

# *Elementary Handbook*

**for Parents, Students  
and Teachers**

Lexington Public Schools  

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Lexington, Massachusetts

# Lexington Public Schools

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The Elementary Handbook is a publication of the Office of Curriculum and Instruction, Lexington Public Schools

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Grateful acknowledgement is made to Jane McLaughlin for coordination; to Jean Cole for editing and design; and to Jim Morello for production.

# Elementary Handbook for Parents, Students and Teachers

Lexington Public Schools

146 Maple Street, Lexington, MA 02420

Revised: August 2009

## *Dear Parents and Guardians,*

Welcome to the Lexington Elementary Schools. In an effort to achieve consistency across the elementary schools, we are providing each family with a copy of the Lexington Public Schools' *Elementary Handbook*.

The handbook is designed to provide you with pertinent information you should be aware of regarding your child's elementary education. We trust that you will share this useful information with your child in the most appropriate manner.

A limited number of copies is available in school offices and libraries, and it is also available on the LPS website.

The Lexington Elementary Schools are full of knowledge, enthusiasm, fun, challenge, constructive play, creativity, support and encouragement. Our dedicated teaching staff and support personnel strive to provide for each student's individual needs. We encourage your support and assistance throughout the school year so that your child will have a successful and rewarding year.

Sincerely,

*Paul B. Ash*

Superintendent

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# Lexington Public Schools

## Core Purposes

### **Academic Excellence for All Children**

- Set high standards in both the planning process and day-to-day interactions
- Use data and results to evaluate ourselves and our practices
- Work hard and persevere
- Confront problems without delay
- Take personal responsibility to improve the quality of programs

### **Respectful and Caring Relationships**

- Use open and honest communication
- Help others
- Use effective teamwork
- Acknowledge that other people have value, even when you disagree with their ideas or behavior
- Treat people the way you would want to be treated

### **A Culture of Reflection, Conversation, Collaboration and Commitment to Continuous Improvement**

- Reflection – analyze our individual and collective practices
- Conversation – generate and evaluate ideas and practice with colleagues
- Collaboration – work with colleagues to achieve individual, group, school or system goals
- Commitment to continuous improvement – act on multiple sources of data to improve practice

**We work to make these Core Purposes a reality.**

## Policy of Non-Discrimination

Lexington Public Schools does not discriminate in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its services, programs and activities, on the basis of race, color or national origin, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI); on the basis of sex, in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; on the basis of disability, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); or on the basis of age, in accordance with the Age Discrimination Act of 1974 (Age Discrimination Act). Nor does it discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or religion, in accordance with Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971 (M.G.L.c.76,§5) and Chapter 151B of the General Laws.

To file a complaint alleging discrimination or harassment by Lexington Public Schools on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, or religion or to make inquiry concerning the application of Title VI, Title IX, section 504, the ADA, the Age Discrimination Act or applicable state laws and their respective implementing regulations, please contact:

Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources  
146 Maple Street  
Lexington, MA 02420  
781-861-2556



## Elementary Schools

### Bowman

9 Philip Road  
Lexington 02421  
781-861-2500  
Mary Antón-Oldenburg,  
Principal

### Bridge

55 Middleby Road  
Lexington 02421  
781-861-2510  
Jade Reitman, Principal

### Estabrook

117 Grove Street  
Lexington 02420  
781-861-2520  
Sandra Trach, Principal

### Fiske

55 Adams Street  
Lexington 02420  
781-541-5001  
Nancy Peterson, Principal

### Harrington

328 Lowell Street  
Lexington 02420  
781-860-0012  
Elaine Mead, Principal

### Hastings

7 Crosby Road  
Lexington 02421  
781-860-5800  
Louise Lipsitz, Principal

The Lexington elementary schools provide a comprehensive education which encompasses a core curriculum enhanced by special program offerings. Our overall goal is to help children learn and succeed. Teachers strive to create a stimulating and challenging learning environment that is sensitive to the needs of all students.

### Instructional Program

Language arts instruction includes reading, writing, speaking, spelling and listening with an emphasis on connections among the skills. Mathematics instruction emphasizes real-life application and problem-solving skills. Science utilizes an inquiry approach to the study of the natural and physical world as well as practical applications of science and technology. Social Studies instruction examines the interrelationships of people and cultures to historic, geographic and economic environments. The curriculum exceeds Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks in its expectations.

Arts instruction includes the visual and performing arts; instrumental music is offered beginning in grade four. Physical and health education emphasize physical fitness, motor skills and lifelong habits of healthy living. All aspects of the curriculum make use of information technologies and an extensive media center in each school.

## Special Features

Children are given opportunities to assume responsibility for their own education and are guided to develop strong study skills, to use time efficiently and to complete tasks. We value each child's uniqueness and try to build on his/her strengths.

Parents are our partners in the important job of educating the children of this community. Each school has an active Parent/Teacher Association that plans special programs, such as talent shows, school fairs, before- or after-school sports, and cultural enrichment programs that tie in to the curriculum.

Each school has a School Council that works as an advisory board to the principal. Opportunities are provided for volunteers to work in the schools. Communication between home and school is vital, and newsletters are provided on a regular basis. Fee-based extended day programs are available.

# General Information

## School Hours

Our doors are open for the children at 8:30 a.m., and for their safety we ask that children not arrive on school grounds before that time. There is aide coverage on the playground for bus children who arrive prior to that time, generally beginning about 8:15 a.m. Because of school meetings or other morning obligations, teachers may not be in their classrooms before 8:30 a.m.

### **GRADES 1 - 5**

#### **Mon. Tues. Wed. Fri.**

8:30 a.m..... Enter classrooms  
8:45 ..... Attendance is taken  
3:15 ..... Dismissal

#### **Thursday**

8:30 a.m. .. Enter classrooms  
8:45 ..... Attendance is taken  
12:15 ..... Dismissal

### **FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN**

#### **Mon. Tues. Wed. Fri.**

8:30 a.m..... Enter classroom  
8:45 ..... Attendance is taken  
3:15. .... Dismissal

#### **Thursday**

8:30 a.m. .. Enter classrooms  
8:45 ..... Attendance is taken  
12:15 ..... Dismissal

### **HALF-DAY KINDERGARTEN**

#### **Mon. Tues. Wed. Fri.**

8:30 a.m..... Enter classroom  
8:45 ..... Attendance is taken  
12:15. .... Dismissal

#### **Thursday**

8:30 a.m. .. Enter classrooms  
8:45 ..... Attendance is taken  
12:15 ..... Dismissal

All children are dismissed at 12:15 p.m. on Thursdays in order that teachers may participate in townwide meetings, curriculum committees, in-service workshops, planning sessions, staff meetings, team meetings, and parent conferences. Parents are encouraged to attempt to use this time for medical and dental appointments as well as other special appointments or classes.

## Lexington Elementary Schools Attendance Policy

Lexington Public Schools require a high level of participation in engaged learning. Regular class attendance enables students to benefit from classroom discussions, presentations and interactive activities. These shared academic experiences are integral to the learning process and cannot be re-created or replicated.

Massachusetts law requires compulsory attendance for all students. Chapter 76, section 1 of the Mass General Laws states that all children between the ages of six and sixteen must attend school. A school district may excuse up to seven day sessions or fourteen partial day sessions in any six-month period. The school must uphold the law.

### Absence and Tardy Information

Students arriving late to school must report to the main office with a parent and be signed in. A child is considered late for elementary school if he or she is not in the classroom by 8:45 a.m. ready to begin the school day.

An EXCUSED ABSENCE/TARDY includes:

- Documented illness or injury
- Bereavement/family funeral
- Major religious observances
- Extraordinary family circumstances (excused at the discretion of the principal)

An UNEXCUSED ABSENCE/TARDY is not covered by the aforementioned definition. Examples of an unexcused absence may include, but may not be limited to:

- Repetitive or chronic absence or tardiness due to illness or injury not documented by a doctor or other medical professional
- Truancy
- Family vacations
- Undocumented absences
- Non-emergency family situations

### Tardy Consequences

Work and/or instruction missed may be made up at recess.

- After 8th tardy – Letter home
- After 10th tardy – Conference with the parent and student

Subsequent tardies may result in the child being referred to the Student Resource Officer.

### Family Vacations

We strongly discourage family vacations when school is in session. In addition to compromising the attendance law, family vacations interrupt

the educational process in each subject area in ways that make-up work cannot reverse. Teachers are not required to provide work in advance of a family vacation.

### Attendance Policy – If a student has...

- Five (5) or more consecutive days absent, parents must obtain a doctor's note and submit it to the school.
- Seven (7) absences (excused or unexcused), a letter of warning will be issued to parents reminding them of the school's attendance policy, and that they will be contacted to schedule a meeting should absences approach 10 days.
- Ten (10) absences (excused or unexcused), a parent conference will be scheduled to discuss the attendance policy and to develop a proactive attendance plan.
- Fifteen (15) absences (in disregard of the personal attendance plan), an attendance hearing will be held with the parents, administrators, and School Resource Officer.
- Twenty (20) absences (in disregard of the personal attendance plan), a 51A (neglect) or CHINS (child in need of services) may be filed.
- Twenty-five (25) absences or more, it could result in retention.

### Early Dismissal

If your child will be leaving during the school day, please send in a note to the homeroom teacher. Then, plan to pick up your child *at the office* where personnel will call the homeroom to notify the child and teacher.

### Family Vacations

Parents and students are reminded that Massachusetts Law requires compulsory attendance for students. We strongly discourage family vacations when school is in session. In addition to compromising the attendance law, family vacations interrupt the educational process of each course in ways that make-up work cannot reverse.

Teachers are not required to give out homework assignments prior to a family vacation.

### Changing Dismissal Routine

If your child's normal dismissal routine is to be altered on a particular

day, please send a note to the classroom teacher describing the change and who will meet your child at school, if someone is to do so. Experience tells us that, if a child does not have a note and we can not locate the parent, the child will be dismissed following the normal dismissal routine.

## Office Hours

School offices are open from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m.

## Inclement Weather

In the spring of 1993, the Lexington School Committee adopted a new policy to deal with inclement weather. It states that, “In the case of inclement weather, the Superintendent shall exercise his/her best judgment as to whether or not school shall be kept open. The Superintendent will consider a delayed opening of either one or two hours as a response to inclement weather or other emergency conditions. A decision to open with a delay will be communicated to the public and to staff in the same manner as a no school announcement.”

“No School” information, including delayed openings and emergency closings, will be broadcast on radio stations WBZ (Radio AM/1030; TV Channel 4); WRKO/WHDH (Radio AM/680; TV Channels 7 and 56); WCVB TV Channel 5; or WFXT FOX25. Please tune in to one station or channel after 6:00 a.m.

You can also check the school district website <<http://lps.lexingtonma.org/snow>> for information. Please do not call the school unless it is an emergency.

In the best interest of public safety, please do not call the police, fire, or public works departments for “No School” information as their lines need to be kept open for emergency purposes. The best practice is to listen to one of the radio or television stations listed above or check the LPS website for information.

In the event that parents or guardians feel weather conditions will not allow their children to reach school safely, they are encouraged to keep their children home.

## Emergency School Closing

It is a rare occurrence that school is canceled because of an emergency during the day, e.g., mid-day snow storm, no heat, etc., but when this

happens the principal initiates a telephone chain to alert parents that the children are coming home earlier than usual.

We ask every parent to discuss with his/her child what to do in case of an emergency school closing. You, too, need an emergency plan.

We ask you not to suggest that the child call you because our telephone lines are jammed on these days and very few calls can get in or go out.

## School Lunch Program and Snacks

Hot lunches, with plain, chocolate or skim milk included, are available to all students who wish to purchase them. For those children who bring their lunches from home, milk is sold separately (one price for plain, chocolate or skim milk).

Menus are printed weekly in the Lexington Minuteman and also are distributed to students on a monthly basis from the school.

A newly installed debit card system is now available to students when paying for lunch or snacks. Details about the program and sign-up information will be mailed to each family and is also available in each school office.

