

WELCOME TO WATERTOWN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Dear Families,

Welcome to Watertown Middle School! On behalf of our faculty and staff, I am very enthusiastic about beginning a new school year. I will continue to work with staff, parents, and students to create a positive and productive learning environment that supports the growth and success of all students in all areas of their development.

We have been working very hard over the summer to make this year our best ever. We have even updated this handbook to make it more comprehensive than ever. Although it is filled with many rules, procedures, and policies, I hope you see that much of it revolves around the SOARS principles: Success, Ownership, Achievement, Respect, and Service. SOARS is the Watertown Middle School student recipe for success.

We must all work collaboratively to support everyone's success and promote a vision of excellence at Watertown Middle School. Our partnership with families is crucial. Together, we can make a difference for children, remembering that it takes an entire community to educate every one of them.

I look forward to sharing many exciting and memorable school experiences with you and your family. Best wishes to each and every one of you in the upcoming year, as we work together to continue our commitment to excellence at Watertown Middle School.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Kimo Carter', written in a cursive style.

J. Kimo Carter, Principal

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Watertown Public Schools Vision Statement

The Watertown Public Schools promote high achievement through inquiry, problem solving, collaboration, creativity and hard work. We provide students with a robust education so they will acquire, apply, and practice the knowledge and skills needed for self-actualization and life-long learning. All programs support diverse learning styles, civic interaction, global awareness, and personal success.

WPS District Strategic Goals

Support High Academic Achievement
Foster the Capacity for Life-long Learning
Promote Local and Global Citizenship

Middle School Mission Statement

The Watertown Middle School, in partnership with families and the community, provides a supportive and challenging learning environment where every student feels safe, respected, and valued. As a place for transition, the Middle School nurtures the development of self-esteem and the unique emotional, social, ethical and academic growth of each student.

School Committee

The Watertown School Committee establishes goals, policies, and the budget for the Watertown Public Schools. The School Committee hires the Superintendent and works closely with that individual in developing policies and practices to improve the school system. The School Committee also is responsible for conducting collective bargaining with all employee organizations and has other responsibilities as outlined by Massachusetts General Laws.

The School Committee consists of seven members. Six are elected on a town-wide basis for four-year terms. The Town Council President serves as the seventh member and is elected to a two-year term. In January of each year the School Committee elects a chair, vice-chair, and secretary from among its members. The School Committee also organizes itself into subcommittees to conduct its business.

Members:

- Eileen Hsu-Balzer, Chair
- Michael Shepard, Vice-Chair
- Guido Guidotti, Secretary
- Julie McMahan
- John Portz
- Mark Sideris, Town Council President
- Elizabeth Yusem

Contact Information

Principal: Mr. J. Kimo Carter

Assistant Principal: Mr. Jason Del Porto

Address: 68 Waverley Avenue, Watertown, MA 02472

Main Office Telephone Number: 617-926-7783

Main Office Fax Number: 617-926-5407

Watertown Public Schools Website: www.watertown.k12.ma.us

Hotline Telephone Number (for absentee notification): 617-926-7783 ext 2501

Call before 7:30 a.m. if your child will be absent that day.

School is in Session: 7:40 a.m. - 2:10 p.m.

Children must arrive by 7:30 to appropriately prepare for the day.

School Nurse: Gloria Kimera, RN

Direct Line: 617-926-7783, (Fax): 617-924-4125

Changes in Emergency Contact Information

Please notify the main office immediately whenever there is any change in your child's emergency contact information. This includes:

- Change of address
- Change of home phone number/email
- Change in parent/guardian work or cell phone number
- Changes in emergency contact person and/or phone number
- Change in parent's email address

The best way to accomplish this is to go into iParent and make the edits there. If you need help with this process, please contact the main office. We use this information to release your child and in the event of an evacuation or crisis.

Emergency Situations

In an emergency, we will attempt to contact parents and then people on a child's emergency contact list. It is very important that you fill out your child's emergency contact list as thoroughly as possible. It is also important to keep contact lists updated at all times. If you need to make a change, contact the main office or make the appropriate changes to your iParent account. We will not dismiss students to people not listed as an emergency contact.

Parents should develop a contingency plan in the event of an unscheduled early dismissal in which case no parent might be at home. An example might be having your child go to the home of a relative or neighbor.

Visitors

To ensure the security of our students, staff and operations of Watertown Public Schools, the following visitation guidelines will be followed in all school buildings:

All visitors are required to follow the below guidelines when entering a school building.

1. Upon arrival, all visitors must:
 - a. enter through the main entrance
 - b. state their purpose
 - c. register in the main office or front desk
 - d. sign in before proceeding to any other part of the building
2. All visitors must have a visible “Visitor” Identification Badge with them at all times during their stay.
3. All those coming to pick up students must present valid photo identification.
4. All visitors must comply with building based visitation hours.
5. Contractors who are working in the building must also meet with a building custodian before proceeding to destination.
6. All those wishing to observe or visit a classroom must make an appointment with building personnel at least two days prior.
7. At the end of the visitation, all visitors must report back to main office to sign out, return the badge and directly exit the building.

The district reserves the right to deny any visitors entry to the school buildings when there is reason to believe that such an individual’s presence would be detrimental to the operation of the school and its learning environment.

Bus Transportation

Students may take the bus to school only if a parent/guardian has signed up and paid for a bus pass at the Central Office. Only those students who have a bus pass will be permitted to board the bus. For questions about the bus, contact the Central Office at 617-926-7716.

All disciplinary policies apply to the students riding the bus. If necessary, the administration may suspend a child from the bus.

Applying to a vocational high school

If you are interested in attending a vocational high school, please contact your guidance counselor. The application must be submitted to the Superintendent’s office for review and approval by March 31st.

THE SCHOOL DAY

Start of School

- The day begins at 7:15 a.m. for students who eat breakfast in school. These students enter through the main door and proceed to the cafeteria.
- Students who wish to be in the building from 7:15 to 7:30 must be in the cafeteria under faculty supervision.
- At 7:30 students enter from either the Waverly Avenue or Bemis Street entrances.
- If you are driving your child to school, **Please consider the safety of our children who are walking nearby. DROP STUDENTS OFF ON BEMIS ST. ONLY. Please do not block traffic, and pull your car clear of others before pulling away.** To avoid traffic tie-ups, consider dropping your child off a block away and letting him/her walk the rest of the way.
- We expect all students to adhere to pedestrian laws and cross on the crosswalks.

Homeroom

- All students must be in their homeroom by 7:40 or they will be marked tardy.
- In homeroom, students will hear the day's announcements.
- On most days homeroom is approximately 10 minutes in length.
- One day a week, homeroom is 35 minutes to accommodate whole-school activities.

Class Schedules

- Each grade is split into two clusters, and students in each cluster attend classes together. The 6th grade has clusters 1 and 2, the 7th grade clusters 3 and 4, and the 8th grade clusters 5 and 6.
- All students have classes in English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Students also take classes in a foreign language (Spanish, Arabic, or Italian) or reading, and specials.
- The middle school has A day and B day schedules. A days are on the odd number days from Day 1 to Day 179. B days are on the even number days from Day 2 to Day 180.
- Specials consist of Music, Art, Technology Education, Physical Education, Health, Drama, and Introduction to Design. Specials and enrichment courses meet every other day and rotate by term.
- We have a support and enrichment block for one period a day. Students can either take academic support classes, enrichment classes or alternating support and enrichment classes that period.
- All periods are approximately 45 minutes in length.

Lunch

- The Middle School has three lunch periods each day, one per grade. Lunch is 30 minutes long.
- Students can bring lunch from home or purchase it at school. The cafeteria provides a nutritious menu that includes a variety of hot entrees prepared each day, sandwiches, salads, snacks, and drinks.
- Each student is given a lunch account and a Personal Identification Number (PIN) to use when paying for lunch. Students deposit money in their accounts and withdraw funds to pay for food, to avoid money transactions and expedite the process of lunch service. Please make sure your child's account has funds available throughout the year
- Free and reduced priced meals are provided for those who qualify. Forms are available in the school office at any time. They are sent home at the beginning of each school year. Families must re-apply each year for eligibility.
- Lunch costs \$3.50. Reduced price lunch is \$.40.
- Breakfast costs \$1.25. Reduced price breakfast is \$.30.

End of school

- School ends each day at 2:10. Students are dismissed and are required to leave the building unless they are involved in an after-school activity supervised by an adult. We encourage all students to take part in our after-school programs.
- Supervised activities include Library Learning Lab, extra work with a specific teacher, after school enrichment clubs, and Watertown Middle School athletic teams.
- Watertown Middle School offers a wide variety of seasonal sports. Please refer to the athletic section for more information.
- If you are picking up your child at the close of school, **please consider the safety of our children who are walking nearby. PICK UP STUDENTS ON BEMIS ST. ONLY. Please do not block traffic, and pull your car clear of others before stopping.** To avoid traffic tie-ups, consider picking up your child a block away from school at a pre-arranged spot.
- The late bus departs at 4:15 p.m. to allow students to take part in after-school activities. There is no late bus on Fridays..
- Students who take the late bus must have a bus pass.
- If you are picking up your child after 2:30 p.m., please use the Waverley Ave. entrance.

ACADEMICS

Grading and Report Cards

Grades are based on student performance in class as well as homework and project completion outside the classroom. Circumstances may require that a student be graded on an individual basis. This will be agreed upon ahead of time for students with Individualized Educational Plans.

Report Cards: Report cards are issued three times per year. Report cards are sent home with students and available online with iParent.

Grades: Grades can be issued by letter (A-F), by number on a 100 point scale, or on an A, S (satisfactory), U (unsatisfactory) scale. The following is a conversion table that equates letter grades with a 100 point scale:

A	100 - 93	C+	79 - 77
A-	92 - 90	C	76 - 73
B+	89 - 87	C-	72 - 70
B	86 - 83	D+	69 - 67
B-	82 - 80	D	66 - 63
		D-	62 - 60
		F	Below 60

Incomplete (INC) is given when requirements for the term have not been completed. Students may be given extra time to complete the missing work. A grade is issued at the end of the time period.

Honor Roll

Watertown Middle School recognizes both student *achievement* and *effort* for honor roll.

Honor Roll Achievement Recognition: In order to be on the honor roll for achievement, a student will need to have a weighted average grade of an 87 on a 100-point scale (a low B+) in all of his or her classes. To be on the honor roll for high achievement, a student will need to have a weighted average grade of a 92 on a 100 point scale (a high A-) in all of his or her classes. Classes that meet every other day are calculated with a 0.5 weighting; extended classes that meet three periods every two days are calculated with a 1.5 weighting.

Any student receiving a 69 or below (a D or an F) in any of his or her classes will not be eligible for achievement recognition, even if the average grade exceeds an 87.

A few classes grade students on an A (excellent), S (satisfactory), and U (unsatisfactory) basis. If a student receives an A in that particular class, it will be averaged in as any A, a 95. If a student receives a Satisfactory, the S will not be averaged in the honor roll calculation, thus neither helping nor hurting a student in attaining achievement recognition. If a student receives an Unsatisfactory, he or she will not be eligible for honor roll achievement.

Honor Roll Effort Recognition: There are four factors that we will consider when determining whether to recognize a student's effort: homework completion rate; classwork completion rate; the student's contribution to the learning environment (attitude, attention, and participation); and the student's approach to schoolwork (ownership, initiative, and advocacy). Cluster teachers will use the following rubric to rate a student's effort:

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>1: Usually does not meet expectations</i>	<i>2: Sometimes meets expectations; other times does not meet expectations</i>	<i>3: Usually meets expectations; sometimes exceeds expectations</i>	<i>4: Always meets expectations; often exceeds expectations</i>
<i>Homework completion rate</i>	Under 60% of all homework assignments fully completed on time	60% to 79% of all homework assignments fully completed on time	80 to 89% of all homework assignments fully completed on time	Over 90% of all homework assignments fully completed on time
<i>Classwork completion rate</i>	Under 80% of all in-class assignments completed at a satisfactory level	80% to 89% of all in-class assignments completed at a satisfactory level	90% to 94% of all in-class assignments completed at a satisfactory level	Over 95% of all in-class assignments completed at a satisfactory level
<i>Student's contribution to the learning environment (attitude, attention and participation)</i>	-- Often projects an "I don't care attitude" -- Often inattentive, disengaged and distracted -- Often refuses to participate in class	-- Attitude varies from day to day -- Inconsistent engagement; sometimes distracted -- Will participate, but often needs support or intervention	-- Comes with a positive attitude and stays positive -- Focused, involved, asks relevant questions, makes relevant comments -- Ready to participate	-- Enthusiastic, supports others, and engages others -- Attentive, initiates discussion, encourages others, helps bring back focus -- Fully participating, takes a classroom leadership role
<i>Student's approach to schoolwork (initiative, advocacy, and ownership)</i>	-- Does not ask for help -- Frequently needs cues to begin tasks -- Will frequently give up on challenging tasks -- Will not revisit nor revise work -- Has possibly been caught cheating or plagiarizing	-- Sometimes asks for help when needed -- Sometimes requires cues to begin work -- Will revisit and revise work to meet minimum standards -- Infrequently challenges self beyond minimum expectations	-- Regularly asks for help when needed -- Sometimes takes advantage of outside help opportunities -- Persists until schoolwork meets a moderately high standard -- Sometimes challenges self beyond expectations	-- After trying independently, always asks for help -- Frequently seeks outside help opportunities -- Continually persists as necessary to achieve top-quality work -- Consistently goes beyond expectations

In each of the four criteria, teachers will rate students from 1 to 4 based on the above rubric. If a student averages a 3 on the rubric in *all* of his or her classes, he or she will receive honor roll recognition for effort. Sixth grade students will receive honor roll recognition for effort with an average of a 2.5 on the rubric for the first term only.

