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Webinar ID: 847 4897 5653

The following items will be discussed at the meeting of the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues to be held virtually on Monday, March 22, 2021 at 4:30 p.m. in Room 410 of the Durkin Administration Building:

gb #0-28 - Mayor Petty/Miss Biancheria/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/Ms. McCullough/Mr. Monfredo/Ms. Novick (January 8, 2020)

To create an Ad Hoc Subcommittee of the Worcester School Committee to consider changes to the school committee rules, meetings and agendas to make the work of the School Committee and our meetings more effective and better aligned with the focus on the strategic direction of the district. These changes should reflect best practices and address the recommendations included in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's report from 2017.

(Consider gb0-59 and gb0-210 together.)

gb #0-59 - Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley (January 29, 2020)

To rewrite the Worcester Public Schools' Student Dress Code.

gb #0-223 - Administration (July 6, 2020)

To consider amendments to the current Student Dress Code Policy to be included in the Student Handbook and the Policy Manual.

gb #0-230 - Administration (July 7, 2020)

To consider approval of the proposed 2020-21 Student Handbook of the Worcester Public Schools.

gb #0-264 - Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Ms. McCullough (August 17, 2020)

Consider and redraft as necessary the policies and associated sections of the student handbook considered by "Pandemic Policy Specific for Back to School."

gb #0-368 - Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Ms. McCullough (November 23, 2020)

To create Worcester School Committee operational norms.

c&p #1-1 - Clerk (December 28, 2020)

To consider a communication from the EAW to allow members of Burncoat High School's faculty and staff to donate accrued sick time to a colleague.

c&p #1-2 - Clerk (February 17, 2021)

To consider a communication from the EAW to allow members of Gates Lane School's faculty and staff to donate sick days to a colleague.

gb #1-35 - Administration (January 25, 2021)

To consider approval of the proposed 2021-22 Student Handbook of the Worcester Public Schools.

gb #1-50 - Ms. McCullough/Miss Biancheria//Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/
Mr. Monfredo (January 25, 2021)

Request that the Administration review camera use procedures regarding privacy, legal and family contract options.

Committee Members
Laura Clancey, Chair
John F. Monfredo, Vice-Chair
Tracy O'Connell-Novick

Administrative Representative
Jennifer Boulais
Helen A. Friel, Ed.D.

OFFICE OF THE
CLERK OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
20 IRVING STREET
WORCESTER, MA 01609

AGENDA #2

The Standing Committee on GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES will hold a meeting:

on: Monday, March 22, 2021
at: 4:30 p.m.
virtually in: Room 410 of the Durkin Administration Building

ORDER OF BUSINESS

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. ROLL CALL
- III. GENERAL BUSINESS

gb #9-350 - Miss McCullough/Mr. Foley/Mr. Monfredo (October 14, 2019)

Request that the School Committee work with the Clerk of the School Committee to determine 3 or 4 dates in 2020 for policy forums/conversations that will be open to the community.

ros #0-9 - Administration (September 23, 2020)

RENNIE CENTER FOR EDUCATION RESEARCH & POLICY – REPORT ON THE TECHNOLOGY SECTION FROM THE STRATEGIC PLAN

c&p #0-13 - Clerk (August 18, 2020)

To consider a communication from the Racism Free Worcester Public School Group regarding nine areas of concerns.

gb #0-28 - Mayor Petty/Miss Biancheria/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/Ms. McCullough/Mr. Monfredo/Ms. Novick (January 8, 2020)

To create an Ad Hoc Subcommittee of the Worcester School Committee to consider changes to the school committee rules, meetings and agendas to make the work of the School Committee and our meetings more effective and better aligned with the focus on the strategic direction of the district. These changes should reflect best practices and address the recommendations included in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's report from 2017.

gb #0-59 - Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley (January 29, 2020)

To rewrite the Worcester Public Schools' Student Dress Code.

gb #0-109 - Mr. Monfredo (March 16, 2020)

Request that the School Committee submit to the Clerk any proposed changes to the Rules of the School Committee.

gb #0-210 - Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/Ms. McCullough (June 10, 2020)

To conduct an equity audit of the Worcester Public Schools' policies and student handbook.

gb #0-213 - Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/Ms. McCullough (June 10, 2020)

To review for possible implementation the Massachusetts Attorney General's Model Memorandum of Understanding for School Resource Officers.

gb #0-223 - Administration (July 6, 2020)

To consider amendments to the current Student Dress Code Policy to be included in the Student Handbook and the Policy Manual.

gb #0-230 - Administration (July 7, 2020)

To consider approval of the proposed 2020-21 Student Handbook of the Worcester Public Schools.

gb #0-264 - Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Ms. McCullough (August 17, 2020)

Consider and redraft as necessary the policies and associated sections of the student handbook considered by "Pandemic Policy Specific for Back to School."

gb #0-288.1 - Administration/Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Ms. McCullough (September 22, 2020)

Response of the Administration to the request to outline in writing under what circumstances the Department of Children and Families is called regarding a family or child, particularly with regard to student attendance.

gb #0-293 - Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Ms. McCullough (September 9, 2020)

To ensure Worcester Public Schools remote learning policies ensure all Worcester Public Schools administrators, staff, and students behave as guests in each other's homes.

gb #0-359 - Administration (November 12, 2020)

To consider approval to turn on the self-harm filter that is available with the current software that monitors those students' behaviors.

gb #0-368 - Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Ms. McCullough (November 23, 2020)

To create Worcester School Committee operational norms.

c&p #1-1 - Clerk (December 28, 2020)

To consider a communication from the EAW to allow members of Burncoat High School's faculty and staff to donate accrued sick time to a colleague.

gb #1-35 - Administration (January 25, 2021)

To consider approval of the proposed 2021-22 Student Handbook of the Worcester Public Schools.

c&p #1-2 - Clerk (February 17, 2021)

To consider a communication from the EAW to allow members of Gates Lane School's faculty and staff to donate sick days to a colleague.

gb #1-50 - Ms. McCullough/Miss Biancheria//Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/
Mr. Monfredo (January 25, 2021)

Request that the Administration review camera use procedures regarding privacy, legal and family contract options.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Helen A. Friel, Ed.D.
Clerk of the School Committee

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Monday, March 22, 2021

ITEM: Mayor Petty/Miss Biancheria/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/Ms. McCullough/
Mr. Monfredo (January 8, 2020)

To create an Ad Hoc Subcommittee of the Worcester School Committee to consider changes to the school committee rules, meetings and agendas to make the work of the School Committee and our meetings more effective and better aligned with the focus on the strategic direction of the district. These changes should reflect best practices and address the recommendations included in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's report from 2017.

PRIOR ACTION:

1-16-20 - Mayor Petty requested that the item be referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues in order to have a transparent meeting where Mrs. Clancey can bring in experts from other cities and towns.
Referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues as amended.

BACKUP:

Set up an Ad Hoc Subcommittee.

ITEM: gb #0-59

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Wednesday, May 13, 2020

ITEM: Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley (January 29, 2020)

To rewrite the Worcester Public Schools' Student Dress Code.

PRIOR ACTION:

2-6-20 - Referred to the Student Advisory Council and to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.

BACKUP: (Consider with gb #0-223.)

The Administration recommends that this item be filed.

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Monday, March 22, 2021

ITEM: Administration (July 6, 2020)

To consider amendments to the current Student Dress Code Policy to be included in the Student Handbook and the Policy Manual.

PRIOR ACTION:

7-16-20 - Mayor Petty allowed the following individuals to speak to the item. Antonia McCarthy and Lashonda Beard spoke to the issue of students not being allowed to wear durags in school. They stated that wearing them is part of their culture and should not be associated with gangs. They would like the stigma of durags and gangs changed and people to know that they should not be profiled because of wearing them. Superintendent Binienda stated that the Dress Code Policy was discussed with the Diversity Committee which included the Chief Diversity Officer, Administration and student representatives. She stated that the Student Handbook does have to go out for print and be translated into many languages but is willing to put in an insert, if necessary.

Ms. McCullough asked if a meeting of the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues was held next week to discuss the two items and the Action Sheet was provided at the School Committee meeting on Aug 5th, would the printing still be done in a timely manner?

Dr. O'Neil stated that the RFP will have to go out and the amendments would have to translated into multiple languages and hopefully, the handbook will be ready prior to the opening of school.

(Continued on Page 2)

BACKUP: (Consider with gb #0-59.)

Annex A (2 pages) contains a copy of the proposed Seattle Dress Code Policy.

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

7-16-20 - Ms. Novick stated that the process for approving the Student Handbook should be started in March, not in July. It is the job of the School Committee to approve policies and she wants the public to have input in reviewing the amendments to the Handbook. She stated that the individuals that are most impacted by these policies are families and students and they should be invited to speak to them.

Ms. Novick made the following motion:

Request that (gb #0-230), the Student Handbook, item also be referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.

On a roll call of 7-0, the motion was approved.

Superintendent Binienda stated that she agrees with Ms. Novick on starting the process for approval earlier and suggested starting in February. She would like Antonia McCarthy and Lashonda Beard to be invited to the Standing Committee meeting.

Ms. Novick requested that the student body also be invited to the meeting.

Mayor Petty made the following motion:

Request that the item be referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues with a request to invite the student body to the meeting.

On a roll call of 7-0, the motion was approved.

7-22-20 STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING

Vice-Chairman Monfredo stated that he is in favor of a gender neutral Dress Code Policy for students.


Ms. Novick stated that it was a step forward to include durags, but felt that due to the current climate in which we are living, the proposed policy is a waste of the teacher's time. She referenced the Seattle Public Schools' Dress Code as being one of the most inclusive and free of bias policies. (See Attached). She shared and read the policy which she felt was more appropriate. She said that one of the issues she heard most from students and family members was the amount of time and attention spent on policing students.

Ms. Novick proposed striking everything in the proposed WPS Dress Code Policy beginning with "The District's core values" and replacing it with the following:

(Continued on Page 3)

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

7-22-20 - (continued)

	STUDENT DRESS	Policy No. 3224 July 10, 2019 Page 1 of 3
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It is the policy of the Seattle School Board that the student and their parent/guardian hold the primary responsibility in determining the student's personal attire, hairstyle, jewelry, and personal items (e.g. backpacks, book bags). Schools are responsible for assuring that student attire, hairstyle, jewelry, and personal items do not interfere with the health or safety of any student and do not contribute to a hostile or intimidating environment for any student.

Core Values

In relation to student dress, the district's core values are the following:

Students should be able to dress and style their hair for school in a manner that expresses their individuality without fear of unnecessary discipline or body shaming;

Students have the right to be treated equitably. Dress code enforcement will not create disparities, reinforce or increase marginalization of any group, nor will it be more strictly enforced against students because of racial identity, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, gender nonconformity, sexual orientation, cultural or religious identity, household income, body size/type, or body maturity;

Students and staff are responsible for managing their personal distractions; and

Students should not face unnecessary barriers to school attendance.

Universal Dress Code

Students must wear:

Top (shirt, blouse, sweater, sweatshirt, tank, etc.);

Bottom (pants, shorts, skirt, dress, etc.);

and Footwear.

This policy permits additional student attire requirements when necessary to ensure safety in certain academic settings (e.g. physical activity, science or CTE courses).

Additionally, this policy allows for reasonable variation in required student attire for participation in activities such as swimming or gymnastics.

Students may not wear clothing, jewelry, or personal items that:

Are pornographic, contain threats, or that promote illegal or violent conduct such as the unlawful use of weapons, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or drug paraphernalia;

Demonstrate hate group association/affiliation and/or use hate speech targeting groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious affiliation, or other protected groups;

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

7-22-20 - (continued)

Intentionally show private parts (nipples, genitals, buttocks). Clothing must cover private parts in opaque (not able to be seen-through) material;

Cover the student's face to the extent that the student is not identifiable (except clothing/headgear worn for a religious or medical purpose); or

Demonstrate gang association/affiliation.

Attire worn in observance of a student's religion are not subject to this policy. This policy permits schools with a uniform policy to continue having a uniform policy provided that it is gender neutral and inclusive of attire worn for a religious reason.

Enforcement

Principals are required to ensure that all staff are aware of and understand the guidelines of this policy.

Staff will use reasonable efforts to avoid dress-coding students in front of other students.

Students shall not be disciplined or removed from class as a consequence for wearing attire in violation of this policy unless the attire creates a substantial disruption to the educational environment, poses a hazard to the health or safety of others, or factors into a student behavior rule violation such as malicious harassment or the prohibition on harassment, intimidation, and bullying. Further, no student shall be referred to as "a distraction" due to their appearance or attire. Typical consequences for a violation of this policy include parent/guardian contact or conference and the directive to cover, change, or remove the noncomplying attire. A student may be instructed to leave their classroom briefly to change clothes. The Principal or their designee should notify a student's parent/guardian of the school's response to violations of the student dress policy.