The children have 45 minutes for a lunch and recess period. They are allowed to take as much time as necessary to eat lunch. Teacher aides supervise the lunch and playground periods. Behavior conducive to good eating habits is expected in the lunchroom. Children may bring a snack for the mid-morning recess.

## Pupil Progress Reports and Parent/Teacher Conferences

Pupil progress reports for children in grades 1-5 are sent home three times a year—in December, March, and June; and for kindergarten children, twice a year—in December and June. Parent conferences are held twice a year and are scheduled in October/November and again in March.

## Volunteers

There is no better way to learn about your school and to help your school than to share your time and talent with us. You may choose, for example, to volunteer as a library helper, to assist students with computers, be a member of the PTA Board, serve on a PTA committee, chaperone a field trip, share an activity with children in a classroom, or help in a classroom. Call the school for further information. Volunteers are subject to

CORI checks based on the following statute:

## CORI Checks

M.G.L. c. 71, § 38R requires all schools in Massachusetts to conduct criminal background checks on current and prospective employees and volunteers, including those who regularly provide school related transportation to students and those who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children. The CORI law requires a school or district to notify all persons for whom a CORI is requested that such information is being or may be obtained. Prospective employees and volunteers are required to complete and sign a CORI Request Form which is available through the secretary at each of our six elementary schools. The Request Form is used to document that we have provided you with notice that a CORI is being conducted and to verify your identity through a government issued form of photographic identification (usually a driver's license). If you have any questions concerning the CORI process please contact the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources.



## Fire Drills

At the ringing of the fire alarm, students are to leave their rooms under the direction of the teacher. They will follow the fire drill directions written and posted in each room. Students should be familiar with the directions in each classroom they attend. The “no talking” rule is in effect during the drills. When outside the building, students must remain with their own classes.

Fire drill instructions – Teachers are expected to review these instructions with each class at the beginning of the year.

1. Walk, do not run!
2. All classes are to move at least 100 feet from the building exit. Teachers are to urge students to move promptly to the designated areas.
3. Individual classes are to remain together.
4. Teachers are responsible for the accounting and the supervision of the students in their classes during a drill or emergency.
5. The ringing of the school bells will be the signal to re-enter the building.
6. Teachers not assigned to classes are to report to the nearest exit and assist during the drill or emergency.
7. Alternate routes – all teachers and students must be ready to deviate from the drill pattern if an emergency should cause the closing of an exit or route.

Provision for physically handicapped students – The Special Education Department has developed plans for the evacuation of physically handicapped students during drills and in the event of an actual emergency. These plans are available for review in the Special Education Office.

## METCO Program

The Metropolitan Council for Education Opportunity (METCO) Program is a voluntary urban/suburban educational desegregation program. It provides opportunities for urban students of color to attend school in suburban public school systems. It also provides suburban students and staff opportunities to interact with many minority students and to benefit from a culturally diverse learning environment. METCO provides additional resources to the schools and to our students throughout the year in order to facilitate learning and cultural experiences for everyone in the school system.

The METCO Program is funded by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts under the Racial Imbalance Act. Annually, each METCO community receives money from the State which pays for METCO staff, transportation, and special education services for, our Boston resident students. METCO funding also pays a portion of the salaries for classroom teachers in Lexington. The Program budget has enabled us to afford multicultural programs for our schools, workshops and seminars for students and parents, and professional development opportunities for school staff.

METCO exists in 36 suburban communities across the State. Lexington was one of the first communities to enter into the METCO urban/suburban partnership when it first began in 1966. Lexington is the third largest METCO community, enrolling 259 students in the school system. Boston resident students are usually placed into our METCO Program at the elementary school level. Occasionally, placements are made at the middle school level when space exists. Our students are members of their school community at all schools in Lexington.

The METCO Family Friends Program is another supportive aspect of the METCO partnership wherein Lexington families volunteer to become “partners” with Boston families. When a child enters one of our schools via the METCO Program, she/he is paired with a volunteer Lexington family (preferably a family with a child in the same classroom or grade level as the Boston child). The Family Friends Program provides opportunities for Lexington and Boston children and their parents to broaden relationships through the sharing of family, cultural and social experiences in their respective communities. At the elementary level, Family Friend students participate in METCO Friends Visiting Days which are scheduled in advance on specified Thursday afternoons. Overnight visitations may occur (individually arranged, if desired) both in Lexington and in Boston. Open and regular communication between families in Lex-

ington and Boston is encouraged throughout the year to help nurture the mutual development of relationships.

The METCO Program is committed to educational excellence for all children. METCO provides support services to students, staff and parents around educational, cultural and social issues. In addition, the program strives to provide opportunities for Lexington and Boston families (as well as staff) to learn together, to break down stereotypes, and to open lines of communication.

If you have any questions about the METCO Program, please feel free to call the building Principal or the Lexington METCO Director.

Interim Director: Mr. George Saxon.....781-861-2320, ext. 1450

## Special Education Services

Special education services are available in all of the elementary schools to students with disabilities who meet state and federal regulations for such services. Before services can be provided, a student must have a team evaluation consisting of multi-source assessments to determine if he/she has a disability as defined by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, is not making effective progress in school, that the lack of progress is related to the identified disability and that he/she requires specialized instruction and/or related services in order to access the general curriculum.

Upon completion of the evaluation, the evaluation team must answer the following questions:

1. Does the student have a disability? If so, what type of disability?
2. Is the student making effective progress in school? If not, is the lack of progress a result of the student's disability?
3. Does the student require specially designed instruction in order to make effective progress in school or does the student require related services in order to access the general curriculum?

There is a continuum of special education services available in the Lexington Public Schools. All of the elementary schools provide special education teaching and support in areas such as reading, math, writing, and organization, as well as related services such as speech/language, occupational therapy, physical therapy, counseling, and adaptive physical education. The school system also offers district-wide programs at individual elementary schools to service lower-incidence populations.

School districts are required to provide the student's parents an opportunity to consult with the Special Education Administrator or his/her designee (e.g., Evaluation Team Leader, Supervisor of Special Education) regarding the evaluators who will be used by the school district to conduct the assessments comprising the team evaluation, including the initial evaluation to determine eligibility and any subsequent reevaluations. This requirement may be met by meeting with the parent prior to an evaluation or by incorporating information on this consultation opportunity in the notice sent to the parents when a district is requesting permission to conduct an evaluation. The intent of this requirement, in conjunction with the requirement to consult with the parent on the types of assessments recommended by the school district, is to allow the

parent to be involved in planning the evaluation conducted by the school district, so as to maximize parental satisfaction with the school district's evaluation.

If you have any questions about special education regulations, please call the Director of Student Services at 781-861-2490.

Parents should contact their child's principal if they believe their child has a special need that necessitates an evaluation.

# Life-Threatening Allergies

Date Approved by School Committee: June 21, 2005

## I. Background

- The prevalence of reported food allergies has continued to increase significantly over the last several years. It is reported that the incidence of peanut allergy over the last five years has doubled in children. In 2003, it was reported that there were approximately 2 million school-age children with food allergies. Those with a diagnosed food allergy are at significant risk of anaphylaxis, a life-threatening allergic reaction. In a study by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health there were 374 reported cases of anaphylactic reactions requiring the use of an EpiPen in the schools of the Commonwealth between September 2001 and May 2005.
- In October 2002, the Massachusetts Department of Education joined the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology (AAAAI) in recommending that all schools have in place a system to identify children with life-threatening allergies (LTA) and be prepared in the school workplace to deal with life-threatening allergic reactions. Education of all staff in life-threatening allergy awareness is the cornerstone of this initiative.

## II. Purpose and Scope

- In order to minimize the incidence of life-threatening allergic reactions, the Lexington Public Schools (LPS) will maintain a system-wide response plan to address life-threatening reactions and maintain an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) for any student whose parent/guardian, primary care physician or board certified allergist has informed the principal of a school in writing that the student has a life-threatening allergy.

### III. Implementation of the Life-Threatening Allergy Policy

The Lexington Public Schools (LPS) will:

- A. Provide life-threatening allergy awareness education and EpiPen training for all LPS employees based on Department of Public Health (DPH) and Department of Education (DOE) recommendations, including but not limited to:
  - 1. the significance of LTAs and a discussion on the most common food, stinging insect, latex, and medication allergies,
  - 2. how to create a safe environment for students with LTAs,
  - 3. the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis,
  - 4. what an EpiPen is and how to use it, and
  - 5. how to activate the Emergency Response System (ERS), i.e., nurse and 911 Emergency Medical Services (EMS), to deal with an actual, suspected, or potential anaphylactic reaction.
- B. At the elementary school level during the school day, all schools will require that any parties and celebrations be food free. The use of food for curriculum instruction or special luncheons during the school day will be restricted to approval by the principal. The use of food as a reward in any classroom will be eliminated.
- C. The principal or designee in each school will implement a “No Food or Utensil Sharing” practice, with particular focus at the elementary school level.
- D. Each elementary school, as reasonably appropriate, will provide a peanut free/tree-nut free table in the cafeteria. Reasonable efforts will be made for such table to become “free” of other allergens as deemed needed for an individual student through documentation from the student’s primary care physician or board certified allergist. At the middle and high schools appropriate accommodations will be made as needed.
- E. The risk involved in allowing students of elementary and middle school age to make unsupervised food choices at bake sales is recognized; therefore, no bake sales will be permitted at elementary or middle schools during the school day. Bake sales conducted outside the school day are limited to those at which only adults are allowed to purchase products.

At the high school level, the sale of food products as a fundraiser will be at the discretion of the principal.

- F. At the elementary school level, when a student's medical need to be in an LTA-free environment is clearly documented by a board certified allergist, and clear directions from the allergist are provided, LPS will make reasonable efforts to create LTA-free classrooms for the student. LPS reserves the right to consult with a board certified allergist of its choice to review the recommendation to determine if it will authorize its implementation.
- G. Each school's Crisis Management Plan will include how to respond to an anaphylactic reaction (life-threatening allergic reaction). This plan will be reviewed annually by each building principal and will be part of all LTA-awareness training.
- H. Each school will develop and maintain an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) for any student identified with a life-threatening allergy in collaboration with the student's parent/guardian and primary care physician or board certified allergist.
- I. The LPS will maintain records of any life-threatening allergic reaction, the use of an EpiPen, and the call for medical assistance by calling 911. LPS will report all such LTA reactions to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), according to department regulations and protocol.
- J. Because of the confidentiality of medical records, a student's parent/guardian has the responsibility for notifying school bus drivers directly of any life threatening allergies of which the bus driver should be aware.
- K. For any event outside of the regular school day which is neither sponsored by LPS nor part of the LPS curriculum, the sponsor of such event is responsible for assuring that appropriate provisions concerning LTAs of participants are in place.

## IV. Employee/Contractor Training and Education

- A. Life-threatening allergy (LTA) awareness training will be required of all teachers, aides, tutors, secretaries, and student teachers in the school system.
- B. The custodial staff either will be included in staff LTA-awareness



training or will be offered informational sessions on life-threatening allergies by the building principal.

- C. All substitute teachers contracted by the LPS will receive LTA-awareness training, following the LPS curriculum. No substitute will be employed in the system who has not received this training. The Director of Human Resources will be responsible for ensuring that contracted services provide LTA-awareness training to substitute teachers.
- D. Food-service personnel contracted by LPS will be given building-based LTA-awareness training annually.
- E. The LPS Business Office will offer to our contracted bus drivers the opportunity for LTA-awareness training annually, and will encourage their participation.
- F. Principals or their designees will be responsible to schedule LTA-awareness training in their schools and to ensure that all appropriate employees are trained.

# Child Abuse and Neglect Policy

Date Approved by School Committee: October 7, 2003

## I. Background of Policy

The Lexington Public Schools (LPS) is dedicated to the goal of protecting our students from child abuse and neglect and to responding effectively to incidents of child abuse and neglect. LPS recognizes local, state, and national efforts to address problems associated with child abuse and neglect and will work cooperatively with all agencies with responsibility for addressing such concerns.

Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L) c. 119, § 51A, requires that certain persons in their professional capacity are mandated to report child abuse and neglect when they have reasonable cause or suspicion to believe that a child under the age of 18 years is suffering physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse that causes harm or substantial risk of harm to the child's health or welfare, including sexual abuse, or from neglect, including malnutrition. All employees of the LPS are mandated reporters.

This policy serves to assist all LPS employees to carry out their responsibilities effectively under M.G.L. as well as to establish responsibilities and roles for LPS child protection teams. It also establishes expectations for LPS employees to receive training in both identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect.

## II. Purpose and Scope

All employees of the LPS are mandated reporters under this policy.

LPS employees, like employees in other school departments, are in a unique position to identify potential cases of abuse and neglect of children, because of their sustained contact with school-age children. Responsible action by employees can be achieved through recognition and understanding of potential incidents of abuse, knowing and following established reporting procedures, and participating in available child abuse and neglect information/training programs.

### **Definition of Terms:**

- Neglect is the failure, either deliberately or through negligence or inability, to take those actions necessary to provide a child with minimally adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision, emotional stability and growth, or other essential care. It is understood

that such inability is not solely due to inadequate economic resources or solely due to the existence of a handicapping condition. Neglect can occur while the child is in an out-of-home or in-home setting. Permitting a child to be truant or failing to enroll a child in school without providing an alternative program can constitute neglect.

- Physical abuse includes infliction, by other than accidental means, of physical harm upon the body of a child.
- Emotional abuse refers to excessive, aggressive, or unreasonable behavior by an adult that places demands on a child that are above his/her capabilities. This may include verbal attacks, humiliation, degradation, and chronic rejection of the child, close confinement of the child, or the permitting or abetting of delinquent behavior.
- Sexual abuse refers to any sexual contact between a caretaker and a child or the commission of a sex offense against a child as defined by the criminal laws of the Commonwealth.
- Verbal sexual harassment of a child by anyone, including school district employees/volunteers, is recognized as a form of child abuse and a warning sign of actual physical or sexual abuse.

All LPS employees who have reasonable cause or suspicion to believe that a child is suffering physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse or neglect shall report such a belief to the appropriate authority, according to the LPS Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Procedures.

### III. Application

The Superintendent of Schools has the responsibility to ensure that the LPS Child Abuse and Neglect Policy and the LPS Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Procedures are implemented in the school system. The organizational structure to implement this policy will be through the establishment and support of building-based and systemwide Child Protection Teams.

### Child Protection Teams (CPT)

LPS will establish and support building-based and system-wide Child Protection Teams.

#### **Building-based**

A building-based CPT will be established in each school. This team will consist minimally of the principal, the counselor, and the school nurse. The names of the members of the building-based team will be made

known to all employees working in the building.

Each team will:

- meet at the beginning of each school year to review the LPS Child Abuse and Neglect Policy and the LPS Child Abuse and Reporting Procedures,
- conduct one child abuse and neglect information/training workshop for the school's employees in the first month of each school year,
- collaborate with the system-wide CPT and community agencies regarding programs to raise awareness of issues of child abuse and neglect, and
- coordinate mental health services to children deemed to be suffering from child abuse and neglect and to their families, whenever they are requested or considered to be necessary.

### **Systemwide**

LPS will have a system-wide CPT. This team will consist minimally of a representative from each building-based team.

The Superintendent of Schools or designee will be responsible for overseeing the operation of the system-wide team. The Superintendent or designee will be responsible for maintaining data that result from reports to the Department of Social Services.

The team will:

- provide consultation and support to individual team members and to the school-based teams,
- monitor cases reported to the Department of Social Services,
- review and evaluate annually the continued efficacy of the LPS Child Abuse and Neglect Policy and the LPS Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Procedures, and
- develop, on an annual basis, a curriculum for one child abuse and neglect information/training workshop for all school-system employees to be conducted in the first month of each school year. The curriculum will be developed with input from each of the building-based Child Protection Teams and with the advice of one or more consultants who are experts in the field of child abuse and neglect, hired by LPS in consultation with the Middlesex District Attorney's Office (MDAO).

## Implementation

The procedures for implementing the Child Abuse and Neglect Policy will include information about training all LPS employees on information about child abuse and neglect and mandated reporting procedures, and maintaining documentation and record keeping resulting from reports of suspected abuse and neglect to the Department of Social Services. Nothing in this policy, however, prohibits any professional from notifying the Department of Social Services (DSS) directly when such professional has reasonable cause to believe abuse or neglect occurred. In such a case, the Building Principal and Superintendent must be informed that the suspected abuse or neglect was reported.

## Training

### **New Employees**

Prior to the start of employment or within the first six months of employment, every new employee will be required to attend training on mandated reporting requirements pursuant to M.G.L. c. 119, § 51A.

### **Current Employees**

Every employee will be required on an annual basis to attend training on mandated reporting requirements pursuant to M.G.L. c. 119, § 51A.

Every employee will be required on an annual basis to attend a workshop that includes information on the legal and psychological aspects of child sexual and physical abuse, the impact such abuse has on children, and the appropriate response to a child who has made an allegation of abuse.

## Documentation and Record Keeping

### **The Superintendent of Schools will:**

- develop a procedure for building-based and system-wide documentation and record keeping of complaints relating to the conduct of school personnel and students regarding child abuse and neglect,
- in cases involving school personnel, develop a procedure for communicating in writing to the complainants of the status and disposition of the case, to the extent possible, without compromising the investigation or confidentiality rights of involved persons, and
- notify school administrators on an annual basis of their obligation to advise and inform the superintendent of allegations and complaints that involve suspected criminal activity as it relates to issues of child abuse and neglect.

## Complaints

A person who believes the policy and/or procedures have not been correctly observed, should contact either of the following LPS administrators:

Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources  
Lexington Public Schools  
146 Maple Street  
Lexington, MA 02420  
Tel: 781-861-2556

or

Superintendent of Schools  
Lexington Public Schools  
146 Maple street  
Lexington, MA 02420  
Tel: 781-861-2581

## Penalties

According to M.G.L. c. 119, § 51A, mandated reporters are immune from civil or criminal liability when they file a report pursuant to their duties. Mandated reporters cannot be discharged, discriminated against or retaliated against by their employers if they, in good faith, make a report or testify in any proceeding involving child abuse or neglect. If any of these things happen, the employer shall be liable.

The statute also states that any person who is legally required to report suspected child abuse, i.e., is a mandated reporter, who fails to do so is subject to a criminal fine. In addition, school employees will be subject to disciplinary action by the school department up to and including dismissal.

## IV. References

- M.G.L. c. 119, §51A
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), an agreement between the Lexington School Committee (LSC) and the Middlesex District Attorney's Office (MDAO), February 10, 2003
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Social Services (DSS)
- Crosson-Tower, C. Designing and Implementing a School Reporting Protocol: A How-to Manual for Massachusetts Educators. Boston, MA: Children's Trust Fund, 1998.

# Field Trip Policy

Date Approved by School Committee: February 28, 2006

## I. Background

Lexington Public Schools field trips are intended to allow students experiences that provide them with insight, information, or knowledge that might not be learned within the classroom. As it is widely acknowledged that not all children learn in the same way, field trips allow students the opportunity to expand their learning in ways different from those typically available inside the classroom.

## II. Purpose and Scope

A field trip is student travel away from school premises that is approved by the school district through established procedures for the purpose of curriculum-related study, co-curricular activities, or for interscholastic programs.

### A. Types of Field Trips

1. Curriculum-related: a classroom-associated learning experience to afford students the opportunity to gain insight, information or knowledge, such as, but not limited to, a walk on adjacent conservation land, a visit to a historic site or museum, or attendance at a cultural performance.
2. Co-curricular: school-sponsored experiences associated with school groups that normally meet outside regularly scheduled classes, such as, but not limited to, clubs, student organizations, or academic-related teams.
3. Interscholastic: in-district or out-of-district events in which students participate as representatives of the Lexington Public Schools, such as, but not limited to, athletics, cheerleading, and the performing arts.

### B. Duration of Field Trips

1. Day Trips
  - a. a one-way distance from the school that does not exceed 100 miles and
  - b. overnight travel is not involved
2. Long-distance and Overnight Trips

- a. a one-way distance from the school that exceeds 100 miles or overnight travel is planned between the hours of midnight and six a.m., inclusive, or  
an overnight stay is planned  
the trip is within the continental United States
3. International Trips
  - a. a multi-day program beyond the borders of the continental United States

## C. Inclusion

Reasonable accommodations will be provided to allow eligible students with disabilities to participate in scheduled field trips.

## D. Funding

The Lexington Public Schools will strive to offer field trips with a minimum of expense to the individual student. Reasonable charges may be assessed to cover the actual field-trip costs. The Lexington Public Schools will attempt to provide field-trip scholarships to those who qualify and require them. However, no student is guaranteed a full or partial scholarship for the purpose of attending any field trip.

# III. Application

## A. Components of the Procedures for Field Trips

The Superintendent of Schools shall develop and promulgate written procedures for the operation of field trips that will provide for the health and safety of the students and meet the requirements of state law or regulation. Matters to be addressed include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. accommodations
2. approval process
3. cancellation/trip insurance
4. consent/waiver
5. costs
6. Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) checks for all chaperones
7. emergency contacts
8. forms
9. fund raising



10. liability insurance
11. medical insurance and medical care
12. provision during schools hours for those students not participating
13. scholarships
14. student behavior
15. supervision/chaperones
16. transportation
17. travel plan

## B. Planning

The principal is responsible for seeing that a teacher, advisor, or group of individuals proposing a field trip plans, implements, and assesses the field trip with the following guidelines in mind:

1. the objectives of the trip are specifically related to the curriculum, co-curricular experiences, or interscholastic events
2. the total ongoing school program will not be adversely affected by participation of staff and students taking the trip
3. the planning of the trip provides for the safety and access of students
4. appropriate educational experiences will be provided for those eligible students who do not participate in curriculum-related field trips scheduled on school days
5. the proposed program is feasible within the time allocated
6. if possible, and where appropriate, there should be a preview of the place to be visited by a teacher or staff member, unless the trip has been experienced previously
7. the financial impact on school system and family resources will be considered
8. the planning of the field trip provides a minimum of two adult chaperones and adult-student ratio appropriate for the particular student group and the trip
9. the primary transportation for overnight field trips will be a commercial carrier licensed for passenger transportation by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). Carriers with a safety rating of “conditional” or “unsatisfactory” will not be used. Trip itineraries will leave enough time for drivers to rest in conformity with federal hour-of-service requirements. (Any contract with a private carrier must prohibit the use of subcontractors unless approved by the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall not ap-

prove use of any subcontractor unless the subcontractor meets the criteria referenced previously in this section.)

10. if primary transportation for any field trip, whether day, overnight, or international trip, is other than US commercial carrier, the form of transportation will be noted on the Consent/Waiver form

## C. Authorization

### 1. Day Trips

The building principal is vested with the authority to approve day trips.

### 2. Long-Distance and Overnight Trips

The Superintendent of Schools is vested with the authority to approve long-distance and overnight trips.

### 3. International Trips

The Lexington School Committee is vested with the authority to approve all trips beyond the borders of the continental United States.

### 4. Cancellation/Exclusion from School Sponsored Trips

The Superintendent has the authority to cancel any field trips up until the time of departure for any reason. In such event, school officials will make a reasonable effort to obtain a refund of monies paid by students and parents. However, such refunds are not guaranteed.

In the event a student fails to meet expectations for appropriate conduct on a field trip, including but not limited to those set forth in the school's Code of Conduct, school staff may contact the student's parents or guardian, and staff shall have the discretion to send the student home. The student's parents or guardian shall be responsible for any additional expense incurred in such circumstances. Students may also be disciplined in accordance with the school's Code of Conduct.

### 5. Non-School Sponsored Trips

Teachers and other school staff sometimes privately conduct educational tours or trips involving the participation of Lexington students. The School Committee neither sanctions nor prohibits such activities, nor assumes any responsibility for them. Teachers and other school staff are prohibited from soliciting students for privately run trips through the school system.

