus contractor.

The Director of School Finance is responsible for establishing bus schedules, routes, and stops in cooperation with the bus contractor.

Authorized bus stops shall be located in places where pupils may be loaded and unloaded, cross streets and roads, and safely await arrival of the buses.

Criteria Used to Evaluation Bus Stop Safety

Evaluation of bus-stop safety is done by the Director of School Finance, safety officers from the police and fire departments, and the bus company.

When a parent requests a change in the assigned bus stop, the following safety review criteria is used to evaluate the safety of a bus stop:

- Site lines of the traffic from both directions in approaching the bus stop.
- Speed limit and traffic conditions at the location of the bus stop.
- Hills or turns that impede traffic visibility of stop and proximity to the bus stop.
- Ability of a school bus to navigate in an area
- Width of a road.
- Grade level (age) of students.
- Ability of the school bus to safely pull out of a side street onto a main road.
- Time constraints.
- Number of students involved at a bus stop.
- Any other unique conditions.

All requests to change a bus stop must be in writing and must include the reason for making the request. Send this written request to the Director of School Finance who will make the final decision after consultation with safety officers and the bus company.

Late Bus

There are a limited number of late buses. The number of these buses will be announced at the beginning of the year. They will operate on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and depart school at 3:05 PM. The town is divided into designated areas and goes to general stops in that area. **The late bus is a convenience and will not stop at every morning bus stop.** If your child is uncertain which bus to take, he/she should give his/her address to the driver and the driver will let him/her know if that is the correct bus or will direct him/her to the other bus. Please have your child speak to the driver if there is any uncertainty about the bus or route. Because the late bus students are not always the same students, the specific routes may change each day. However, the same bus goes to the same part of town each time.

Bicycles

Riding a bike is a privilege that has a responsibility for your safety and the safety of others. Please be aware of the following safety rules:

- All students **must** wear a helmet.
- Walk your bicycle in the schoolyard coming to school and going home. Our school road is too busy for riding your bicycle.

- Park your bicycle in the rack as soon as you get to school.
- Lock your bicycle. We are not responsible for any bikes that are damaged or lost.
- Students with bicycles are dismissed only with the walkers.
- Follow safe bicycle rules at all times.

17. SCHOOL SERVICES

Lunch

Students are encouraged to eat a nutritious lunch in the cafeteria. There are many choices for a well-balanced meal available to all students. School lunch menus are posted in all homerooms, are available in the main office for students to take home and are published on the Westford Public Schools website. Costs for lunch are announced in September. Through the Nutrikids POS system all students have lunch accounts. You may add money to your child's account on-line, at myschoolbucks.com or you may send cash or a check made out to Westford School Lunch Program to school with your child. The cafeteria manager will be happy to add the funds to your child's account. Students with an account balance which exceeds -\$10.00 will not be allowed to buy the regular lunch, dessert or any A la Carte items. A nutritious substitute lunch will be served until the balance is paid. Your child's account will be charged for the substitute lunch.

Applications for Free and Reduced Meals are sent home with every student the first week of school and should be returned immediately to the school office. Completed applications are automatically approved for foster children and households receiving Food Stamps or AFDC support for children. Applications are approved as determined by income eligibility and number of persons in the household. Eligibility may be checked at any time during the school year, and school officials may ask for verification of information reported on individual applications.

All meals served must meet patterns established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. However, if a child has been determined by a doctor to be handicapped and the handicap would prevent the child from eating the regular school meal, each school will make any substitutions prescribed by the doctor at no extra charge. In the operation of the Child Feeding Programs, no child will be discriminated against because of race, sex, color, national origin, age, or handicap. Please call 692-5560 x2109 or x2110 with any questions about the Food Service program.

Guidance

Guidance services are available for every student in the school. These services include assistance with educational planning, interpretation of test scores, occupational information, career information, study help, help with home, school, and/or social concerns, or any question the student may feel he/she would like to discuss with the counselor.

Lost & Found

Any lost articles, books, clothing, etc. should be turned into the office. They will then be placed into the Lost & Found Box, located in the Main Lobby at Stony Brook and in the cafeteria at Blanchard, where they will be held for a period of time. Clothing will only be stored temporarily. If not claimed, all usable articles of apparel will be donated to a social agency.

