

Paul P. Gates, M.D. School
Student Handbook



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Principal's Message

Dear Parent / Guardians and Students:

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the Paul P. Gates M.D. Elementary School. The staff and I look forward to meeting and working with you this school year. We hope to offer you a pleasant, challenging, and successful school experience.

This book contains a wealth of information to acquaint you with the Gates School. It contains both general information and policies and procedures we follow at school.

I hope you will find the contents of this handbook informative and that it will serve as a reference guide for you. Please feel free to contact the school for any additional clarification or information as necessary.

We look forward to working with you this year.

Sincerely,

Walter McGrail, Principal

Introduction

This handbook will, hopefully, provide you and your child(ren) with some helpful school information and serve as a resource while at Gates.

A. Mission Statement

At Gates, we believe that student growth and success is based upon a foundation of values consisting of caring, self-esteem and lifelong learning.

These values are supported by student, parent, and teacher involvement in the total school community.

B. General Philosophy

We are a committed group of educators working in conjunction with parents to foster active student learning and academic growth.

We are committed to the growth and development of each child's social, emotional, physical, and intellectual needs in a safe and healthy school environment.

We encourage respect and tolerance of individual differences while celebrating the diversity of the school population.

C. Our Beliefs

School Community

- * School must be a place where students feel physically and emotionally safe.
- * We believe in an environment that is stimulating, interesting, and dynamic.
- * We believe in cooperation, friendliness, and respectful relationships among staff, students, and parents.
- * Clean and attractive physical surrounds are conducive to positive attitudes toward school.
- * Staff morale, teamwork, and professionalism are important to the success of our students.
- * School should be a place where fun and enjoyment are evident.

Self - Esteem

- * Individual differences need to be recognized and appreciated.
- * Students gain self-esteem by receiving recognition for success in academic and personal growth.
- * Students should have the opportunity to participate in varied activities.
- * Students who feel positive about themselves and their abilities are better learners.
- * Students gain confidence through trying new things, meeting new people, and making new friends.
- * We believe that students need to realize their own self-worth.
- * Self-confidence is an important ingredient in a student's ability to be curious, to be willing to explore, and to be open to learning new things.

Caring

- * Everyone is entitled to be treated with respect, warmth, and sensitivity.
- * Respect is characterized by positive and supportive interaction among staff, students, and parents.
- * We respect and appreciate others and value differences among people.

Life - Long Learning

- * All children can learn.
- * All students should be provided with the opportunity to reach their own highest potential.
- * Academic excellence is enhanced when students, teachers, and parents collaborate to create a mutual sense of responsibility for academic learning.
- * Learning requires an educational environment in which everyone is both a teacher and a learner.
- * Learning requires the ability and confidence to think critically and clearly.
- * Learning is enhanced in an environment in which enthusiasm and a willingness to experiment are valued.
- * Attaining a definite goal requires continued effort and perseverance.
- * Learning requires cooperation and interdependence to enable us to function successfully now and in the future.
- * We recognize and promote the importance of art, music, and physical education in the total development of students.

Student and Parent Involvement

- * Parent and student interest, participation, and involvement are essential to the quality of education the school can provide.
- * We believe that it is an essential part of learning to seek parent and community involvement as a resource for students and teachers.
- * We believe in frequent and open communication between school and home.
- * There must be equal opportunity for participation in all aspects of the school experience.
- * Opportunities for shared decision making create an investment in the educational process.

General Information

Dr. Paul P. Gates (Written by fifth grade students of Basic Challenge)

The Gates School was built in 1968 and named after Dr. Paul P. Gates, an Acton doctor.

Dr. Gates was born on August 25, 1908. He is considered a native of Acton since he spent his entire life here, except for the time spent in the Navy and some medical practice time in Maine.

He and his wife had two children, a girl and a boy. His daughter lives in Maryland and his son lives in Massachusetts. He ran a small yarn shop in West Acton.

Dr. Gates attended local grammar schools. After he finished grammar school in Acton he went to high school in Concord as there was no high school in Acton at the time. While in high school, he enjoyed playing baseball and basketball. He was one of 16 students in his high school graduation class. After high school, since he was not old enough to go to college, he spent some time at Lawrence Academy. After his experience and time at Lawrence Academy, he went to Harvard and studied to be a doctor. After his studies at Harvard, he went into the service and practiced medicine.