Teachers and other school staff are expected to clearly state that

such trips are not school-sponsored and that the Lexington School Committee and the Lexington Public Schools do not sanction the trip or assume any responsibility.

#### D. Implementation

The Superintendent of Schools will develop appropriate procedures pursuant to this policy.

# Fund Raising/Contribution Policy

Date Approved by School Committee: January 23, 2001

## I. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this revision to the fund raising/contribution policy is to codify activities and events that support the elementary schools and set an expectation for collaboration between school affiliated groups, school councils, building administrators and members of the community at large. Improved communication and coordinated efforts will result in a more cohesive approach to system-wide enhancements.

The Lexington School Committee, parents, teachers and the greater Lexington community share a common purpose to provide ongoing support for public education. The Committee welcomes and encourages efforts in support of individual schools whether those efforts are demonstrated by the contribution of time and talents or by financial donations.

Activities to promote communication between home and school, support the educational program and build a sense of community are important to the spirit of each school and should continue. Examples of such activities at the elementary level include but are not limited to school newsletters and notices, school fairs, family events such as picnics and talent shows, family math nights, interior/exterior enhancements such as plantings and murals, interior display cases and bulletin board supplies.

## II. Application

The School Committee recognizes that residencies secured through Arts Created Together (A.C.T.) monies and or Lexington Education Foundation (L.E.F.) grants enhance curriculum and should continue. However, any initiative to provide enrichment materials and activities must be consonant with the educational goals of each school and with Lexington Public Schools' core values. The School Committee urges all school affiliated groups to work collaboratively with the principals and school councils throughout the year to define appropriate enrichment objectives.

Trying to reach an appropriate balance between focus on individual schools and focus on the school system as a whole is a worthy goal. The role of the School Committee is to maximize system-wide resources for all Lexington students and to see they are distributed in a fair and equitable manner. Enrichment should focus at class, grade or school levels

as opposed to being for the benefit of individual students. The final decision with regard to approving efforts to enrich student experiences before, during and after school hours rests with the school principal.

Acquisition of computer technology by individual schools through fund raising, donation of equipment and/or grants will be counted toward the goals enumerated within the Technology Plan. The Lexington School Committee endorses the systemwide Technology Plan and will advocate for funds toward the Plan's full implementation.

Generally speaking, funding raising for the purpose of purchasing large capital items that are standard use for school buildings and grounds is beyond the scope of responsibility for parent-teacher organizations and members of the community at large. Examples of large capital items include but are not limited to copier machines, playground equipment and classroom furniture. However, there are times when funding from the PTA can enhance a school program. Therefore, PTA's will be allowed to spend up to \$2500.00 for building and equipment projects annually. In addition, a system will be developed for PTA's to work with their building principals and the Director of Facilities and Grounds to generate a list for system-wide prioritization of building and equipment related projects.

Providing financial resources for the purposes of hiring building staff (certified and classified contracted personnel) and/or changing established curricula is beyond the scope of responsibility for parent-teacher organizations and members of the community at large. This decision is the responsibility of the Lexington School Committee in concert with the professional judgment of the school administration.

Fund raising projects which entail door-to-door solicitations by students of grades K-5 will not be allowed. Fund raising projects which entail door-to-door solicitations by students grades 6-12 should be discouraged. Exceptions may be made by the Principal for projects which relate directly to services or performances by students (plays, musical, etc.)

Appeals and request for consideration of exceptions to this policy should be directed to the attention of the Lexington School Committee and the Superintendent of Schools.

# Policy Prohibiting Harassment

Date Approved by School Committee: February 2003

## I. Background of Policy

The Lexington Public Schools is committed to maintaining a school environment free of any harassment based on, but not limited to, age, color, disability, gender, national origin, race, religion or sexual orientation. Such harassment in the workplace or school environment is unlawful and is absolutely prohibited. This includes harassment by administrators, certified and support personnel, students, vendors, and other individuals in school or at school-related events. Further, any retaliation against an individual who has complained about harassment or against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a harassment complaint is similarly unlawful and will not be tolerated.

## II. Purpose and Scope

Harassment is defined as any communication or conduct that is sufficiently serious to limit or deny the ability of a student to participate in or benefit from the educational program or the ability of a staff member to perform his/her duties. It includes, but is not limited to, any communication, written, spoken or otherwise, such as jokes, comments, innuendoes, notes; material placed on the internet or other electronic media such as email, web page, and voice mail; writing placed on school property, the display of pictures or symbols, graffiti, gestures, or other conduct that offends or shows disrespect to others based upon age, color, disability, gender, national origin, race, religion, or sexual orientation.

By law, the particular communication or conduct is viewed from the perspective of a reasonable person with the characteristic on which the harassment is based. What one person may consider acceptable behavior may reasonably be viewed as harassment by another person; therefore, individuals should consider how their words and actions might be viewed by other individuals.

It should be noted that, while this policy sets forth the goal of the Lexington Public Schools to maintain a work and educational environment that is free of harassment based upon age, color, disability, gender, national origin, race, religion or sexual orientation, the policy is not designed or intended to limit the authority of school officials to discipline or take remedial action for conduct which is deemed unacceptable, whether or not that conduct satisfies the definition of harassment.

## Sexual Harassment

While all types of harassment are prohibited, sexual harassment requires particular attention. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Acceptance of or submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or education, or
2. The individual's response to such conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting an employee or as a basis for educational, disciplinary, or other decisions affecting a student, or
3. Such conduct interferes with an individual's job duties, education, or participation in extracurricular activities, or
4. The conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work or school environment.

The legal definition of sexual harassment is broad. In addition to the above examples, other sexually oriented conduct, whether it is intended or not, that is unwelcome and has the effect of creating a work or educational environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating or humiliating to individuals of either gender may also constitute sexual harassment. While it is not possible to list all circumstances that may constitute such harassment, examples may include references to sexual conduct, comments on an individual's body, unwelcome leers, and suggestive or insulting comments.

## III. Application

### Employee Complaints

An employee who believes that he/she is the victim of harassment should contact:

Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources  
Lexington Public Schools  
146 Maple Street  
Lexington, MA 02420  
781-861-2556

If an employee does not wish to discuss the issue with the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources or feels that she is not addressing the problem in an effective manner, the employee should contact the Superintendent of Schools (781-861-2580).

## Student Complaints

A student who believes that he/she is the victim of harassment should report the matter to a teacher, counselor, or administrator who in turn will notify a complaint manager in the school. As an alternative, a student may report directly to a complaint manager. Notice of each school's complaint managers will be posted in a prominent location in the school.

All employees of the Lexington Public Schools must respond to complaints by students of harassment by notifying the building principal or an appointed complaint manager. Employees are required to take every report of harassment seriously.

A student may also file a complaint alleging harassment by contacting:

Director of Student Services  
Lexington Public Schools  
146 Maple Street  
Lexington, MA 02420  
781-861-2490

If a student does not wish to discuss the issue with a teacher, counselor, administrator, complaint manager, or the Director of Student Services, or if the student feels that the aforementioned people do not address the problem in an effective manner, the student should contact the Superintendent of Schools (781-861-2580).

The Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, Director of Student Services, and Superintendent as listed above are also available to provide information about this policy and the Lexington Public Schools' complaint process.

## Investigation and Closure of a Complaint

The Lexington Public Schools urges all individuals in the school community to bring any complaint of harassment to the attention of school personnel so that they can resolve the issue. The Lexington Public Schools will promptly investigate every complaint, observing all relevant state and federal laws and regulations and school system policies and procedures, as well as applicable contractual requirements. If it determines that harassment has occurred, Lexington Public Schools will take appropriate action to end the harassment and to ensure that it is not repeated.

When an investigation has been completed, school personnel will inform the complainant of the results and file a report with the Director of Human Resources, Coordinator for Title IX, the Student Services, Coordina-



tor for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and for M.G.L. Chapter 76 Section 5 (commonly known as Chapter 622).

Retaliation against any individual who has filed a complaint of harassment or who cooperates in an investigation is unlawful and will not be tolerated.

## Penalties

Persons who engage in harassment or retaliation will be subject to suspension, termination/expulsion or other sanctions, subject to applicable school system policies and procedures, as well as applicable contractual requirements.

In certain cases, harassment of a student, and in particular, sexual harassment of a student, may constitute child abuse under Massachusetts law. Verbal sexual harassment of any child by anyone, including school district employees/volunteers, is recognized as a form of child abuse and a warning sign of actual physical or sexual abuse. Such abuse must be reported immediately to the Department of Social Services in accordance with the requirements of M.G.L. c. I 19, s. 51A. A matter reported under this section shall be screened to determine whether an investigation is pursuant to the Child Abuse and Neglect Policy, the Sexual Harassment Policy, or both. The Lexington Public Schools will comply with all legal requirements governing the reporting of suspected cases of child abuse.

## References

State agencies that enforce laws prohibiting harassment or receive complaints thereunder include the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD), which is located at One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108, telephone (617) 727-3990, and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148, telephone (781) 338-3000.

Federal agencies responsible for enforcing federal laws prohibiting harassment include the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), One Congress Street, Boston, MA 02109, telephone (617) 565-3200, TDD Users (617) 565-3204; and the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), J.W. McCormack POCH, Boston, MA 02109-4557, telephone (617) 223-9662, TDD Users (617) 223-9695.

# Homework Policy

Date Approved by School Committee: December 1989

## I. Purpose And Scope

Homework is an important extension of activities begun in school by students under the guidance of their teachers and continued at home. Working together, home and school can guide students as they develop their learning capacities by making possible experiences which foster learning.

Homework provides for practice of skills and application of principles based upon work begun in the classroom. It may enrich school experiences and promote a permanent interest in learning. A secondary goal of homework is to stimulate individual initiative, personal responsibility and self-direction.

Due to differences in age levels and modes of instruction between the elementary and secondary schools, homework expectations will necessarily differ.

## II. Application

Listed below are the responsibilities of teachers, students and parents with regard to homework.

### **Teachers:**

- Assign homework that is meaningful and useful to individuals.
- Provide appropriate and timely response to all homework assignments.
- Provide a balance between long-range and short-term assignments.
- Give assignments over weekends, that are no longer than a daily assignment.
- Refrain from assigning homework during vacation periods and on legal and religious holidays.
- Monitor long-term assignments in order to avoid last minute student efforts.
- Give clear, concise directions; allow time for student questions; consider availability of materials; provide legible worksheets when used.
- Inform parents of their role in supervising homework.
- Ensure that students who are absent know how they may makeup homework.
- Monitor the effectiveness of homework as reflected in student performance.
- Record the directions for homework.

- Ask questions when necessary to clarify the assignment.

**Students will:**

- Follow a schedule and keep materials in order.
- Hand in, on time, neat, accurate, and meaningful products.
- Plan time for completion of long-term assignments.
- Determine and complete homework assigned during absence.

**Parents will:**

- Provide a suitable place for study.
- Help students develop routine home study habits.
- Ensure that absence does not interfere with makeup.
- Assist and correct but not do the actual work and notify the teacher if students experienced extreme difficulty.
- Assist students in making wise course and course level choices.
- Be aware of long-term assignments and assist students in learning to budget their time accordingly.
- Contact the teacher if he/she observes an absence of homework.

Because the time required of individuals to complete assignments varies, homework activities must, therefore, be planned to meet each student's individual learning profile. Homework guidelines for some students with special needs may be determined by the student's educational plan and should be specifically related to the student's learning profile. The modifications in an educational plan supersede the suggested guidelines listed below. Though it is impossible to predict the time necessary for all students to complete assignments because of different learning rates and age levels, the following is suggested:

**At the Elementary level:**

- Grade K - Occasionally.
- Grade 1 - Fifteen minutes each night.
- Grade 2 - Twenty minutes each night.
- Grade 3 - Thirty minutes each night.
- Grade 4 - Forty minutes each night.
- Grade 5 - Forty-five minutes each night.

In addition, parents should continue to read to their children and encourage and support their children's recreational reading.