The Superintendent or their designee is authorized to develop procedures in order to implement this policy if needed.

Adopted: July 2019 Revised:

Cross Reference: Policy Nos. 3200; 3207; 3433

Related Superintendent Procedure:

Previous Policies:

Legal References: RCW 28A.320.140 Schools with Special Standards – Dress Codes

Management Resources: Oregon National Organization for Women Model Dress Code

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

7-22-20 - (continued)

Vice-Chairman Monfredo voiced his concern that this was the first time that the Seattle policy was seen and that the special subcommittee had already submitted their proposed policy with which to go forward. He proposed that the current policy be voted on and the Seattle policy be taken to back to the special subcommittee for discussion.

Chairman Clancey stated that she has also researched other school district's policies and was concerned about the section in the WPS policy that states the school principals have the discretion to render judgment, possibly creating reason for conflict and that it may not be consistent across the district. She agreed with Vice-Chairman Monfredo that others should weigh in on this before making a decision.

Chairman Clancey opened the meeting to the public for comment. Betzabe Vasquez, Antonia Amouna-McCarthy, Helen Kennedy, Molly Roach and Diana spoke to their concerns with the current policy which included, but was not limited to, durags, hoods, victim blaming, racial profiling and religious headwear.

Superintendent Binienda made it clear that principals should be in charge of their buildings. The issue with students wearing hoods is the inability for the principals to recognize who is in the building.

Ms. Novick suggested inviting the members of the subcommittee to the next meeting and also invite students, parents and staff to be part of the discussion.

Chairman Clancey made the following motion:

To approve the proposed Dress Code Policy.

On a roll call of 2-1 (nay Ms. Novick) the motion was approved.


Chairman Clancey made the following motion:

To hold the item and bring the proposed Seattle Dress Code Policy and any other policies back to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues for discussion.

On a roll call of 3-0, the motion was approved.

8-5-20 - SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING - The School Committee approved the action of the Standing Committee as amended.

Miss Biancheria amended the Action Sheet by requesting that her name be added as an attendee on the Action Sheet.

 <p>SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS</p>	STUDENT DRESS	Policy No. 3224 July 10, 2019 Page 1 of 3
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It is the policy of the Seattle School Board that the student and their parent/guardian hold the primary responsibility in determining the student's personal attire, hairstyle, jewelry, and personal items (e.g. backpacks, book bags). Schools are responsible for assuring that student attire, hairstyle, jewelry, and personal items do not interfere with the health or safety of any student and do not contribute to a hostile or intimidating environment for any student.

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In relation to student dress, the district's core values are the following:

Students should be able to dress and style their hair for school in a manner that expresses their individuality without fear of unnecessary discipline or body shaming;

Students have the right to be treated equitably. Dress code enforcement will not create disparities, reinforce or increase marginalization of any group, nor will it be more strictly enforced against students because of racial identity, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, gender nonconformity, sexual orientation, cultural or religious identity, household income, body size/type, or body maturity; Students and staff are responsible for managing their personal distractions; and Students should not face unnecessary barriers to school attendance.

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Top (shirt, blouse, sweater, sweatshirt, tank, etc.);

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This policy permits additional student attire requirements when necessary to ensure safety in certain academic settings (e.g. physical activity, science or CTE courses). Additionally, this policy allows for reasonable variation in required student attire for participation in activities such as swimming or gymnastics.

Students may not wear clothing, jewelry, or personal items that:

Are pornographic, contain threats, or that promote illegal or violent conduct such as the unlawful use of weapons, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or drug paraphernalia;

Demonstrate hate group association/affiliation and/or use hate speech targeting groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious affiliation, or other protected groups;

Intentionally show private parts (nipples, genitals, buttocks). Clothing must cover private parts in opaque (not able to be seen-through) material;

Cover the student's face to the extent that the student is not identifiable (except clothing/headgear worn for a religious or medical purpose); or

Demonstrate gang association/affiliation.

Attire worn in observance of a student's religion are not subject to this policy. This policy permits schools with a uniform policy to continue having a uniform policy provided that it is gender neutral and inclusive of attire worn for a religious reason.

Enforcement

Principals are required to ensure that all staff are aware of and understand the guidelines of this policy.

Staff will use reasonable efforts to avoid dress-coding students in front of other students. Students shall not be disciplined or removed from class as a consequence for wearing attire in violation of this policy unless the attire creates a substantial disruption to the educational environment, poses a hazard to the health or safety of others, or factors into a student behavior rule violation such as malicious harassment or the prohibition on harassment, intimidation, and bullying. Further, no student shall be referred to as "a distraction" due to their appearance or attire.

Typical consequences for a violation of this policy include parent/guardian contact or conference and the directive to cover, change, or remove the noncomplying attire. A student may be instructed to leave their classroom briefly to change clothes. The Principal or their designee should notify a student's parent/guardian of the school's response to violations of the student dress policy.

The Superintendent or their designee is authorized to develop procedures in order to implement this policy if needed.

Adopted: July 2019 Revised:

Cross Reference: Policy Nos. 3200; 3207; 3433

Related Superintendent Procedure:

Previous Policies:

Legal References: RCW 28A.320.140 Schools with Special Standards – Dress Codes

Management Resources: Oregon National Organization for Women Model Dress Code

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Monday, March e2, 2021

ITEM: Administration (July 7, 2020)

To consider approval of the proposed 2020-21 Student Handbook of the Worcester Public Schools.

PRIOR ACTION:

7-16-20 - On a roll call of 7-0 the item was referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.

BACKUP:

This item was already approved at the Full School Committee meeting on August 5, 2020. Therefore, the Administration recommends that this item be filed.

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Monday, September 14, 2020

ITEM: Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Ms. McCullough (August 17, 2020)

Consider and redraft as necessary the policies and associated sections of the student handbook considered by "Pandemic Policy Specific for Back to School."

PRIOR ACTION:

8-27-20 - On a roll call of 7-0, the item was referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues. **(Continued on page 2.)**

BACKUP:

ITEM: (Ms. Novick)

Consider and redraft as necessary the policies and associated sections of the student handbook considered by "Pandemic Policy Specific for Back to School."

Answer:

The Student Handbook was not yet amended to account for the scheduling changes due to the pandemic and related safety during the SY 2020-2021.

Motion: (Ms. Novick – 9-14-20)

Request that the School Calendar and File IC/ICA - School Year/School Calendar of the Policy Manual be amended to read 170 days not 180 days.

Answer:

The SY 2020-2021 school calendar online was adjusted to reflect the 2020-2021 change in start date (September 15, 2020) and related 170 days in session prior to opening.

Motion: (Ms. Novick – 9-14-20)

Request that the Administration amend the Immunization Schedule in the Student Handbook on page 4 by adding the influenza vaccine.

Answer:

The Immunization Schedule on page 4 of the Student Handbook was inadvertently not updated in the online handbook. However, the flu vaccination requirement was posted on the website, communicated to families, and flu vaccination clinics were held throughout the district in collaboration with Family Health until January 2021 when the requirement was rescinded.

Motion; (Mrs. Clancey – 9-17-20)

Request that the Administration draft a proposed Attendance Policy for synchronous and asynchronous remote learning.

Answer:

The administration proposes that the attendance policy stay as it is. Attendance is taken as required and tracked by the school based team for any necessary follow-up with students, parents, and guardians.

PRIOR ACTION (continued)9-14-20 - **STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

Ms. Novick made the following motions:

Request that the School Calendar and File IC/ICA - School Year/School Calendar of the Policy Manual be amended to read **170 days** not 180 days.

Request that the Administration amend the Immunization Schedule in the Student Handbook on page 4 by adding the influenza vaccine.

On a roll call of 3-0, the motions were approved.

Mrs. Clancey asked the Administration how it plans to take into account the attendance for students during power outages, internet problems and other situations that might render a student unable to log in for their class. She also asked for an update on how attendance will be taken at the elementary and secondary levels on synchronous and asynchronous days.

Superintendent Binienda stated that the Attendance Policy will not change. Attendance will be taken every morning and during every class Monday through Thursday for synchronous remote learning. If a student comes in tardy they will be marked as tardy. If they miss more than half the day, it will be considered an absence. If a student is present for the first two periods, but not the rest of the day that will be considered a dismissal. She also stated that the State guidelines for attendance were very specific as to what the district has to record for both hybrid and remote learning.

Ms. Novick questioned how the student's attendance will be done on Fridays for the asynchronous learning.

Superintendent Binienda stated that the state requires attendance to be taken on Friday which is the asynchronous learning day. Every school will have an assigned teacher to take attendance during the hours between 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. She further stated that if a student has an appointment or is having trouble logging in during the check in-time, the parent or student should notify the Assistant Principal via email or phone of the situation.

Ms. Novick stated that the idea of having every secondary school student on their computer at a specific hour is not in line with the State's intention. She feels that there needs to be a backstop created for students who are having problems with connectivity and that the language for the Attendance Policy in the Student Handbook needs to be redrafted. She suggested the following language for synchronous learning be added to the policy:

- If a student cannot be reached and has not turned in any work, then that student will be marked absent from school.

Superintendent Binienda stated that the State and the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education Riley were very clear that attendance has to be taken in every class because "this is a school day, and we ought to take attendance like a regular day." As far as the asynchronous day on Friday, there has to be a set time to take attendance because teachers are involved in common planning and/or staff development. If a student's Wi-Fi goes down, it is the principals and teachers who will handle the situation and they will be very understanding of what's happening with the student during the remote learning time.

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

9-14-20 - Superintendent Binienda stated that the reporting required by the state is very specific on how the system has to record attendance, dismissals and tardiness and the data that is provided back to the state is what the plan was based on.

Mr. Monfredo stated that he feels that the asynchronous learning day is a normal school day and that the Superintendent has made the right decision regarding the time for students to check in for their attendance to be taken. He also stated that there needs to be only one set of rules and that student attendance is very important.

Ms. Novick questioned the need to take attendance at a specific time every morning when the States guidelines may allow for other ways to monitor students like reviewing their work on the Google classroom accounts.

Superintendent Binienda stated that discussions took place with all principals in the system regarding the asynchronous learning day and taking attendance during the morning was the best scenario for everyone involved. The Commissioner stated that a student must be in attendance during the school day to be registered as present. She further stated that the system needs an organized process of doing attendance and believes that the Administration has provided the best option.

Mrs. Clancey stated that she would like to see a clear Attendance Policy in writing with a statement that, when a student is absent during the time the attendance was taken, the student or parent must email the Assistant Principal or the teacher with the reason for their absence.

Ms. Novick voiced her concern regarding the issue of connectivity and every student on the Wi-Fi at the same time. She doesn't think it is an equitable system and is not a good policy. The policy needs to be thoughtful and sensitive to the families that the system serves. She further stated that the hotspots do not have the capacity to sustain Zoom for families with multiple children.

Superintendent Binienda stated that the system needs to have high expectations of the students and attendance is a very important part of that. As far as the backstop, if a student doesn't show up, the teachers will call his/her home to inquire why that student was not in class. Every Monday, the first teacher of the day will be doing a check-in survey and every Thursday, the last teacher of the day will be doing an SEL survey asking how students are doing. She stated that there was a test run done for the hotspots where an individual, who has 4 children in the system, took one home to use. All 4 students were streaming at the same time for a long period of time with no issues.

Mr. Monfredo suggested that the attendance time change from 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. on Fridays and reconvene in a month to evaluate if any more changes that need to be made.

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

9-14-20 - Mrs. Clancey asked the Administration to provide options for students and families to notify the schools if connectivity is lost. She would like to have the current policy of Friday check-in adopted for the start of the remote learning quarter and revisit the policy going further. She would like the item held in the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues for further follow-up of the Attendance Policy.

Ms. Clancey made the following motions:

Request that the Administration draft a proposed Attendance Policy for synchronous and asynchronous remote learning.

Request that the item be held at the Standing Committee level for further review and discussion.

On a roll call of 2-1 (nay Ms. Novick), the motion was approved.

9-17-20 - **SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING** - The School Committee approved the action of the Standing Committee as amended.

Ms. Clancey made the following motions:

Request that the Administration draft a proposed Attendance Policy for synchronous and asynchronous remote learning.

Request that the item be held at the Standing Committee level for further review and discussion.

On a roll call of 6-1 (nay Ms. Novick), the motion was approved.

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Monday, March 22, 2021

ITEM: Ms. Novick/Mrs. Clancey/Ms. McCullough (November 23, 2020)

To create Worcester School Committee operational norms.

PRIOR ACTION:

- 12-3-20 - Miss Biancheria made the following motions:
Request that all School Committee members be allowed to add any additional information they feel is pertinent to the item.
Request that School Committee members be notified when the item will be discussed at the Standing Committee level.
Request that the item be held for discussion at the Standing Committee level at a later date due to the remote learning issues.
On a roll call of 7-0, the motion was approved.
Mr. Foley suggested that a retreat be scheduled to discuss operational norms.
On a roll call of 7-0, the item was referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.