Many students on Individual Education Plans, 504 Plans, or Student Success Plans receive curricular modifications and accommodations. Teachers will consider these modifications and accommodations when they determine whether or not the student earns recognition for their achievement or effort.

Two negative behavior comments on the report card from two different teachers may constitute ineligibility for any kind of honor roll recognition. Some examples of negative behavior include disrespect to teachers, keeping others from learning, and frequent disruption.

Awards Assemblies: After every term, there will be an awards assembly for each grade level and often the PTO sponsors refreshments afterward. All students of that grade level will be recognized. During the assemblies after the fall and winter terms, eligible students will receive honor roll certificates. At the final awards assembly at the end of the year, students may receive all A's awards, community service awards, special achievement awards, and SOARS awards. Every year an eighth grade boy and girl receive a Principal's Award and an eighth grade boy and girl receive an Assistant Principal's Award.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences can be scheduled at any time during the school year when cluster teachers have common planning time. Additionally, there are conference days and evenings scheduled in the late fall, when we try to meet with as many families as possible and in early spring when we have longer conferences a more limited number of families. If you would like to meet with your child's teachers at any time, please set up a conference through the Guidance Department.

Progress Reports

Progress reports are issued by each of your child's teachers at least once every 4 weeks. These reports are useful tools that allow you to check your child's progress in each subject, and focus on specific areas that need improvement.

Back to School Night

In September, the Watertown Middle School hosts Back to School Night for parents and guardians. The purpose of the open house is for you to meet each of your child's teachers, and have them provide a brief explanation about what will be taught during the year. Parents and guardians are strongly urged to attend this important event, as it will give you a first-hand opportunity to see what your child will be learning during the upcoming year.

Clusters

All students in a cluster are taught by the same team of teachers: English, social studies, math and science. These core subject teachers are supported by special education and English language education teachers and the grade level guidance counselor. Cluster students are assigned to small homerooms run by their cluster teachers and by other Watertown Middle School staff. Clusters allow Watertown Middle School students to be part of a small, more intimate group within the larger school. The teachers and homerooms within a cluster are all located near each other, reducing student travel time between classes. Cluster teachers, along with the guidance counselor for the grade, meet regularly to discuss the progress of their students.

Grade 6	Clusters 1 & 2
Grade 7	Clusters 3 & 4
Grade 8	Clusters 5 & 6

Specials

While your child will have the core subjects every day, Specials follow an alternating day schedule. Specials include Art, Music Drama, Technology Education, Health and Introduction to Design.

Physical Education

Every student at Watertown Middle School will have physical education or health every other day. You will need to purchase, from the school, a Watertown Middle School physical education T-shirt that students are required to wear. You will also need to provide your child with appropriate gym clothes such as gym shorts, sweatpants, and sneakers. Please ensure that your child brings clean gym clothes to school on the days he/she has physical education.

Academic Support and Enrichment

It is the philosophy of Watertown Middle School that all students need to be stretched to meet their potential. Whether that entails additional academic support or enrichment, we will raise the expectations so students will experience increased academic success and satisfaction.

Academic Support: Watertown Middle School has four kinds of support classes available to all students:

- Content support classes for those students who need pre teaching and re teaching in the content areas
- Extended math or English classes for those students who may need more instructional time to meet benchmarks
- Directed study classes for seventh and eighth grade students who need a structural environment in order to complete their assignments
- Tutorials in reading and math for those students who need to continue to develop their basic skills. Tutorials can happen during school or after school in the Library Learning Lab.

Additionally, special education students and English Language Learners may have other support classes, including resource room, specialized reading, and ESL content support.

Enrichment: Students who are making effective progress in their core subjects will take enrichment classes designed to challenge them and enhance the core class curriculum. Sixth graders can take science, social studies, band, chorus, and string ensemble. Seventh and eighth grades have more options. Full-year enrichment classes include band, chorus, string ensemble, engineering, leadership, and theatre production. Trimester long enrichment classes include advanced art, art history, best buddies, computer programming, current events, evolutionary biology, film studies, fit for life, geometry, Japanese culture, literature enrichment, newspaper, psychology, science laboratory, video production, writers workshop, and yearbook.

Academic support and enrichment classes meet every other day during the same teaching block. Some students have two enrichment classes; some have two support classes, and other have one enrichment and one support class.

Community Service

The Watertown Middle School tries to foster in its students a commitment to service for others – the final “S” in our “SOARS” recipe for success. Students are encouraged to complete a suggested number of hours of community service according to grade level. Homeroom advisors will assist students in finding appropriate programs in which to complete the service. In addition, a staff member will serve as the Community Service Coordinator for the school. Outside agencies will request volunteers through the coordinator, who will inform students of these opportunities. In addition, the coordinator will organize school-based community service opportunities and will advertise these to the students.

The purpose of community service is to assist those in need in the community. Community service is not completing household chores or fulfilling responsibilities within one's immediate family. Students often volunteer in after-school programs, work with younger children through scouts or sports, assist the elderly with shopping, snow removal or yard work, or help at local food pantries, nursing homes or assisted living facilities. The list is endless. A ceremony is held each spring to recognize all students who have completed their recommended hours and submitted signed Community Service Logs, which are included in the agenda book provided at the beginning of the year.

Recommended Community Service hours are: Grade 6, 10 hours; Grade 7, 15 hours; Grade 8, 20 hours.

Homework

Homework is given to reinforce skills taught in class and to encourage the development of good study habits. Your child can expect daily homework. If your child is doing more than 2-3 hours of homework and reading per night, please contact your child's guidance counselor for help.

Why Do We Need Homework?

- Homework provides extra practice on skills learned during class.
- Homework offers more in-depth learning which complements class work.
- Homework establishes good work habits that will make the transition to high school and beyond easier.
- Homework allows parents to see what their child is learning and the progress that he/she is making.

Homework Hotline/Website: Each teacher posts homework on the website. Go to www.watertown.k12.ma.us click "Middle School" to get to the Middle School webpage. On the right, click "Classroom Sites". On the right side of the Classroom Sites page are the homework pages by cluster.

If Your Child is Absent: Be sure your child sees each of her/his teachers when returning from an absence, in order to make up missed work and assignments. A reasonable amount of time will be given for returning students to complete the missed work.

Helping Your Child with Homework:

- Encourage your child to clarify assignments with teachers whenever he/she is confused.
- Encourage your child to read and reread directions for written homework before starting.
- Remember: Studying is a real homework assignment. Encourage your child to spend time preparing for upcoming quizzes and tests.
- You or another family member should quiz your child on the subject matter to help him/her prepare for upcoming quizzes and tests.
- Consider having your child attend the Library Learning Lab, especially if he/she needs help becoming more organized or more consistent in completing homework successfully.
- If your child left his or her assignment(s) at home, please feel free to come to the office and place it in the grade level baskets. To avoid frequent class disruption, we will not call students from classes to pick up late work. Students are allowed to pick up the materials between classes, or it will be given to them at the grade level lunch session.

Effective Home Study Habits

In an effort to assist students in transitioning to the rigors of middle school academics, the following are recommendations to help with homework assignments:

- Decide with your child, on the best time for homework completion.
- Help your child choose a place where he/she can accomplish homework with no disruptions or distractions.
- Make sure your child writes down all assignments in the agenda book provided by the school.
- Encourage your child to check before leaving school if he/she has all the books/materials needed to do their assignments.
- Check the homework website if you or your child has any questions.
- Make sure your child has the phone number of a reliable classmate for the times he/she is absent or has a question regarding an assignment.
- Help your child focus solely on the task at hand. TV, email, and phones distract students and prolong the time needed to accomplish the assignments.
- Make sure your child has everything ready to go in the morning.

Healthy Technology Tips and Habits for Middle School Students

- Children should be off screens by 9:00 p.m. to ensure good sleeping habits. Please do not let your child keep their cell phone, tablet or computer in their room at night. Instead, make a central spot where all phones and tablets get charged in the evening.
- Parents, please make sure you frequently supervise/review all social media and electronic footprint activity, including: Twitter, texting, photos, Facebook, Instagram, Kick, or any web site that allows anonymous postings. This is also important when friends are in your home.
- Model healthy habits for your children
- Make sure your children are not giving out personal information

Here are some helpful links:

<https://www.common sense media.org/>

<http://thehealthteacher.com/tech-tips-for-parents/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/media/subtopic/matte/pdf/cdcelectronicregression.pdf>

Student Agendas

All students will be given a student agenda book at the beginning of the school year. Students must use the agenda book to record all daily homework and long-term assignments. The agenda book is a good communication tool between home and school. If a student loses his/her agenda book, he/she will be expected to pay for a replacement. The agenda book is a key to organization and success in school.

Textbooks and Other Borrowed Materials

During the year, students will be given textbooks and other materials. These items should be cared for and returned at the end of the school year in good condition. Students will need to pay for books and other materials that have been lost or damaged. The school will withhold report cards and/or new schedules if students have outstanding fees.

Extra Help

Teachers are available after school to help students. Students should check with teachers to see which days they are available. The Library Learning Lab is available for students who need structured help after school Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays.

Access to Library

Library Hours are: 7:40 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays and 7:40 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Wednesdays and Fridays. Students must have a pass from a teacher to work in the library during classes. Computers are available for students to use throughout the day.

Students may check out books for a period of three weeks. If a book is not returned or renewed, it is considered overdue. Notices are given out in homeroom. Students are required to replace lost books. The Librarian will determine replacement cost. Students will not receive report cards or completion certificates if books have not been returned or replaced at the end of the school year.

Guidance and Student Support

Each student is assigned to a guidance counselor whose role is to provide overall support. The counselor is available to meet with students individually, as needed, to help with issues and concerns that may arise in the course of the year. The counselors meet regularly with teachers to exchange information and discuss student progress. Counselors are also available to meet with parents. If desired, appointments may be made by calling the school and asking to be connected to the counselor's office. Students may make appointments with their counselors by requesting a pass from the teacher. Guidance counselors are a wonderful resource when a student or parent needs advice.

For the 2014-15 school year, the guidance counselors are:

Grade 6	Ms. Skypeck
Grade 7	Ms. Stern
Grade 8	Ms. Davis

Standardized Testing

Watertown Middle School uses standardized testing to assess the performance of each student compared to the overall performance of students in Watertown, Massachusetts, and the United States. Standardized testing is required by state law, (1993 Education Reform Act) and federal law (No Child Left Behind Act). This year, all students are expected to take the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). This year there will be one session of PARCC tests for both English Language Arts and Mathematics in May. Eighth grade students will take the Science & Technology/Engineering MCAS test in May as well.

Additionally, ESL students are tested annually for both written and oral English proficiency. We also utilize nationally recognized and approved assessment tools when needed in other subjects. For all standardized tests, accommodations are made as required by a student's IEP. Your child's PARCC and MCAS results will be mailed home in the fall along with explanatory material.

SPECIALIZED SERVICES & PROGRAMMING

504 Accommodation Plans

A 504 Accommodation Plan is a legal document falling under the provisions of the American Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This is a civil rights law to protect people with disabilities by eliminating barriers and allowing full participation in education. A 504 Accommodation Plan is designed to articulate and implement a program of instructional services, including general classroom modifications, to assist students with significant disabilities. A 504 plan is not an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and is a regular education entitlement. In order for a student to qualify for a 504 Accommodation Plan he or she must meet certain federal requirements. They include the following: Referral, Non-discriminatory Evaluation, Eligibility, Placement Procedures, Procedural Safeguards (Due Process), and the writing of the Individual Accommodation Plan.

A student with disabilities has the same legal rights as “a handicapped person.” As stated under the federal law, the definition is as follows:

Handicapped person means any person who (i) has a physical or mental impairment, which substantially limits one or more major life activities (ii) has a record of such impairment, or (iii) is regarded as having such impairment.

For further information, contact your child’s guidance counselor or the Special Education Coordinator.

Special Education Services

Under Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972, the Massachusetts Special Education Law (603 CMR 28.00), a student identified with a disability that impacts upon his or her education must be provided with a free, adequate and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment that includes specially designed services and/or programs that meet his or her individualized educational needs. A student is entitled to special education services if he or she meets all three of the criteria listed below:

- The student has an identified disability.
- The student is unable to progress effectively in the general education program without the provision of specially designed instruction.
- The student requires specially designed instruction and/or services to make effective progress.

Special education laws are grounded in six basic principles: parent and student participation; free and appropriate public education; appropriate evaluation; Individualized Education Plan (IEP); least restrictive environment; and procedural safeguards.

In accordance with Public Law 94-142, special education co-teachers work as part of a team to develop Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for children when eligible. The team may consist of the classroom teacher, parents, principal, guidance counselor, psychologist, school nurse, and special education administrator. To deliver services, the special education co-teachers work with classroom teachers within the classroom. There they help students strengthen reading, writing, math, and organizational skills.

If you believe your child may be in need of special education services please contact the Principal, Special Education Coordinator or counselor to assist you with the process. State regulations governing the Chapter 766 process and the “Notice of Procedural Safeguards” brochure are available in all schools for review. For more information about special education please feel free to contact the Director of Student Services at the Central Office.