Forgotten Items

Should a student forget homework, needed school supplies or permission slip, etc. parents should bring forgotten items to the main office. Students may come to the office area to pick up items before or after lunch or with permission from a teacher. **Classes will not be interrupted for this reason.**

Textbooks

Textbooks are issued at the beginning of the year and may be checked periodically. All textbooks must be covered. **Students are responsible for textbooks.** They are loaned to you for your use. If a student loses or damages them, he/she must pay for them.

Library

The mission of the Westford Public School Library Media Center is to foster academic excellence by providing services and instruction to students that support the school's curriculum. Library teachers collaborate with faculty in designing learning opportunities with quality resources, information, and technology to help students become effective life-long learners.

Program Goals:

- To encourage a love of reading and an appreciation of good literature.
- To provide students with access to a variety of information, which enables them to define a problem, locate, apply, synthesize and evaluate information throughout the research process.
- To ensure that students achieve the necessary skills to ethically, creatively and critically use information and technology to acquire knowledge.

The following guidelines are listed for your information:

- Students may borrow books or magazines for a one-week period. Materials should be returned or renewed on the date due.
- Reference materials are only used in the library.
- Students are responsible for all library materials in their possession. Care should be given not to lose or damage borrowed materials.
- Please report any lost or damaged materials to the library media specialist. A bill will be sent home indicating the replacement cost.
- Students will be unable to borrow library materials until all fees are paid or materials are returned.

PARENT INFORMATION

18. HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

- Student progress report and report card grades are communicated to parents and students through *iParent*. The *iParent* system is integrated into the District's iPASS student information system. *iParent* is specially designed to provide a means of communication and sharing of information between parents, teachers, students, and administrators. **Blanchard and Stony Brook Middle Schools request that all parents apply for *iParent* access.** To apply, go to the Westford Public Schools district home page at <http://www.westfordk12.us> and click on the *iParent* link.
- The middle school websites include pertinent information about each middle school. The web site can be located at <http://westfordk12.us>.
- Weekly emails are sent from the school's principal. You may sign up to receive these emails on the respective school web site.
- Every teacher is issued an email and voicemail account. Please see your school's website for contact information.
- If you would like to schedule a meeting with your child's team of teachers, please contact the main office.
- Should sensitive information need to be conveyed to parents in a timely manner, an automated telephone message will be sent out.

19. MEDICATION INFORMATION

Westford Public School Policy #5503 - The school nurse is the only person allowed to administer medication to students in the Westford Public Schools.

- If medication is to be given at school, it must be in the pharmacy bottle with the prescription label attached.
- The parent/legal guardian must send a note to the nurse which contains: the parent/legal guardian's printed name, signature and emergency phone number; list of medications the student is currently receiving; approval to have the school nurse administer the medication and names of persons to be notified in case of a medication emergency.
- The parent/legal guardian must send to the school nurse an order from a licensed prescriber which contains: the student's name; name and signature of the licensed prescriber including telephone number; name of medication; the frequency and time of medication administration; date of the order and discontinuation date; diagnosis and other medical condition (s) and specific directions for administration. If appropriate, please have the licensed prescriber also provide the following information: any special side effects, contraindication and/or adverse reactions to be observed; any other medications being taken by the student and the date of the next scheduled visit to the physician, if known.

- Medications are kept in the Nurse's Clinic.
- A medication administration plan should be developed with the nurse, including plans for class trips.
- If your child takes regular medication outside of school, it is suggested you contact the school nurse.
- If your child has an allergy requiring an Epipen, please contact the nurse to develop an Emergency Health Care Plan.
- Please telephone or meet with the nurse regarding special medication situations: a student's self-administration of medications; short-term medications; over the counter medications and investigational new drugs.

Medication Found on School Property

If a student finds a prescribed or over-the-counter medication on school property, the following protocol will be followed:

- Student should NOT touch the medication.
- Student will immediately notify the principal and school nurse.
- Custodian will retrieve medication and deliver it to the school nurse.
- School nurse will interview and check the student who found the medication for any signs of skin contact or ingestion.
- School nurse will notify the parents/guardians of the child.
- School principal may contact the Westford Police Department.
- School principal may notify all parents/guardians of students via email and/or memo sent home with students.

Physicals and Immunizations

Westford Public School Policy #5504

Westford Public School regulations require that school children have up to date physical examinations in the 7th grade. School nurses can provide forms for physical examinations, but all health care provider forms are accepted.