BACKUP:

- Annex A (2 pages) contains a copy of the District Governance Support Project from the MASC.
Annex B (7 pages) contains a copy of a document from the MASC entitled An Annotated Review of Samples of Personal Norms, Statements of Principles and Beliefs, and Meeting Best Practices.



District Governance Support Project What Protocols Cover

Who the Committee Represents

The Committee will represent the needs and interests of all the students in the district.

We will strive to represent common interests rather than factions. We will make decisions that are best for students in all cases: all means all.

We will advocate for the [] Public Schools and public education. We readily accept our roles as ambassadors of the school systems, promoting support for public education and spreading the news of our success.

How it will do business

The committee will conduct its business through a set agenda. Emerging items will be addressed in subsequent meetings through agenda items.

We acknowledge that a School Committee meeting is a meeting that is held in public—not a public meeting, and we will make every effort to ensure that the Committee meetings are effective and efficient

We will base our decisions upon available facts, vote our convictions, avoid bias, and uphold and support the decisions of the majority of the School Committee once a decision is made.

How members treat each other

The Committee will debate the issues, not one another.

We will build trusting relationships.

We will respect staff and fellow committee members at all times.

We will work to build trust between and among SC members and the superintendent by treating everyone with dignity and respect, even in times of disagreement

How it will communicate

The Superintendent and the School Committee recognize the importance of proactive communication and agree that there will be no surprises. If SC members have questions or concerns, they agree to contact the Superintendent well in advance of a meeting.

SC members will channel requests for information through the superintendent and School Committee Chair rather than directly to staff. The Superintendent will ensure that each member has equal access to this information.

We will recognize a single official “voice” of the committee.

How it will improve

The Committee will provide continuing education opportunities and support to each other.

School Committee members agree to participate in formal training organized by the Superintendent and the School Committee chairperson.

All new SC members will be assigned a SC mentor and will participate in a SC orientation session.

We will model continuous learning in our roles as members of the governance team.

What are the limits of power

It is the responsibility of the Superintendent to oversee the hiring, evaluation and handling of personnel issues; it is the responsibility of the Committee to evaluate the Superintendent's effectiveness in these matters.

We will recognize that authority rests only with the majority decisions of the SC and will make no independent commitments or take any independent actions that may compromise the School Committee as a whole.

We will follow the chain of command and direct others to do the same. Personnel complaints and concerns will be directed to the superintendent.

We will not use our positions for personal or partisan gain.

What happens when things go wrong

Committee members will work together to clarify and restate discussions in order to strive for full understanding.

We recognize the importance of honoring our agreed upon [operating principles] and we agree to take responsibility for reminding one another when we get off track.

We will maintain fidelity to these commitments and will be held accountable by our fellow School Committee members should any one of us fail to live up to these commitments. If a SC members or superintendent violates any of the above mentioned commitments in any way, he/she will be referred to the Chair.

PROTOCOLS AND BEST PRACTICES FOR EFFECTIVE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

An Annotated Review of Samples of Personal Norms,
Statements of Principles and Beliefs, and Meeting Best Practices

MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEES

2012-2013

SAMPLE –AND BELIEFS

A WORD ABOUT “NORMS AND BELIEFS”

School Committee members are elected public officials, selected by their fellow citizens to act in their interests and empowered to act as they see their duty to work for the children of their community. Although rules of order are essential to an effective public meeting, personal norms and protocols to guide individual or group behaviors are neither established in law nor subject to imposition by anyone outside the board itself. Many people think it is demeaning and condescending to attempt to prescribe behaviors on those whom the people have chosen to represent them, especially adults who are perfectly capable of managing themselves. MASC has encouraged effective School Committees to find their own balance and to encourage collegiality, diligence and diligence in their work. We respectfully offer these recommendations, based on the work of several Massachusetts School Committees, as voluntary guidelines to help make their meetings productive and effective. We have annotated most of these model norms, beliefs and protocols to put in perspective recommendations for model practices, noting that one person's norms and protocols may be another person's unwillingly imposed standards. Democracy demands the individual use one's best judgment as one perceives it rather than succumbing to the will of another, whether it is resolving a matter of policy, fulfilling your fiduciary responsibilities, or providing leadership.

SAMPLE NORMS AND BELIEFS

How We Govern

1. We acknowledge that a School Committee meeting is a meeting of the School Committee that is held in public – not a public meeting, and we will make every effort to ensure that **Committee meetings are effective and efficient.**¹
2. School Committee members agree to thoughtfully seek and support solutions that will provide the greatest benefit to students. Once the School Committee has taken action, **Committee members will support the official position of the School Committee.**²
3. It is the responsibility of the Superintendent to oversee the hiring, evaluation and handling of personnel issues; it is the responsibility of the School Committee to **evaluate the Superintendent's effectiveness** in these matters.
4. We acknowledge the **importance of subcommittees**, and the Superintendent agrees to utilize them to focus on a specific topic in-depth and to prepare for presentation, deliberation and possible action by the full School Committee.
5. School Committee members agree to recognize and respect that their **authority exists when a quorum of the Committee meets and not as individual Committee members.**

¹This is an important distinction because the public does not have an inherent right to speak or participate without recognition by the chair or entitlement through your municipal charter.

²Some individuals object to this provision because it stifles dissent and disagreement. It is important to note that "supporting the official position of the school committee" does not preclude principled disagreement or future attempts to change policy, but simply not to undermine the work of the majority's policy of the district.

SAMPLE –AND BELIEFS

How We Communicate

1. It is our responsibility to set the tone for the entire school system, and we will make every effort to promote a positive image for our school system. The Superintendent will be visible in the community, and we will **operate transparently and respectfully, maintain confidentiality, and respect the Open Meeting laws.**

2. The Superintendent and the School Committee recognize the importance of proactive communication and agree that **there will be no surprises.**³ If School Committee members have questions or concerns, they agree to contact the Superintendent well in advance of a meeting.

3. We agree that discussion will be limited to the agenda, and **items will not be added to the agenda** unless it is determined by the Superintendent and the School Committee Chairperson that it would be detrimental to delay the issue until a subsequent meeting.⁴

4. The Superintendent will share an annual planning calendar with School Committee members. If a member wishes to add an item to a future agenda, he or she should make a request to the Superintendent or the School Committee Chairperson.⁵ In turn, they will consult other members, as well as the **annual planning calendar to gauge interest and alignment.**

5. School Committee members agree to **refer important questions and concerns** they receive from members of the school community to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will investigate and provide all Committee members with the information needed to respond to an issue.⁶

6. School Committee members will **channel requests for information,** reports and data through the Superintendent and the School Committee Chair rather than directly to staff. The Superintendent will ensure that each member has equal access to this information.⁷

7. The Superintendent intends to seek comprehensive solutions to problems and will create **clear structures for decision-making.** In the spirit of continuous improvement, these structures may be revisited at any time.

8. The Superintendent and School Committee recognize the importance of **working collaboratively with City officials** to improve our schools, and we will actively seek ways to enlist their support in our efforts.

³ "Surprises" is a relative term, but it is appropriate to make sure that superintendents are aware of important issues or challenging questions that will be posed at a meeting. This does not preclude a member from asking a question or raising a point that arises during the course of a discussion or debate that, despite the most noble of intentions, could not be anticipated. This is often linked to "full disclosure" noted below.

⁴ Massachusetts law precludes the school committee from raising an issue that could not have been reasonably anticipated by the chair. This protocol as stated on the list imposes an additional responsibility upon members not to push for discussions for which the superintendent or staff may be unprepared. While it is a good idea to allow the superintendent and chair to have the discretion to make a determination, a principled school committee member who feels genuinely that a late-breaking issue is important should not be discouraged from asking colleagues to take up a matter that is critical to some but not to others.

⁵ The agenda is the property of the school committee. Developing the agenda is often delegated to the chair or to the superintendent and chair.

⁶ This is a best practice to follow. However, citizens have an unrestricted right to contact their elected officials and this right may not be abridged by the superintendent or chair. Once you have listened respectfully to your constituents and asked if they have approached the appropriate administrator, you should quickly make the referral to the superintendent.

⁷ Requests for information, reports or tasks to be performed have taken on the title of "vanity projects." They are problematic because they require the time and attention of the superintendent or staff and may not be of interest to the rest of the school committee. For that reason, it is often a policy that these requests are channeled through the school committee as a body or through the chair. However, as is stated, it is critical to the longevity of the superintendent that information be shared with everyone.

SAMPLE –AND BELIEFS

How We Improve

- 1.School Committee members and the Superintendent recognize the **importance of professional growth and development**, and they agree to participate in experiences designed to further their knowledge and understanding and to advance the work of our public schools.
- 2.In addition, School Committee members will **participate in formal training** organized by the Superintendent and the School Committee Chairperson and conducted by organizations such as the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) and/or Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS).
- 3.All new School Committee members will **participate in an orientation session**, and if desired, a School Committee mentor will be assigned.
- 4.The Superintendent and the School Committee agree to set aside time on an annual basis for **self-evaluation and to review our progress** toward adhering to agreed upon norms and beliefs.
- 5.We recognize the importance of **honoring our agreed upon norms and beliefs**, and we agree to take responsibility for reminding one another when we get off track.

[These norms and protocols were adapted from original work by the Taunton School Committee in 2012. MASC notes that reasonable individuals will have rational disagreements about meanings or appropriateness of terms from time to time.]

SAMPLE –AND BELIEFS

OTHER NORMS, BELIEFS AND PROTOCOLS THAT SCHOOL DISTRICTS MAY CONSIDER

- Come to Meetings Prepared⁸
- Creating an Environment for Full and Free Debate, or “Civil Discourse” in a Safe Environment⁹
- Addressing Issues and Avoiding the Ad Hominem Attack¹⁰
- Obligation to Represent All Students
- Obligation to Utilize Vision, Planning, and Policy Making in Decision¹¹
- Full Disclosure¹²
- Blogging and Social Media¹³
- Expectations for the Chair and Other Officers¹⁴
- Set Appropriate Examples for the Employees in the School District¹⁵

⁸ Nothing slows down a meeting more than taking time to explain that information which is in the pre-meeting packet for review.

⁹ This targets intellectual bullies or others who would intimidate colleagues from raising or addressing important questions. It also speaks to those who would demand “civil discourse” as a vehicle to silence principled critics who may become passionate. Nothing should prevent a member from raising one’s voice in passionate argument as opposed to shouting down someone else’s point of view.

¹⁰ While it can be tempting to attack the individual making an argument as a way of refuting that perspective, members are encouraged to focus on the issue and the facts rather than on personalities.

¹¹ This generally is expressed with a specific intent of avoiding intrusion into administrative decision making or general school district day-to-day operations. It is a help in defining the criteria a school committee will use in determining whether an important matter falls under the legal authority, policy responsibility or fiduciary obligation of the school committee, or administrative duties of the superintendent.

¹² Full disclosure includes not only providing all information necessary for administrators to respond as well as that which is of interest to the rest of the school committee. There are also implications for disclosing conflicts of interest and other matters under the state ethics law.

¹³ Blogs are unrestricted devices for constitutionally protected free speech. In some cases, they can have the status of legitimate media to exercise freedom of the press as well. However, they can also be vehicles to upstage or undermine colleagues or school administrators. No one can force an elected official to restrict the use of them, but it is a good idea for school committee members to exercise discretion and good judgment in maintaining a web site, social media page, or blog.

¹⁴ The chair is the servant of the school committee, not the master. As such, the chair must represent both school committee members and citizens, present or absent, to ensure that the meetings are fair and that all members are treated equally and fairly. Other than presiding and the duties inherent in that role, the chair takes one’s authority from the membership. The chair recognizes that the agenda is the property of the membership, not the chair or the superintendent.

¹⁵ Everyone watches the school committee: Do you entertain calls from citizens, staff or other elected officials? Do you intervene in personnel matters? Are you focusing on student achievement or political advancement? Staff take their cues from the board. If school committee members engage in practices that may undermine the administrative leadership, faculty and parents will often encourage those inappropriate practices for personal advantage.

SAMPLE –AND BELIEFS



Protocols Worksheet - How do we do Business?

Issues ¹⁵	Do We have a concern in this area?	How will we handle this?	Do we need a written protocol?	Do we need a policy?
<i>Committee Room Layout</i>				
<i>Seating arrangement at Committee table</i>				
<i>Placement of the Superintendent and staff in the Committee room</i>				
<i>Developing the Committee meeting agenda</i>				
<i>Structure of the Committee agenda</i>				
<i>Placing something on the Committee agenda</i>				
<i>Getting questions answered about items on the agenda before a meeting</i>				
<i>Public input at Committee meetings</i>				
<i>Deliberation at Committee meetings</i>				
<i>Informal Committee reports at Committee meetings</i>				
<i>Allowing the majority vote to set direction for the school district</i>				
<i>Reaction when not in the majority</i>				
<i>Bringing agenda items back for further discussion</i>				
<i>Explaining 'no' votes</i>				
<i>Length of meetings</i>				
<i>Sharing expertise on issues</i>				
<i>Bringing up new ideas</i>				
<i>Requesting information from staff</i>				

¹⁵ Issues often relate to the following areas – Effective Meetings, Board/Member relations, Board/Superintendent relations, Board/Staff relations, Board/Community relations.