Inclusion/Academic Resource Classes

Those students who have been identified within their IEP as needing additional academic support will meet with a special education teacher and possibly additional support staff such as a speech/language therapist. There they will receive specialized instruction to support the regular education instruction given to them in inclusion classes. The programming within these classes is regulated and prescribed by the IEP team to meet the individual needs of the student.

Language-Based Instruction

We can provide language-based instruction and services to those students who have been identified as having a language based learning disability or whose IEP specifies alternative instruction. In English, math, and reading, students will be in small structured classes that deliver modified instruction using a variety of teaching strategies designed to meet the student where they are and create successful academic experiences. In addition to the classes, students may participate in group counseling to work on communication and social skills.

Learning Support Classroom

The Learning Support classroom is designated for those students who have been identified through the IEP process as needing a small, highly structured and individualized learning environment. With a special education teacher and instructional assistants, students will receive specialized instruction prescribed by the IEP team to meet the educational needs of the student. The curriculum content and pace is individualized so that the student will have access to the curriculum in the most appropriate setting. Instruction in content areas such as Math, History, English, etc. will be modified to meet the student's needs. Other services such as physical, occupational and speech therapy may be delivered within these classes as determined by the IEP team.

Integrated Emotional Support Services

As students and families navigate through middle school life and adolescent development, emotional challenges may arise preventing students from meeting academic expectations. In addition, our Watertown families may also be going through turbulence on occasion, affecting the stability of their child's academic success. We recognize the need to provide a range of supportive services to help struggling students recapture academic engagement and motivation for learning. In response, we have developed the Watertown Middle School Integrated Emotional Support Services. Here students can receive a spectrum of services depending on need. Services may include:

- Short-term respite programming
- Counseling services
- Evaluation services
- Case management for families
- Classroom integration consultation
- Behavior modification
- Small therapeutic class instruction
- Emergency consultation services

Connections Program

The Connections Program is a structured, behavior-based, self-contained/sub-separate program. Using Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and sensory integration strategies, students are taught independent life skills, social pragmatic skills and academic skills. Students may also receive related services through counseling, speech and language, occupational therapy and/or physical therapy.

Students' programs are individually designed around each student's needs. As students develop skills, opportunities for inclusion in the general education classes are available. Typically, students in the Connections Program participate in the MCAS Alternative Assessment or participate in the MCAS assessment with accommodations.

The Connections Leadership Council is made up of Watertown faculty and administrators who meet on a monthly basis to ensure that services for students with autism and related disorders are consistent, using an evidence-based teaching approach, throughout grades K-12.

Alternative Education: Home and Hospital Instruction

The Watertown Public Schools provides home and hospital tutoring to students who “in the judgment of their physician, should remain at home or in the hospital on day or overnight basis, or any combination of both, for a period of at least fourteen school days in any school year.” Before a student can receive these services, a licensed physician must complete a state-required form. Forms are available at your child’s school or through the Office of Student Services.

Students who have chronic illnesses or diseases may be eligible for Section 504 Plans, and in those instances, the 14-day requirement will be waived. With the exception of those students who have chronic, debilitating diseases or conditions, home or hospital tutoring is considered short-term (no longer than 60 days) and is not a replacement for regular attendance at school.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

ESL support is provided at three levels for students who do not speak English as their primary language – beginning, intermediate, and advanced. Needs are determined according to the student’s English ability. ESL support provides instruction in speaking, reading, and writing as well as course content support. Intermediate and advanced students are integrated into mainstream classrooms, accompanied by an ESL teacher. The six largest ESL groups at Watertown Middle School are Armenian, Portuguese, Spanish (from Central and South America), Haitian Creole, Russian, and Urdu (from Pakistan).

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

As you can imagine, attendance is the most important aspect of educating our students. When students are not here, they do not have access to instruction. At Watertown Middle School, we pride ourselves in maintaining a very high attendance rate throughout the year. Understandably, there will be times when our students will need to take time away from school for a variety of excused reasons. The following procedure is in place to ensure good attendance, support our families, and follow state and federal laws.

Students are expected to be present and punctual for all classes. All students must be in homeroom by 7:40 a.m. The school doors open at 7:15 a.m. for students participating in the breakfast program, and at 7:30 a.m. for all others. Students are expected to arrive at school at 7:30 a.m. to be ready for the school day.

Tardiness

A student is considered tardy if he or she is not in homeroom by 7:40 a.m. Students who are tardy must sign in at the front door and report to the office before going to class.

Students who are excessively late to school will meet with a guidance counselor to problem solve and work with parents. Students will also be issued a detention for every five times they are late to school and may receive more consequences if the pattern continues. Additionally, if the pattern continues an administrative meeting will be held with parents, student, guidance and administration. The Attendance Officer will also be notified to intervene and coach. Students will also be given an administrative detention every five times they are late to school.

Absences

In the event that a student is absent, a parent or guardian must call the absence hotline at 617-926-7783 x 2501 before 7:30 a.m. Please state the name, grade and homeroom of the student. In the event that the absence is not reported, the school will call the student's home or the place of employment of the parent or guardian to verify the absence.

Excused Absences may include:

- an illness or injury that prevents the student from attending school (The illness or injury must be verified by a health care provider, school nurse, or parent.)
- a death in the immediate family (parent, sibling, grandparent, aunt, uncle, cousin) or other significant personal or family crisis
- court appearances
- school sponsored field trips
- medical or psychological tests during the school day (The parent must show evidence (such as a note from the health center) that the tests could not be scheduled after school)
- religious holidays
- The Principal may also decide what is excused

A parent's note must accompany the student upon return to school, to be collected by the homeroom teacher. Students who are absent may not participate in any extra-curricular school activities or events on the day of the absence, including games and dances. The note must include the date absent, the reason for the absence, a phone number for the parent or guardian, and the parent or guardian's signature. Students must make up missed work during excused absences.

Unexcused Absence: Some parents think that any absence will be excused as long as the parent sends a note. **This is not true.** Here are a few examples of unexcused absences—even if the parent sends a note:

- repetitive and chronic absence due to illness or injury (In these cases, for the absence to be excused, the parent must submit a letter from a physician verifying that the student was too sick or injured to go to school.)
- student needed to baby-sit
- cutting class
- family vacation

Resulting Actions:

- After 3 days of unexcused absences with no contact to the school from the parent, the Assistant Principal will be notified.
- After 5 days of absences (both excused & unexcused) per trimester, a letter of concern will be sent to parents, and a support meeting will be scheduled with parents to create an Attendance Plan which clearly outlines the school, parent and student obligations to improve the problem. If absenteeism continues, further action will be taken, up to and including petitioning the Juvenile Courts with a Child Requiring Assistance, (C.R.A.).
- Truancy first offense/one day = in-school suspension.
- Truancy second and third offense = Further disciplinary action to be discussed in a meeting with family, Assistant Principal, and Guidance.

Dismissal

Please excuse our formality and strict guidelines regarding dismissal. It is solely intended to protect your children and the privacy of your family. If you would like your child to be excused from school, please provide your son/daughter with a note including the reason, date, time of dismissal and parent signature. Students will be dismissed to the office when presenting the note to their teacher.

- All students will be dismissed from the main office.
- Unless approved by administration, no child will be dismissed to people not on the official contact list.
- All people picking up children must show legal identification and sign-out before leaving.
- Student will not be dismissed unless accompanied by an adult.
- On the first day of school, students will bring home a student information form that parents need to fill out. Please fill out the emergency contact list carefully. Unless approved by administration no child will be dismissed to people not on the official contact list. This includes times when we may have to dismiss students in an emergency.

Snow Days and Delayed Openings

State law requires 180 days of instruction, and also requires that any snow days be made up before June 30th. Snow days and delayed openings are listed on the website www.watertown.k12.ma.us, and also broadcast on the following radio and television stations:

WCVB Television (Channel 5)

WHDH Television (Channel 7)

WBZ Television (Channel 4) and Radio (AM 1030)

Cable Television Service - If available, check the local community channel.

WBUR web site - part of National Public Broadcasting (Radio - FM 90.9).

All parents and students are urged to depend on the above communication services. PLEASE DO NOT CALL the School Department, Police Department, or Fire Department for school cancellation information, as these lines must remain open for emergency situations

On days of delayed opening, school will open up to two hours after the regularly scheduled time. All students should report to homeroom for attendance and announcements. Lunch will be served at the regular time, and school will close at the regular time.

Professional Development Days

The Watertown Middle School has certain times set aside for teacher professional development and curriculum planning. With the continuous changes to improve curricula, it is important for teachers to have dedicated time set aside to learn the new topics they are required to teach. These days are shown on the school calendar.

Half Days: Students are dismissed right after lunch at 11:45 am.

Full Days: There is no school on these days. Usually there are three full professional days per year.

BEHAVIOR PROCEDURES

Watertown Middle School Recipe for Success

A Watertown Middle School Eagle **SOARS!**

Success: Support the **SUCCESS** of others and the school community!

Ownership: Take responsibility and **OWN** your actions!

Achievement: Set challenging goals and strive to **ACHIEVE** them!

Respect: **RESPECT** yourself and the differences around you!

Service: **SERVE** your school, community, and country!

Until you spread your wings, you have no idea how far you can fly!

Code of Conduct

At Watertown Middle School, we respect the need for a balanced approach towards discipline and character development. It is critical that students are both celebrated when following our high standards and also given natural consequences when they make mistakes. In addition, we appreciate that in order for our students to be successful, they need to feel safe to take risks. At Watertown Middle School, creating a safe and nurturing environment to accomplish this is our top priority. The SOARS tenets listed above are the pillars of the Watertown Middle School community.

The following sections describe our policies and protocols around student conduct.

Prevention

Here at Watertown Middle School, we pride ourselves in creating a secure and caring learning community that fosters success. Providing opportunities for students to create meaningful and supportive relationships with their teachers is an essential part of establishing a safe environment that prevents students from making poor choices. We offer a wide spectrum of services that support these endeavors. The following is a partial list of some of the supportive programming that takes place here:

- Guidance
- Counseling Services
- Advisory Program
- Small Advisory groups
- 6th grade Tokens of Success Program

Celebrating Success

In order for students to recognize their achievement and good behavior, it is critical that we celebrate those moments when students are successful. The way we recognize successful students ranges from grade to grade, ranging from a tokens of success program for sixth graders to awards assemblies for seventh and eighth graders.

Redirection

During class time, teachers practice a variety of redirection techniques before students are referred out of the class. The following are some of the strategies teachers may use to redirect students within the class if they are disrupting the success of others:

- Non-verbal redirection
- Verbal redirection
- Providing options/choices
- Formal warning
- Changing seating
- Time-out

If a student has not redirected him/herself after the teacher has attempted a number of strategies, the student will be formally asked to leave the class and walk to the Support Room in hopes of refocusing and returning as soon as possible to his/her schedule. There the student will meet with a teacher, who will help to process the incident, determine administrative involvement, and strategize reintegration back to class.

The following is an outline of the protocol for referring a student to the Support Room:

- Teacher sends student (with hall pass) to the Support Room with academic work.
- Parent is notified that day.
- Teacher calls down to report incident to Support Teacher.
- Teacher will deliver written referral to Assistant Principal.
- Support Teacher will process incident, and determine administrative involvement.
- If able, student will return to next period.
- Teachers will be responsible to check IPASS to review disciplinary records.

Anti-Bullying Procedures

The Watertown School Committee policy and procedures are compliant with MGL c 71, Section 370, An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools, which was enacted May 3, 2010.

All schools, under the direction of the principal and the guidance department, provide ongoing professional development and training to the staff throughout the school year. Additionally, faculty meetings and other professional time will be devoted to ensure that our schools are bully free zones and that they optimize learning in a safe and caring environment.

A quick response and investigation of any alleged bullying incident will be conducted. This will include notification, resolution, consequences and other necessary steps depending on the exact nature of the situation. It is important that our children and staff work to create a school where all children are respected, cared for and encouraged, and capable of achieving their fullest potential.

The complete text of the Watertown Bullying Prevention and Intervention plan may be found on the District's website.

Definition and Prohibition of Bullying: Bullying is defined as **repeated** use of written, verbal, or electronic communication, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, by one or more students directed at another student that has the effect of:

- causing physical or emotional harm to the other student or damage to his or her property;
- placing the other student in reasonable fear of harm to him or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- creating a hostile environment at school for the bullied student;
- infringing on the rights of the other student at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupting the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

This law further specifies a prohibition against bullying:

- At school and at all school facilities;
- At school-sponsored or school-related functions, whether on or off school grounds;
- On school buses and school bus stops;
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device;
- At non-school-related locations if the bullying affects the school environment.

Cyber-bullying is defined as bullying through the use of technology or any electronic means.

Procedures for reporting: Teachers and staff are now **required** by law to report incidences of bullying to the principal in their building. The principal will establish a procedure, which will include the following steps:

- Notify school personnel or administration
- Call or text our Bullying Reporting Line - **617-688-0432**
- Parents of aggressor and target are notified of investigation
- Investigation conducted by administration
- Determination is created whether it is an act of bullying
- Parents of target and aggressor are notified of conclusion and next steps
- Intervention(s) are conducted

The law specifically prohibits retaliation for reporting an incident of bullying.

Whenever an incident of bullying is determined to have taken place, the parents of all students involved will be notified of the incident and of the actions being taken by the school to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation.