According to MIAA rules, any student participating in school sports must provide documentation of an up-to-date physical examination before tryouts – a physical examination done no more than 13 months prior to the completion of the designated sports season by a licensed health care provider. Documentation of the physical (including height, weight and blood pressure) should be given/mailed to the school nurse.

Inoculations of Students

Westford Public School Policy #5505

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

If parents/legal guardians do not adhere to Massachusetts General Law requiring these inoculations for their children, then the administration may take appropriate steps to prohibit students from attending school until the parents/legal guardians can provide evidence that the student has had the required inoculations.

Mandated Screenings

School Health Services staff conduct vision and hearing screenings for 7th grade students. Height and weight and postural screenings are conducted on all students in grades 6-8. Parents/legal guardians will be notified of screening results by letter or telephone only if student has failed a screening exam or requires further care from their healthcare provider. Findings of these referrals for follow-up should be returned to school to update a student's health record.

Exclusion from School

1. A student may be dismissed or excluded from school for any of the following:
2. Temperature over 100 (oral temperature).
3. Disruptive cough with fever
4. Suspected infection of eye, ears, nose, throat, skin or scalp
5. Severe abdominal pain or headache
6. Suspected communicable disease
7. Suspected pediculosis (head lice)
8. Suspected fractures or any severe or disabling injury
9. Questionable need for sutures
10. Vomiting or diarrhea
11. Head injury
12. Immunizations which are not up-to-date

Injuries

Any injury or illness should be reported **IMMEDIATELY** to the school nurse. If the nurse is not on duty, the problem should be reported to the school office. If the injury occurs in Physical Education, it should be reported immediately to the Physical Education Instructor. An accident form must be filled out for every injury.

Emergency Cards

Emergency cards are distributed to all students on the first day of school. Complete information is necessary to ensure your child's health and safety while at school. All information is confidential and must be updated if there are any changes.

20. STUDENT RECORDS

Westford Public School Policy #6111

The school principal is responsible for the privacy and security of all student records maintained in the school. Any parent has the right to examine all records that are maintained on their child by the school system. At the conclusion of Grade Eight, unnecessary information will be removed from the cumulative folders. If you want this information, please contact your child's teacher between June 1st and the last day of school.

21. DIRECTORY INFORMATION

Westford Public School Policy #6111

Directory Information is defined as information contained in the student record which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. Directory Information may be disclosed without prior written consent. The following categories of information has been designated by the Westford School Committee as Directory Information:

First name, last initial

Dates of attendance

Grade level

Extracurricular activities

Awards or honors

Parents or legal guardians can notify the school in writing of any restriction to the release of Directory Information as it applies to their child. Authorization to withhold Directory Information will remain in effect until the beginning of the next school year or until the parent/guardian submits written notification to the school office.

Student Release for Print and Electronic Publication

During the course of the school year, members of the school staff may photograph or videotape students participating in school activities as a way of assessing learning or documenting learning activities. News photographers and cameramen may also visit our schools to take photos or videos of students engaged in school-related activities. These photos and videos may be selected to appear in school publications such as parent newsletters, or student literary journals, in local newspapers, or on cable or commercial TV. In addition, written work or artwork produced by students may be selected to appear in school publications or released to the media.

Occasionally student work or photographs of students participating in school activities or highlights of their achievements may be displayed on the Westford Public Schools web site at <http://westfordk12.us>.

Only the student's' first name and last initial will be published on school department pages. Westford Public Schools will not publish student work or photographs in print or on the Internet without parent/guardian written permission. The school Committee recognizes three levels of publishing audiences as defined in **Westford Public School Policies 6302 and 6115:**

Classroom/School Publishing: All student work and images may be used, displayed, or published in the classroom/school setting unless parent notification to the contrary is received by the school.

Community Publishing – upon parental approval student work may be used in community publications (e.g., *Eagle, Sun*) The student work may be credited with the student's first name and last initial.

World Publishing – upon written parental approval, student work may be displayed on the school district website.

District Acceptable Internet Use

Westford Public School Policy # 6302

Introduction

The Westford Public Schools support student and staff access to a variety of rich information resources.

The following is the Westford Public Schools' Acceptable Use Policy (AUP). Parents and legal guardians will sign the transmittal page of this handbook verifying that they have reviewed the District's Acceptable Use Policy with their child.