Dr. Gates was in the Navy for 5 years, from 1942 to 1947. During this time he took care of soldiers wounded in World War II. He was stationed near New Guinea and then Hawaii. He couldn't tell where he was because of the fear that the Japanese might get the information. He was very proud of his 7 battle stars. He liked the Navy and everything about it except the paperwork!

When he returned home, he had his medical practice at his home at 248 Central Street. Patients would come to visit him, but he also made house calls. He liked to work with children better than adults, but some of the adults were some of his better patients.

Dr. Gates enjoyed many hobbies. One he particularly enjoyed was fixing old clocks. As a doctor, sometimes his patients would bring him a broken clock and he would love fixing it. One time he received a big, beautiful clock from a patient, and just for fun, he enjoyed taking it apart and putting it back together. He also enjoyed fishing, photography, and model H and O railroads.

Dr. Gates died in 1968 and is buried in a local cemetery.

Dr. Gates was a very good doctor who loved his job. As a way to honor his memory, the school committee decided to name the Spruce Street School after him.

Organization

The Gates School has grades Kindergarten through grade 6 with approximately 500 students. The school has 21 classrooms, a library / media center, gymnasium, cafeteria, computer lab, and a large outside play area.

Main Office

Our school's main office serves as the center of a number of important activities. It also serves as the communication link between home and school. If you have need to leave a message for any staff member, we will connect you to their voice mail. The school's main number is 978-266-2570.

Our secretaries receive a large number of bus passes and pick-up forms from the classroom teachers and compile a daily list. It is important that these forms be filled out accurately and completely prior to the start of the school day. This expedites the dismissal process. Please feel free to contact the office if you have any questions regarding procedures or policies.

Emergency Cards

As of September 2007, student emergency cards must be completed on-line. Your private password and code may be obtained by contacting the Gates School office. Up-to-date information allows the Gates School office and/or Superintendent's office to contact parents in an emergency.

It is very important to update your information on-line as it changes and at the beginning of each school year.

School Schedule

The Gates School schedule alternates every year. (2007-2008 follows schedule B)

Schedule A

8:30 a.m. - 2:45 p.m. (12:15 Thurs.)

8:30 a.m. - 11:15 a.m., AM Kindergarten

12 noon - 2:45 p.m., PM Kindergarten

Schedule B

9:15 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (1:00 Thurs.)

9:15 a.m. - 12:00 noon, AM Kindergarten

12:45 - 3:30 p.m., PM Kindergarten

Kindergarten students switch sessions at midyear.

School Cancellation

Please do not call the Acton Fire or Police departments to determine whether or not school has been canceled. This practice seriously interferes with the respective department's notification of emergencies and ability to respond in a timely manner.

Parents are advised to listen to radio and TV announcements to determine whether school will be canceled for the day. You may also check the school system's web site (<http://ab.mec.edu>) for cancellation information and to sign up for the AB Emergency Notification mailing list. If the weather is threatening and parents will not be home that day, parents should make arrangements for their children in the event that school closes early.

It is the parent / guardian responsibility to monitor school cancellations.

Gates School Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

The PTO exists to enhance the education at Gates by serving as a network of volunteers organizing social activities for the Gates families and to provide financial support for special programs and purchases. PTO also acts as an information conduit between the administration, school committee, staff, and parents / guardians.

PTO evening meetings are held monthly in the Gates library beginning in September. Consult the PTO schedule for exact dates and times.

PTO sponsors annual social events such as a fall social, ice cream social, Auction / Raffle, a spring activities day. The PTO also publishes a school directory and a newsletter, The Gates Gazette. All Gates parents / guardians and staff are members of the PTO. You may choose the level of involvement that best suites you, from acting as a regular volunteer to just attending an occasional meeting as a listener to be an informed parent.

Volunteers / CORI Check for Volunteers (Criminal Offender Record Information)

The Gates School encourages volunteers. The main areas of volunteer services include: Media Center, library, main office, and classrooms, special projects and activities. Volunteer sign-up forms are distributed in September.

On November 22, 2003, the Senate and House of representatives passed a new law, Chapter 385 of the Acts of 2002 which took effect on February 27, 2003. The new law requires schools to obtain all available criminal offender record information about any and all volunteers and employees who may have direct and unmonitored contact with pupils under the school's supervision.