Safety Intervention Plan: A Safety Intervention Plan will be developed to help both the target and aggressor. These will be individualized to the students with the goal of preventing further bullying.

Communication with Parents: Educational programs will be offered to parents about MGL c. 71, Section 370, “An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools” during the school year. Information on these programs will be posted on the district’s website and in school newsletters.

Bullying Prevention Curriculum and Programming: At WMS we use the Advisory model as a means of prevention and character development. Within small Advisory groups, students meet with an advisor a couple times a week to connect, build character, and learn resilience and communication skills. We believe that students must have at least one trusted adult they can go to and have a group that is connected to one another to prevent bullying and be a successful in school.

Substance Abuse

Watertown Middle School prohibits the use of any illegal substances by students or adults in the school community. Strict disciplinary measures will occur if a student is found to be in possession of an illegal or controlled substance, or distributes intoxicated by a controlled substance, or distributes an illegal substance to others. In such cases, the Watertown Police will be notified.

Additionally, the school will work collaboratively with the student’s parents/guardians to point the student toward appropriate therapeutic services that will help the child with his or her substance abuse issue.

Consequences for Disciplinary Infractions

Cluster Sessions: Cluster sessions are an after-school detention that may occur when a student has broken a rule within the cluster, and the teacher feels it necessary for the student to stay after. Parents will always be contacted to schedule this time.

Lunch Sessions: Teachers may issue lunch sessions to student for minor infractions. This time will be served during lunch and is also an opportunity for students to reflect on their mistake. After three lunch session's students will be referred to the Assistant Principal.

Administrative After-School Sessions: We will hold after-school sessions/detention for those students who are required to attend by an administrator. This will be a supervised 50-minute period of time where students should take the opportunity to reflect or complete academic work. Parents will always be notified when a student has been given an after-school session. If a student receives numerous after-school sessions, further disciplinary action may result.

Academic Probation: When a student has shown consistent loss in motivation (grades dropping), has regular behavioral issues interfering with success or has not passed summer school, the team may place the student on academic probation, which includes contracting with the student and family about interventions necessary to further support the student. Students on academic probation may:

- have a mandatory after-school schedule to meet with teachers
- be taken off athletic teams until they meet the school's athletic requirements
- have additional study hours during school

Loss of Privileges: Administration may also keep students from attending other school related functions as a means of intervention and consequence. Some of these may include field trips, assemblies, athletics and school dances.

Suspension

Any student, who has committed a severe infraction or repeatedly failed to follow the school's rules and expectations for proper student behavior, may be suspended by the Principal or expelled by the School Committee. The following procedure is enacted through the 1993 Massachusetts Education Reform Act and have been recently amended in Chapter 222 of the Acts of 2012, An Act Relative to Student Access to Educational Services and Exclusion from School. A copy of these laws is available through the Principal, Superintendent and the Department of Education.

Students who repeatedly break school rules may also be subject to the C.R.A. process within the juvenile courts.

Parent/Guardian and Student Due Process: Before any suspension takes place a hearing will be scheduled with parents/guardians and students. There, the student and parent will be able to present his/her side of the story. After, the principal or his/her designee will present the results of the investigation, evidence and the recommended suspension, consequences and intervention. Parents and/or guardians will also be reminded of the right to appeal the schools decision before the principal or superintendent of schools. A written letter of notification will also be sent out to the parents/guardians. It should be noted that some information gathered during the investigation may be private information about other students and thus will not be shared.

The written notice to students and parents will be presented in the primary language spoken in the home. All efforts will be made to obtain an interpreter for the hearing prior to the suspension.

In-School Suspension: Students are removed from their regular class and assigned to a location in the school where there is adult supervision. The Watertown Middle School resorts to this form of suspension for many infractions. It is our philosophy to keep students in school as much as possible to maintain academic progress and help students learn from their mistakes with appropriate guidance. It is a severe punishment in many ways, but it is less punitive than an out-of-school suspension. Students are expected to work during the day and will be allowed the same number of days to make up class work as the number of days they were out of class. Students separated from classes because of school infractions may earn class credit for the successful completion of any required assignments.

Out-of-School Suspension: Students will be subject to out-of-school suspension for a period of 1 to 10 days when involved in incidents of severe misbehavior. Out-of-school suspensions are considered a last resort. The school makes every effort to use in-house suspensions as a means of consequence. Parents will be notified of the suspension and their responsibility to pick up their child from school. A student will not be readmitted to school until the Principal or designee, parents, and student meet to determine if the student is ready to follow the school rules. Suspended students may not take part in any school activities, attend evening functions at school, or take part in any school-sponsored event held on or off school premises. Academic work missed during school suspension may be made up according to the schedule established by the classroom teacher.

Education Service Plan: Students who are suspended in school or out for less than 10 consecutive school days will be given every opportunity to make academic progress and make up assignments during this time. For students who have been suspended more than 10 consecutive school days, an Education Service Plan will be created to ensure academic progress. This plan may include, but is not limited to, tutoring, alternative placement, distance or online learning.

Expulsion

Any student who is found on school premises or at a school-sponsored or school-related event in possession of a dangerous weapon or a controlled substance, or who assaults school personnel, is subject to expulsion. In such cases, the police will be called. Students are entitled to a School Committee hearing and may be recommended to be permanently removed from the school and school district. *See appendices for more details.*

An expulsion hearing with the School Committee will contain the following due process rights:

- Written notice of the charges
- The right to be represented by an attorney or advocate at the student's expense
- Adequate time to prepare for the hearing
- Access to documented evidence prior to the hearing
- The right to request that witnesses attend the hearing and the right to question them
- A reasonably prompt written decision including the specific grounds for the decision

Discipline of Students with Special Needs

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior outlined in this handbook; however, students with special needs demand a greater degree of flexibility and understanding when applying the rules and considering the consequences. In addition, Chapter 766 of the Massachusetts General Laws requires that additional provisions be made for students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The following procedure is enacted through those laws:

- The IEP for every student may indicate whether the student can be expected to meet the school's discipline code. If the student's needs prevent him or her from meeting the code, a modified behavior program must be described in the IEP.
- All educational personnel in regular contact with the student will be informed of the modified program.
- A student whose misbehavior is not the result of his special needs as defined in the IEP is subject to all consequences of misconduct, including suspension from school. A student whose misbehavior is a manifestation of his special needs may be exempt from suspension except in an emergency situation.
- The principal will notify the Special Education Office of the length and reason for each suspension. A record of such notices will be kept at the school.
- If the suspension exceeds ten days (cumulative) in one school year or the student's misconduct is serious enough to warrant expulsion, an emergency team meeting will be held to review and determine the appropriateness of the student's placement and IEP.

PLEASE REVIEW THE ADDITIONAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS REGARDING DISCIPLINARY PROCESS INCLUDED IN THE APPENDICES OF THIS HANDBOOK.

Denial of Transportation

The Watertown Middle School considers the school bus to be an *extension of the classroom*. We have the same standards of behavior on the school bus as we do in school. For example, students should remain in their seats; they should not hang out of windows, harass, push, or fight with other students, throw things, or try to distract the driver.

Students who violate the Code of Conduct while on the bus may be disciplined and may be denied transportation. Some school buses are equipped with video cameras. The video may be used as evidence in disciplining students who misbehave on the bus.

Hall Passes

Students are only permitted in the halls during class periods when accompanied by a staff member or if they are carrying a pass issued by a faculty member. Students must sign out from teacher supervision. Students who violate this expectation repeatedly will be referred to the Assistant Principal.

Lockers

Each student is assigned a locker at the beginning of the school year. Students are responsible for providing a lock for their assigned lockers. He or she is responsible for keeping the locker in good condition. The school is not responsible for articles lost or stolen. Students should not give out their locker combinations.

Personal Electronic Devices and Cell Phones

To better protect students from misuse of handheld devices the following guidelines have been established:

In the school building, personal electronic devices (PED) and cell phones should be off and in your locker, unless specified otherwise by the teacher. PEDs or cell phones may be used during school hours under the supervision of the teacher only. Students are permitted to use their phones upon dismissal at the end of the day. Some other examples of PEDs include, iPods, iPads, tablets and laptops

Any use of these PEDs or cell phone outside of teacher supervision is strictly **prohibited**. Faculty or staff has the right to confiscate a PED or cell phone and turn it into the principal's office. The device can be picked up at the office by the student at the end of the school day. Repeated offenses may require the parent to pick up the device.

PEDs and cell phones should not be used during the school day for communication between students and parents. Urgent messages between parents and students must be communicated via the main office.

The school is not responsible for the maintenance, loss, theft or damage of any personal electronic device.

All use of personal electronic devices is commensurate with the District's Acceptable Use Policy.

Bicycles, Skateboards, Scooters, etc.

Racks are available outside to secure bicycles. Skateboards and scooters may not be used on school grounds and must be secured inside the locker.

Cafeteria

In order to maintain a safe and enjoyable environment for everyone, students are expected to follow the rules posted in the cafeteria. They are expected to:

- use a moderate tone of voice, no yelling or loud noise;
- remain in the cafeteria unless permitted to leave by a cafeteria supervisor;
- refrain from running, pushing, or cutting in the lunch line;
- refrain from throwing food or containers;
- clean up after themselves;
- stop talking immediately when asked, or when lights are turned off;
- remain at their table unless buying lunch or snacks;
- ask a faculty member for permission to leave

Disciplinary action will occur for students not following expectations.

Conduct on Buses, Field Trips, and Events

Your child represents the Watertown Middle School during school-related activities outside the school building, whether on the school bus, a field trip, or attending a school sporting event as a participant or spectator. Misbehavior on a bus may result in suspension from the bus, suspension from field trip activities, and/or any other disciplinary actions.

Student Dress Code

Students' clothing/dress should reflect their readiness to focus on learning, education and hard work. We recognize that students express themselves in many ways as young adults, but at the same time, school attire should support the scholarly culture that leads to academic success.

Student clothing should be neat, clean, and worn in the manner for which it was designed. If a student is out of dress code, he/she will first get a verbal warning and be asked to change. If the student can't find appropriate clothing, he/she can use our stock of Watertown athletic clothing as an alternative. If it is a second or repeat offense, the student will be referred to administration for disciplinary action.

Students are expected to adhere to the following guidelines while in school, or while attending a school-sponsored event or field trip:

1. No clothing or accessories with inappropriate or offensive symbols or statements shall be worn. Some examples include but are not limited to:
 - a. References to drugs, tobacco or alcohol
 - b. References to racial, ethnic, or otherwise discriminatory slurs
 - c. References to violence
 - d. Sexual connotations
2. No head coverings shall be worn except in the case of religious or health reasons.
3. No undergarments shall be visible.
4. Shorts must be at least 5 inches from the fold of the leg when seated, even when wearing leggings.
5. Dresses or skirts must be worn with leggings if the length is shorter than mid-thigh (see measurement rules below).
6. No halter-tops, spaghetti straps, backless tops or muscle shirts shall be worn.
 - a. Shoulders should not be completely bare.
 - b. Shoulder straps should be at least 1 inch in width.
7. All clothing, including shirts, tops, dresses, pants, shorts and leggings, must be completely opaque (not see-through).
8. Pants/shorts must be appropriately worn around the waist, not below the waistline, and accompanied by a belt if necessary.
9. Shirts must reach the top of pants, shorts, or skirts even when seated (no bare midriffs).
10. Clothing must be free of holes, rips and tears that are inappropriately located.
11. Necklines should be appropriate in length so as not to reveal cleavage.
12. Night clothing, including but not limited to pajamas, slippers, etc. may not be worn.
13. Non-prescriptive glasses may not be worn.

MEASUREMENT RULE

Shorts, skirts, dresses or long tops must measure no less than 5 inches from the fold of the garment when seated (see measurement graphic/ for details).

****Administration reserves the right to evaluate the appropriateness of student dress when needed.***

****We will evaluate the dress code on an annual basis to adjust for cultural trends***

HEALTH PROCEDURES

School Health Services

The school nurse is a vital part of the school community and is available during school hours to provide care to students and staff as needed. Student health services are designed to protect and support all students in the maintenance of good health and to enable each student to reach and maintain the highest possible state of well being for effective learning. The direct telephone number to the nurse's office is 617-926-9783 x 2116. The school nurse maintains all student health records in accordance with Massachusetts state laws. These laws require the following:

1. All students must have a physical exam by a primary care provider including evidence of the Massachusetts required immunizations before entering kindergarten, 4th grade, 7th grade and 10th grade: Also new students must have a physical. These physicals must be within a year of entering the grade or school. Your nurse will inform you of immunization requirements
2. Up-to-date health records including immunizations must be presented for anyone registering as a new student.
3. A current physical exam, within 13 months of the start of the season is required of all students participating in team sports

In accordance with Massachusetts state law, students must be properly immunized before entering school to protect the school community from disease. If parents/guardian do not submit up-to-date immunization records, students will not be permitted to attend school.

Postural, vision and hearing screenings will be administered with recommendations to parents for follow-up when necessary

Illness or Injury

Students may request or be sent to see the nurse with a pass issued by a staff member. The nurse will make the determination about what treatment, if any, is needed. Parents are notified when necessary.

For your child's protection, it is essential for the school to maintain accurate emergency contact information. Please notify the office immediately when emergency contact information has changed.

In case of illness or injury, a student will be dismissed to a parent or guardian, or to a responsible adult designated by the parent or guardian.