Homework is generally assigned two to four times a week, generally Mondays to Thursdays. No homework will be given on legal and religious holidays or during vacations.

# Student Policy Guidelines for Internet Use

Date Approved by School Committee: January 7, 1997

## I. Background

The Internet is a vast, global network, linking computers at universities, schools, laboratories, and other sites. Through the Internet, one can communicate with people all over the world through discussion forums and electronic mail. In addition, many educationally valuable files may be downloaded from the Internet. Because of its enormous size and resources, the Internet's educational potential is boundless. Because of its broad reach, however, the Internet also contains the potential for abuse. These Guidelines are intended to help ensure that students use this valuable resource in a safe and appropriate manner.

## II. Purpose And Scope

The Lexington Public Schools offer Internet access at each school. The sole purpose of this Internet access is to support education and research by providing students and teachers with access to unique resources and an opportunity for collaborative work. All uses of Lexington's Internet access (like all other uses of Lexington's computer facilities) must be in support of and consistent with these educational objectives. All students who use Lexington's Internet access are expected to read these guidelines and/or to take part in a discussion of the guidelines with a teacher. Adherence to the guidelines is a condition for a student's privilege of Internet access.

## III. Application

### **Students' Individual Responsibility**

All students use of the Internet is to be conducted under faculty supervision. Nevertheless, faculty members are not expected to monitor student use at every moment. Every student is expected to take individual responsibility for his or her appropriate use of the Internet.

### **Levels of Student Access**

Two levels of Internet access are provided through the Lexington Public Schools:

## **1. Internet and World Wide Web**

All students will have access to the Internet and World Wide Web, with teacher supervision, in classrooms, libraries, or laboratories. No individual account agreement is required. Before a student may access the Internet and Web, however, he or she must be familiar with these Guidelines.

*Grades K-5:* Before students in Grades K-5 will be authorized to access the Internet and World Wide Web, they will take part in a discussion of these Guidelines with their teacher. Teachers will be asked to sign a statement indicating that they have had such a discussion with their class.

*Grades 6-12:* Before students in Grades 6-12 will be authorized to access the Internet and World Wide Web, they will be asked to sign a statement stating that they have read the Guidelines and agree to adhere to it.

## **2. Individual Email Accounts**

Students may apply for individual e-mail accounts. Before an account will be provided, the application must be completed and signed by the student and, for all students under 18 years old, by the student's parent or guardian.

### **Internet Access Is a Privilege**

For both levels of access, Internet access through the Lexington Public Schools is a privilege, not a right. A student's access may be canceled by school officials if this privilege is abused. Inappropriate conduct on the Lexington Public School Internet access will also be subject to disciplinary action, in conformity with the Lexington Public School Policy on Student Conduct and Discipline (which is published in school handbooks) and the disciplinary policies of individual schools.

### **Administrators' Access to Student Files**

All student email files and other Internet files and records may be accessed and examined by administrators for educational and administrative purposes, including the need to ensure that these Internet Guidelines are being adhered to. Administrators will also cooperate in providing access to student email and Internet files and records to law enforcement authorities. Students should not assume that uses of the Lexington Public Schools Internet access will be private.

## **Personal Safety**

The Internet is accessible to the public. Unfortunately, this includes people who want to make contact with students for inappropriate purposes or under false pretenses. The Lexington Public Schools cannot screen the Internet for such inappropriate uses. Therefore, students must be cautious and prudent about supplying personal information and arranging personal meetings. In particular, students should never arrange a personal meeting with a person who was met on-line without their parents' knowledge and approval. Students should promptly inform their teacher or school administrator of any on-line communication that the student feels is threatening, harassing, or otherwise inappropriate.

## **System Security and Resource Limits**

Students are expected to follow procedures and guidelines that are issued in order to ensure the security of the Lexington Public School computer system and to respect its resource limits. These include any downloading guidelines and virus protection procedures that may be issued.

## **Network Etiquette**

Students are expected to learn and to abide by generally accepted rules of Internet network etiquette, as well as rules of school decorum. These include common courtesy, politeness, and the avoidance of vulgar language.

## **Unacceptable Uses**

The following uses of the Lexington Public Schools Internet access are unacceptable:

1. Posting private or personal information about another person.
2. Attempting to log in through another person's e-mail account or to access another person's files.
3. Accessing or transmitting obscene or pornographic material.
4. Posting chain letters or engaging in "spamming." ("Spamming" means sending annoying or unnecessary messages to large numbers of people).
5. Engaging in sexual harassment. The Lexington Public Schools Sexual Harassment Policy, which is included in the individual schools' handbooks, is applicable to Internet conduct.
6. Participating in any communications that facilitate the illegal sale or use of drugs or alcohol; that facilitate criminal gang activity; that threaten, intimidate, or harass any other person; or that violate any other laws.

7. **Plagiarism.** “Plagiarism” means the taking of material created by others and presenting it as if it were one’s own. The Lexington High School policy on plagiarism/cheating, which is included in the *Lexington High School Student/Parent Handbook*, is applicable to Lexington High School students’ use of the Internet.
8. **Infringing copyrights.** Copyright infringement occurs when a person inappropriately reproduces or transmits material that is protected by copyright. For example, most software is protected by copyright and may not be copied without the permission of the copyright owner.
9. **Participating in commercial activities** that are not directly related to the educational purposes of the Lexington Public Schools.

### **Disclaimer of Liability**

The Lexington Public Schools disclaim all liability for the content of material that a student may access on the Internet, for any damages suffered in the course of or as a result of the student’s Internet use, and for any other consequences of a student’s Internet use.

### **Changes in the Guidelines**

The Lexington Public Schools reserve the right to change these Guidelines at any time.

# Medication Policy

Date Approved by School Committee: November 1999

## I. Background

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health requires that in order to dispense over-the-counter medications, a written order from either the private physician or from the school physician must be on file.

The school system can establish more rigid regulations, but cannot establish less stringent regulations according to Department of Public Health policies. The Lexington Public Schools have never authorized the school physician to write a blanket protocol for the administration of over-the-counter medications. Therefore, a written order from the student's private physician is required.

Note: In interpreting the Mass. General Law, medication is defined as both prescription and non-prescription medications by the National Guidelines for Administration of Medications in Schools (1991).

## II. Application

### A. Management of Medication

#### Administration Program:

- (1) The school nurse shall be the supervisor of the medication administration program.
- (2) The school nurses, in consultation with the school physician, shall develop the policies and procedures relating to the administration of medication.
- (3) Medication Orders – Parental/Guardian Consent
  1. The school nurse shall insure that a proper medication order from a licensed prescriber is renewed as necessary, including the beginning of each academic school year. A telephone order for any change in medication shall be received only by the school nurse. The verbal order must be followed by a written order within three school days. Whenever possible, the medication order and the administration plan shall be developed before the student enters or re-enters school.



2. In accordance with standard medical practice, a medication order from a licensed prescriber shall contain:
  - a. Student's name.
  - b. Name and signature of the licensed prescriber and telephone number.
  - c. Name of the medication.
  - d. Dosage of medication.
  - e. Frequency and approximate time of medication administration.
  - f. Date of the order and discontinuation date.
  - g. Diagnosis and other medical conditions requiring medication, if not a violation of confidentiality or if not contrary to the request of a parent, guardian or student to keep confidential.
  - h. Specific direction for administration.
3. Every effort shall be made to obtain from the licensed prescriber the following additional information, if appropriate:
  - a. Any special side effects, contraindications and adverse reactions.
  - b. Any other medications being taken by the student.
  - c. Date of next scheduled visit, if known.
4. Special Medication Situations:
  - a. Short-term medications, i.e., those requiring administration for ten school days or fewer, the pharmacy-labeled container may be used in lieu of a licensed prescriber's order; if the nurse has a question, she may request a licensed prescriber's order.
  - b. For "over-the-counter" medications, an order from the licensed prescriber is required in accordance with the regulations of the Board of Registration of Nursing.
  - c. Investigational new drugs may be administered in the schools with a written order by a licensed prescriber, written consent of the parent/guardian and a pharmacy-labeled container for dispensing. If there is a question, the school nurse may seek consultation and/or approval from the school physician to administer the medication in the school setting.

5. Written authorization by the parent/guardian shall contain:
  - a. Parent/guardian's printed name, signature, and emergency phone number.
  - b. List of all medications the student is currently receiving, if not a violation of confidentiality or contrary to the request of the parent, guardian or student that such medications not be documented.
  - c. Persons to be notified in case of a medication emergency, in addition to the parent or guardian and licensed prescriber.

6. Medication Administration Plan:

A medication administration plan shall be established for each student in collaboration with the school nurse and parent/guardian whenever possible. The student, whenever possible (the DOE requires student consent for age 18-21 and student participation in the plan after age 14 if appropriate), shall be involved in the decision-making process.

Prior to the initial administration of the medication, the school nurse shall assess the student's health status and develop a medication administration plan to include:

- a. Name of student.
- b. An order from a licensed prescriber, including telephone number.
- c. Signed authorization of the parent/guardian, including home and business telephone numbers.
- d. Any known allergies to food or medications.
- e. Diagnosis, unless a violation of confidentiality or the parent/guardian or student requests that it not be documented.
- f. Name of medication.
- g. Dosage of the medication, frequency of administration.
- h. Specific directions for administration.
- i. Possible side effects, adverse reactions or contraindications.
- j. Quantity of medication to be received by school from parent/guardian.
- k. Required storage conditions.
- l. Duration of prescription.

- m. Plans, if any for teaching self-administration of medication.
  - n. When appropriate and with parental permission, other persons, including teachers, to be notified of medication administration and possible adverse effects.
  - o. List of other medications being taken by student, if not a violation of confidentiality or contrary to the request of the parent/guardian or student that such medication not be documented.
  - p. Plan for monitoring the effects of the medication.
  - q. Provision for medication administration in case of field trips and other short-term special school events.
7. The school nurse shall identify each student who receives medication.
- a. Significant observations relating to the medication effectiveness and/or adverse reactions or other harmful effects will be communicated to the student's parent/guardian.
  - b. In accordance with standard nursing practice, the school nurse may refuse to administer any medication, which, based on her individual assessment and professional judgment, has the potential to be harmful, dangerous or inappropriate. In these cases, the parent/guardian and licensed prescriber shall be notified immediately by the school nurse and the reason for refusal explained.
  - c. The school nurse shall have a current drug reference book available for her use.

## B. Self Administration of Medications

"Self administration" means that the student is able to consume or apply medication in the manner directed by the licensed prescriber, without additional assistance or direction. This option is limited to high school students and does not apply to psychotropic medications. At the middle school, students may only self administer inhalers, EpiPens, and enzymes with clear medication orders from their physician. At the elementary level, inhalers and EpiPens may be self administered as directed by the physician and with the approval of the nurse.

A student may be responsible for self-administration of his/her own medication after the school nurse has determined that the following requirements are met:

1. The student, school nurse and parent/guardian, where appropriate, enter into an agreement, which specifies the conditions under which medication may be self-administered.
2. The school nurse, if appropriate, develops a medication administration plan, which contains only those elements necessary to ensure safe self-administration of medications.
3. The school nurse is reasonably assured that the student is able to identify the appropriate medication, knows the frequency and time of day for which the medication is ordered.
4. There is a written authorization from the student's parent or guardian that the student may self medicate, unless the student has consented to treatment under M.G.L. c.112, § 12F or other authority permitting the student to consent to medical treatment without parental permission.
5. If requested by the school nurse, the licensed prescriber will provide a written order for self-administration.
6. The student's self-administration is monitored based on his/her abilities and health status.
7. With parent/guardian and student permission, as appropriate, the school nurse may inform appropriate teachers and administrators that the student is self-administering a medication.
8. As necessary, the school nurse will consult with teachers, student and parent/guardian to determine a safe place for storing medication being self-administered. In the case of an inhaler or other preventive or emergency medication, whenever possible, a backup supply of the medication shall be kept in the health room or a second readily available location.

## C. Handling, Storage and Disposal of Medications

1. All medications shall be delivered to the school under the following conditions:
  - The medication must be in a pharmacy or manufacturer labeled container.