SAMPLE –AND BELIEFS

Issues ¹⁶	Do We have a concern in this area?	How will we handle this?	Do we need a written protocol?	Do we need a policy?
<i>Individual Committee member requests for information</i>				
<i>Individual Committee member requests for action</i>				
<i>Handling complaints from the community</i>				
<i>Handling complaints from staff</i>				
<i>Handling complaints from Committee members</i>				
<i>Addressing concerns of the community</i>				
<i>Use of subcommittees</i>				
<i>Use of work sessions</i>				
<i>Confidentiality</i>				
<i>Committee member role in public</i>				
<i>Committee/member communications</i>				
<i>Committee/Superintendent communications</i>				
<i>Committee Staff communications</i>				
<i>Visiting Schools</i>				
<i>Self-evaluation of governance team effectiveness</i>				
<i>Handling of email</i>				
<i>Superintendent Evaluation</i>				
<i>Goal setting and planning</i>				

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Monday, March 22, 2021

ITEM: Clerk (December 28, 2020)

To consider a communication from the EAW to allow members of Burncoat High School's faculty and staff to donate accrued sick time to a colleague.

PRIOR ACTION:

- 1-7-21 - Mayor Petty allowed Roger Nugent, President of the EAW, Patricia Chamberlain and Thomas Davis to speak regarding donating sick time to a colleague at Burncoat High School. They requested that the School Committee approve a total of 108 sick days from the teachers to be transferred to their colleague.
Ms. Boulais stated that she would work with Mr. Nugent to determine the names of the Burncoat faculty who will be donating the sick days.
Mayor Petty made the following motions:
Request that the item be referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues to be discussed at the next meeting.
Request that the Administration provide enough sick days from the faculty at Burncoat High School until such time as the item is discussed at the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues and voted on at the School Committee meeting on January 21, 2021.
On a roll call of 7-0, the motions were approved.
- 1-19-21 - **STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**
Ms. Novick made the following motion:
Request that the Instructional Assistant be granted the sick time from the faculty of Burncoat High School for the days through her next doctor's appointment with additional days per the doctor's advice.
On a roll call of 3-0, the motion was approved.
- 1-21-21 - **SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING** – The School Committee approved the action of the Standing Committee as stated.

BACKUP:

Annex A (1 page) contains a copy of the petition from the EAW.



December 23, 2020

Mayor Joseph Petty
c/o Dr. Helen Friel Clerk of School Committee
20 Irving Street
Worcester, MA 01609

VIA Email Scan

Dear Dr. Friel,

I would like to speak at the next School Committee meeting on January 7th with a few educators at Burncoat High.

We will be speaking about donating sick days to a co-worker (IA at Burncoat High).

Please let us know when we will be presenting.

Sincerely,

Roger Nugent

Roger Nugent EAW President

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Monday, March 22, 2021

ITEM: Clerk (February 17, 2021)

To consider a communication from the EAW to allow members of Gates Lane School's faculty and staff to donate sick days to a colleague.

PRIOR ACTION:

2-25-21 - Jaclyn Ford stated that some of the faculty and staff of Gates Lane School would like to donate some of their sick time to a colleague.

Ms. Novick made the following motion:

Request that the School Committee approve the request of the faculty to donate some of their sick time to the Instructional Assistant through April 1, 2021.

On a roll call of 7-0, the motion was approved.

Ms. Boulais requested that Mr. Nugent provide the names of the staff, in order, who are willing to donate their sick time to the Human Resources Department.

On a roll call of 7-0, the item was referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.

BACKUP:

Annex A (1 page) contains a copy of the petition from the EAW.



February 17, 2021

Mayor Joseph Petty
c/o Dr. Helen Friel Clerk of School Committee
20 Irving Street
Worcester, MA 01609

VIA Email Scan

Dear Dr. Friel,

I would like to speak at the next School Committee meeting on February 25th with a few educators at Gates Lane.

We will be speaking about donating sick days to a co-worker (IA at Gates Lane).

Please let us know when we will be presenting.

Sincerely,

Roger Nugent

Roger Nugent EAW
President

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Monday, March 22, 2021

ITEM: Administration (January 25, 2021)

To consider approval of the proposed 2021-22 Student Handbook of the Worcester Public Schools.

PRIOR ACTION:

2-4-21 - Ms. Novick made the following motion:
Request that the Student Handbook be forwarded to the Student Representatives for their review and invite them to attend the meeting of the Standing Committee when the item is discussed.
On a roll call of 7-0, the motion was approved.
On a roll call of 7-0, the item was referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.

BACKUP:

Annex A (2 pages) contains a copy of the proposed changes for the 2021-22 Student Handbook.

Annex B (33 pages) contain a copy of the 2021-22 Student Handbook with the proposed changes.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO 2021– 2022 STUDENT HANDBOOK

PAGE	PROPOSED CHANGES
Cover	Change 2020-21 to 2021-22 and throughout the book.
Inside front	Insert updated calendar for 2021-22
Throughout	Replace all English language learner (ELL) with English learner (EL)
ii	Handbook Updates (will be updated once the handbook is approved)
iii, iv	<p>COVID-19 PANDEMIC Safety Requirements and Educational Program Continuum Last sentence change order to ordered.</p> <p>Masks/face coverings First bullet, delete the words: in grade 2 and above Delete the second bullet</p> <p>Hand Hygiene Third bullet, delete the words - ethanol or at least 70 percent isopropanol and add the word alcohol. If handwashing is not feasible, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol content can be used.</p>
vi, vii	Update table of contents (will be updated once the handbook is approved)
2	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Grades 7 – 12</u></p> <p>First paragraph, delete the first sentence - Students new to our city in grades 7-8 register at the Dr. James L. Garvey Parent Information Center. First paragraph, second sentence change 9-12 to 7-12 New students in grades 7-12 have the option to register</p>
8	<p>Student Dress Code Policy Second sentence – change the word regulations to regulation</p>
17-24	<p>Code of Conduct Philosophy #4 – Add to the end of the sentence - through policies and practices that are designed to use discretion and to re-engage the student in the learning process.</p> <p>Other Discipline – First paragraph - change evidence based to evidence-based Third paragraph - delete the words except that and add However, to read as follows: School discipline shall not include the right to inflict corporal punishment. However, reasonable force.....</p> <p>Rule 1. – Damage or Destruction of School Property Second sentence - delete the word - intends and add reserves the right as follows: The Administration reserves the right to file criminal complaints against, and seek restitution from, any student who violates this rule.</p> <p>Rule 3. – Physical Assault on a School Employee Add – use or attempt to use physical force against a school employee or -as follows: A student shall not use or attempt to use physical force against a school employee or cause or attempt to cause physical injury to a school employee.....</p>

PAGE	PROPOSED CHANGES
<p>17-24 continued</p>	<p>Code of Conduct (continued)</p> <p>Rule 4. – Physical Assault on a Student or Other Person not Employed by the School Add – use or attempt to use physical force against a school employee or -as follows: A student shall not use or attempt to use physical force against a student or other person or cause or.....</p> <p>Rule 5. – Verbal Assault on a School Employee Second sentence delete the words – defiance, insolence, rudeness, Verbal assault means obscenity, bullying or abusive language.</p> <p>Rule 6. – Verbal Assault on, or Threat to, a Student or Non-employee of School Second sentence delete the words – defiance, insolence, rudeness, Verbal assault means obscenity, bullying or abusive language.</p> <p>Rule 8. - Policy on Possession or Use of Drugs or Alcohol a. Add the words– short-term or, before the words long-term suspension b. Add the words – short-term or, before the words long-term suspension c. Delete the words – expelled or have and add the words subject to a short-term or, before the words long-term suspension e. Second sentence add the word – school, after the word authorized and before the word personnel</p> <p>Rule 14. - Cell Phones, Electronic Devices, and Laser Pointing Devices First paragraph last sentence – delete the word powered and add unless permitted by a school staff member after the words while in school. Students are not permitted to have their cell phones or electronic devices while in school unless permitted by a school staff member.</p> <p>Rule 15. - Policy on Gangs and Obscene Clothing 1. Add at the end of the paragraph – and which causes disorder or disruption to the school environment.</p> <p>Rule 16. - Students Charged with or Convicted of a Felony Delete the words or his/her designee.</p> <p>Rule 19. – Fighting Delete the word – situation and add the words activity or event A student shall not engage in physical altercation with another student on or off school grounds at any school-related activity or event including, but not limited to, travel to and from the activity or event.</p> <p>Rule 20. - Inciting a Disturbance First sentence add the words – or event, after the words related activity. Second sentence add the words-or disruption, after the words disturbance. A student shall not incite a disturbance on or off school grounds at any school related activity or event. A student shall not organize, encourage, or participate in a disturbance or disruption of school. It can apply to one who urges or instigates others to disturb the school setting or related activity.</p>

Worcester Public Schools Student Handbook



2021—22

Please Note: The form located on the back of this Handbook must be signed and returned to school.

www.worcesterschools.org/handbook

Worcester Public Schools Calendar 2021-22

AUGUST 2021						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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MAY 2022						
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2021	2022
August 26: Teacher/Staff Reporting August 27: Teacher/Staff Reporting August 30: First Day of School September 2: First Day for PreK & K September 6: Labor Day October 8: Staff Development October 11: Columbus Day November 11: Veterans' Day November 24-26: Thanksgiving December 23-31: Holiday Vacation	January 1: New Year's Day January 17: Martin Luther King Day February 21: Presidents' Day February 22-25: Winter Vacation April 15: Non-School Day April 18: Patriots' Day April 19-22: Spring Vacation May 26: Last day of school for seniors May 30: Memorial Day June 14: Last day of school June 20: Juneteenth

☐ = DAYS WHEN SCHOOL IS NOT IN SESSION FOR STUDENTS

**Last day of school may change in response to the number of snow days used during the school year*

End of Marking Quarters:	November 5, 2021	January 21, 2022	April 8, 2022	June 14, 2022 or last day of school
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The Worcester Public Schools is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer/Educational Institution and does not discriminate regardless of race, color, gender, age, religion, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, or homelessness. The Worcester Public Schools provides equal access to employment and the full range of general, occupational and vocational education programs. For more information relating to Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action contact Human Resource Manager, 20 Irving Street, Worcester, MA 01609, 508-799-4000.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Mayor Joseph M. Petty - Chairman

John L. Foley - Vice-Chairman

Dianna L. Biancheria

Laura B. Clancey

John F. Monfredo

Molly O. McCullough

Tracy A. O'Connell Novick

SUPERINTENDENT’S MESSAGE

The Worcester Public Schools is pleased to present the 2021-22 Student Handbook to inform students and parents/guardians of the important policies and procedures that are in effect in our school system.

Thank you for reviewing this handbook with your child and for keeping it for future reference. Please note there have been revisions made to some of the policies and procedures from the previous year. We ask that you pay particular attention to those revisions.

Best wishes for a successful 2021-22 school year.

Superintendent Maureen F. Binienda

Handbook Updates

(To be updated)

COVID-19 Pandemic	iii
Opt-Out Policy for English Learners	2
Massachusetts School Immunization Requirements for 2020-2021.....	4
Student Dress Code Policy.....	8
Sexual Harassment Policy.....	35
High School Graduation Requirement	75

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The district will follow state and federal guidelines to address COVID-19 related school issues. Due to the unpredictable nature of the pandemic, the guidelines may change during the school year. The district will provide timely information to parents/students/guardians about any needed changes to district programs and services.

Remote Learning Time and Use of Remote Learning Platforms

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, during the 2021-22 school year the District may be required to provide some or all educational programming via remote learning and various remote learning platforms, e.g. Zoom, Google Classroom etc.

The Code of Conduct and District Policies, including but not limited to those that govern student discipline, bullying, harassment, and discrimination, are applicable during remote learning times and when using remote learning platforms.

Parents and students are prohibited from recording and/or disseminating remote learning lessons or instruction. Violations of the no-recording policy may result in school-based discipline or referral, in appropriate cases, to law enforcement.

Safety Requirements and Educational Program Continuum

As a result of the on-going Covid-19 pandemic, on June 25, 2020, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education issued “Initial Fall School Reopening Guidance” (the “Guidance”). In accordance with this guidance, the following safety requirements and educational programming models will be in place for the 2021-2022 academic school year as required by the Commonwealth. The District reserves the right to amend these requirements and the manner in which educational services are provided to its students as determined appropriate and as order (ADD ed)/advised by the various agencies of the federal and state governments.