Medications

Written authorization from the primary care physician is required for all medications given out during the school day. Medications must be brought to the school by the parent or guardian in the original container with the label intact. The parent or legal guardian must give written permission in order for the nurse to give medication to a student. Parents are asked to call and make an appointment to meet with the school nurse to discuss any medication issues or medical concerns.

Emergency Illness or Injury protocol

In case of an accident or illness during school hours, a parent or guardian will be notified. When indicated, the student will be dismissed to the parents or another adult designated by the parent. The school is responsible for providing appropriate care to the student until the parent arrives.

If emergency medical attention is needed, the school will contact you and an emergency response team.

If your child is ill or injured and must be excused from gym a doctor's note is required. Another doctor's note is needed to return to gym

Watertown Concussion Procedures

Watertown Concussion Procedures have been developed in accordance with Watertown Policy and Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) regulation 105 CMR 201.000 Head Injuries and Concussions in Extra-curricular Athletic Activities, mandated by Chapter 166 of the Acts of 2010, An Act Relative to the Safety Regulations for School Athletes.

The complete Procedures can be found on the Watertown High School Athletics Website.

These procedures provide:

- 1)Parameters for staff training
- 2)Forms to be used at various stages in the head injury and concussion process
- 3)Steps to be taken if an injury occurs at a sports event
- 4)Steps to be taken to ensure a safe and healthy re-entry into school.

At the beginning of each sports season, students must turn in:

- 1)Proof of a physical examination by a medical doctor in the last 13 months
- 2)A completed Pre-Participation Form
- 3)Athletics Fee

Students will not be allowed to play if these forms are not successfully completed and turned in.

If parents or students require more information, they should visit the WHS Athletics site to read the complete text of the Procedures.

When to Keep Your Child Home

Please keep your child at home if he or she has:

Cold with cough and fever: If your child has a cold and cough symptoms with a fever or he/she does not seem to be getting better, call your doctor. Your child may not attend school with a fever over 100°. The temperature must be normal for 24 hours without the use of medication before the child may return to school

Sore throat with fever and swollen glands: These may be signs of strep throat. Call your doctor to have your child evaluated. Children are still contagious the first 24 hours on antibiotics and must remain home.

Red eyes: When the white part of the eye looks red and there is a yellow or green crusty discharge, call your doctor. Your child may have conjunctivitis, a common but troublesome condition that may be a contagious infection. Your child may need an eye ointment, and may attend school after 24 hours of treatment.

Rash: A rash is usually a sign of a viral illness. It also may be a reaction to a medication or chemical (plants, detergents). If your child has an unusual rash or it is associated with a fever, contact your doctor. Keep your child home from school until you have discussed the rash with your doctor.

Stomach ache, vomiting, diarrhea: A child with vomiting and/or diarrhea should be kept home until symptoms have resolved for approximately 24 hours and the child is able to keep down food and liquid. Consult your doctor if fever and stomach pains do not go away or your child is not eating well and appears dehydrated (dry mouth, no tears, sunken eyes, urinates less than 4 times in 24 hours).

Head Lice/Nits: Students may not return to school until hair has been treated and all eggs/nits have been removed. If your child has lice, please contact the school nurse so she may check siblings and classmates. This is kept confidential.

Chicken Pox: Students must remain out of school for at least 1 week from the appearance of eruptions. All lesions must be scabbed over with no new eruptions, to return to school.

Since school health rooms are not equipped to accommodate sick children, and since crowded health rooms lead to further spread of disease, it is imperative that sick children be kept at home. It is also crucial that parents make every effort to pick up children as soon as possible when notified by the school of a child's illness.

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Student Council

The Student Council is made up of one representative from each homeroom, plus four officers: President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Homeroom representatives are elected in September for the current school year.

The election of officers takes place in May or June for the next school year. Students seeking nomination for officer positions must be in 7th grade, planning to serve in their 8th grade school year. All candidates must attend an election workshop. Candidates must adhere to all election regulations, which are explained at the workshop, especially the deadline for submitting nomination papers. Candidates must get signatures from 20 seventh grade students. In addition, they must have signatures from one sixth grade cluster teacher, three seventh grade cluster teachers and a seventh grade specialist. An administrator must also sign the nomination papers. Candidates for office must have a C or better average in all subjects and they must have no major discipline infractions. No candidate may have any suspensions during the present school year and they may not have excessive after-school sessions. More than 5 unexcused absences a year and more than 5 tardy days per term will also disqualify candidates. A 7th grade assembly will be held and all candidates will give a speech. The election will be held the following day.

The Student Council meets on a regular basis and plans activities such as the school dances, student/staff basketball games, community service fundraisers, and projects. The Executive Board of the Student Council consists of the four officers and a male and female student chosen by the homeroom representatives to represent each grade level. These students meet every Tuesday. The Student Council affords students the opportunity to develop leadership skills, and they are often called upon to represent the school. Academic or behavior issues sometimes make it necessary to suspend a student councilor from office, either temporarily or permanently

School Dances

The Student Council sponsors several dances throughout the year. Dances take place on Friday evenings from 7-10:00 p.m., with admission by prior ticket sale only. Only Watertown Middle School students may attend. Students will not be allowed into the dance after 7:20 p.m. unless by prior arrangement with the administration. Students are expected to dress and behave in a manner consistent with school procedure.

Students who have any of the following will not be eligible to attend the next dance: six lunch or three office sessions, one suspension, five unexcused absences, or ten unexcused tardies within a month.

Students should be picked up promptly at 10:00 PM at the Waverley Avenue door. A parent or designated adult must pick up their child. Students will not be allowed to walk home. If a parent or guardian fails to pick a student up from the dance within a reasonable amount of time, a student may not be eligible to attend the next dance.

Sports

Fall

Field Hockey
Boys Soccer
Girls Soccer
Boys X-Country
Girls X-Country

Winter

Boys Basketball
Girls Basketball
Boys Hockey
Girls Hockey

Spring

Baseball
Softball
Boys Track
Girls Track

At the Watertown Middle School, we take pride in having developed over the years a rich and successful Athletic Program. We understand that athletics is an integral part of the school culture, providing our students with invaluable experiences throughout the year. While providing our students with these opportunities, we adhere to strict guidelines to keep our students focused on their academics and to provide accountability when they make mistakes. The following guidelines will apply to all students who are involved in the Watertown Middle School Athletics' Program.

1. Students are required to maintain a C- (70%) average to participate.
If students are not academically eligible to start or continue a season, students will be placed on academic probation for a period of three weeks to bring their grades up. The Watertown Middle School guidance team will manage the eligibility issues throughout the school year.
2. If a student has received an office detention or suspension the following guidelines will apply.
 - Suspension – three weeks suspension from athletics
 - Office detention – suspension from one game and two practices*If disciplinary events continue, the Principal/Assistant Principal may restrict a student from further athletic activities.*
3. If a student is absent from school, she/he will be ineligible to play that day.
4. If a student has an unexcused tardy, she/he will be ineligible to play that day.

The Athletic Fee to play sports at Watertown Middle School is \$160 per athlete per year. Families of students who receive free or reduced price lunches may apply to the principal for a reduced athletic fee.

Students will be notified when team try-outs or sign-ups take place, or information may be obtained from the Watertown Middle School website.

After School Program

Watertown Middle School offers a number of after-school activities located within the building and outside in the community. Throughout the year, there will be opportunities for students to sign up for after school activities. On the days when the student is scheduled to participate in a club, team, or activity, he or she should check in at the cafeteria, have a snack, and go directly to the room or area where the activity will take place. A full schedule of after school activities will be sent home in the summer mailing and will be posted again in the fall on the school's website and in the newsletter.

Working Papers

We recommend that middle school students not work at a job during the school week (i.e., Sunday evening through Thursday evening). If a student needs to work, we recommend that he/she does not work for more than ten hours per week.

Students who have reached the eligible age of 14 for working papers should first be hired and then procure a yellow card from the main office at the High School for the employer and doctor to sign. Students must present a birth certificate and student identification. Upon completion of this card, students should return the yellow card in order to get the official working papers. Students are reminded that working papers are available Monday – Friday in the Main Office at the High School from 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

The communication guidelines delineated below are designed to provide an efficient and effective process for parents to access information about all aspects of their child's school experience. We define a "chain of communication" because we feel that the most effective way to obtain accurate responses to inquiries or lasting solutions to concerns is at the level closest to the issue or concern.

The following chart identifies the individual who should be contacted initially, depending upon the nature of the question or concern. The Personnel Directory lists positions and phone extensions. If parents remain uncertain about where to make a call, they should feel free to contact any member of the school community who will refer the inquiry to the appropriate person. We understand that there are times when a parent feels the need to start with a specific individual. We defer to parents' judgment in this matter.

Classroom Concerns

Any questions related to classroom issues should be referred to the teacher. Most concerns are resolved when parents take this initial step. Teachers are interested in the concerns of parents and want to address those concerns in an open and professional manner. Parent/teacher conferences make a positive contribution to student achievement.

Supervisors and administrators are willing to listen to questions and concerns related to classroom issues and will provide procedure-related information, but they may ask the parent to contact the teacher if a parent/teacher dialogue has not already begun.

Parents who feel that an issue is unresolved after having consulted with the teacher should contact the individual listed in the "referral" column.

Other Concerns

The chart following assists parents in directing their questions to other members of the school community. If an issue is unresolved after the initial contact, parents may then address their concern to the person listed in the "referral" column.

Anonymous Calls or Complaints

There will be no response within the School Department to anonymous calls, letters, or complaints.

Questions and Concerns Chart

NATURE OF CONCERN	INITIAL CONTACT	REFERRAL
Academic Progress	Teacher	Curriculum Coordinator or Principal 617-926-7783
Discipline	Teacher	Assistant Principal 617-926-7783
Teaching Methods & Curriculum	Teacher	Curriculum Coordinator or Principal
Counseling/Student Adjustment	Counselor	Principal or Assistant Principal
Health / Medication	Nurse	Principal or Assistant Principal
Special Needs Referral	Teacher or Counselor	Special Education Coordinator or Principal
School Traffic Guards	Principal	Watertown Police Department 617-972-6500
Transportation	Principal	Director of Business Services 617-926-7716
Special Needs Transportation	Director of Student Services 617-926-7766	Director of Business Services 617-926-7716
Title I Program	Title I Tutor/Teacher	Principal
Policy - District	Superintendent 617-926-7700	School Committee 617-926-7700
School Lunch Program	Principal	Director of Food Services 617-926-7756
Community Education Programs (Adult Ed/Summer School/Before and After School Programs)	Director of Community Education 617-923-7653	Assistant Superintendent 617-926-7700

GETTING INVOLVED

Parent-Teacher Organization

The Watertown Middle School Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is a voluntary group of parents, teachers and administrators, who meet to discuss and organize activities and events. The PTO supports the school in many ways. Dues for the year are \$10.00 per family, which go right back to the classroom and support your child in many ways.

Fundraising efforts include:

- Magazine Drive
- Coupon Drive
- Restaurant Nights
- Community Events
- Bake Sales

PTO fundraisers finance activities and programs essential to our school's academic, social, and cultural life:

- Student and Teacher Agenda Books
- Honor Roll Breakfasts for each grade
- Scholarships
- 8th Grade Washington D.C. Trip
- 8th Grade Career Day refreshments
- 8th Grade Graduation
- Principal's Fund
- Money for each Cluster
- Field Trips such as the Science Museum and Museum of Fine Arts
- In house performances such as Shakespeare and Greek Mythology
- Ice Cream Social
- Scavenger Hunt for incoming 6th graders
- Scholastic Book Fair
- Teacher Appreciation Luncheon
- Pizza Parties

The PTO meets once a month. A schedule of meetings will be posted in the main office in September. The PTO welcomes anyone who would like to be a part of this terrific organization.

School Site Council

The Watertown Middle School Council consists of parents, teachers, the principal, and community members. School Councils were created in every district by the 1993 Education Reform Act (M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 59C). They provide input to the principal regarding student, parent, and community needs. Parent and teacher representatives are elected by parents and teachers respectively to serve staggered three-year terms. The School Council meets monthly. Duties and responsibilities include:

- adopting educational goals for the school.
- identifying the educational needs of students attending the school.
- reviewing the school building's annual budget.
- formulating a school improvement plan.

Parent Volunteers

Parent volunteers are encouraged to help in school. The assistance of parents is greatly valued. We believe that children who see their parents working in school will better recognize the importance of school in their lives. Volunteer positions will be announced at the beginning of school.

APPENDICES

These Appendices are included in each school's handbook, for all grade levels.

1. District Policies
2. Federal and State Regulations
3. Summaries and Signature Page
4. Gender Identity
5. Harassment and Discrimination

APPENDIX 1 – District Policies

Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Policy – Technology

Purpose

The Watertown Public Schools shall provide access for employees and students to the system/network, including access to external networks, for limited educational purposes. *Educational purposes* shall be defined as classroom activities, career and professional development, and high quality self-discovery activities of an educational nature. The purpose of the system/network is to assist in preparing students for success in life and work by providing access to a wide range of information and the ability to communicate with others. The system/network will be used to increase communication (staff, parent, and student), enhance productivity, and assist staff in upgrading existing skills and acquiring new skills through a broader exchange of information. The system/network will also be utilized to provide information to the community, including parents, governmental agencies, and businesses.

Availability

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

Access to the system/network, including external networks, shall be made available to employees and students for instructional and administrative purposes and in accordance with administrative regulations and procedures.