For example, (but not limited to), parents who volunteer as field trip chaperones, library or office assistants, or who lead nature walks will now have to submit to the "CORI" process before any involvement in the schools. All CORI information is confidential and privacy will be maintained. Only a very few staff will have access to the CORI information which will be stored in a locked secure site in the Central Office.

CORI forms will be distributed to ALL volunteers through the school office. Forms must be completed and returned as soon as possible. According to the law, the criminal history check must be completed prior to volunteer service. Once the initial "CORI" check is done, it must be completed every three (3) years.

Volunteers with specific questions or concerns are encourages to contact either the principal of the school or Director of Personnel, Marie Altieri, at 978-264-4700, ext. 3209.

School Council

Section 53 of Chapter 71 of the Acts of 1993 (The Education Reform Act) calls for the establishment of school councils at each school in the Commonwealth. The school council is comprised of parent, teacher, and community representatives and the school Principal.

The purpose of the council is to assist the Principal in:

- * adopting educational goals for the school
- * identifying the educational needs of the students attending the school
- * reviewing the school's annual budget
- * formulating a school improvement plan and participating in its implementation
- * working on other projects as requested by the Principal

Members of the School Council at Gates are asked to make a 2 year commitment to serve. In the past, the Council has consisted of four teachers, four parents, a community member at large, and the Principal.

Parent Involvement Program (P.I.P.)

The goal of this volunteer program is to identify the business and personal skills, talents, hobbies, and interests of our parent community, and match them with requests from teachers and the administration. P.I.P. differs from other volunteer programs at Gates as it is based on school-wide needs, not just the needs of your child's classroom. Early each fall, parents / guardians are requested to complete a questionnaire detailing the skills and talents they would be willing to share with the Gates Community. This information is catalogued and matched with requests as they are received. It is an excellent opportunity to share your talents.

School Visitors

All visitors must report to the main office upon their arrival. They must sign at the office before visiting any classrooms, cafeteria, playground, or other part of the school. Before leaving, visitors are asked to sign out at the office. For the safety of all children, no parent / adult is permitted to go to a classroom without first signing in at the office.

Safe Arrival Program

This program is run by the Gates PTO to help insure the safe arrival of your children to school. If your child is going to be absent or late on a given day, please call the Safe Arrival line at 978-263-SICK. The answering machine is on 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Lost and Found

A lost and found box for items of clothing etc. is located in the cafeteria. It is suggested that clothing and other belongings be labeled with the student's name. At the end of June, all unclaimed items are donated to a charitable organization.

Recess / Lunch

Classes in grades 1-6 have a daily recess period (except for Thursday) of approximately 20 minutes. Keeping within the school rules, students may choose what they wish to play. Except in inclement weather, students will go out for recess and lunch recess. Therefore, we strongly urge that students come to school with proper attire for outdoor recess.

Lunch period is held four days a week for approximately 30 minutes (exception is Thursday). Hot lunches may be purchased at this period. Milk may be purchased by those students who bring their lunch from home. Lunch menus are sent home at the beginning of each month and are posted on the school's web site. Ice cream treats may be purchased at the end of the lunch period on Friday. Free and reduced lunches are available for those who qualify.

The last several minutes of the lunch period, generally 10 minutes, allows for a mini-recess. In good weather, students will go out for this time. At its conclusion they will go directly to their classrooms. Lunch and recess supervision is provided by lunch / recess aides.

School / Home Communication

A Parents' Night is held in September. At this time, each classroom teacher gives an overview of his / her classroom which includes a curriculum description, class expectations, rules, procedures, and routines. The curriculum guidelines for each grade are available at the school upon request.

All parents / guardians are asked to schedule a November conference with their child's teacher. Scheduling forms will be sent home mid to late October. A spring conference is scheduled upon request by the teacher or the parent. Additional meetings may be scheduled when appropriate. All kindergarten parents / guardians review their child's progress with the teacher in the spring of the year.

Progress reports (report cards) are issued three (3) times a year in grades 1-4, and four (4) times a year in grades 5-6.

Extracurricular Activities

Periodically, the last period on Friday is set aside for the scheduling of any special grade level or school-wide activities. Some examples may be: special interest clubs, special performances, Talent Show, and Activity Day.

In addition, the PTO will sponsor evening events such as the fall social, Ice Cream Social, and the annual major fund raiser, our Auction / Raffle.