Safety Requirements

Masks/face coverings

- Students (DELETE in grade 2 and above) are required to wear a mask/face covering that covers their nose and mouth.

- **(DELETE Students in kindergarten and grade 1 should be encouraged to wear a mask/face covering.)**
- Masks/face coverings must be provided by the student/family; however, extra disposable face masks will be made available by the school for students who need them.
- Adults, including educators and staff, are required to wear masks/face coverings.
- Exceptions to mask/face covering requirements must be made for those for whom it is not possible due to medical conditions, disability impact, or other health or safety factors.
- Mask breaks will occur throughout the day in a manner that complies with health and safety standards.
- Masks/face coverings are required to be worn by everyone on the bus during school bus transportation.

Physical Distancing/Student Groupings

- The District will aim to maintain a physical distance of six feet between individuals.
- When a physical distance of six feet cannot be maintained, the District will aim to maintain a minimum distance of three feet between individuals.
- Classrooms will be configured in a manner that provides for the above-referenced physical distance between individuals.
- Students will be contained in one classroom and with one group of students to the extent feasible.
- Additional safety precautions will be taken by the school nurses and/or any staff supporting students with disabilities in close proximity, when distance is not possible.

Hand Hygiene

- Students and staff are required to exercise hand hygiene (handwashing or sanitizing) upon arrival to school, before eating, before putting on and taking off masks, and before dismissal.
- When handwashing, individuals should use soap and water to wash all surfaces of their hands for at least 20 seconds, wait for visible lather, rinse thoroughly, and dry with an individual disposable towel.
- If handwashing is not feasible, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent **(DELETE ethanol or at least 70 percent isopropanol and ADD alcohol)** content can be used. Hand sanitizer should be applied to all surfaces of the hands and in sufficient quantity that it takes 20 seconds of rubbing hands together for the sanitizer to dry.

Educational Program Continuum

Per the Guidance, educational services will be provided in one of the three models described below depending upon the needs of the student and/or health and safety requirements.

Model 1 – In-Person Learning

It is the District’s goal to provide in-person learning to as many students as possible without compromising safety. In this model, all students return in person to school settings that are appropriately modified to accommodate the health and safety requirements outlined above. Examples of modifications could include altered classroom configurations, setting up additional learning spaces, and schedule changes.

Model 2 – Hybrid Learning

In the event that the District is unable to bring all students back to school under the health and safety requirements despite best efforts, or in case of COVID-19 related circumstances, a hybrid learning model will be implemented. In this model, students will alternate between in-person and remote learning. For instance, students could switch between in-person and remote learning on alternating weeks or days of the week.

Model 3 – Remote Learning

In the event that individual students cannot return to in-person learning, or in the event of future classroom or school closures impacting all students, remote learning will be implemented. As stated throughout the Handbook, the Code of Conduct and District Bullying and Harassment/Discrimination policies apply to students during remote learning times and when using remote learning platforms. Under Massachusetts State guidance, all families have the option for on-line learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Plan for Special Populations

Additional plan(s) will be developed as appropriate for the provision services and accommodations to special student populations, including students with disabilities and English learners.

For students with disabilities who receive services and/or accommodations pursuant to an IEP or Section 504 Plan, please note that in the event of a school closure or provision of a hybrid learning model as described above, these exceptional circumstances may affect how a particular service is provided and FAPE may look different than it did during in-person learning. Federal disability law allows for flexibility in determining how to meet the individual needs of students with disabilities. In these instances, the District will work to provide specialized instructional opportunities and related services through remote learning or a hybrid model of remote and in-person learning to the extent feasible while maintaining the safety of both students and staff and complying with applicable federal, state and local government directives.

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REGISTRATION

Dr. James L. Garvey Parent Information Center

Open All Year Monday through Friday

8:30 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.

768 MAIN STREET

SHATTUCK BUILDING

JACOB HIATT COMPLEX

Phone: (508) 799-3299, (508) 799-3068,

(508) 799-3069, (508) 799-3194

In the event of extended school closure, online registration is available at <https://www.worcesterschools.org/enroll/>

In order to enroll a student in the Worcester Public Schools, the following documentation must be provided and verified:

Verification of:

1. Birth Certificate or Passport
2. Legal Guardianship or a responsible adult party in the household who can serve as an emergency contact
3. Worcester residence (utility bill, lease, mortgage statement, etc.) or completed STUDENT ADDRESS VERIFICATION FORM
4. State mandated immunizations
5. Records from previous school, if available
6. The requirement for school immunizations and records may be temporarily waived for students who qualify as homeless under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act or are in foster care.

Preschool—Grade 6

All students (preschool through grade 6) registering for, or transferring into or within the Worcester Public Schools, must do so at the Dr. James L. Garvey Parent Information Center.

The Dr. James L. Garvey Parent Information Center staff will:

- Provide information to parents/guardians regarding the student assignment policy
- Assist parents/guardians in selecting an educational environment most appropriate for their child's needs
- Assist parents/guardians in the initial stages of registration required by schools, i.e., documentation of birth and immunization, completion of Home Language Survey Forms, Medicaid eligibility, etc.
- Answer questions regarding school policies

Grades 7 – 12

(~~DELETE~~ Students new to our city in grades 7-8 register at the Dr. James L. Garvey Parent Information Center). New students in grades (~~DELETE 9 and replace with 7-12~~) have the option to register at their respective high school. Potential English learners must complete registration at the Dr. James L. Garvey Parent Information Center.

Students in grades 7-12 who are transferring within the Worcester Public Schools will do so at the appropriate middle or high school based on their new address.

Home Language

State and federal regulations require that all schools determine the language(s) spoken in each student's home in order to identify their specific language needs. If a language other than English is spoken in the home, the district is required to do further assessment to determine whether the student is an English (~~DELETE Language~~) Learner and to place the student in the appropriate instructional program to support content area and language learning.

Opt-Out Policy for English Learners (ELs)

The Worcester Public Schools is committed to comply in good faith with all federal, state and local laws, rules and guidelines in the area of education for English (~~DELETE Language~~) Learners. Federal civil rights laws, namely, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 (EEOA), require schools to take appropriate steps to address the language barriers that prevent ELs from meaningfully participating in their education. Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71A and supporting regulations provide the state framework for the education of English learners in Massachusetts.

Parent/Guardians of ELs may notify the district of their choice to have their child “opt-out” of English learner education programs. The decision to opt-out must be made by the parents/guardians (or students over 18 years of age) and must be **voluntary** and **informed**.

In opt-out cases, the district must inform the parents/guardians of the services the child would receive in the district's English learner education programs, as well as the type of support that would be provided to the student if the parents/ guardians decide to “opt-out” of English learner services.

A parent's/guardian's choice to opt-out means their child will not receive separate English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction focused on language development, but the district will provide the necessary support and actively monitor the student's progress to ensure that the student's English language and academic needs resulting from lack of English proficiency are met.

In order to comply with the laws, the following procedures shall be followed in every school building:

1. Parents/guardians who contact the school to request that their child opt-out of ESL services will be invited to attend a meeting at the school to include a school administrator and an ESL teacher. If the parents/guardians have identified in the Home Language Survey that they prefer an interpreter at meetings, the district shall provide an interpreter at the meeting.
2. No school personnel shall influence or encourage parents/guardians to request that their child opt-out of ESL services.
3. At the meeting, the district shall inform the parents/guardians of the services the child would receive in the district's English learner education programs, as well as the type of support that would be provided to the students if the parents/guardians decide to opt-out.
4. If the parents/guardians are unable or unwilling to attend a meeting in person at the school, the school can offer an alternative means of meeting by telephone or otherwise.
5. The school shall provide the parents/guardians with the Opt-Out Form in the parent's/guardian's native language if the parents/guardians have indicated in the Home Language Survey that they seek written information in their native language.
6. The school shall retain a copy of the Opt-Out Form in the student's cumulative file.
7. If the parents/guardians decide to opt-out of an English **(DELETE language)** learner program, the school should place the student in an English language mainstream classroom with an SEI-endorsed teacher. The school may also provide support from a reading specialist or other specialist as appropriate in order to ensure that the student has access to the curriculum and is provided the same opportunities to master the same academic standards and curriculum framework as their native English-speaking peers.
8. The student will continue to be classified as an "EL" on district reports, and will continue to be assessed annually in his/her language proficiency with the state-mandated English language proficiency test, ACCESS for **(ELLS REPLACE with ELS)** 2.0. The parents/guardians will be notified of their child's participation in such assessments, as well as assessment results.
9. The initial opt-out of a student remains active for one school year. According to new guidelines from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), parents are now required to complete a form **annually** requesting their child remain opted out of ESL services. The Annual Parent Choice Form also allows families who have previously made the decision to opt-out of ESL, an opportunity to reconsider ESL instruction for their child.

Massachusetts School Immunization Requirements for School Year 2021-22

	Child Care/ Pre-K	Kindergarten	Grades 1-6	Grades 7-12
Hepatitis B	3 doses	3 doses	3 doses	3 doses
DTaP/DTP/ Td/Tdap	>/=4 doses DTap/DTP	5 doses DTap/DTP	>/=4 doses DTap/DTP or >/=3 doses TD	>/=4 doses DTap/DTP or >/=3 doses TD, plus 1 dose Tdap
Polio	>/=3 doses	4 doses	>/=3 doses	>/=3 doses
Hib	1 to 4 doses	N/A	N/A	N/A
MMR	1 dose	2 doses	2 doses	2 doses
Varicela	1 dose	2 doses	2 doses	2 doses
Meningococcal	N/A	N/A	N/A	1 dose grade 7 entry, 1 dose on or after 16 years of age or grade 11 entry

Students lacking proper documentation of required immunizations shall be excluded until proof of such immunization is provided (102 CMR 7.07 and 105 CMR 220.00). If a child cannot be immunized due to medical reasons, (requires physician documentation yearly) or if a parent refuses to have a child immunized because of religious beliefs (requires a parent-signed letter yearly), the non-immunized student will be excluded from school during outbreaks of diseases for which the student is not immunized (MGL c. 111, § 3, 6, 7, 109, 110, 112 and 105 CMR 300.00).

- **Lead Screening documentation is required of all students prior to entering Pre-K and/or kindergarten (105 CMR 460).**
- **Physical Examination documentation is required of all students entering grades K, 4, 7 and 9, and yearly for all student athletes.**

An **immunization clinic** is available for students at the Dr. James L. Garvey Parent Information Center (PIC). All state-required immunizations are provided by an

RN at no cost. Please refer to the WPS website for hours of operation or call the Parent Information Center at 508-799-3194.

Registration Policy Elementary (K-6)

Students in the Worcester Public Schools shall attend schools based upon neighborhood district lines. They are also eligible to attend the five citywide magnet schools based on conditions of space availability and the magnet school being in compliance with the Worcester Public Schools' Deisolation Plan. The five citywide magnet schools are: (1) Chandler Magnet School, (2) City View Discovery School, (3) Jacob Hiatt Magnet School (4) Norrback Avenue School and (5) Worcester Arts Magnet School. Elementary students residing in the North quadrant are eligible to attend the North quadrant magnet school, Roosevelt School, based on space availability. Under the Voluntary Controlled Transfer Policy, transfers are permitted to any school within that school's quadrant provided the transfer has a positive effect on the minority percentage of the school and space is available.

Secondary (Grades 7-12)

Depending on the school district in which the student resides, he/she can attend his/her local high school. This is based on the quadrant of residence of the student at the time of enrollment, unless special permission has been requested by the parent/guardian and approved by the District Administration to attend a different school. Attendance at Worcester Technical High School is based upon an application and selection process approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Voluntary Controlled Transfer Policy

I. Conditions for Out-of-District Transfers

It is the policy of the Worcester Public Schools that students shall attend schools based upon neighborhood district lines. Exceptions to this policy are allowed under the "Voluntary Controlled Transfer Policy" which permits transfers to other elementary, middle and high schools or to citywide magnet schools under the following conditions:

1. There must be space available in the receiving school.
2. Elementary, middle and high schools having a minority percentage greater than the citywide average on October 1 of each year will adhere to the following restrictions:
 - a. Minority students will not be allowed to transfer into a school which has a minority percentage greater than the citywide average on October 1 of each year.