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

Acceptable Use

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement administrative regulations, procedures, and user agreements, consistent with the purposes and mission of the Watertown Public Schools as well as with law and policy governing copyright.

Monitored Use

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

Education of Students and Staff

The Watertown Public Schools recognizes its obligation to provide education for students and staff regarding appropriate online behavior including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms, and regarding cyberbullying awareness and response.

The Watertown Public Schools has developed guidelines to be followed in accordance with the requirements of Federal and state statutes. These guidelines will be maintained and updated regularly.

Liability

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

LEGAL REFS.: CIPA Public Law 110-385
 M.G.L. c. 71, § 370
 M.G.L. c. 66, § 10; G.L. c. 4, § 7(26))
REF.: Massachusetts Association of School Committees, Massachusetts
 Association of School Superintendents

Administering Medications to Students

Prescription medication may not be administered to students while at school unless such medication is administered by the school nurse acting under specific written request of the parent or guardian and under the written directive and/or medication order of the student's personal licensed prescriber, as authorized by Ch 94C. When the school nurse is not present, a student who needs prescription medication during the school day may be called to the office at the scheduled hour and reminded by the designated school employee to take the appropriate medication and dosage. This provision only applies when the nurse, physician and parent and guardian agree in the "Student Care Plan" or medication order that the student can self-administer. The student must be able to recognize the prescription medication that he /she is taking. No one but the school nurse, and those others listed in the medical administration plan acting within the above restrictions, may give any medications to any student.

Over the Counter Medication (non prescription medication) may be administered only by the school nurse with written parental permission consistent with the standing orders signed by the school physician. Students may carry over the counter medications and self-administer them with the written permission of the school nurse, personal licensed prescriber, and parent.

The school district shall, through the district nurse leader, register with the Dept. of Public Health and train personnel in the use of Epi-pens.

Following consultation with the school nurse, and submission of the “Student Care Plan” students who fall into the following exceptions may self-administer medications:

1. Students with asthma or other respiratory diseases may possess and administer prescription inhalers.
2. Students with cystic fibrosis may possess and administer enzyme supplements.
3. Students with diabetes may possess and administer glucose monitoring tests and insulin delivery systems.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:54B
Department of Public Health Regulations: 105 CMR 210.00

Asbestos Management

In compliance with the regulations of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency the Watertown Public Schools has an ongoing Operations and Management Program for monitoring the condition of asbestos in the school buildings.

Gang Activity

The goal of the School Committee is to keep District schools and students free from the threats or harmful influence of any gang. For purposes of this policy, gang is defined as any group, secret society, organization or association that advocates drug use, violence, ethnic intimidation, or disruptive or illegal behavior. The Principal or his/her designee shall maintain supervision of school premises to deter intimidation of students and confrontations between members of different gangs.

The Superintendent shall establish open lines of communication with local law enforcement agencies so as to share information and provide mutual support in this effort within appropriate legal guidelines.

The Superintendent shall provide in-service training to help staff members identify gangs and gang symbols, recognize early manifestations of disruptive activities, and respond appropriately. Staff members shall be informed about conflict management techniques and alerted to intervention measures and community resources that may help students.

Symbols: The School Committee finds that gang symbols are inherently disruptive to the educational process, and therefore prohibits the presence of any insignia, apparel, jewelry, accessory, notebook or other school supply, or manner of grooming which by virtue of its color, arrangement, trademark, or any other attribute denotes membership in gangs. The School Committee further prohibits any demonstration of gang membership through the use of hand gestures, graffiti, or printed materials. This policy shall be

applied by the Principal or his/her designee as the need for it arises at individual school sites. A student may be suspended or expelled for failure to comply with the provisions of this policy.

Prevention Education: The School Committee realizes that students may become involved in gangs without understanding the consequences of such membership. Early intervention is a key component of efforts to break the cycle of such memberships. Therefore, gang violence prevention information shall be made available in the elementary, middle, and high schools as appropriate.

Secret Societies: Fraternities, sororities and/or secret societies shall not receive District or building recognition in any manner. A student may be suspended or expelled for failure to comply with the provisions of this policy.

Grievance Procedure for Students, Parents and Guardians

The aggrieved party should attempt remediation through a conference with the teacher involved. The aggrieved party, if dissatisfied, may present his/her grievances to the Principle who, after hearing the facts and after consultation with the teacher, takes any action he/she thinks is indicated. If the aggrieved party feels that the solution or decision is not agreeable to him/her, he/she may appeal to the Superintendent. The Superintendent, after consultation with the Principal, takes action.

Interrogations by Police

The schools have legal custody of students during the school day and during hours of approved extracurricular activities. It is the responsibility of the school administration to make an effort to protect each student's rights with respect to interrogations by law enforcement officials.

Therefore, when law enforcement officials find it necessary to question students during the school day or periods of extracurricular activities, the school Principal or his/her designee will be present when possible. An effort will be made to contact the student's parent or guardian so that the responsible individual may be notified of the situation.

If custody and/or arrest are involved, the Principal will request that all procedural safeguards, as prescribed by law, be observed by the law enforcement officials.

Pregnant Students

Pregnant students are permitted to remain in regular classes and participate in extracurricular activities with non-pregnant students throughout their pregnancy, and after giving birth are permitted to return to the same academic and extracurricular program as before the leave.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:84

Searches

The Watertown Public Schools recognizes and respects the privacy of its students in their persons and belongings. However, the school administration and staff must maintain a proper, safe, and secure educational environment where learning can take place. Possession of contraband in violation of the law or of school rules is prohibited on school premises. Such items include, but are not limited to, cigarettes, drugs (without proper prescription), weapons, and other items that pose a danger to the safety of the school community or which would disturb or disrupt the process of education.

In certain circumstances it may be necessary to search an individual student or group of students and to seize contraband items. Where the school principal, or his/her designee, has reasonable grounds for suspecting that a student has violated, or is violating, either the law or rules of the school, the suspected student or students may be searched for evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or rules of the school.

Searches of students, book bags, purses, clothing, and other containers, and of student lockers may be conducted when appropriate.

When the Principal, or his/her designee, has reason to believe that contraband items are present on school premises, locker inspections may take place without notice to students. A student's right to possession of a locker, or lockers, is nonexclusive as against the school and its officials. Students are hereby put on notice that they should not keep personal items in their lockers if they do not wish them to be discovered by school personnel during a locker inspection conducted in accordance with the provisions of this section. Contraband items discovered during any such inspection will be seized.

In addition, at various times throughout the school year, school administrators may use dogs trained to detect contraband to conduct random searches for contraband in student lockers, other common areas of school buildings, and vehicles parked on school grounds. A qualified and authorized trainer and a school administrator or designee shall accompany each dog. If a dog indicates that contraband is present on school property, school administrators can conduct a further search.

Any contraband items discovered and seized during an inspection or search conducted under the provisions of this section may be turned over to the police when the possession of such items may constitute a violation of any state or federal law. In all cases where illicit drugs or weapons are discovered as a result of inspections or searches conducted in accordance with the provisions of this section, the police will be contacted and any and all items will be turned over to the police department.

If there are any questions regarding whether a particular item may be brought to school, please ask the Principal.

Sexual Harassment

The Watertown School Committee affirms the policy of maintaining within the Watertown Public Schools a learning and working environment free of sexual harassment and intimidation. If you feel that you have been physically or verbally harassed you have a right to take action. There are established procedures for making complaints that are published in two booklets (one for faculty/staff, and one for students). These booklets, with details about what to do, are available in the Main Office and in the Guidance Office. You do not have to remain silent. Your voice is important in stopping, and preventing, harassment of any kind.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

The School Committee has the responsibility to afford students the rights that are theirs by virtue of guarantees offered under the federal and state constitutions and statutes. In connection with rights, there are responsibilities that must be assumed by students.

Among these rights and responsibilities are the following:

1. Civil rights--including the rights to equal educational opportunity and freedom from discrimination; the responsibility not to discriminate against others.
2. The right to attend free public schools; the responsibility to attend school regularly and to observe school rules essential for permitting others to learn at school.
3. The right to due process of law with respect to suspension, expulsion, and decisions the student believes injure his/her rights.
4. The right to free inquiry and expression; responsibility to observe reasonable rules regarding these rights.
5. The right to privacy, which includes privacy with respect to the student's school records.

It is the School Committee's belief that as part of the educational process students should be made aware of their legal rights, and of the legal authority of the School Committee to make and delegate authority to its staff to make rules regarding the orderly operation of the schools.

Students have the right to know the standards of behavior that are expected of them, and the consequences of misbehavior.

The rights and responsibilities of students, including standards of conduct, will be made available to students and their parents through handbooks distributed annually.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37H; 71:82 through 71:86

Suspension and Exclusion

Suspension is defined as the act of the chief administrator of a school in removing a student from school for a period not to exceed ten consecutive school days. Exclusion is defined as an act of the School Committee in removing a student from school permanently or for any period of time exceeding ten consecutive school days.

1. The Superintendent, a Principal/Headmaster, or an Assistant Principal/Associate Headmaster may suspend a student for a period not to exceed ten consecutive school days for disobedience and/or misconduct as related to Policy 711, Paragraph 3 of the Official Policy Manual and the detailed rules supporting these paragraphs as promulgated in the current student manual.

Prior to suspension, a student must be given oral or written notice of the charge(s) against him or her, an explanation of the basis for the accusation(s) and an opportunity to present his or her version of the facts.

A student may be suspended prior to notice and hearing if he or she poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process if not removed immediately. In these cases, notice of suspension proceedings must be given within twenty-four hours of the decision to suspend and the hearing must be held within seventy-two hours of removal.

In a hearing on suspension, the Principal/Headmaster (Superintendent, Assistant Principal/Associate Headmaster) is not required to give the student opportunity to secure counsel, to confront and cross-examine supporting witnesses of the charge(s), or to call his or her own supporting witnesses.

Suspension may be used as a preliminary step to exclusion from school.

Whenever possible, the student's parent or guardian will be informed of the suspension prior to the student's departure from school. Within twenty-four hours after the suspension, the student's parent or guardian will be sent a letter by certified mail informing them of the reasons for and the length of the suspension.

2. With the exception of G.L. Ch. 71 §37H and §37H1/2 the School Committee may exclude a student from school permanently or for any period of time exceeding ten consecutive school days for very serious disobedience and/or very serious misconduct as related to policy 711, Paragraph 3 and other appropriate paragraphs in the 500, 600, and 700 sections of the Official Policy Manual and the detailed rules supporting these paragraphs as promulgated in the current student manual.

Prior to a vote on exclusion, the student and his or her parent/guardian will be informed in writing of the charge(s) and the basis for the charge(s) and will be advised of their right to a hearing before the School Committee.

On the request of the student and/or the parent or guardian, the School Committee will hold a hearing on the charge(s) prior to a vote on exclusion.

The hearing will be held in Executive Session. The student has the right to secure counsel and have counsel represent him or her at the hearing. The student has the right to confront and to cross-examine witnesses supporting the charge(s) and to call his or her own supporting witnesses.

To vote to exclude a student from school, a majority of the members present must concur providing a quorum has been established. Votes and records of Executive Sessions remain secret according to the provisions of the law.

3. In accordance with Ch. 71, Section §37H, of the General Laws, a Principal/Headmaster may exclude or suspend a student at his/her judgment for the violations of good conduct listed. The student excluded or suspended under this provision may appeal to the Superintendent in accordance with subsection (d) of Ch. 71, Section §37H.

4. In accordance with Ch. 71, Section §37H 1/2, of the General Laws, a Principal/Headmaster may exclude or suspend a student upon the issuance of a complaint charging a student with a felony. The suspension/ expulsion may be appealed to the Superintendent. The Superintendent's decision shall be the final decision on the matter.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 39:23A

APPENDIX 2 – Federal and State Regulations

Americans with Disabilities Act

The Watertown Public Schools, in compliance with the American Disabilities Act, prohibits the discriminatory assignment of students with disabilities to segregated classes or facilities based solely on the student's disability. Students with disabilities may be assigned to separate facilities or courses when such a placement is necessary to provide equal educational opportunity.

An Act Relative to Bullying in the Schools, M.G.L. c 71, § 370

The law requires each Plan to include a statement prohibiting bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation.
All acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

- (i) on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, and
- (ii) at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited.

See section titled "Anti-Bullying Procedures" in your handbook for more information.

Education Reform Act of 1993, M.G.L. c.71, § 37H

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

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

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

Under appropriate circumstances, the principal, in his/her discretion, may consider the readmission of a student expelled from school pursuant to M.G.L. c.71, § 37H. The principal shall notify the student, in writing, at the time of his/her expulsion, of the terms and conditions which the student shall fulfill in order to petition the principal for readmission, as well as the process and timelines for such a petition. The principal's decision on an expelled student's petition shall be final and is not subject to appeal.

Education Reform Act of 1993, M.G.L. c.71, § 37H1/2

M.G.L. c.71, § 37H1/2 allows the principal of a school to suspend a student who has been charged with a felony or is the subject of a felony delinquency complaint, if the principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The statute also allows the principal to expel a student who has been convicted, adjudicated, or admitted guilt with respect to a felony or felony delinquency, if the principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

Students with Disabilities

The Code of Conduct applies to all students. There is a specific procedure, however, for disciplining students with disabilities. Your child's school can give you a copy of this document upon request. This procedure is also included in the "Notice of Procedural Safeguards" brochure that you receive with your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

In general, if a student with disabilities has violated the school's disciplinary code, the school may suspend or remove the student from his or her current educational placement for no more than 10 consecutive school days in any school year.