Instrumental Music and Band

Students in grades 5 and 6 may choose to take lessons in woodwind, brass, or percussion instruments once a week. Lessons generally occur before school. Instruments may be provided by the parent / guardian, rented or purchased from the contracted firm at the beginning of the program.

Band is held weekly. Several concerts are held during the year. Fifth grade students may join band in January of the school year.

Panther Awards

A special recognition award called a Panther Award (Panther is our school mascot) is awarded, when appropriate, to any student who qualifies in one or more of the following categories:

1. Superior academic achievement for the student
2. Exceptional effort and attitude
3. Art, Music, Athletic achievement in school and away from school
4. Exceptional project developed
5. Good citizenship, honesty, good deed, leadership. cooperation, etc.

A certificate is awarded along with a special Gates School Panther pencil!

Student Council

Our school has an elected student council with representatives from grades 3-6. Elections are held in the fall. The student council will periodically sponsor the sale of items at the school store as well as conduct school-wide contests and activities. Any school-wide issues may be submitted to the council for discussion. Meetings are generally held before or after school, or during activity period. A parent volunteer oversees the student council.

Art, Music, Physical Education

Each of these classes meets with students one day a week for approximately 45 minutes.

Art classes are conducted in the classroom by an Art specialist. Much student art is displayed throughout the building.

Music classes are conducted in the classroom by a Music specialist. Music productions are performed periodically throughout the school year by various classes.

Physical education classes are conducted in the gym or outdoors by a Physical Ed. specialist.

Religious Holidays

The school accommodates individual differences in religious observances. Thus, if a student is affected by a religious holiday, that student will not be expected to complete daily homework the evening before, or the day of, the religious holiday. Assignments and tests should be made up in a time span that is reasonable to both students and teachers; typically for every day of a religious holiday there should be an opportunity for at least one make-up day. In addition, teachers will not give tests or introduce new concepts and / or applications on the religious holiday itself. However, long-term assignments may be expected to be due the day before, or the day after, the religious holiday.

Gates Amazing Programs

During the school year, students may sign on, for a fee, to participate in the Gates Amazing Programs. The offerings may be in art, sports, games and the like. A schedule of offerings, time / day, and fee along with a permission slip to be completed by parents / guardians will be distributed prior to each session. Classes usually meet one day a week for eight (8) weeks.

Policies and Procedures

Dismissal Procedure

Please send in a note to school if your child is going to be picked up either during or after school hours. Students being dismissed during school hours will be dismissed from the main office. Please come to the office and we will notify the teacher to dismiss your child. If a note has not been sent to school, please check at the office with the secretary.

For the safety of all students, we try to make ourselves aware of the dismissal plans for all our students. At the beginning of the school year, teachers will gather the names of all students who have written permission from home, on file in our office, to walk or ride a bike home on a regular basis.

All students who bring notes requesting permission to walk / bike home just for that day must present those notes to the classroom teacher before permission is granted. These notes are then sent to the office to receive final approval and to allow us to keep a record of that day's student walkers / bike riders.

There are assigned areas for bus lines and walkers. The classroom teacher will explain this to students on the first day of school.

All students who ride a bus to school are expected to ride the same bus home at dismissal. Several exceptions, however, may be: if he / she has a bus pass to another destination / address, a parent's / guardian's note giving permission to walk / bike home, stay after school, or a note indicating they'll be picked up by a parent / guardian or designee.

Students who are to be picked up at dismissal time by a parent / guardian or designee will be met in the library. A sign out sheet will be available for signing out the student.

Parents must arrange for transportation if they have agreed to have their child stay after school. Teachers will contact parents if there is a need for children to remain at school after the normal school hours.

Also see Appendix #1

Health and Illness

Isolation and Quarantine Regulations

- * Chicken Pox - Student may return to school one week from appearance of new lesions provided lesions are dry.
- * Mumps - Student may return to school one week from onset of disease or after all swelling has subsided.
- * Streptococcal Infection - Student may return in 24 hours after start of (including scarlet fever medication and provided the medication is for strep throat) continued for at least ten (10) days.

As of September, 2007, emergency information must be completed online. This up-to-date information allows the Gates School office and/or the school district to contact parents in an emergency. It is extremely important that information be up-dated online as it changes, and at the beginning of each school year.