- b. Majority students will not be allowed to transfer out of a school except in the case where the sending school is in compliance and the receiving school is out of compliance as a result of having a minority percentage greater than 15 percentage points above the citywide minority percentage.
 - c. All students, both minority and majority, shall be eligible to attend citywide magnet schools and secondary magnet schools. In order to exercise this eligibility, the magnet school must be in compliance.
3. Elementary, middle and high schools having a minority percentage less than the citywide average on October 1 of each year will adhere to the following restrictions:
- a. Majority students will not be allowed to transfer into a school which has a minority percentage less than the citywide average on October 1 of each year.
 - b. Minority students will not be allowed to transfer out of a school except in the case where the sending school is in compliance and the receiving school is out of compliance as a result of having a minority percentage less than 15 percentage points below the citywide minority percentage.
 - c. All students, both minority and majority, shall be eligible to attend citywide magnet schools and secondary magnet schools. In order to exercise this eligibility, the magnet school must be in compliance.
4. Voluntary transfer requests will be considered for properly documented medical disabilities and other unique circumstances.
5. Spanish Bilingual, Structured English and Special Education Programs are offered in certain schools. Any student requiring these services will be enrolled in the school that will meet his/her assessed needs.
6. When a student changes residence and would enter grade 6, 8 or 12, he/she may finish the year in that school provided that he/she is a resident of Worcester and has received the out-of-district principal's permission to remain in that school.
7. Students who enroll in an out of district magnet program or the Worcester Technical High School must complete the year in the out-of-district school.

II. Procedures for Applying for a "Voluntary Transfer"

1. Applications and a policy statement are available at the Parent Information Center or the Office for Instruction and School Leadership:

Parent Information Center:	(508) 799-3194
Burncoat/South Quadrants	(508) 799-3264
Doherty/North Quadrants:	(508) 799-3221
*Technical Quadrant:	(508) 799-3499

*Applications for Worcester Technical High School may be obtained in all secondary guidance offices or at the Technical School Admissions Office.

1. The application must be filled out and returned to the appropriate office. Parent Information Center or the Office for Instruction and School Leadership.
2. A written approval or denial will be sent to the home of the parent/guardian and copies will be forwarded to the principals of both the sending and receiving schools.
3. A copy of the application and the approval or denial letter will be kept on file in the Office for Instruction and School Leadership.

III. Hardship Appeals Process

If the parent/guardian disagrees with the decision of the Office for Instruction and School Leadership, an appeal must be filed before the first day of the school year. A maximum of two weeks will be allowed to appeal the decision in writing to the Chairperson of the Hardship Appeals Board, Parent Information Center, 768 Main Street, Worcester, MA 01610.

The board will review each case referred to it and make timely decisions relative to the disposition of the appeal. A copy of the decision will be sent to the parent/guardian and the Office for Instruction and School Leadership. Proceedings of the Hardship Appeals Board will be recorded and maintained by personnel in the Office for Instruction and School Leadership.

Policy for Non-resident Foreign Students holding J-1 Visas

Admission:

- By the first week in January each Worcester Public School high school principal will determine how many spaces are available (no fewer than three) in his/her school to accommodate the admission of non-resident foreign students whose host family resides in their district (or who otherwise obtain special permission from the Managers for Instruction and School Leadership on a space available basis) **for the following school year**. No high school principal will enroll more than three non-resident foreign students until this determination is made and forwarded to the Managers for Instruction and School Leadership.

Criteria for Attendance:

- Foreign exchange students must provide certified proof of prior academic performance from the high school(s) in his/her native country.
- Transcripts from intermediary or sponsoring agencies will not be accepted as appropriate documentation for determining past academic performance unless they bear the seal of the school and/or are presented in a sealed envelope from the school.
- Acceptance to the Worcester Public Schools will be on a one (1) year basis with the sponsoring organization or guardian required to reapply annually for continued study.

- Once admitted, the foreign student will be subject to all rules, policies, regulations and procedures as they relate to all students in the system.
- The system will provide an academic record of the foreign student's participation while a member of the system to the sponsoring organization or the parent/guardian, as required.
- Foreign students holding J-1 visas participating in this program are exempt from paying tuition.
- The system will award appropriate city (general) diplomas and/or school diplomas if students can demonstrate through appropriate documentation and verification that they have met the prerequisite requirements of the Worcester Public Schools.

School Choice

The Worcester Public Schools participates in the Massachusetts School Choice program. The School Choice program allows parents to send their children to schools in communities other than the city or town in which they reside. For the 2021-22 school year, the School Committee has approved the following:

1. Student enrollment in the Inter-District School Choice program is based on availability and limited preference will be given to young siblings, if space is available.
2. Parent/guardian is responsible for transportation to the district school.
3. All Pre-K to Grade 12 schools participate in the program with the following exceptions:
 - a. Chapter 74 approved programs in the comprehensive high schools
 - b. Chapter 74 approved programs in the Worcester Technical High School
 - c. Alternative Pathways Programs
 - d. Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) Pathway Programs
4. Students accepted into the Inter-District School Choice program may apply for schools on the same basis as resident students, but the Intra-District Choice Plan (Voluntary Transfer) may give preference to resident students in assigning students to schools.

To obtain information regarding the Inter-District School Choice program, please contact the **Parent Information Center** at 508-799-3194 or the **Office for Instruction and School Leadership** at 508-799-3499.

STUDENT DRESS CODE POLICY

The district's core values, in relation to student dress, are that appropriate dress and attire contribute to a safe, respectful and inclusive learning environment. The emphasis of this policy is on equitable treatment of students and (**regulations change to regulation**) of student dress must be free from bias. While students have a right to self-expression by the dress and hair style of their own choosing, their clothing shall not disrupt the school's educational process. In addition, students are expected to wear garments that meet acceptable standards of health, safety and cleanliness.

Head coverings such as scarves, durags, hair wraps, cultural and religious headwear are permissible. Hats and bandanas are not permissible unless for medical reasons. Clothing should provide appropriate body coverage. Bareback, midriff and low-cut shirts are not permitted. In addition, attire that reveals undergarments, and garments that are made of see-through materials (mesh, sheer fabrics) without a blouse/shirt underneath are not allowed. Clothing must cover undergarments when sitting, standing or bending.

Safe footwear must be worn in the school building. Seasonal footwear is recommended (example: boots and closed shoes to be worn in the winter).

Student clothing and jewelry shall be free of graphics/images that are obscene, violent, vulgar, sexist, racist and/or promote the use of illegal drugs/alcohol/tobacco and cause disorder or disrupt the educational process. Apparel that is gang, violence and/or cult related (refer to Rule 15) is not permitted.

Outerwear will not be worn in school buildings (example: jackets/parkas/windbreakers). Students may wear hooded sweatshirts or shirts but may not wear the hoods up or covering their heads or faces in the building or on school property. Earbuds or headphones may not be worn or used except when it is connected to a learning activity with permission of school personnel. Specific accommodations will be granted to students who require headphones to access their learning.

The School principal has the discretion to render judgements regarding what is and what is not appropriate based upon the recognition that students have the right to freedom of expression for their clothing and hair so long as their choices do not cause disorder or disruption to the educational process. The principal will determine what consequences should follow when a student does not comply with the policy.

Career Vocational Technical Education Programs: Shop and Uniform Policy

All trades require specific uniforms or clothing and adherence to workplace standards of appearance beyond the requirements for school dress. Shop instructors, with the respective trade department heads, identify the necessary dress.

Shop instructors, with the respective department heads, have a responsibility to provide a safe shop environment for all students. The Administration enforces these requirements.

Voluntary School Uniform Policy

1. Voluntary uniform policies must comply with existing School Committee policies on student attire.
2. Prior to seeking School Committee approval, a majority of the school council members and the school principal must approve the school's voluntary uniform policy. The principal will forward the request to the Clerk of the School Committee who places it on the agenda for School Committee approval which then allows the school to implement the policy.
3. There will be no disciplinary action if a student does not adhere to the voluntary uniform policy.

POLICY REGARDING TELEVISED BROADCASTS

Many times, the Worcester Public Schools extracurricular activities and programs are broadcast on Charter Channel 191 WEA-TV and participants may be shown in these broadcasts. Re-broadcasts of all programs may be made throughout the school year at unannounced times.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE

It is the policy of the Worcester Public Schools that the Pledge of Allegiance be recited and a moment of silence be observed at all levels on a daily basis.

SAFETY AND BEHAVIOR

INTERNET SAFETY AND ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Purpose

The Worcester Public Schools recognize the value of computer and other electronic resources to improve student learning and enhance the administration and operation of its schools. The Worcester Public Schools encourages the responsible use of computers; computer networks, including the internet; and other electronic resources in support of the mission and goals of our district.

It is the policy of the Worcester Public Schools to: (a) prevent user access over its computer network to transmit inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications; (b) prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity; (c) prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and (d) comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act [Pub. L. No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254(h)]. The Worcester Public School system certifies that its schools have adopted and are enforcing Internet safety policies as part of Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act. Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) as amended in the Broadband Data Improvement Act [Pub. L. No. 110.385] to include educating minors about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms and cyber bullying awareness and response. The district has adopted curriculum to remain in compliance with the most recent FCC Report and order FCC 11-125.

Terms of Agreement

In order to use networked and Internet resources, all students and parents/guardians must sign and return the signature page as contained on the back cover of the Student Handbook, and those under age 18 must obtain parental permission.

Internet Safety

The Worcester Public Schools is in compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). The Worcester Public Schools will comply with any additional state and federal regulations that pertain to technology use within the district and through use of the Worcester Public Schools District network infrastructure and servers that is forthcoming from the local, state, and federal regulatory agencies.

A third party filtering system is in place that prevents accessing web pages that are 1) obscene, 2) pornographic, or 3) deemed harmful to minors. The district will monitor the online activities of users. The staff and students are advised never to access, keep or send anything that they would not want made public. While some pages are blocked by human intervention, other sites are blocked based on an algorithm that attempts to discern inappropriate sites. Best efforts are made to make the filtering as accurate as possible given the vast number of websites on the Internet. Subject to staff supervision, technology protection measures may be disabled or, in the case of minors, minimized only for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.

Inappropriate Network Usage

Staff and students should be aware that some material accessible via the Internet might contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive. The Internet is to be used for constructive educational purposes only. Drives and files may be reviewed by network administrators occasionally to maintain system integrity.

To the extent practical, steps shall be taken to promote the safety and security of users of the Worcester Public Schools online computer network when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, and other forms of direct electronic communications.

Specifically, as required by the Children’s Internet Protection Act, prevention of inappropriate network usage includes: a) unauthorized access, including so-called “hacking,” and other unlawful activities; and b) unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors.

Unacceptable Uses

The activities listed below are not permitted. The list of activities described below is not meant to be comprehensive. The Worcester Public Schools reserves the right to make judgments both as to what constitutes inappropriate behavior and the consequences that apply.

- Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures
- Using obscene language
- Giving personal information, such as full name, phone number, address or identifiable photo without permission from teacher and parent or guardian
- Harassing, insulting or attacking others (cyber-bullying)
- Damaging or modifying computers, computer systems or network resources, whether physically or through use of software means such as deletion, formatting, viruses, hacking, phishing or cracking
- Attempting to bypass web content filters through proxy sites or other means
- Violating copyright laws
- Using others’ passwords
- Trespassing in others’ folders, work, or files
- Intentionally wasting limited resources
- Installing any software, shareware or freeware without Principal approval and installation by on-site contact person

- Employing the network for commercial purposes, financial gain or fraud
The network, wired and wireless, is for educational uses only. Any non WPS device on the Worcester Public Schools network shall be used for educational purposes only. Non educational use is prohibited.

Penalties

Violation of any terms set forth in this policy may result in the loss of Worcester Public Schools computer network privileges, disciplinary action and/or appropriate legal action.

Electronic Messaging Guidelines

The Worcester Public Schools contracts with a vendor to provide emergency and informational calls, texts and emails. The Telephone Consumer Protection Act of 1991 “TCPA” (and subsequent amendments) was created to prevent consumers from receiving “robo” marketing calls from telemarketers. By signing the student handbook, you are providing prior express consent for the school district to contact you and your family via phone, email or text message for emergency and informational purposes. If you would like to opt-out of receiving informational messages, you can do so at www.worcesterschools.org/tcpa. Emergency messages will continue to be sent to the contact numbers provided, as authorized under TCPA.

Note: Worcester Public Schools’ teaching staff is not contractually obligated to check email or other electronic messaging systems. Please contact your child’s teacher personally to confirm whether they utilize these systems. When using email, please follow these important guidelines: Email is not confidential. Teachers will not respond via email to discuss contentious, emotional, or highly confidential issues. These issues are to be handled by phone or personal contact. Emails should be used for general information that is non-vital. For example, do not use email to inform a teacher that your child is not to go home on the bus. A teacher may not read the message in time. A phone call should be made to make sure your message is clearly received.

Adoption

The School Committee of the Worcester Public Schools adopted this Internet Safety and Acceptable Use Policy at a public meeting following normal public notice on May 21, 2009. This amended policy was adopted by the School Committee of the Worcester Public Schools on June 5, 2014.

Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)

The Worcester Public Schools utilizes a number of computer software applications and web-based services to supplement educational services provided by school-based staff. While these tools are reviewed to ensure that they provide students with effective tools for learning, the applications and services are not operated by the district but by third parties. In order for students to use these programs and services, certain personal identifying information – typically the student’s name and e-mail address – may be provided to the website/application operator. The Worcester Public Schools enters into a data sharing agreement with third parties to ensure student data is handled in a manner not in violation of federal requirements.

Under the federal Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), the websites/application operators must provide parent/guardian notification and obtain consent before collecting personal information from children under the age of 13. The law permits school districts to consent to the collection of personal information on behalf of its students thus eliminating the need for individual parent/guardian to consent directly to individual website/application providers.

A list of the sites used in our classrooms with links to privacy policies, terms of service and our data share agreements can be found on our Student Data Privacy Consortium website:

https://sdpc.a4l.org/district_search.php?state=MA&districtID=786

If a parent/guardian wishes for their child to be removed from specific third party services, an opt-out form can be obtained at the above district website. Completed forms should be returned to the school principal.

Science Laboratory Safety

Science is taught using an inquiry based approach in the Worcester Public Schools. This can be done safely only with the cooperation of students to the teacher’s directions and procedures. It is the responsibility of students to conduct them- selves in an appropriate manner in the lab setting. Students are expected to:

1. Sign a safety contract which emphasizes their responsibilities in the sciencelab;
2. Have parents/guardians co-sign the contract to alert them to these responsibilities;
3. Be aware of measures to be taken should an accident occur;
4. Know classroom evacuation procedures in case of an emergency;
5. Use protective equipment (gloves, aprons, goggles, etc.) provided as instructed; and
6. Refrain from eating and drinking in the laboratory.

SECURITY MEASURES

Crisis Prevention and De-escalation (Physical Restraint)

The Board of Education adopted new regulations on the use of physical restraint in public education programs. The regulations (603 CMR 46.00) are meant to promote safety for all students. Physical restraint shall be considered an emergency procedure of last resort and shall be used only when a student’s behavior poses a threat of assault, or imminent, serious, physical harm to self or others and the student is not responsive to verbal directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions, or such interventions are deemed to be inappropriate under the circumstances. Mechanical restraints, medication restraints and seclusion are prohibited in all public education programs.

The amended regulations may be found at:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr46.html?section=all>

Security Cameras in Schools

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

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

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

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

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

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

Emergency Plans

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

The Superintendent shall review annually the safety plan with local police and fire officials. Building principals will meet all requirements for conducting fire drills and emergency response drills to give students practice in moving with orderly

dispatch to designated areas under emergency conditions, and the staff practice in carrying out their assigned responsibilities for building evacuation.

Student Lockers

All lockers available to students are the property of the Worcester Public Schools. Use of lockers by students is regulated by the school administration and all lockers are subject to inspection by the school administration when deemed appropriate.

Any student assigned a locker must use a school issued lock. The administration will remove all non-school issued locks. If a locker is not used/assigned, the administration will secure it with a lock.

Students must store all book bags, gym bags, and outerwear (coats and jackets) in their lockers during the school day.

For security reasons, students will not be permitted to wear outerwear (coats and jackets) during the school day. Students will be permitted to carry backpacks made of a mesh or transparent material at the secondary level.

Any weapon, drugs or other prohibited items or substances found in a locker in violation of school policy may be considered to be the property of the student assigned to the locker for purposes of disciplinary action under this code.

Access to Students During School Hours

The Legal Office of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has supported the present policy of the Worcester Public Schools regarding permitting persons to meet with students during school hours without parental permission. The following persons may be granted access to students during school hours:

1. The custodial parent (the parent with physical custody more than 50% of the time) or guardian or personnel or agency legally authorized to act on behalf of the child in place of or in conjunction with the father, mother, or guardian. According to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, §34H, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request to the school principal for such access. For further information, contact your child's principal.
2. A student, age 14, or upon entering grade 9, may consent to meet with an individual.
3. Certain individuals, including school personnel, police, and employees of certain state agencies may be granted access to students in the performance of their official duties. This information can be viewed at:
<https://worcesterschools.org/wp-content/uploads/handbook/Access%20to%20Students%20During%20School%20Hours.pdf>

If any court ordered restrictions exist regarding access to your child, it is imperative that you provide the WPS a copy of the order so that we can comply with the order of the court.

Dismissal of Students

1. Students may only be dismissed to persons specified by parents/guardians in writing. Principals may remind families to update student emergency contact information to include a robust network of persons who may be called in case of an emergency.

2. Parents may be provided with a Caregiver Affidavit to designate someone to make educational and/or medical decisions for a child if the child is temporarily living with someone who is not the parent/guardian.

Handling of Students Whose Parents Have Been Detained or Taken Into Custody

If a school receives notification that the parent/guardian of a student has been detained or taken into custody by immigration law enforcement officials or agents, the school will take the following steps:

1. Contact the person(s) listed on the student's emergency card to inform the person(s) of the situation and ask if they can retrieve the student;
2. Make arrangements for school counselors to be available to support the student;
3. Contact DCF if there is no responsible adult authorized by parents to receive the student;
4. Consult with the district's homeless liaison if the student becomes homeless as a result of their parent/guardian's detention.

Visitors in the Schools

All Worcester Public Schools are posted with signs requiring that all visitors must report to the Office of the Principal. This ensures that the school administration knows who is visiting in the building, the reason for the visit, and if the timing of the visit is appropriate.

The following sign-in procedures will be adhered to upon entering a school building:

- Enter through the front door (some schools have Intercom Systems that will allow you to enter after ringing a bell and identifying yourself)
- Go immediately to the front office
- Please sign in at the register
- Affix a Visitor's Tag on a visible area of your attire
- Wait for further instructions from the school clerk or administrator on how to proceed to the respective visiting area or classroom

Any other entry into a school building by visitors will be considered trespassing. Intruders into the building are immediately asked to leave, and if they refuse to do so, local law enforcement officials are contacted for assistance. Trespassing laws will be enforced in accordance with this policy.

Use of Motor Vehicles

Students are extended the privilege of bringing automobiles to school as long as they respect the safety of others and obey these basic rules:

1. Automobiles must be parked in the assigned student parking areas.
2. Students who leave the campus in motor vehicles during the school hours without following established dismissal procedures will be suspended.
3. Idling of a motor vehicle engine in excess of 5 minutes is prohibited on school property. Violators will be fined.
4. Students must drive slowly and carefully on or near school grounds, always remembering that pedestrians have the right of way.

5. Cars may not be visited during the school day except with principal's approval
6. Parking privileges will be revoked or suspended for the following reasons:
 - a. Speed in excess of 15 m.p.h.
 - b. Any act endangering life or property while on school grounds.
 - c. Parking in areas other than student parking areas.
7. Parking privileges will not be available without an appropriate school registration and parking permit.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Philosophy

It is the policy of the Worcester Public Schools to ensure fair and effective disciplinary practices. Every student has a right to an education in a safe, secure and supportive environment, and every teacher has a right to expect respectful, prepared students in his/her classroom.

A key aspect of a student's education is the acquisition of social and behavioral skills, since effective learning can only occur when students obey basic rules of conduct. This means that:

1. Students have a responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner that is in the best interest of the school and its students.
2. Parents/guardians have a responsibility to develop positive attitudes toward study and behavior.
3. Teachers have a responsibility to continue behavior development through teaching and discipline in the classroom.
4. The Administration and the School Committee have a responsibility to support and maintain the enforcement of discipline within the school buildings **(ADD through policies and practices that are designed to use discretion and to re-engage the student in the learning process.)**

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in this handbook. Chapter 71B of the Massachusetts General Laws, requires that additional provisions be made for students who have been found by an evaluation team to have special needs and whose program is described in an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). Such provisions will also be made, when appropriate, for students with a disability who are receiving accommodations or related services under a 504 plan.

The Code of Conduct is based on a system of progressive discipline with a goal of limiting the use of long-term suspension as a consequence for student misconduct until other consequences have been considered, as appropriate. The administrator will exercise discretion in determining disciplinary consequences.

The administrator may utilize his/her discretion to significantly increase penalties in the cases of second and third offenses or for other factors. In determining the severity of the penalty or suspension, the appropriate administrator may consider all relevant facts, including but not limited to: 1) previous disciplinary record, 2) severity of disruption to the educational process, 3) degree of danger to self and/or others, 4) the degree to which the student is willing to change his/her inappropriate behavior and 5) whether alternative consequences are appropriate to re-engage the student in learning.

School-Imposed Discipline

Expulsion means the removal of a student from the school premises, regular classroom activities, and school activities for more than ninety (90) school days, indefinitely, or permanently, as permitted under MGL c. 71, §§37H or 37H½ for: a) possession of a dangerous weapon; b) possession of a controlled substance; c) assault on a member of the educational staff; or d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, or adjudication or admission of guilt with respect to such felony, if a principal or his/her designee determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school, as provided in MGL c. 71, §§37H or 37H½ .

In-school suspension means removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises, for no more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions during the school year. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days. In-school suspension for ten (10) days or less, consecutively or cumulatively during a school year, shall not be considered a short-term suspension under these regulations. If a student is placed in in-school suspension for more than ten (10) days, consecutively or cumulatively during a school year, such suspension shall be deemed a long-term suspension for due process, appeal, and reporting purposes under 603 CMR 53.00.

Short-term suspension means the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten (10) consecutive school days or less. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days.

Long-term suspension means the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days. Except for students who are charged with a disciplinary offense set forth in subsections (a) or (b) of MGL c. 71, §37 H, or in section 37H ½ of MGL c. 71, no student may be placed on long-term suspension for one or more disciplinary offenses for more than ninety (90) school days in a school year beginning with the first day that the student is removed from school. No long-term suspension under section MGL c. 71 §37H ¾ shall extend beyond the end of the school year in which such suspension is imposed.

Other Discipline: Demerits or detentions may be imposed for infractions of these rules at the school level. Alternative consequences may be used, as appropriate, and include the use of **evidence(ADD -)based** strategies and programs such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive behavioral interventions and supports.

Participation in clubs and activities at Worcester Public Schools and attending school-sponsored, school-related events is a privilege afforded to students who remain in good standing. To participate in school activities, events and clubs, students are expected to maintain good attendance and demonstrate good behavior and citizenship during school and at school-sponsored events. Eligibility for participation in activities, events, clubs, awards, scholarships and honorary positions at Worcester Public Schools is limited to students who are currently enrolled in and attending Worcester Public Schools in good standing. Students not meeting these expectations may be excluded at the discretion of the principal or his/her designee. If a student is suspended from an extracurricular activity, at the determination of the principal, the student may be excluded from that specific type of event involving the student's school of enrollment for the remainder of the school year. A student's removal from extracurricular activities and attendance at school sponsored events is not subject to the procedural requirements of MGL c. 71 §37H ¾ (Principal's Hearing). The removal is not a suspension for the purpose of counting the school days that a student is suspended. Parents/guardians will be notified when a student is removed or excluded from extracurricular activities.

School discipline shall not include the right to inflict corporal punishment. **(DELETE except that) (ADD However,)** reasonable force may be used as necessary to protect other students or other persons from assault or the imminent threat of bodily injury.

School Officials may legally search a student and confiscate property provided:

1. there are reasonable grounds to suspect a search will turn up evidence tending to show that the student has violated or is violating the law or the school's rules; and
2. the search as conducted is reasonably related in scope to the circumstances that justified the search in the first place.

Disruptive Conduct

Violation of any of the following rules is grounds for discipline as defined above and pertains to actions both on or off school grounds during school or school-related situations.

Rule 1. – Damage or Destruction of School Property

A student shall not steal or cause damage to school property, nor make such attempts. The Administration **(DELETE intends) (ADD reserves the right)** to file criminal complaints against, and seek restitution from, any student who violates this rule.

Rule 2. – Damage or Destruction of Private Property, Cheating, Forgery,

Plagiarism A student shall not steal or cause damage to private property nor make such attempts during school situations on or off school grounds or at any school-related situations including, but not limited to, travel to and from the situation. A student shall not cheat, forge or plagiarize any work submitted for academic credit or documentation.

Rule 3. – Physical Assault on a School Employee

A student shall not **(ADD use or attempt to use physical force against a school employee or)** cause or attempt to cause physical injury to a school employee

on or off the school grounds or during school situations or school-related situations including, but not limited to, travel to and from the situation. Any student who assaults any school employee or any student who assaults a principal, teacher, instructional assistant, or other educational staff on school premises or at school sponsored or school related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion or a long-term suspension from the school by the school principal.

Rule 4. – Physical Assault on a Student or Other Person not Employed by the School

A student shall not (**ADD use or attempt to use physical force against a student or other person or**) cause or attempt physical injury to another student or any other person on or off school grounds at any school-related situation including, but not limited to, travel to and from the situation.