- The school nurse receiving the medication shall document the quantity of medication delivered.
- 2. All medications shall be stored in their original pharmacy or manufacturer labeled containers and in such manner as to render them safe and effective. Expiration dates shall be checked.
- 3. All medications to be administered shall be kept in a securely locked cabinet used exclusively for medications, which is kept locked except when opened to obtain medications. Medications requiring refrigeration shall be stored in either a locked box in a refrigerator or in a locked refrigerator.
- 4. Parents or guardians may retrieve the medications from the school at any time.
- 5. No more than a thirty (30) school day supply of the medication for a student shall be stored at the school.
- 6. Where possible, all unused, discontinued or outdated medications shall be returned to the parent or guardian and the return appropriately documented. After discontinuation of a medication, if the parent/guardian has not picked up the medication within one week, the medication shall be discarded. All medications should be returned at the end of the school year.

## D. Documentation and Record-Keeping

1. The school nurse shall maintain a medication administration record for each student who receives medication during school hours.
  - a. Such record shall include a daily log and a medication administration plan, including the medication order and parent/guardian authorization.
  - b. The medication administration plan shall include the information described earlier.
  - c. The daily log shall contain:
    - The dose or amount of medication administered.
    - The date and time of administration or omission of administration, including the reason for omission.
    - The full signature of the nurse administering the medication. If the medication is given more than once by the same

nurse, she may initial the record, subsequent to signing a full signature.

- d. The school nurse shall document in the medication administration record significant observations of the medication's effectiveness, as appropriate, and any adverse reactions, as well as any action taken.
  - e. All documentation shall be recorded in ink and shall not be altered.
  - f. The completed medication administration record shall be filed in the student's health record. When the parent, guardian or student, where appropriate, objects, these records shall be regarded as confidential medical notes and shall be kept confidential.
2. The Department of Public Health may inspect any individual student medication record or record relating to the administration or storage of medications without prior notice to ensure compliance with the Regulations Governing the Administration of Prescription Medications in Public and Private Schools.

## E. Reporting and Documentation of Medication Errors

1. A medication error includes any failure to administer medication as prescribed for a particular student, including failure to administer the medication:
  - a. Within appropriate timeframe.
  - b. In the correct dosage.
  - c. In accordance with accepted practice.
  - d. To the correct student.
2. In the event of a medication error, the school nurse shall notify the parent or guardian. The nurse shall document the effort to reach the parent or guardian. If there is a question of potential harm to the student, the nurse shall also notify the student's licensed prescriber or school physician.
3. Medication errors shall be documented by the nurse on the appropriate form. These reports shall be retained in the medication error file. They shall be made available to the Department of Public Health upon request. All medication errors resulting

in serious illness requiring medical care shall be reported to the Department of Public Health, Bureau of Family and Community Health.

#### F. Response to Medication Emergencies

See First Aide Guide.

#### G. Dissemination of Information to Parents or Guardians Regarding Administration of Medication

An outline of the above medication policies is available to parents/guardians upon request. A summary of medication policies is outlined in the parents' newsletter at least annually.

#### H. Procedures for Resolving Questions between the School and Parents Regarding Administration of Medications.

Consultation with prescribing physician, parents, school nurse, principal, and Special Education administrator, if appropriate.

#### I. Policy Review and Revision

Review and revision of these policies shall occur as needed but at least every two years.

Also see:

Copy of Mass General, §§ 74-81C, "Professional Nursing" Defined Policy of the Board of Registration in Nursing for non-prescription medications.

# Policy: Non-Resident Students

Date Approved by School Committee: January 1996

## I. Background

Eligibility for enrollment in the Lexington Public Schools is governed by Mass. General Laws, Chapter 76. Except as provided for in collective bargaining agreements, the School Choice Law, the METCO Plan, the McKinney Homeless Act or as provided below, the Lexington Public Schools will not admit students who do not actually reside in the town of Lexington.

Residence is defined as sleeping in the town of Lexington for at least four (4) nights per week.

## II. Application

### 1. Attendance by arrangement with another school committee:

The Superintendent may make arrangements with a neighboring community for a Lexington pupil to attend school in that community or for a student from another community to attend school in Lexington in the following circumstances:

- (a) the student requires special education pursuant to Mass. Gen. Laws, c. 71B (Chapter 766) and/or related federal laws;
- (b) a student moves to or from Lexington after the beginning of the school year and requests permission to complete the year in his/her former place of residence;
- (c) a student entering his/her senior year of high school who moves to or from Lexington and requests permission to attend school in his/her former place of residence during his/her senior year; or
- (d) a student is admitted to Lexington pursuant to an agreement with the school committee of the community in which the student resides. (See M.G.L. C 76 s. 12)

Such arrangements are contingent upon the respective school committees reaching mutually agreeable terms for such attendance, the payment of tuition and upon the availability of space as determined by the Superintendent of schools.



2. Students who reside in Lexington for the sole purpose of attending the Lexington Public Schools:

Students who take up residence in Lexington for the sole purpose of attending the Lexington Public Schools will be charged tuition which shall be set by the school committee (M.G.L. c. 76 s. 6).

Students who are admitted with “student visas” will be charged tuition unless they are admitted pursuant to a “foreign exchange program,” e.g., American Field Service (AFS) or ASSE International Student Exchange Program, which has been approved by the school committee prior to the time of enrollment. (See “Guidelines for Admission of Exchange Students”.)

Unless the student is enrolled pursuant to a “foreign exchange program” approved by the School Committee, Lexington will not participate in the application process required for a student visa.

#### Legal References:

Mass. Gen. Laws, c. 76, s. 6

Mass. Gen. Laws, c. 76, s. 12

Mass. Gen. Laws, c. 76, s. 12A

Mass. Gen. Laws, c. 76, s. 12B

Mass. Gen. Laws, c. 71, s. 6A

# Parental Notification Relative to Sex Education Policy

Date Approved by School Committee: July 17, 1997

## I. Purpose and Scope

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, s. 32A, the Lexington Public School Committee has adopted the following policy relating to the rights of parents and guardians of our students in relation to curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues.

## II. Application

The Lexington Public Schools afford parents or guardians the flexibility to exempt their children from that portion of the curriculum that specifically involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues. Parents must request the exemption in writing to the school principal. No child so exempted shall be penalized by reason of such exemption.

Students who are exempted from that portion of the curriculum specifically involving human sexual education or human sexuality issues will be assigned related coursework and material to occupy the exempted curricular time. Students will be responsible for course materials and performance criteria as determined by state mandated assessments and local school district requirements.

At the beginning of the course the school will inform parents/guardians, in writing, about curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues. This notice will include the topics covered in the course as well as the course requirements, expectations and methods of assessment. Parents/guardians will be required to sign the notice and return it to their child's teacher as part of that course's requirements.

To the extent practicable, program instruction materials for said curricula will be made reasonably accessible to parents, guardians, educators, school administrators, and others for inspection and review.

### III. Background

Upon formal adoption by the Lexington School Committee this written policy will be distributed and made available to each principal in the district by September first, nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and each year thereafter. Each principal will then include this policy with any other school policies that are made available to parents.

# School Councils Policy

Date Approved by School Committee: February 1994

## I. Background

This policy is designed to implement the provisions of Chapter 71 of the Acts of 1993, Section 53, which requires the establishment of school councils in all of the public schools in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The Lexington School Committee supports and encourages the intent and purpose of School councils. The Committee believes that parents, teachers, high school students and other members of the community working collaboratively to assist the principal will enhance the education of all the children in Lexington. In fulfilling their statutory responsibility, school councils should adopt a leadership role in creating a climate in the schools in which faculty, parents, administrators, students (where appropriate), and other community participants, working together, share responsibility for school improvement, better student performance, increased satisfaction among professional educators and greater commitment to, and involvement with, parents and the broader community.

While the School Committee supports the attempt to foster a collaborative effort at the local school level, it also recognizes its responsibility to provide a common direction for all the students in Lexington, regardless of which school they attend. To that extent, it is the expectation of the Lexington School Committee that school councils, when developing school improvement plans, will address the areas contained within the Reform Act in the context of the system-wide goals, known as the core values of the school system.

The purposes of the school councils are to:

- 1) assist the principals in adopting educational goals for the schools;
- 2) assist principals in the identification of the educational needs of the students;
- 3) assist principals in the review of the annual school budget; and
- 4) assist principals in the formulation of a school improvement plan.

## II. Purpose and Scope

### Background: School-Based Management

As school systems move toward shared decision making, traditional roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders and participants will change. In particular, the role and responsibility of the Central Office (including the School Committee); curriculum coordinators; constituents at the local site, including principal, teachers and parents; and the local association will experience particular review.

At the Central Office, increased participation at the site level in decision making generally will require that the Central Office and its personnel move from a role of enforcers and monitor to one of facilitator, encourager and coordinator. In moving decision making closer to the classroom, research shows that school committees and superintendents have an increased responsibility to articulate a vision for the system as a whole. A strong central vision combined with a variety of implementation strategies at individual sites should become the operating norm. In this context, the School Committee and Superintendent will retain legal responsibility for the system and for the compliance with various state and federal mandates. Schools will operate within the larger vision and core values for the system. Individual means to achieve the vision and the values will necessarily vary from school to school depending upon the local context.

Perhaps the greatest changes will occur at local school. Here the roles of teachers, the principal, parents and even the community at large must be explicitly considered. Once again, the articulation of a shared vision for a school that is consistent with the vision for the system is important. Although the extent to which the various stakeholders will participate in decisions at the school will vary, changes in role will likely be the most dramatic for the principal. The experience of principals involved in the reform of decision making processes indicates that they often spend greater time promoting effective teaching and learning in their buildings. Changes for teachers and parents also will be significant. Teachers and parents will have greater say and concomitant responsibility for activities that affect teaching and learning.

The third group directly affected by a move toward shared responsibility is the local teachers' association. Once again, a key role for the leadership of the association is to promote shared values and visions. Previously litigious relationships with the Superintendent and School Committee

will now be enhanced by a process that is characterized by trust, respect and open communication. However, as in the case of the ultimate legal responsibility residing with the school board and the Superintendent, school based management does not replace the process and benefits of a collective agreement between the association and the school committee.

Throughout any reform, individual parties must keep a close eye on why the reform is being undertaken. The loci of control and responsibility within this system is not being changed for the sake of change, but rather to enhance the learning of students in the schools. Specialized knowledge and leadership from individuals, parents, teachers, principals, the Superintendent and the School Committee will continue to be important to the creation of successful learning opportunities for all children, but the relative roles and responsibilities may necessarily change.

### III. Application

#### **Membership**

Each school council will be composed of the school principal who will serve as co-chair; teachers elected by the professional staff of the school; parents elected from a process identified by the school parent-teacher association in consultation with the principal; non-parent community persons recruited by the principal, with informal assistance from the Lexington Town Meeting Members' Association (TMMA); support staff, including custodians, secretaries, and aides; and at the secondary level, at least one student elected by the student council. The number of parents has to equal the number of teachers plus the principal. The selection/election of parents, staff, students and other community members should produce a council that is broadly representative of the racial and ethnic diversity of the school building and the community.

Each school council shall determine its own procedure for electing members, provided that the procedure shall be approved initially by the Superintendent. A term of office is either two (2) years or (3) years, with each school council having the prerogative to decide term lengths. Members may serve, but are not limited to, two (2) consecutive terms in office. After a lapse of at least two years (one term), former members are eligible for re-election. Provisions for staggering terms and conditions for re-election should be considered.