Personal Safety (Restrictions are for students only)

- Users of the District's Computing Environment (Users) shall not post personal contact information about themselves or other people that does not adhere to the publishing guidelines as stated above.
- Users shall not agree to meet with someone they have met online without parental approval and participation.
- Users shall promptly disclose to a teacher or other school employee any message they receive that is inappropriate or makes them feel uncomfortable.
- A parent/legal guardian must give written permission for their child's photograph, image, or work to be displayed on the District's web site.

Respect for Privacy

- Users shall respect the privacy of others in the District Computing Environment.
- Users shall not attempt to learn the password, access the files or mail of other users.
- Users shall not post private information about another person.

Illegal Activities

- Users shall not attempt to gain unauthorized access to or through the District Computing Environment to any other computer system or go beyond their authorized access.
- Users shall not make deliberate attempts to disrupt the District Computing Environment's performance or destroy data by spreading computer viruses or by any other means.
- Users shall not use the District Computing Environment to engage in any other illegal act, for example, arranging a drug or alcohol purchase or sale, engaging in criminal gang activity, or threatening the safety of any person.

Publishing

Westford Public School Policy #6115

Westford Public Schools recognizes the need to differentiate target audiences to whom information is published. The Internet is a worldwide target audience and because of that audience, certain restrictions exist on personal information that may be published. At the elementary level the primary concern is to ensure the security and safety of our children by not publishing full names of students. Student work, student first name and last initial, photos, and audio may be used with parental permission. At the high school level, there is no restriction on the publishing of student and staff full names subject to parental/legal guardian and eligible student permission.

World Publishing (Grades K-8) - upon parental approval, student work may be displayed on the school district website. The student work may be credited with the student's first name, last initial. World Publishing requires parental, legal guardian or eligible student permission.

More narrowly scoped target audiences limited to the community are addressed by the comprehensive publishing policy

Environment Security

- Users are responsible for their individual accounts and shall take precautions to prevent others from using their accounts. Under no conditions should a user provide his/her password to another person.
- Users shall immediately notify the designated administrator if they identify a possible security problem.
- Users shall follow the local site's virus protection procedures.

Inappropriate Language, Conduct and Harassment All restrictions against inappropriate language, conduct, and harassment apply to public messages, private messages, and material posted on Web pages.

Truthfulness and Accuracy

Users shall not knowingly or recklessly post false or inaccurate information.

Respecting Resource Limits

- Users shall limit their use of the environment to educational and professional or career development activities.
- Users shall not post chain letters or engage in "spamming." Spamming is sending an annoying or unnecessary message to a large number of people.
- The Superintendent, Principals and/or their designees have the right to reclaim allocated resources with reasonable notice to the user.

Plagiarism and Copyright Infringement

- Users shall not plagiarize works that they find on the Internet. Any sources used in research must be cited and credit given to the author.
- Users shall respect the rights of copyright owners. Copyright infringement occurs when an individual inappropriately reproduces software or another work that is protected by a copyright. If software or another work contains language that specifies acceptable use of that work, the user shall follow the expressed requirements when using the work. If the user is unsure whether or not he/she can use a work, he/she should request permission from the copyright owner.

Inappropriate Access of Material

Users shall not use the District Computing Environment to access material that is inappropriate to the intended educational use.

If a student user inadvertently accesses such information, he/she should immediately disclose the inadvertent access to the supervising staff member. This will protect a user against an allegation that he/she intentionally violated the Acceptable Use Policy.

Any violation of this policy will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including immediate suspension or dismissal.

22. BULLYING

In accordance with The Westford Public Schools Policy #5304:

Bullying is defined as the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional[MM1] of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Examples of bullying include physical aggression, verbal aggression, malicious rumors/gossip; social exclusions and/or threats of harm or exclusion.

Bullying that happens outside of school can lead to disciplinary action at school if a target feels unsafe at school or if school is disrupted as a result of the bullying behaviors.

Westford Public Schools
Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

The Westford Public Schools (WPS) created the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (the Plan) required under M.G.L. c.71, §37O in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents, and guardians. The Plan is posted on the district website www.westfordk12.us.

The Westford Public Schools' Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan ("the Plan") is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying. The district is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. In consultation with these constituencies, we have established this Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. The principal or his/her designee is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan. The district is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyberbullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process.

We understand that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming a target of bullying or harassment based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have 1 or more of these characteristics.[MM2] . The district will take specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

We will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. We will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target's sense of safety. We will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent or guardian involvement.