Rule 5. – Verbal Assault on a School Employee

A student shall not assault verbally any school employee on or off school grounds at any school related situation including, but not limited to, travel to and from the situation. Verbal assault means (**DELETE defiance, insolence, rudeness,**) obscenity, bullying or abusive language. Abusive language shall include but not be limited to derogatory statements concerning race, sexual orientation, color, gender, age, religion, gender identity, national origin or disability.

Rule 5A. – Threatening a School Employee

A student shall not threaten any teacher, administrator, or other school employee or volunteer with physical harm so as to place such person in reasonable apprehension that force will be used to inflict such physical harm.

Rule 6. – Verbal Assault on, or Threat to, a Student or Non-employee of School

A student shall not assault verbally any person on or off school grounds at any school-related situation including, but not limited to, travel to and from the situation. Verbal assault means (**DELETE defiance, insolence, rudeness,**) obscenity, bullying or abusive language. Abusive language shall include but not be limited to derogatory statements concerning race, sexual orientation, color, gender, age, religion, gender identity, national origin or disability.

Rule 6A. - Written Assault or Threat on a Student or Non-employee of School

A student shall not threaten, intimidate or bully in writing, any person on or off school grounds at any school-related situation including, but not limited to, travel to and from the situation. Written threats mean any messages including e-mail, text messaging or any other cyber-related forms of communication; e.g. chat rooms.

Rule 7. - Policy on Possession or Use of Weapons

If any device which may be considered a weapon under this policy is distributed by a teacher, for use in the classroom, then no student receiving such a device shall be charged with an offense under Rule 7 provided the device remains in the classroom and provided the device is only used for the classroom purpose.

A student shall not possess, use, or attempt to use, any weapon on school premises or at a school related situation, including but not limited to travel to and from the situation.

In order to protect the students of the Worcester Public Schools, 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 may be subject to expulsion or a long-term suspension from the school by the principal regardless of the size of the knife.

For purposes of this policy, a dangerous “weapon” includes but is not limited to a gun (including a B.B., pellet or other replica device), knife, sling shot, blowgun, blackjack, metallic knuckles including a ring intended to be worn on more than one finger (“fused rings”) or knuckles or any substance which could be put to the same use with the same or similar effect as metallic knuckles, nunchaku, zoobow, also known as klackers or kung fu sticks, or any similar weapon consisting of two sticks of wood, plastic or metal connected at one end by a length of rope, chain, wire or leather, a shuriken or any similar pointed star-like object intended to injure a person when thrown, or any armband, made with leather which has metallic spikes, points or studs or any similar material weighted with metal or other substance and worn on the hand, or a manrikigusari or similar length of chain having weighted ends. Any other device or object used or attempted to be used to inflict bodily harm on a person may be considered a weapon.

This policy will be implemented according to the due process provisions of the WPS Discipline Code applicable to Regular and Special Education students.

Rule 8. - Policy on Possession or Use of Drugs or Alcohol

- a. Any student who distributes or possesses, with intent to distribute, any controlled substance as defined in MGL c. 94C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, or heroin, on school premises or at a school sponsored activity, may be expelled or have a **(ADD short-term or)** long-term suspension imposed from the Worcester Public Schools by the school principal. This applies to drug paraphernalia such as scales, grinders, pipes, electronic smoking devices and any and all instruments used for drug products.
- b. Any student who uses or possesses any controlled substance as defined in MGL c. 94C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine or heroin, or is under the influence of such a substance on school premises or at a school sponsored activity may be subject to expulsion or a **(ADD short-term or)** long-term suspension from school by the school principal.
- c. Possession or use of alcohol on the premises of the Worcester Public Schools is forbidden. Any student who uses or possesses alcohol on school premises, or at a school sponsored activity, or is under the influence of alcohol on school premises, or a school sponsored situation, may be **(DELETE expelled or have)** **(ADD subject to a short-term or)** a long-term suspension imposed from the Worcester Public Schools.
- d. This policy will be implemented subject to the due process provision of the Worcester Public Schools Discipline Code applicable to Regular and Special Education students. Any student charged with a violation of Rule 8 shall have the due process rights outlined in Due Process, Section III.
- e. Possession or use of drugs or controlled substances which are medically prescribed is not a violation of this policy. However, all prescribed medications will be administered to students by authorized **(ADD school)** personnel and will be kept in a secure location.

Rule 9. - Excessive Tardiness

A student shall not be tardy from school or class without legitimate cause.

Rule 10. – Repeated School Violations

A student shall not repeatedly fail to comply with directions and reasonable requests of any authorized school personnel during any period of time he/she is under school supervision.

Rule 11. - Hazing

A student shall not organize or participate in hazing. A student with knowledge of any hazing activity must report the incident to the school administrator.

Rule 12. - Sounding False Alarms

A student shall not, without reasonable cause, by outcry, bells, or otherwise cause a false alarm of fire (such action shall be reported under MGL c. 269, §13). No student shall set a fire in a school building or at a school-sponsored site or situation.

Rule 13. - Smoking and Tobacco Products

Smoking, possession, use, or distribution of tobacco or tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and vaping devices within school buildings, school facilities, school grounds, on school buses or at a school sponsored activity by any person are prohibited. Any student who violates this rule may be suspended.

Rule 14. - Cell Phones, Electronic Devices, and Laser Pointing Devices

While on school premises or at a school sponsored event during the school day, a student shall not, without expressed permission of appropriate school personnel, use any cell phone, smart phone, tablet, camera or any other type of electronic device which may potentially be disruptive of school activities or a distraction to students. Electronic devices shall include any cell phone, smart phone, tablet or anything powered by electricity and is suitable for communicating any oral, voice, audio or text messages or postings or for recording or communicating any audio, voice, picture, image or video imagery. Students are not permitted to have their cell phones or electronic devices (~~DELETED powered~~) while in school (**ADD unless permitted by a school staff member**).

Students should also be aware that recording an individual without his/her consent could result in criminal charges under MGL CH. 272.

Use of such devices in violation of this rule may result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to, out-of-school suspension time. The School Administration reserves the right to confiscate cellular phones or other electronic devices when a student is believed to be violating this rule.

A student shall not use or possess a laser pointing device of any type on school premises or at a school sponsored event, unless such device is distributed by a teacher or its use is authorized by a teacher in connection with school work. Use of a laser pointing device against the face, eyes, or head of another individual may be considered a weapon for disciplinary purposes including, but not limited to, the possibility of long-term suspension.

Enforcement and Penalties:

This cell phone policy may be enforced by the principal, any teacher (including substitutes) or by any other school official or employee designated by the principal.

Enforcement personnel shall have the right to confiscate any cell phone or electronic device possessed or used in violation of the Code of Conduct.

Penalties for students found in violation of the policy will be as follows:

1. First offense: Student's cell phone/electronic device will be confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the school day.
2. Second and subsequent offenses: Student's cell phone/electronic device will be confiscated and returned only to the student's parents or guardians. Any such parent or guardian may, within five days of any such confiscation, request a hearing to determine the validity of the violation of the Code of Conduct and resulting confiscation of the cell phone/electronic device. In such event the principal shall designate a hearing officer who shall: 1) give the student and/or his or her parents/guardians an opportunity to present their case; 2) hear or review the incident report from the enforcing person and any other person with relevant information; and 3) provide a recommendation to the principal as to whether there is a reasonable basis to conclude that the cell phone policy of the Code of Conduct was violated by the student. Regardless of any request for a hearing, any confiscated cell phone/electronic device shall be returned to the parent/guardian at the first opportunity and shall not be dependent on the scheduling or outcome of any hearing.
3. Students committing repeated violations of this policy may be subject to additional disciplinary action, consistent with the Worcester Public Schools Code of Conduct up to and including suspension from school.

Rule 15. - Policy on Gangs and Obscene Clothing

1. No student on school property or at any school sponsored function shall wear any article of clothing (including hats, bandanas, scarves and sweat-bands), jewelry, emblem, badge, symbol or sign which has wording, or designs that are reasonably deemed by the school administration to be obscene, lewd or vulgar (**ADD and which causes disorder or disruption to the school environment.**)
2. No student on school property or at any school sponsored function shall wear any article of clothing (including hats), jewelry, emblem, badge, symbol or sign, which displays, evidences or advertises alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, illegal drugs, or other controlled substances illegal under Massachusetts law.
3. No student on school property or at any school sponsored function shall wear any article of clothing (including hats), jewelry, emblem, badge, symbol or sign which the school administration reasonably deems to be evidence of membership or affiliation in any gang. As defined in this policy a "gang" is any group of two or more persons affiliated together, either formally or in-formally, whose purposes include the commission of illegal acts or who in concert commit illegal acts.

Rule 16. - Students Charged with or Convicted of a Felony

In accordance with MGL c. 71 §37 H ½ principals have the authority to suspend students charged with a felony and expel or impose a long-term suspension for students convicted or adjudicated of committing a felony if the principal (**DELETE or his/her designee**) has determined that the student's continued presence would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

Any student charged with a violation of Rules 3, 7, 8 and 18 shall have the due process rights outlined in Due Process, Section III.

Rule 17. - Disruption of School

1. In addition to complying with Rules 1 through 15 stated above, a student shall not use violence, force, threat, fear, passive resistance or any other conduct in order to cause the disruption or obstruction of any lawful mission, process, or function in school.
2. Students are not permitted in any area of the school building/grounds without supervision by a staff person of the WPS before, during and after normal school hours. Students are not permitted access to the school building/ grounds until 30 minutes before the official start of the school day or when personnel of the Worcester Public Schools are available for supervision.

Rule 18. - Bomb Threats

No student shall communicate or cause to be communicated any information in any form whatsoever that a bomb or any type of explosive device is located in or on any building or property under the control of the Worcester Public Schools or is at any school sponsored situation, including but not limited to transportation provided by the Worcester Public Schools, either directly or by contracted services.

Rule 19. - Fighting

A student shall not engage in physical altercation with another student on or off school grounds at any school-related (~~DELETE situation~~) (**ADD activity or event**) including, but not limited to, travel to and from the (~~DELETE situation~~) (**ADD activity or event**).

Rule 20. - Inciting a Disturbance

A student shall not incite a disturbance on or off school grounds at any school related activity (**ADD or event**). A student shall not organize, encourage, or participate in a disturbance (**ADD or disruption**) of school. It can apply to one who urges or instigates others to disturb the school setting or related activity.

Rule 21. - Leaving School without Permission

A student shall not leave the school grounds or school-related activity without permission from the school administration.

Rule 22. - Lab and Shop Safety

A student shall comply with all standards of safety in a lab or shop setting. Students are expected to behave appropriately in these settings without causing any unsafe situation that may cause harm to self or others.

Rule 23. - Bullying and Harassment

A student shall not engage in conduct that constitutes bullying or harassment in school, at school events or activities, or outside of school if the conduct creates a hostile or disruptive environment at school.

ITEM: gb #1-50

STANDING COMMITTEE: **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEE ISSUES**

DATE OF MEETING: Monday, March 22, 2021

ITEM: Ms. McCullough/Miss Biancheria/Mrs. Clancey/Mr. Foley/Mr. Monfredo
(January 25, 2021)

Request that the Administration review camera use procedures regarding privacy, legal and family contract options.

PRIOR ACTION:

2-25-21 - On a roll call of 7-0, the item was referred to the Standing Committee on Governance and Employee Issues.

BACKUP:

Annex A (1 page) contains a copy of the Administration's response to the item.

The district proposes establishing an expectation of camera on for daily attendance with waivers/an alternate check-in allowed for special circumstances. This stems from related safety concerns to confirm student health and safety that have arisen in the state during the pandemic. The district also proposes to continue to work with staff, particularly grades 6 through 12, on strategies to engage, monitor and increase active student participation. Through a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) lens, we will have building staff develop supports in line with Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to support consistent student participation in lessons. Educators will be supported in developing strategies at building level meetings, through topic related professional development newsletters and opportunities for drop-in support at the district level with the office of Instructional Technology and Digital Learning. The goal is to increase active student participation and their sense of belonging to the school community. The district and schools would communicate home to guardians the expectation and rationale.

The district established video conferencing guidelines in August 2020 in anticipation of full remote learning. **(See: [WPS Video and Audio Conferencing Guidelines Guidance as of August 1, 2020](#))** WPS did not require students learning remotely to turn on their cameras with the opening of the school year 2020-2021. Teachers were encouraged to invite students to turn on cameras using strategies such as teaching students how to utilize backgrounds, teaching students how to turn their self-view off, playing games/using ice breakers, and other strategies to engage students in active participation. Strategies such as using the chat function and monitoring the work in the tools have also been shared as a way to monitor active student engagement. The administration recognizes that over time, as remote learning has extended further into the year, educators have voiced concerns regarding students, particularly secondary students, sustained engagement and participation. Parents and guardians have also voiced concerns at the building and district level that students are not actively participating. The administration proposes continuing to work with staff to identify successful strategies to engage remote students and increase consistent, active participation. Progress will be measured and monitored to identify effective practices and related contexts.