#### **Meeting Procedures**

At the first meeting of a council, a member will be elected to serve as co-chair with the principal. All meetings are to be conducted according

to the requirements of the Open Meeting Law. In addition, an agenda for each meeting, prepared by the co-chairs, will be provided to the council members and posted prior to the meeting date. Every effort will be made to inform the parent community of the agenda prior to the meeting in a timely manner. The Superintendent, any member of the staff, any parent, any student, or any member of the council who wishes to have an item included on an agenda may request its inclusion to the principal no later than three days prior to the meeting. Any item of interest may be placed on the council's agenda, and the council will decide whether individual items will actually be discussed. All meetings will be conducted in accordance with the prepared agenda. Decisions should be reached only on agenda items; other issues may be brought up for discussion, but decisions should not be reached on them until they are formally placed on a future agenda. Minutes of each meeting should be available for distribution to the school community. The official records for each school council meeting will be kept at the school.

### **Ground Rules**

It is expected that a council will operate by consensus. Lack of agreement will be viewed as a signal that the best option may not yet have been developed and put forth. If the council cannot reach an agreement by consensus, and a majority decision needs to be reached, the decision of the council will require a majority vote.

In the event that a council reaches a deadlock on some important issue or repeatedly fails to reach consensus on issues, and three (3) members may request that the Superintendent designate a mediator to help improve the council's process. In the event that mediation is requested, the Superintendent may seek a mediator from among the members of another council. All members of a council are obligated to cooperate in good faith with any such mediation.

### **School Improvement Plans/Educational Goals**

The principals, in consultation with school councils, shall adopt educational goals for the schools and shall formulate a school improvement plan to advance such goals. Each school's educational goals must include the student performance standards adopted by the Massachusetts Board of Education and, consistent with any educational policies established for the district, shall assess the needs of the school in light of these goals. The school improvement plan also shall be consistent with the system-wide goals/core values.

The plan shall identify ways to meet the diverse learning needs of children; the establishment of a welcoming school environment characterized by tolerance and respect for all groups' professional development for the school community; the allocation of resources toward enhancement of parental involvement in the life of the school; safety and discipline; extracurricular activities; and such further subjects as the principal, in consultation with the school council, shall consider appropriate.

Each school improvement plan shall be submitted to the School Committee for review and approval every year. If the school improvement plan is not reviewed by the School Committee within thirty days, the plan shall be deemed to have been approved.

### **Training**

The School Committee will include in its annual budget a plan to train members of school councils. Training will be arranged by a system-wide Steering Committee whose purpose will be to support and encourage the continued operation of school councils. The Steering Committee shall be composed of the Superintendent or his/her designee, the President of the teachers' association or his/her designee, and a member of the School Committee. They shall jointly appoint up to four additional members representing school principals, teachers, parents, and community members. Steering committee members may serve up to two (2) consecutive two-year terms, with a possibility of re-election following a two-year absence from the Steering Committee.

In addition, the Steering Committee will coordinate and stimulate the flow of information among the councils and various stakeholders; review the overall implementation of school-based management in the context of the system-wide core values as well as the education reform law; distribute occasional newsletters and informational items to school councils; and provide technical assistance to the councils as requested.



# School Transfer Requests

## Administrative Procedure for Requesting Transfers Between K-5 Schools

A parent or legal guardian of an elementary child may request a transfer from a class in his/her school district to an out-of-district school.

- 1. The application for out-of-district placement **MUST** be submitted to the Superintendent of schools **NO LATER** than May 15. Application forms are available at your elementary school and on our website at: <http://lps.lexingtonma.org/forms/formindex.html>
- 2. Applications will be sorted into two lottery pools:
  - (a.) Requests to continue an out-of-district placement: Applications from parents whose children currently attend an out-of-district school will be considered first.
  - (b.) New, first-time requests for out-of-district placement: Applications from parents whose children currently attend a neighborhood school will then be considered only if there are still available spaces after the first lottery.
- 3. The following conditions will be evaluated and considered before a decision is made:
  - (a.) For parents whose children currently attend an out-of-district school — The out-of-district class size **MUST** not exceed the School Committee’s recommended class size guidelines.

School Committee’s Recommended Class Size Guidelines		Maximum Class Size for Transfers
Kindergarten	18 students	18
Grades 1 & 2	22 students	22
Grades 3, 4, & 5	24 students	24

If the transfer request creates an imbalance in the teacher/pupil ratio in excess of 3 students per class between the 2 schools, the request will be denied, except in such cases when the transfer of a student reduces the range of class sizes.

- (b.) For parents whose children currently attend a neighborhood school — The out-of-district class size **MUST** have at least 2

fewer students than the recommended class size guidelines.

<b>School Committee's Recommended Class Size Guidelines</b>		<b>Maximum Class Size for Transfers</b>
Kindergarten	18 students	16
Grades 1 & 2	22 students	20
Grades 3, 4, & 5	24 students	22

If the transfer request creates an imbalance in the teacher/pupil ratio in excess of 3 students per class between the 2 schools, the request will be denied, except in such cases when the transfer of a student reduces the range of class sizes.

4. All decisions will be made on a random basis, unless there is a substantial overriding social or educational consideration, which shall be determined by both the sending and receiving principals.
5. The Superintendent will notify parents/legal guardians of the final decision, in writing, by August 1.
6. Once an out-of-district placement has been approved for a given year, the parent or guardian must make an annual application in order to keep his/her child in the out-of district school. Each year, the transfer request will be decided based on the above mentioned criteria.
7. Once the out-of-district placement has been approved, the parent or legal guardian accepts responsibility for providing transportation to and from school. If space is available on an existing route, a transfer student may be allowed to ride the bus; however, no special bus routing will be established and the parents must pay for the bus seat.

March 2007

# Policy on Student Conduct and Discipline

Date Approved by School Committee: July 25, 1994

The Lexington Public Schools strive to provide all students with a quality education in a safe school environment. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner which promotes a safe, orderly learning environment within the schools and may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including the possibility of expulsion for serious offenses if they fail to do so. In imposing disciplinary action, school staff should consider the need to maintain or restore an orderly learning environment, the overall disciplinary record of the individual student, and the need to improve the student's behavior where appropriate. Because effective discipline involves the participation of staff, parents or guardians, and students, school officials are required to contact parents or guardians of students under age 18 for offenses of this discipline policy which may result in students' suspension or expulsion.

A student whose safety or learning at school is jeopardized by other students is expected to report the matter to a professional staff member. Retaliation in any form against a person who makes a complaint is forbidden. Staff members who are aware of disruptive students should take appropriate action, including immediately reporting matters which cannot be appropriately handled in the classroom to the school administration.

## I. School Rules

Each school principal, in conjunction with the school council, will prepare a student handbook setting forth the school rules and possible consequences of violation of such rules. In addition to addressing matters specific to the individual school, such rules should address students' possession of controlled substances (including drugs and alcohol) or dangerous weapons, use of force, theft, vandalism, knowingly making a false accusation, and violation of other students' civil rights. The school council shall review the student handbook each spring to consider changes to take effect the following September, but may also consider changes at other times.

## II. Procedural Due Process

No student shall be disciplined without being afforded appropriate due process. Prior to discipline which does not involve exclusion from school or school-related activities, the student should be informed of the charges against him or her and given an opportunity to present his or her side of the story. For discipline involving exclusion, the following procedures will be followed.

### **A. Short Term Suspension and Exclusion from School-Related Activities**

Unless a student presents a danger or substantial disruption to the educational process, the student shall receive the following prior to a suspension of one to ten days or exclusion from school-related activities: (1) oral or written notice of the charges against the student; (2) an oral or written explanation of the facts which form the basis for the accusation; and (3) an opportunity to present the student's side of the story. In the case of danger or a substantial disruption, this process will occur immediately after rather than before suspension.

### **B. Expulsion or Long Term Suspension**

Prior to expulsion or suspension longer than ten days, the student shall receive (1) written notice of the charges against him or her; (2) written notice of the underlying facts which form the basis for the charges; (3) an opportunity for a hearing, including an opportunity to hear the evidence against him or her, to present witnesses and other evidence on his/her own behalf, and representation by a parent, attorney, and other adult.

In the case of a student who is charged with possessing a dangerous weapon or controlled substance at school or school-related events, assaulting educational staff, or who is lawfully charged with or convicted of a felony, the hearing shall be held before the principal, with appeal to the superintendent. The principal who serves as hearing officer may not conduct the investigation of student wrongdoing.

Except as specified in the paragraph above, hearings from long term suspension or expulsion will be held before the School Committee.

### III. Special Education Laws

The discipline of a student who has been identified as having special needs pursuant to Chapter 766 or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is subject to the requirements of the student's Individualized Education Plan. If it becomes apparent that a student identified as having special needs or referred for a special education evaluation may be excluded from school for a total of ten days in any school year (including both in-school and out-of-school suspensions), the student's special education TEAM must be convened prior to expulsion beyond the ten days and the requirements of Chapter 766 followed. (See Policy on Discipline of Students with Special Needs.)

The school principal shall comply with the requirements of Chapter 766 regulations in the case of regular education students. (Such Chapter 766 regulation currently states that the principal must consider referring for evaluation any regular education student who is suspended for more than five days during a school quarter and must inform the parent whether a referral is being made and of the parent's right to make such a referral.)

### IV. Prohibition of the Use of Tobacco Products

The use of any tobacco product is prohibited within school buildings or school facilities, on school grounds, or on school buses by any individual. A student who violates this provision may be suspended.

### V. Reporting Possible Crime to Police

When school staff have a reasonable basis for believing that a crime has been or is being committed by a student on school property or at school related events, such matters shall be reported to the police. Reportable crimes include, but are not limited to, possession of a controlled substance or dangerous weapon, assault, vandalism, stalking, and hazing.

## MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS CHAPTER 71, SECTION 37H

## Suspension and Expulsion by School Principals

Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, all student handbooks shall contain the following provisions:

- (a) Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
- (b) Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
- (c) Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal.

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

- (d) Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of his/her appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.
- (e) When a student is expelled under the provisions of this section, no school district within the commonwealth shall be required to admit such student or to provide educational services to said student. If

said student does apply for admission to another school or school district, the superintendent of the school district to which the application is made may request and shall receive from the superintendent of the school expelling said student a written statement of the reasons for said expulsion.

#### MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS CHAPTER 71, SECTION 37 H1/2

### Suspension and Expulsions by School Principals when Students Are Charged with a Felony

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

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

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

an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the suspension.

- (2) Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony delinquency, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may expel said student if such principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and reasons for such expulsion prior to such expulsion taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such expulsion; provided, however, that the expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

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

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

The department of education and the department of youth services shall, pursuant to a study and recommendations conducted by the MassJobs Council, assure that an educational opportunity is provided for a student whose admission to a school or right to educational services is regulated by the provisions of this act.



Said study shall contain a statistical analysis of the number of students who have been expelled and the services that are now provided, and recommendations for the provision of education to expelled students in the future. Said study shall be completed within five months and shall be submitted to the house and senate clerk and the house and senate chairmen of the joint committee on education, arts and humanities.

# Student Records: Non-Custodial Parent

## Introduction

Under federal and state law, a divorced or separated parent has full access to his/her child's student records unless there is a court order, state statute, or legally binding document relating to matters such as divorce, separation or custody that specifically revokes this right. The Massachusetts legislature recently passed a statute (Mass. Gen. L. ch. 71, §34H) that is designed to standardize the process by which public schools provide copies of student records to parents who do not have physical custody of their children ("non-custodial parents"). Non-custodial parents who want copies of their children's student records must submit a written request to the school principal as described below.

### **(5) Access Procedures for Non-Custodial Parents as required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 34H, is described below:**

- (a) A non-custodial parent is eligible to obtain access to the student record unless:
  - 1. the parent has been denied legal custody or has been ordered to supervised visitation, based on a threat to the safety of the student and the threat is specifically noted in the order pertaining to custody or supervised visitation, or
  - 2. the parent has been denied visitation, or
  - 3. the parent's access to the student has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record, or
  - 4. there is an order of a probate and family court judge which prohibits the distribution of student records to the parent.
- (b) The school shall place in the student's record documents indicating that a non-custodial parent's access to the student's record is limited or restricted pursuant to 603 CMR 23.07(5)(a).
- (c) In order to obtain access, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student record to the school principal.
- (d) Upon receipt of the request the school must immediately notify the custodial parent by certified and first class mail, in English and the primary language of the custodial parent, that it will provide the

non-custodial parent with access after 21 days, unless the custodial parent provides the principal with documentation that the non-custodial parent is not eligible to obtain access as set forth in 603 CMR 23.07 (5)(a).