If a student with disabilities possesses, uses, sells or solicits illegal drugs on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event; carries a weapon to school or a school function; or inflicts serious bodily injury upon another person at school or a school-sponsored event, the school district may place the student in an interim alternative educational setting for up to 45 school days. If a student has been placed in an interim alternative education setting as a result of a disciplinary action, the student may remain in the interim setting for a period not to exceed 45 school days. Thereafter, the student will return to the previously agreed-upon educational placement unless the parent or the district has initiated a hearing on the

disciplinary action that the district took and a hearing officer orders another placement, or the parent and the school agree to another placement.

Any time the school wishes to remove a student with disabilities from his or her current educational placement for more than 10 consecutive school days in any school year, or if a student is removed for disciplinary reasons for more than a total of 10 days in any school year when a pattern of removal is occurring, this is a “change of placement.” A change of placement invokes certain procedural protections under federal special education law. These include the following:

- (a) Prior to any removal that constitutes a change in placement, the school district must convene a Team meeting to develop a plan for conducting a functional behavioral assessment that will be used as the basis for developing specific strategies to address the student’s problematic behavior. If a behavioral intervention plan has been previously developed, the Team will review it to make sure it is being implemented appropriately, and will modify it if necessary.
- (b) Prior to any disciplinary removal that constitutes a change in placement, the school district must inform the parent that the law requires that the school district consider whether or not the behavior that forms the basis for the student’s disciplinary removal is related to his or her disability. This is called a “manifestation determination.” Remember that you, as the parent, always have the right to participate as a member of the group of people making this determination.

Consideration of whether the behavior is a manifestation of the student’s disability: The law provides that the school district and the parent, along with relevant Team members, must consider all evaluation information, observational information, the student’s IEP and placement; and must determine whether the student’s behavior that prompted disciplinary removal was a manifestation of his or her disability. The behavior is considered a manifestation of the student’s disability if the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to the student’s disability, or was a direct result of the school district’s failure to implement his or her IEP.

If the manifestation determination decision is that the disciplinary behavior was related to the student’s disability then the student may not be removed from the current educational placement (except in the case of weapon or drug possession or use, or serious bodily injury to another) until the IEP Team develops a new IEP and decides upon a new placement and the parent consents to that new IEP and placement, or a Hearing Officer orders a removal from the current educational placement to another placement.

If the manifestation determination is that the behavior was not related to the student’s disability, then the school may suspend or otherwise discipline the student according to the school’s code of student conduct, except that for any period of removal exceeding 10 days the school district must provide the student with educational services that allow the student to continue to make educational progress. The school district must determine the educational services necessary and the manner and location for providing those services.

In the case of a disagreement with the Team’s determination: If the parent disagrees with the Team’s decision on the “manifestation determination” or with the decision relating to placement of the student in an interim alternative education setting or any other disciplinary action, the parent has the right to appeal the Team’s decision by requesting an expedited due process hearing from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA).

Hazing Law and Policy

Hazing as defined in Chapter 269 under the Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is prohibited in the Watertown Public Schools.

M.G.L. Chapter 269; Section 17 Hazing; organizing or participating; hazing defined

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

The term "hazing" as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug, or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation. (Added by St. 1985, c.536)

M.G.L. Chapter 269: Section 18 Failure to report hazing

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

M.G.L. Chapter 269: Section 19 Copy of secs. 17-19; issuance to students and student groups, teams and organizations; report

Statement of Compliance and Discipline Policy Required

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

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

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

Any person(s) found engaged in hazing may be subject to suspension or exclusion dependent upon the seriousness of the hazing offense.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act

Every child without a permanent home has a right to an education.

If you live in a shelter, motel, vehicle, or campground; on the street; in an abandoned building, trailer, or other inadequate accommodations; or with friends or relatives because you cannot find or afford housing, then your child has certain rights and protections under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act.

Your child has the right to:

- Access the same free and appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to all other children.
- Remain in the school he/she attended before becoming homeless.
- Receive transportation to the school they attend before your family became homeless or the school they last attended if you or a guardian requests such transportation.
- Enroll in school without giving a permanent address. Schools cannot require proof of residency that might prevent or delay school enrollment.
- Enroll and attend classes while the school arranges for the transfer of school and immunization records or any other documents for enrollment.
- Enroll and attend classes in the school of your choice even while the school and you seek to resolve disputes over enrolling your child.
- Receive the same special programs and services, if needed, as provided to all other children.

If you need assistance in enrolling your child into school contact: Director of Student Services

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) is a federal education law that aims to:

- Raise accountability by measuring each schools progress every year (Adequate Yearly Progress – AYP);
- Set goals to improve student performance in math, reading/English Language Arts (ELA) and science;
- Improve teacher quality by providing professional development funds;
- Provide parents/guardians with information about the professional qualifications of their child's classroom teachers. Parents/Guardians can request this information from the school principal, and
- Make schools safer and drug-free.

Nondiscrimination

Public schools have the responsibility to overcome, insofar as possible, any barriers that prevent children from achieving their potential. If someone has a complaint or feels that they have been discriminated against because of their race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability, their complaint should be registered with the Title IX non-discrimination compliance officer(s). This commitment to the community is affirmed in the following statements of School Committee intent to:

- 1.0 Promote the rights and responsibilities of all individuals as set forth in the State and Federal Constitutions, pertinent legislation, and applicable judicial interpretations.
- 2.0 Encourage positive experiences in human values for children and youth and adults, all of whom have differing personal and family characteristics and who come from various socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic groups.
- 3.0 Support a more integrated society and to enlist the support of individuals as well as groups and agencies, both private and governmental, in such an effort.
- 4.0 Use all appropriate communication and action techniques to air and reduce the grievances of individuals and groups.
- 5.0 Carefully consider, in all the decisions made within the school system, the potential benefits or adverse consequences that those decisions might have on the human relations aspects of all segments of society.
- 6.0 Ensure continual process of reviewing policies and practices of this school system in order to achieve to the greatest extent possible the objectives of this statement.

The Watertown School Committee's policy of nondiscrimination and all other pertinent Federal and State laws will extend to students, staff, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business; and will apply to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.

Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap

- 1.0 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and its accompanying regulations and amendments apply to all school systems receiving federal funds. Under this act the Watertown Public Schools:
 - 1.1 May not discriminate against qualified handicapped persons in any aspect of school employment solely on the basis of handicap.
 - 1.2 Shall make facilities, programs, and activities accessible, usable, and open to qualified handicapped persons.
 - 1.3 Shall provide appropriate education at elementary and secondary levels, including non-academic and extracurricular services and activities, to qualified handicapped persons.
 - 1.4 May not exclude any qualified handicapped person solely on the basis of handicap from participation in any preschool education or day care program or activity or any adult education or vocational program or activity.
 - 1.5 Shall provide each qualified handicapped person with the same health, welfare, and other social services that are provided others.

Accordingly, employees of this school system will comply with the above requirements of the law and policy statements of this Committee and all other pertinent Federal and State laws to ensure non-discrimination on the basis of handicap.

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

The Watertown Public Schools in keeping with the regulations set out in the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment requires notification to parents and/or students under the following conditions:

- Instructional materials are made available for inspection by parents if those materials will be used in connection with a federal U.S. Department of Education or other publicly funded survey, analysis, or evaluation in which their children participate; and
- That schools obtain prior written parental consent before minor students are required to participate in any U.S. Department of Education or other publicly funded survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning:
 1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent;
 2. Mental and psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
 3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
 4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
 5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
 6. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, or ministers;
 7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parent; or
 8. Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).
- The right of parents to inspect, upon request, any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum for students. This term does not include academic tests or academic assessments.
- The right to prior knowledge and consent if the school district administers physical examinations or screenings. This does not include hearing, vision, or scoliosis screening.
- The right to prior knowledge of the school district's collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or selling, or otherwise providing the information to others for that purpose.
- The right to inspect, upon request, any instrument used in the collection of personal information.

The Watertown Public Schools will notify parents, guardians, and/or eligible students the specific or approximate dates during the school year if and when these activities are scheduled. Such notification will be provided through specific notices, newsletters, and/or the Watertown Public Schools website.

This federal requirement is not intended to preempt applicable provisions of State law that require parental notification. The law does not apply to any physical examination or screening that is permitted or required by State law, including such examinations or screenings without parental notification. The requirements of PPRA do not apply to a survey administered to a student in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The requirements under PPRA do not supersede any of the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Restraint of Students

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

Methods and Conditions for Implementation

School staff may use physical restraint only:

1. When non-physical interventions would be ineffective and the student’s behavior poses a threat of imminent, serious harm to self and/or others.
2. *Pursuant to a student’s IEP or other written plan developed in accordance with the State and Federal law and approved by the school and parent or guardian.*

Physical restraint may not be used as a means of punishment or as a response to property destruction, disruption of the school order, a student’s refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive, or verbal threats that do not constitute a threat of imminent, serious physical harm. Chemical and mechanical restraints may only be used if explicitly authorized by a physician and approved by a parent or guardian. Seclusion is prohibited.

The Regulations do not prevent the teacher, employee, or agent of the District from using reasonable force to protect the student, other persons, or themselves from assault or imminent serious harm, or from restraining students as otherwise provided in the Regulations.

Reporting Requirements and Follow-Up

In instances when a physical restraint (1) lasts more than five minutes or (2) results in an injury to a student or staff member, the school staff must report the physical restraint to the principal or a designee. The principal/designee must maintain an ongoing record of all reported instances, which will be made available in accordance with State and Federal law and regulations. The principal/designee must also verbally inform the student’s parent or guardian of the restraint as soon as possible, and by written report postmarked no later than three school working days following the use of the restraint. The written restraint report must be provided to the parent or guardian in the language in which report cards and other necessary school-related information are customarily provided.

In the event that a physical restraint (1) lasts longer than 20 minutes, or (2) results in serious injury to the student or staff member, the school must, within five school working days of the reported restraint, provide a copy of the written report to the DOE along with a copy of the school’s record of physical restraint covering the thirty-day period prior to the date of the restraint.

For students who require the frequent use of restraint because they present a high risk of dangerous behaviors, school staff may seek and obtain the parent/guardian consent to waive reporting requirements for the restraints administered to an individual student that do not result in serious injury to the student or staff member or constitute extended restraint (longer than 20 minutes).

Follow-up procedures for restraint include not only reporting requirements set forth above, but also reviewing the incident with the student, staff, and consideration of whether follow-up is appropriate for students who witnessed the incident.

A copy of the Regulations can be obtained at www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr46.html.

Sex Education (MGL Ch. 71 §32A)

Schools are required by law to notify parents/guardians about any classes that will be held on human sexual education or sexual issues. The notice must tell the parent/guardian how he/she can review the content and materials of the classes.

While parents/guardians do not have to give permission for their children to take sex education classes, parents do have the right to exempt their children from such classes. Please read and **return** the sign-off page entitled “Commonwealth of Massachusetts: An Act Relative to Sex Education” to your building principal.

Student Record Regulations and Confidentiality

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s education records. They are:

The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days of the day the district receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask the Watertown Public Schools to amend a record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the district decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the district will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Committee; a person or company with whom the district has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

The parent/guardian has the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the district to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

FERPA requires that the Watertown Public Schools, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, the Watertown Public Schools may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the District to the contrary in accordance with District procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the Watertown Public Schools to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications.

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's, guardian's, and/or student's prior consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two Federal laws require school districts receiving Federal funds to provide military recruiters, upon request, with three directory information categories - names, addresses, and telephone listings - unless parents/guardians, and/or students have advised the school district that they do not want their information disclosed without their prior written consent.

If you do not want the Watertown Public Schools to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the school district in writing by September 15th of each school year. The Watertown Public Schools has designated the following information as directory information:

1. Student's name
2. Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
3. Address
4. Telephone listing
5. Weight and height of members of athletic teams
6. Electronic mail address
7. Photograph
8. Degrees, honors, and awards received
9. Date and place of birth
10. Major field of study
11. Dates of attendance
12. Grade level and the most recent school attended

Massachusetts Student Records Regulation

State regulations governing student records are briefly summarized below. These regulations are available at each public school and the superintendent's office for review. Parents may access the student records regulations through the Massachusetts Department of Education website.

A student's record consists of his or her school transcript and temporary record. The temporary record includes all information, which is organized on the basis of the student's name, is relevant to the educational needs of the student and is kept by the school. A student's parent or guardian or an eligible student (who is 14 years old or has entered the ninth grade), has the right to inspect all portions of the student's record upon written request to the principal. The record must be made available to the parent, guardian, or eligible student not later than two consecutive workdays after the request is made, unless the parent or guardian, or eligible student consents to a delay. The parent/guardian, or eligible student may request copies of any part of the record. A fee may be charged for the cost of copying.

Confidentiality of Records

No individual or organization other than the parent/guardian, eligible student, or school personnel working directly with the student is allowed access to a student's record without the specific written consent of the parent/guardian, or eligible student except in limited instances as specified by the State or Federal regulations governing student records.

Amendment or Deletion of Records

The parent, guardian, or eligible student has the right to add relevant comments, information, or other written material to the student's record. In addition, the parent, guardian, or eligible student has the right to request that information contained in the record be amended or deleted except for information inserted in the record by a special needs or Section 504 evaluation. The parent/guardian, or eligible student has a right to a conference with the school principal for the purpose of information contained in the school record. Within a week after such conference, the principal must render a decision in writing on the objection. If the parent/guardian or eligible student is not satisfied with the principal's decision, he or she may appeal such decision to the Superintendent of Schools and ultimately, to the School Committee.