DEFINITIONS

Several of the following definitions are copied directly from M.G.L. c.71, §37O, as noted below.

[MM3]

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c.71, §37O, is the repeated use by one or more students **or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional** of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- i. causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- ii. places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- iii. creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- iv. infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- v. materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Cyberbullying, is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. See M.G.L. c.71, §37O for the legal definition of cyberbullying.

Hostile environment, as defined in M.G.L. c.71, §37O, is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.

Perpetrator is a student or member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

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

Staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

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

PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

Acts of bullying, which include cyber-bullying, are prohibited:

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

(ii) at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited.

As stated in M.G.L. c.71, §37O, nothing in the Plan requires the district or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

Reporting bullying or retaliation. The district expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of suspected bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or associate/assistant principal. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Reports may be made orally or in writing. The “WPS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form” has been developed for student, parent or other non-school or district staff use to report incidents of suspected bullying. This form can be obtained in every school office or it can be printed from the district’s website www.westfordk12.us. Use of the “WPS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form” is not required as a condition of making a report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the principal or associate/assistant principal.

Determinations. With the principal’s receipt of the complaint of bullying or retaliation, the principal or his/her designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or his/her designee will determine what remedial action may be required, if any, and determine what responsive and/or disciplinary actions will be taken. The principal’s finding and determinations shall be documented in writing and shall notify the parents of the target of the availability of the

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Program Resolution System if the target or the target's parents are dissatisfied with the bullying investigation[MM4] .

All notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal or his/her designee cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

Taking Disciplinary Action

If the principal or his/her designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or his/her designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the Plan and with the school's or district's code of conduct. Disciplinary sanctions may include, but are not limited to, suspension or expulsion from school.

Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which should be read in cooperation with state laws regarding student discipline.

If the principal or his/her designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action.

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the principal or his/her designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the principal or his/her designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately. The principal or his/her designee will monitor the effectiveness of any such interventions employed and, where appropriate, recommend alternative or supplemental interventions.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c.71, §37H or 37H½, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

23. HARASSMENT POLICY

In accordance with The Westford Public Schools Policy #5303:

The School Committee is committed to maintaining a work and educational environment free from all forms of harassing conduct. Harassment including but not limited to, race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sex, creed, marital status, gender identity, sexual orientation or disability will not be tolerated in the Westford Public Schools. All employees, students, contracted vendors, and other members of the school community will conduct themselves in an appropriate manner with respect, dignity, courtesy, and fair treatment for all individuals while on school grounds, school property, or property within the jurisdiction of the school district, school busses, or attending or engaging in school activities.

Harassment means conduct of a verbal or physical nature which is designed to embarrass, distress, agitate, disturb, or trouble any person when: 1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's work or education or of an individual's participation in school programs or activities. 2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for decisions affecting the individual. 3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or creating an intimidating or hostile learning or working environment.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

1. Verbal, physical or written harassment or abuse
2. Unsolicited remarks or remarks of a demeaning nature
3. Gestures or physical contact
4. Displays or circulation of written materials or pictures derogatory to either gender or derogatory to racial, ethnic, religious, sexual orientation or disability groups.
5. Implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievement, or other school matters.
6. Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at an individual.

Gender Harassment (Sexual Harassment) includes, but is not limited to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other physical or verbal conduct of a sexual nature as listed below:

1. Submission is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's participation in school programs or activities.

2. Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for work or educational decisions affecting such individual.
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or educational performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working/educational environment.

Each administrator shall be responsible within their school or office for promoting an understanding of harassment and ensuring compliance with state and federal laws, and with School Committee policy and regulations governing harassment.

Violations will be cause for disciplinary action up to termination or expulsion.

Retaliation in any form against any person who has filed a complaint relating to harassment will not be tolerated. No individual will be subject to any form of coercion, intimidation, retaliation or discrimination for filing a report of harassment. The consequences for retaliation will be the same as for harassment. False accusations made in bad faith will be subject to the same disciplinary action as the harassment itself.

Following disclosure by a student of an incident involving student-to-student harassment, **one or more** of the following may occur after investigation by an appropriate responder.