- (e) The school must delete all electronic and postal address and telephone number information relating to either work or home locations of the custodial parent from student records provided to non-custodial parents. In addition, such records must be marked to indicate that they shall not be used to enroll the student in another school.
- (f) Upon receipt of a court order that prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to G.L. c. 71, §34H, the school shall notify the non-custodial parent that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial parent.

Regulatory Authority:

603 CMR 23.00: M.G.L. c. 71, 34D, 34E

# Use of Tobacco Products Policy

Date Approved by School Committee: June 18, 2002

## Purpose and Scope

Use of any tobacco products within all school buildings, school facilities, school grounds, or school buses of the Lexington Public Schools by any individual is prohibited at all times.

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

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

## Application

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

LEGAL REF: M.G.L. 71, §37H

# Transportation Policy of the Lexington Public Schools

In keeping with the mandates of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts relative to the transportation of students to and from school, the Lexington Public Schools has established the following criteria for the implementation of the Lexington Public Schools' Transportation Policy:

1. K-6 students living more than two miles from their district school, as measured from the sidewalk or public way in front of or nearest to the homeowner's property, will be transported at Town expense.
2. K-6 students who live two miles or less from their school and ALL students in Grades 7-12 will NOT be transported at Town expense. Those students wishing to ride the school bus must purchase a bus pass according to the fee schedule, payable in advance, and for the entire year. One-way tickets are not available. The only exceptions to this rule are for those students whose Individualized Education Plan (IEP) requires special transportation, and those students whose Individualized Education Program (IEP) requires special transportation and those who have been approved for financial assistance. Financial Assistance Applications are available for consideration for ALL student fees associated with the Lexington Public Schools including transportation.
3. Students will be picked up and dropped off at organized bus stops; door-to-door service is not available. Half-day kindergarten students will be picked up at written designated bus stop in the morning and dropped off at their home after the 12:15 dismissal time. On these days, an adult must be waiting. The exception to this rule is Thursday and other scheduled half-day dismissals when the half-day kindergarten students are dropped off at written designated bus stops with other elementary students.
4. Once a child boards the bus, and only at that time does he or she become the responsibility of the school district. Such responsibility shall end when the child is delivered to the regular bus stop at the close of the school day. The parent/guardian is responsible for behavior and safety of the student between the residence and the designated bus stop, while waiting at the bus stop, and the afternoon drop off.
5. Only children possessing bus passes may ride on a bus. For liability

purposes, as well as safety issues, students may only ride their assigned bus. Transporting to social events, daycare or religious classes is not permitted. We offer a second pass (based on space availability) to students with two households. (The cost is referenced in the fee structure of the program.)

6. All Town paid and fee-based students are issued a bus pass that they must show each day upon entering the bus. The pass entitles students a school bus ride to and from school. In the event a student loses a bus pass, a duplicate pass may be obtained from the Transportation Office for a fee.
7. A student who allows another student to use his/her bus pass or sells his/her bus pass is subject to having bus privileges revoked for the remainder of the year or the remainder of the time as a student in the Lexington Public Schools.
8. Registration of students on bus routes will not exceed the legally allowed limits for which the bus is licensed. This assumes three to a seat in most if not all seats.
9. Students who opt to purchase a pass later in the year, provided space is available on the bus, will be required to pay the full dollar amount.

## Regulations for Bus Students

### **At School**

- Walk to the bus line when bus is called, not before.
- Walk to the bus behind the adult leading the line.
- There is no giving or taking cuts. No “back cuts.”
- Keep on the sidewalk while walking to the bus.
- When you have questions about your bus, see your teacher, an aide, or the principal.

### **At Your Bus Stop**

- Arrive at your bus stop on time.
- Pupils shall stand on the sidewalk or another designated place while waiting for the school bus. They shall respect other people’s property, respect the right of other people to pass on the sidewalk, and display manners that indicate consideration and safety for others.

- Pupils shall never approach a school bus until it has completely stopped and the door is opened. In boarding the bus, they should proceed in an orderly manner, single file. Younger students should board and alight first from the bus.
- In crossing the roadway after alighting from the bus, cross only in front of the bus when the blinking lights are on and the stop sign is extended. Pass at least 10 feet in front of the bus and look for traffic in both directions before crossing the roadway. Never run beside a bus, chase after a bus, or pick up anything that has fallen near the wheels of a bus.

### **On Your Bus**

- All students are issued a bus pass that they must show each day upon entering the bus.
- The bus driver has full authority as well as responsibility for control of the conduct of pupils while they are on the bus. Pupils should not annoy the operator or distract his/her attention from driving. The bus drivers should be treated with courtesy and respect at all times.
- The safety of students, and particularly those who suffer from life threatening allergies, is a major concern. It is because of this that food (including any type of candy or gum) and drinks are strictly prohibited from consumption on the school bus. All food, drink, and candy must remain contained while on the school bus.
- Vandalism, destruction, or defacing of property will not be tolerated.
- Pupils who witness the destruction of property have a responsibility to report such misbehavior to the driver or school authorities.
- Due to the width of the school bus aisle (12" at the knees and 15" at the waist/chest) and the height of the seat backs (44" from the floor to the top of the seat back), no large instruments (e.g., cellos, French horns), large projects or large objects may be brought on the bus. In addition, a child must be able to carry and contain any and all items between his/her legs or on his/her lap. Cellos, French horns, large projects, or other large objects cannot be accommodated in the one seat in which a child is sitting.
- Do not block the aisle.
- Find a seat quickly. No saving seats.
- Two or Three children permitted in a seat, no more.
- Stay seated while the bus is moving. Wait until the bus stops before getting up.
- Pupils shall not open windows without permission. Do not throw

anything out of the window. Do not put your hands, arms, or any parts of your body out the window at anytime. Do not open the rear exit emergency door unless there is an emergency or the driver directs you.

- There shall be no pushing, striking, or general fooling. Pupils are not allowed to use profane or abusive language.

### **Behavior**

The procedure for handling behavior problems, including bad language, on school buses shall be as follows:

- a. First Offense: A letter and the Bus Conduct Form shall be sent from the principal of the school or transportation coordinator to the parents of the student advising the parents of the offense.
- b. Second Offense: Bus privileges may be revoked for a two-week period, and parents shall be so notified by the principal of the school the student attends.
- c. Third Offense: Transportation privileges may be taken away from the student for the remainder of the year, and the parents shall be so notified by the principal of the school the student attends. There are no refunds if privileges are revoked.

In cases where a pupil's conduct jeopardizes the safety and well-being of other students, based upon the assessment of the driver, that pupil may be immediately excluded from the bus. Parents shall be notified by the Principal of the school the child attends.

A pupil who pays a fee for transportation and whose riding privileges are suspended because of a violation of rules will not receive a fee refund.



# Student Rights

## Right to Education

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts guarantees “an adequate publicly supported education to every child resident.” This right cannot be denied “on the basis of national origin, sex, economic status, race, religion, and physical or mental handicap.” Any person pregnant or married has the same right to an education.

In Massachusetts, a child between the ages of six and 16 is required by law to attend an approved educational institution unless legally excused. All persons from 3 through 21 have the right to an education to suit their individual needs as may be determined through an evaluation process. This process is designed to provide all children unable to function in the regular educational program with an educational plan suited to their special needs. This plan is created as a result of assessments made by psychologists, social workers, physicians, teachers and other professionals.

The evaluation process guarantees due process rights for parents, individualized educational plans, careful and non-discriminatory use of testing, and educational placements in the least restrictive settings. Questions about referrals and eligibility for support services should be directed to the school principal.

## Equal Educational Opportunity

Discrimination on account of sex is prohibited by the United States Constitution and federal law. In Massachusetts, the law is more comprehensive than the federal law. For example, Chapter 622 and its implementing regulations include in their coverage the prohibition of sex bias in instructional materials, an area not covered in the federal regulation. It is the policy of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to afford all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, economic status or handicap, equal rights and opportunities in the educational institutions within the State, as described by the guidelines of school policy.

## Freedom of Assembly

Students have the right to assemble peacefully. The Students Rights and Responsibilities Law guarantees “the right to assemble peaceably, with the responsibility to obtain prior approval of school officials.”

There is an appropriate time and place for the expression of opinions and

beliefs. Conducting or participating in demonstrations which substantially interfere with the operation of the school or classroom is prohibited. All student meetings in school buildings or on school grounds may function only as part of the formal educational process or as authorized by school authorities. Organizations that meet the above conditions are entitled to equal rights of peaceable assembly on school property.

## Freedom of Religion

It is the responsibility of the school to protect the religious freedom of students.

Students have the right to practice their own religious beliefs as long as they violate neither the constitutional rights of others nor the Supreme Court's prohibition on the school's extending the mantle of public sanction or support to any particular religion.

Students have the right to study, examine, discuss, and analyze religious ideas and institutions just as they might explore any other subject included in the curriculum of the Lexington Schools; therefore, the study of religion and religious holidays as an academic subject or as part of a foreign culture is appropriate.

## Patriotic Ceremonies

Certain rights and privileges pertaining to patriotic ceremonies are afforded by the First Amendment.

A student may decline to participate in the salute to the flag, the Pledge of Allegiance, and the singing of the National Anthem. The school may not force the student to leave the room or otherwise punish the student. Students who choose to refrain from participation have a responsibility to respect the rights and interest of others who do wish to participate in the ceremony. The student may refuse to perform the ceremony in a manner that will not disrupt the ceremony for other persons.

## Freedom of Expression

The First Amendment provides, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances." Not only is Congress prohibited from infringing upon rights guaranteed by this amendment, but also state officers and employees, school directors, superintendents, principals, and teachers.

The chief purpose of the First Amendment is to encourage a free expression and exchange of ideas however unusual, unpopular, distasteful, or radical, without threat of punishment or reprisal. This free expression and exchange is vital to education in a democracy.

Therefore:

Students have the right of freedom of expression, subject only to the responsibilities to keep such expression from disrupting the educational process, and to allow other points of view to be expressed.

Students also have the right to be free from dress codes, subject only to the responsibility to observe reasonable standards of health, safety and cleanliness.

Free speech and expression include not only the actual saying of words, but also symbolic speech such as the wearing of buttons, armbands, decals, and the like. (A student's right to exercise this freedom may not be limited merely because there is a hypothetical fear of disturbance).

Freedom of press includes not only the printing and distribution of a school newspaper, but also the printing and distribution of other newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, leaflets and other literature.

## Right to Privacy

Parents, students and former students are guaranteed the rights of confidentiality, inspection, amendment, and destruction of student records. Specifically:

A parent has the right to inspect the school records of his/her child;

A parent has the right to a hearing to contest records that are allegedly inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the rights of privacy of the student;

Search of an area assigned to a student shall be made in the presence of a witness and, when reasonably possible, in the presence of the student;

Illegal items as defined by federal, state, or local law or a provision of this policy and which may reasonably be determined to be a threat to health, safety, or security of others may be seized by the school authorities and turned over to the police department; and

Items which are used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process may be temporarily removed from a student's possession.

## Confidentiality of Records

With a few exceptions, no individuals or organizations but the parent, student, and school personnel working directly with the student are allowed to have access to information in the student record without the specific, informed, written consent of the parent or the student.

## Freedom from Corporal Punishment

While “reasonable” corporal punishment is permissible in certain other states, Massachusetts law clearly forbids it:

The power of the School Committee or of any teacher or other employee or agent of the School Committee to maintain discipline upon school property shall not include the right to inflict corporal punishment upon any pupil.

The above statement, however, refers only to punishment. As the student has the right to protection from bodily harm, so do all other members of the community. Therefore, in instances where there is a need for a teacher, Principal, or other school official to defend himself or others, to divest a student of a dangerous instrument, or to prevent injury to property, reasonable force may be used. All acts and threats of physical violence are inconsistent with the maintenance of the humane institution and are prohibited.

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