Destruction of Records

A student's temporary record shall be destroyed no later than seven years after the student leaves the school system. The school system may offer the student, parent, or guardian the temporary record upon graduation or leaving school as long as the student, parent, or guardian acknowledges and accepts the temporary record by written consent. A student's transcript may be destroyed no sooner than 60 years after the student leaves the school system. A school principal or his or her designee may destroy misleading, outdated or irrelevant information contained in the temporary record during the time the student is enrolled in the school district, provided the parent/guardian, or eligible student has been notified in writing and given the opportunity to inspect and copy any of the information prior to destruction.

All parents/guardians of children in the Watertown Schools have the right of inspection of their children's records in accordance with [M.G.L Chapter 71, Section 34D](#), and [M.G.L Chapter 71, Section 34E](#). Also, a student, eighteen years of age or older, has the right of access to all records relative to him/her in accordance with M.G.L. Ch.71, Sections 34D, 34E.

M.G.L. Chapter 71, specifies detailed procedures that govern access to student records by parents who do not have physical custody of their children. For more information, please contact the principal.

Courtesy and the need for maintenance of order suggest that anyone interested in exercising the above right make his/her request in writing for an appointment with the principal so that possible questions may be answered.

Non-custodial Parent Access to Student Records

The Massachusetts Board of Education has amended Student Records Regulations concerning access to student records by non-custodial parents. As set forth in the amended regulation, 603 CMR 23.07(5), non-custodial parents are eligible to obtain access to their children's student records *unless* the school or district has been given documentation that:

1. The non-custodial parent has been denied legal custody based on a threat to the safety of the student or to the custodial parent;
2. The non-custodial parent has been denied visitation or has been ordered to supervised visitation;
3. The non-custodial parent's access to the student or to the custodial parent has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the order or any subsequent court order specifically allows access to student record information.

If you have any questions or need further information regarding any of the above named District Policies, Federal Laws, or State Laws, please contact the Watertown Public Schools Central Office. Watertown Public Schools, 30 Common Street. Watertown, MA 02472. 617-926-7700 (phone)

APPENDIX 3 – Summaries & Signature Page

The Watertown Public Schools is required to collect signatures to ascertain that parents/guardians and students have read and understand the following:

1. Content of the Student Handbook (including Media Release, Directory Information, Transfer of Records, and Student Publication on the Internet)
2. Information concerning an Act Relative to Sex Education (M.G.L. Ch. 71 §32A)

To assist you, please refer to the following summaries.

Complete and return the signature page to your child's school no later than one week after the receipt of the Student Handbook.

Pictures, Names, or Quotes in the Media

Sometimes media (such as newspaper, television, radio, or cable) reporters or photographers would like to be involved in activities in the schools. Having a picture in the paper for participating in a program is usually acceptable to parents, but occasionally, for legal reasons, it is not prudent. **If you do not wish your child's name to be used or picture to be taken for the media, you must notify the school in writing on the back of the Signature Page.**

Directory Information Notice

The Watertown Public Schools has designated certain information contained in the education records of its students as directory information for purposes of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Student Record Regulations, 603 CMR 23.00 et seq.

The following information regarding students is considered directory information: name; address; telephone number; date and place of birth; major field of study; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; weight and height of members of athletic teams; dates of attendance; degrees, honors, and awards received; and post high school plans of the student.

Directory information may be disclosed for any purpose in the School System's discretion, without the consent of a parent/guardian of a student or an eligible student. Parents/guardians and eligible students have the right, however, to refuse to permit the designation of any or all of the above information as directory information. In that case, this information will not be disclosed except with the consent of a parent/guardian or eligible student, or otherwise allowed by FERPA and 603 CMR 23.00 et seq.

Any parent/guardian or student refusing to have any or all of the designated directory information disclosed must file a written notification to this effect with the school's principal no later than one week following the receipt of this handbook. You can write this notification on the bottom of the Signature Page.

In the event a refusal is not filed, it is assumed that neither parent/guardian nor eligible student objects to the release of directory information.

Notice on Transfer of Records to Another School

Pursuant to 603 CMR 23.07 (g), notice is hereby given that the Watertown Public Schools forwards the complete school record of a transferring student to schools in which the student seeks or intends to enroll. Such transfer of records takes place without consent of the parent/guardian or eligible student.

An Act Relative to Sex Education (M.G.L. Ch. 71 §32A)

Parent Notification

The Health Education and Science programs of Watertown Public Schools contain comprehensive PreK-12 curricula. The goal of the program is to help students acquire appropriate content background to develop the life skills, including problem solving, communication, and decision-making abilities, to prepare for a healthy and productive future.

The Health Education and Science programs have been designed by our professional staff, using their own research based programs as well as programs developed by the Massachusetts Department of Education, the American Heart Association, the American Cancer Society, the American Red Cross, Operation Lifesaver, and other health and science education resources.

During health and science classes, student questions will be answered factually and in an age-appropriate manner. Each student's privacy will be respected, and no one will be required to answer questions or reveal personal information. Material is presented factually.

Under Massachusetts law and the Watertown School Committee policy, you may exempt your child from any portion of a curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues. If you would like to exempt your child from a particular class, please send the request in writing.

The Director of Health Education or the Principal are available to meet with you to review curriculum and materials. To review these materials, please call to make an appointment.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that your child has a positive and educationally enriching experience this school year. If you have any questions regarding the exemption process for the Health and Science Programs, please call your school's principal.

To exempt your child from any portion of the health and/or science curriculum that primarily involves sexual education or human sexuality issues, you must notify the school in writing on the back of the Signature Page.

An Act Relative to Bullying in the Schools, M.G.L. c 71, § 370

Please read section "Anti-Bullying Procedures" in this handbook.

Signature Page

*PLEASE CUT OUT AND DELIVER TO SCHOOL OR HOMEROOM TEACHER
Complete and sign both sides of this page.*

Student Information:

Last Name
First Name
Home Address
Date of Birth
Age

School/Grade

Parent Information

Parent/Guardian Name
Home Phone & Cell
E-Mail Address

Student Handbook

I acknowledge that I have read and we have discussed the preceding rules and regulations of this SCHOOL HANDBOOK.

An Act Relative to Sex Education

I acknowledge that I have read the information concerning parent notification of any classes that will be held on human sexual education or sexual issues as related to Sex Education M.G.L. Ch. 71 §32A .

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian

Signature

Date

If you do not want to have any or all of the designated directory information disclosed, please write a note here. Let us know what information you would NOT like disclosed.

An Act Relative to Bullying

I acknowledge that I have read the information concerning parent notification on bullying as related to An Act Relative to Bullying in the Schools, M.G.L., c 71 § 370.

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Permission for Student Publication on the Internet

During the school year, students attending Watertown Public Schools will be creating many different projects, some of which will appear on district, school, and classroom websites. These projects will pertain directly to the curriculum. These give students the added incentive to produce excellent work that is published for others to see. These projects may include: photographs/video of the student, the student's voice, student work such as illustrations and writing. We will only include a student's first name with his or her published work.

If you have any objections to your child's work being published on the Internet, check the options for which you do not give permission, sign, and return this page to your child's teacher.

If you have no objections, leave the boxes empty and sign this page and return it to your child's teacher.

I **do not** give permission for the following to be published on the Internet:

- Student's Photograph/Video
- Student's Voice
- Student's Work

By signing below, I verify that I understand the above release about publishing my child's curriculum project work on the District's, School's, or Classroom's websites and that I have indicated my preferences. By checking a box, I am withholding permission to publish my child's photograph/videos, voice, or work on the District's, School's, or Classroom's websites. If my preference changes during the school year, I will contact the principal.

Student's Name _____

Student's Grade & Classroom Teacher/English Teacher _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Parent/Guardian Name _____

Date _____

Please let us know if you have access to the Internet at home. This will help us in our plans to have Internet available before and after school.

We have access to the Internet at home: YES NO

APPENDIX 4 – Gender Identity

The Watertown Public Schools strives to provide a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment in which all students can thrive and succeed in its schools. The Watertown Public Schools prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation and ensures that all students have equal rights of access and equal enjoyment of the opportunities, advantages, privileges, and courses of study.

From the Massachusetts Legislature:

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same as follows:

Section 1. Section 7 of Chapter 4 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2010 Official Edition, is hereby amended by adding the following clause:

Fifty-ninth, “Gender identity” shall mean a person’s gender-related identity, appearance or behavior, whether or not that gender-related identity, appearance or behavior is different from that traditionally associated with the person’s physiology or assigned sex at birth. Gender-related identity may be shown by providing evidence including, but not limited to, medical history, care or treatment of the gender-related identity, consistent and uniform assertion of the gender-related identity or any other evidence that the gender-related identity is sincerely held as part of a person’s core identity; provided, however, that gender-related identity shall not be asserted for any improper purpose.

APPENDIX 5 – Harassment and Discrimination

Harassment & Discrimination

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

Harassment means conduct of a verbal or physical nature that is designed to embarrass, distress, agitate, disturb, or trouble any person when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's work or education or of an individual's participation in school programs or activities.
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for decisions affecting the individual.
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or creating an intimidating or hostile learning or working environment.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

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

General Harassment (sexual harassment) includes unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors and other physical or verbal conduct of a sexual nature as listed below:

1. Submission is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's participation in school programs or activities.
2. Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for work or educational decisions affecting such individual.
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or educational performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working/educational environment.

Each administrator shall be responsible within their school or office, for promoting an understanding of harassment and assuring compliance with state and federal laws, and with School Committee policy and regulations governing harassment. Violations will be cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination or expulsion.

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

Filing a Discrimination Complaint

Any employee or other person who believes that she/he has been the victim of discrimination because of her/his race, color, national origin, genetics information, active military status, age, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, religion, age or other legally protected status, should promptly register a complaint, giving as much specific information as possible, to employee's Principal, direct supervisor or the Director of Human Resources.

A person with a complaint involving discrimination may either use this grievance procedure or file the complaint with the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination or the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission at the addresses provided below.

Contents of Complaints and Time Lines for Filing:

Complaints under this grievance procedure should be filed within 30 school days of the alleged discrimination. The complaint should be in writing. The grievance representative, building principal, or any person of the grievant's choosing may assist the grievant with filing the complaint. The written complaint must include the following information:

- A. The name and school of the grievant.
- B. The name (and address and telephone number if not an employee) of the grievant's representative, if any.
- C. The name of the person(s) alleged to have caused the discrimination or harassment (respondent).
- D. A description, in as much detail as possible, of the alleged discrimination or harassment.
- E. The date(s) of the alleged discrimination or harassment.
- F. The name of all persons who have knowledge about the alleged discrimination or harassment (witnesses), as can be reasonably determined.
- G. A description, in as much detail as possible, of how the grievant wants the complaint to be resolved.

Investigation and Resolution of the Complaint

The Principal, Human Resources Director or their designee, will interview witnesses whom s/he deems necessary and appropriate to determine the facts relevant to the complaint, and will gather other relevant information. Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that such interviews and gathering of information will be completed in a timely manner.

As soon as possible upon receiving the complaint, the Principal or Human Resources Director will meet the grievant and/or her/his representative to review the information gathered and, if applicable, to propose a resolution designed to stop the discrimination or harassment and to correct its effect. As soon as possible after the meeting with the grievant and/or representative, the Principal or Human Resources Director will provide written disposition of the complaint to the grievant and to the respondent(s).

All the time lines specified above will be implemented as specified, unless the nature of the investigation or exigent circumstances prevent such implementation, in which case, the matter will be completed as quickly as practicable. In addition, it should be noted that in the event the respondent is subject to a collective bargaining agreement which sets forth a specific time line for notice and/or investigation of a complaint, such time lines will be followed.

Confidentiality of grievant, respondents and witnesses will be maintained, to the extent consistent with the Watertown Public School's obligations relating to investigation of complaints and the due process rights of individuals affected.

Retaliation against someone because he/she has filed a complaint under this grievance procedure or has cooperated in an investigation is strictly prohibited. Acts of retaliation may result in disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or dismissal.

If the grievant is not satisfied with a disposition the grievant may appeal the disposition to the Superintendent, as follows:

Dr. Jean M. Fitzgerald, Superintendent
Watertown School Administration Building
30 Common Street
Watertown, Massachusetts 02472
Telephone: (617) 926-7700

The superintendent will issue a written response on the appeal to the grievant typically within ten (10) school days of receiving the appeal.

Generally, a grievant may file a complaint with:

The U.S. Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights
33 Arch Street, Suite 900
Boston, Massachusetts 02110-1491
Telephone: (617) 289-0111
TDD: (877) 521-2172

In general, complaints to the Office for Civil rights must be filed within 180 calendar days of the alleged discrimination or harassment. Complaints should be made in writing, if possible. All complaints will be taken seriously and will be investigated thoroughly. If, after investigation, a complaint is determined to be warranted then appropriate action will be taken, up to and including disciplinary action against the person or persons who behave in a discriminatory fashion.

Employees may also file a complaint by contacting:

Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD)
One Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 727-3990

United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
John F. Kennedy Federal Building
475 Government Center
Boston, MA 02203
Phone: (617) 565-3200
TDD: (617) 565-3204