In an emergency when parents / guardians can not be reached, the child will be taken to Emerson Hospital via police cruiser or fire department ambulance. Parents / guardians will be notified as soon as possible. It is suggested that parents / guardians complete Emergency Consent forms at Emerson Hospital and have them on file at the hospital.

Lice

Acton policy requires that students be excluded from school if head lice are found. They may return to school only after treatment as recommended by your physician and only if all lice or eggs have been removed. The child should report to the school nurse upon returning to school.

Universal Precautions

It is imperative for the health of our students and staff that all blood drips and spills be treated as potentially dangerous. The HIV virus is transmitted by blood and other body fluids. The Hepatitis B virus can live dried on a surface for up to one week and has the same mode of transmission. Each staff member has a packet containing latex gloves, gauze pads, and a copy of the " Universal Precautions for School Settings." The precautions must be posted in a visible place in each classroom and office, and the glove / gauze packet must be hung or taped nearby so that they are readily available to students and staff.

Medications

Nonprescription medicines should not be brought to school or used by a student on school premises. Tylenol is dispensed by the school nurse only with written parental / guardian consent.

Prescription medicines should be administered at home. Should it be necessary for medication to be taken during the school day, the medicine should be brought to the Health Office at the beginning of the day. Medicines must have a pharmacy label, which must include the prescription number, the name of the drug, the directions (including the times of administration and the dosage), and the patient's full name.

Physical Examinations

Vision and hearing screenings are given to each student annually, as well as recording the child's weight and height. In addition, scoliosis screening takes place in the fifth and sixth grades. Parents are notified of any irregularities.

Returning to School After an Illness

- * Your child should be without fever.
- * Your child should have enough stamina to manage a full day of school activities.
- * If your child is taking an antibiotic for an infectious, communicable condition, he / she should remain at home for the first 24 hours.
- * We are concerned about the health of all our students and staff. Please contact the nurse when your child has a communicable disease or ANY condition that requires special follow-up.

It is essential that we be able to contact parents / guardians during the school day. Whenever there is a change in your home, work, or cell phone number, please make the necessary changes online using your private password or code. Contact the school office if you have any difficulty.

Also see Appendix #5

Homework

The quantity of homework will be such that the student will be required to budget the time necessary to complete assignments. In any case, the work should not be so excessive that it cannot be completed before normal bedtime. Each grade level has a guideline for frequency and length of assignments.

Grade Frequency

Kindergarten once or twice every two weeks, 10 min.

Grade 1 1 x week (starting - Oct.) 10 - 15 min.

Grade 2 2 x week (starting - Oct.) 15 min.

Grade 3 3 x week (starting - Sept.) 4 x week (starting Jan.) 20 -30 min.

Grade 4 4 x week (starting - Sept.) 40 min.

Grade 5 4 x week (starting - Sept.) 50 min.

Grade 6 4 x week (starting - Sept.) 60 min.

It is suggested that students have a quiet area to complete homework devoid of distractions, and that a homework time routine be established if at all convenient and appropriate for your family. Assignments should be completed independently by the student. Parents / guardians are encouraged to help reinforce basic skills.

School Bus Behavior Regulations

Students are expected to behave in an orderly manner while riding the bus and during the loading and unloading process. The bus driver will be in complete charge of the bus and its passengers at all times. The bus driver will ensure the safety and well-being of all students who ride the school bus.

Students shall observe the following rules and safety procedures:

1. The driver's instructions will be followed at all times.
2. Students will only ride their assigned bus to and from their assigned stops. Drivers will not allow unauthorized students to board the bus.
3. State law prohibits lighting of matches or smoking on the bus.
4. Liability for any bus vandalism must be assumed by the parents / guardians of the student(s) involved.
5. No pushing or shoving is allowed at the bus stop while loading or unloading the bus.
6. Line up single file to load the bus. Do not run toward the bus as it is preparing to stop, but wait until the bus has stopped completely before approaching the door
7. Find a vacant seat quickly and sit down.
8. Remain seated while the bus is in motion.
9. Keep hands and feet to yourself. Do not disturb others.
10. Do not shout or make distracting noises. Speak quietly to others around you. Profanity will not be acceptable on the bus.
11. Do not change seats or leave your seat unless instructed to do so by the driver.
12. No pushing or shoving when getting off the bus. Leave your seat to exit quickly and quietly.
13. Upon departing, walk away from the bus. Do not walk along the side of the bus.
14. If you must cross the street after getting off the bus, cross in front of the bus far enough ahead so that you and the bus driver can see each another. Look both ways before crossing the street for your own safety.
15. Consumption of food or beverage is not permitted on the bus.
16. The emergency door at the rear of the bus is to be used as an exit only in the event of an emergency.
17. Throwing objects on the bus, from the bus, around the bus, or at the bus stop is not permitted.
18. Objects which may create a hazard on the bus will not be permitted, such as sharp objects, live animals, or excessively large items which cannot be transported safely or which cause an inconvenience to other passengers due to insufficient seating space.