- A letter identifying the offending behavior may be written and given to the offender. This is not a disciplinary action. The letter is not kept on file in the Principal's Office. However, it is retained by the Guidance Director. If harassment described by the student involves extreme physical assault, a letter response would not be appropriate, and the matter would be turned over to an administrator for more direct attention and disciplinary action.
- Notification of parents when disciplinary action is not required may vary depending on the school level.
- Student may be disciplined.

At any stage in the complaint process, the complainant has the right to file formal complaints with the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, 5 Post Office Square, Boston, MA 02110-1491 (617) 289-0111, or with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, One Ashburton Place, Sixth Floor, Room 601, Boston, MA 02108, (617) 727-3990. For complaints of discrimination on the basis of disability the complainant may also file a complaint with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 75 Pleasant Street Street, Malden, MA 02148, (617) 338-3300 or may file a Request for Hearing with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Bureau of Special Education Appeals, One Congress Street, Boston, MA 02108, 617-626-7200. Complaints of discrimination in employment practices may also be filed with the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), 475 JFK Federal Building, Boston, MA 02203-0506, (617) 565-3200.

If students feel that they are being harassed by adult personnel, they are encouraged to report the incident to a counselor and/or administrator. Appropriate action will be taken in all instances.

24. HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

Westford Public School Policy #6201

Program Definition: The homebound instruction program is designed for students who cannot attend school for a variety of medical or emotional factors as substantiated by a healthcare provider. The program may be of short or long-term duration.

The program designed for each student is determined by his/her educational plan and consists primarily of academic tasks, which are coordinated by the regular/special education teacher(s) and the home instruction teacher.

Program Goals: The goals of the program are to:

- Provide instructional support for students assigned to the Homebound Instruction Program.
- Provide the schools and the classroom teacher(s) with periodic reports of student progress.
- Implement the designed educational plan with the intent of returning to the regular school program at the earliest possible time.

25. TOBACCO USE/POSSESSION POLICY

Westford Public School Policy #5306

According to Federal Regulation Massachusetts General Laws, and Town of Westford By-Laws **use/possession of any** tobacco products (School use: electronic and smokeless cigarettes) within the school buildings, the school facilities, on school grounds or school buses, by any individual, including school personnel, is strictly prohibited. **Tobacco products will be confiscated.** Each violation will result in the following fine in addition to disciplinary actions detailed:

1st offense: \$100.00 Required attendance at Westford Academy Tobacco Education Program and parent notification.

2nd offense: \$200.00 in-school suspension and parent notification

3rd offense: \$300.00 in-school suspension and meeting between Superintendent or designee and student and parents

4th offense: \$300.00 in-school suspension for insubordination and meeting between student, parents and the School Committee along with a recommendation for expulsion.

26. ALCOHOL USE/POSSESSION

According to law **use/possession of alcohol** within the school buildings, the school facilities, on school grounds or school buses, by any individual, including school personnel, is strictly prohibited.

27. POLICE QUESTIONING

Westford Public School Policy # 1401

Schools have the responsibility to parents/guardians for the welfare of students while they are in school.

If the police department needs to question a student, school officials have the responsibility of notifying the student's parent or legal guardian regarding the questioning. The presence of the student's parent/guardian at the time of the questioning is desirable to safeguard the self-incrimination rights of the student. Whenever possible, the questioning should be conducted away from the school to avoid any display of law enforcement activities which can lead to unfortunate misunderstandings on the part of other students and members of the faculty.

28. STUDENT EXPULSION

M.G.L. ch. 71; Sec 37L: Possession of Weapons Section 37L. The school committee of each city, town or regional school district shall inform teachers, administrators, and other professional staff of reporting requirements for child abuse and neglect under section 51A of chapter 119 and the reporting requirements for fires under section 2A of chapter 148.

In addition, any school department personnel shall report in writing to their immediate supervisor an incident involving a student's possession or use of a dangerous weapon on school premises at any time.

Supervisors who receive such a weapon report shall file it with the superintendent of said school, who shall file copies of said weapon report with the local chief of police, the department of children and families, the office of student services or its equivalent in any school district, and the local school committee. Said superintendent, police chief, and representative from the department of children and families, together with a representative from the office of student services or its equivalent, shall arrange an assessment of the student involved in said weapon report. Said student shall be referred to a counseling program; provided, however, that said counseling shall be in accordance with acceptable standards as set forth by the board of education. Upon completion of a counseling session, a follow-up assessment shall be made of said student by those involved in the initial assessment.

A student transferring into a local system must provide the new school system with a complete school record of the entering student. Said record shall include, but not be limited to, any incidents involving suspension or violation of criminal acts or any incident reports in which such student was charged with any suspended act.

29. CHAPTER 622 and TITLE IX

Equal Educational Opportunity

In accordance with the regulations of Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, all courses of study, extra-curricular activities, services, and facilities offered by the school are available without regard to race, color, sex, religion or national origin.

Furthermore in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, United States of America, no person shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity.

Under both Chapter 622 and Title IX, provisions for grievance procedures are made. Any student, parent, guardian or other person or group who believes that these regulations have been or are being violated, may so notify the Principal, Superintendent of Schools, and Chapter 622/Title IX Coordinator. The School Department will respond promptly, but no later than 30 days, in writing to the party filing the grievance. The party filing the grievance may also submit a copy of the grievance to the Bureau of Equal Educational Opportunity of the Department of Education. Should a non-compliance be found, procedures for making changes will be made immediately initiated both to correct the non-compliance and to provide particular remedies to the person or group affected.

30. ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

- All students, as they enroll in WPS, are required to complete a Home Language Survey
- If a language in addition to English is spoken at home, or if a student's first language is not English, the student will be assessed for English language proficiency.
- Students scoring below expectations on the English language proficiency testing and recommended for ELL services will receive ELL support services during the school day.
- Students receiving ELL support are required to participate in statewide assessments.
- If parents elect to exclude their child from ELL services, they must check the box marked, "No" on the Permission for Services form or contact the principal in person, via telephone or email.
- Students will exit the ELL Program after passing statewide testing, and based on the results of standardized testing, classroom performance and teacher recommendation.

31. NO SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENT

No School announcements will be made over WBZ (1030), Channel 4, 5, 7, or Cable TV-8 or on the westford.com website – www.westford.us.

32. TRANSMITTAL FORM

A parent or legal guardian signature is required on the transmittal form. This form verifies that you have read and reviewed the handbook with your child and have indicated which level of publishing you give to the Westford Public Schools. The handbook will be posted online and copies will be made available in the office. Please return the Transmittal Form to the school office by the date provided on the form.

33. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What if your child forgets something?.... When you bring your child's forgotten lunch, homework, project, and/or instrument to school, make sure it is clearly labeled. Remember it is your child's responsibility to check the "forgotten items" on the counter in the main office to see if any items were brought in. **Classes will not be interrupted for this purpose.**

What if your child needs to be dismissed?.... Your child must bring a signed note to the front office in the morning. The student will receive a dismissal slip. When it is time to be dismissed, the student shows this slip to the teacher, then brings the slip to the front office where he/she will be dismissed. You will need to come into the office area and sign the dismissal book. You can pick your child up at the front office. Ideally your child should report to the office at the time of dismissal. We do not want to interrupt classes.

What if your child gets sick or injured during the school day?.... The school nurse will decide if there is a need to leave school or seek further medical attention. In such cases, the school nurse will notify parents or guardians. This is one reason accurate and up to date emergency cards are needed.

What if your child is late for school?.... If a student is late to school, he/she should have a signed note from a parent or guardian explaining the reason for being late. There is a sign-in book in the front office. Please have your child come to the front office and enter the information in this book.

What if your child loses money or a personal article?... If anyone should lose something, the team teachers or an administrator should be notified as soon as possible. Students should also check the lost and found box located in the front lobby. Large sums of money or valuable personal items (walkman, CD players, etc.) should not be brought to school.

What if your child forgets lunch money?.... If your child forgets lunch money and cannot make arrangements with home, he/she will be given a lunch ticket worth one lunch without dessert. This will be good for one lunch. Money owed will have to be paid back before additional money is loaned. A student may only borrow once if they have not paid back the money borrowed.

What if your child has been absent?.... Students who are absent may obtain homework assignments by accessing the middle school website and clicking on their grade and team. Students may also contact their teachers via email. Email addresses can be found on the school's website.

What to watch for with home internet?.... Closely monitor your child's use of chat rooms, instant messages, cell phone texting, and social networking sites including Facebook, Instagram. Most social networking sites have an age requirement of at least 13. If you allow your child to have these accounts, insist that you have full access to the account. If you allow your child to have a cell phone, check the phone frequently for appropriate use of text messaging and picture taking.