Student's Rights

Students will be given the opportunity to express their views to their respective principal prior to any disciplinary action being taken as a result of a formal complaint from a bus driver.

Students will be transported until such time that disciplinary action is taken. Students will be transported to their designated destination. No arbitrary decision can be made by the driver to discharge a student at a location other the student's authorized destination.

Disciplinary Action for Bus Misconduct

Bus drivers have been instructed to prepare formal reports in the event of student misconduct aboard the bus. The following procedure will be followed after the report has been received by the building principal:

First Offense - Principal speaks to the student and a note is sent home to parents / guardians. In addition, the principal will either speak with the parent / guardian or send a letter home which requires written acknowledgment, explaining the situation and the potential consequences. In serious incidents, the principal may elect to suspend bus privileges.

Second Offense - Principal speaks to student and a second notice is sent home. Principal may elect to suspend bus privileges.

Subsequent Offenses - Principal speaks to student and a notice is sent home. This shall result in an automatic one (1) week suspension of bus privileges. The principal shall continue to work with the parents / guardians and student when subsequent offenses occur.

Violation of State Laws - For example, smoking or the lighting of matches will result in an automatic one (1) week suspension of bus privileges.

The principal will determine the time of suspension of bus privileges in all cases based upon the seriousness of the offense. In the case of an offense where an automatic one week suspension is required, the principal may decide to lengthen the suspension.

Elementary Bus Pass Policy Policy E415

The School Committee authorizes the issuance of two (2) types of bus passes to elementary students. In order to protect all students who are transported to / from schools, requests for changes in dismissal arrangements will not be taken over the telephone, except in an emergency as determined by the school principal.

Permanent bus passes - These passes may be issued to elementary students under the conditions stated in the following procedures.

One day bus passes - These passes may be issued to elementary students under the conditions stated in the following procedures.

Elementary Bus Pass Procedures

Permanent bus passes will be issued to elementary students only when a student is attending day care services or other after school activities such as music or dance lessons, religious classes, scouts, etc., on a regular weekly schedule provided their parent or guardian has submitted the appropriate form, filled out completely and correctly, to the school office. These forms are available in each elementary school office. or available online. Bus Pass Form

One day bus passes will be issued to elementary students for any purpose provided there is sufficient seating space on the buses and the parent / guardian has submitted the appropriate form, filled out completely and correctly to the school office. If buses are full, alternate arrangements for transportation must be made by the parent / guardian or designated emergency contact person for that child. Kindergarten students will be issued a one day bus pass only in an emergency as determined by the school principal. Forms for both a permanent and one day bus pass are available in the school office or on the Gates School web site. Daycare providers, private tutors, and organizations receiving students with bus passes are responsible for these students once they exit the bus.

Information relative to bus numbers, bus routes, and bus stops can be obtained from the Transportation Office by calling 978-263-3451 or the main number for the school district 978-264-4700 ext. 3225 during regular school hours. The elementary school offices, in consultation with the Transportation Office, reserve the right to deny the issuance of bus passes which are not filled out properly.

Discipline in General

In general there are three basic rules. They are:

1. Keep hands, feet, and objects to oneself.
2. Be respectful of others and property.
3. The safety of others is a must!

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

Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other staff on school premises or at school sponsored or school related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing: provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal.

After said hearing, a principal may, in his discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b); provided, however, that any principal who decides that said student should be suspended shall state in writing to the school committee his reasons for choosing the suspension instead of expulsion as the most appropriate remedy. In this statement, the principal shall represent that, in his opinion, the continued presence of this student in the school will not pose a threat to the safety, security and welfare of the other students and staff in the school.

Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten (10) days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of his appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.

When a student is expelled under the provisions of this section and applies for admission to another school for acceptance, the superintendent of the sending school shall notify the superintendent of the receiving school of the reasons for the pupil's expulsion.

Consequences for Most Infractions

Generally on the first offense, the student receives a warning. For subsequent offenses, the student will lose recess or cafeteria privileges, depending on the nature of the infraction. In some instances, the student will be required to remain after school with parent / guardian notification. In very serious cases, the principal has the right to skip steps, extend consequences, enact an in-school or out-of-school suspension.

Policy on Disciplining Students with Special Needs

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in this handbook. Chapter 71B of the Massachusetts General laws, known as Chapter 766, 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 the Individualized Educational Plan (I.E.P.). The following additional requirements apply to the discipline of special needs students.

1. The I.E.P. for every special needs student will indicate whether the student can be expected to meet the regular discipline code or if the student's handicapping condition requires modification. Any modification will be described in the I.E.P.

2. The Principal or Vice Principal will notify the Special Education Chairperson of the offense which may lead to suspension of a special needs student, and a record will be kept of such notices.

3. When it is known that the suspension(s) of a special needs student will accumulate to ten days in a school year, a review of the I.E.P. as provided in Section 333 of the Chapter 766 Regulations will be held to determine the appropriateness of the student's placement in the program. The TEAM will make a finding as to the relationship between the student's misconduct and his/her handicapping condition and either:

- * Design a modified program for the student or,

- * Write an amendment to provide for the delivery of special education services during the suspension and any needed modification of the I.E.P. relative to the discipline code expectations.

In addition, the Department of Education will be notified, as required by law, and the procedure promulgated by the Department of Education for requesting approval of the alternative plan will be followed.

Also see file JKF

Student Rights (Procedural Due Process)

In order to protect the rights of the individual, any student and / or parents / guardians who feel they have been the recipient of unfair treatment have the right to appeal their cases by requesting a "hearing." If the request for a hearing is justifiable, all disciplinary action will be held in abeyance until persons involved in the grievance can meet to consider all viewpoints. Hearings must be requested in the following sequence:

- a. Level One: A hearing with the school principal and all persons involved.
- b. Level Two: A hearing with the Superintendent of Schools and all persons involved.
- c. Level Three: A hearing with the School Committee and all persons involved.

Field Trips

In order to participate in class field trips, the student must return a signed Parental Permission slip. Generally, the students assume the cost of transportation and other expenses. A fund does exist for anyone who finds participation difficult for financial reasons.

Student Promotion

Promotion is highly desirable for most children. However, the right and responsibility to modify the policy for certain individuals must be recognized. The classroom teacher does not make this promotional decision alone. The principal, guidance counselor, and outside personnel, if necessary, all have input. All possible information concerning the child is considered and analyzed. Parents / guardians and child play a major role in the decision.

The promotional question is an issue that can be raised by either school officials or parents / guardians. It is generally best to raise the topic no later than early spring. This is important as to give ample time to study the case and to better assist the child to gradually accept and understand the decision to retain if that decision is made.

Student Assignment Policy

It is not the policy of the school to solicit parental requests for teacher assignments. Such requests should be limited to those special cases where parents / guardians feel there is a special need.

Our procedure and policy on classroom assignments is outlined below.

A. Procedure / Steps

1. Individual classroom teachers compile a tentative listing of student assignments.
2. Input is given to the classroom teacher by relevant staff (special educators, principal)
3. Grade level meetings are then conducted to assess all students and formulate a tentative list.
4. These lists are shared with the previous grade and receiving teachers, special educators and guidance counselor. Meetings are held if necessary.
5. Lists are then presented to the principal who has the final responsibility and decision making for the classroom assignments. The lists are reviewed and consultations with the appropriate personnel take place.
6. Modifications, if needed, are made during the summer.
7. Final class assignments are announced in mid August.

B. Guidelines

1. Heterogeneous (mixed) grouping of students (ability, behavior, boys / girls)
2. Special needs of students
3. Particular characteristics of students and teacher
4. Peer relationships (friendships, antagonisms)
5. Class size
6. Teacher expertise and work load
7. Recommendations from special educators, support staff, and principal
8. Parent / guardian requests - only for exceptional reasons (as determined by the principal)

C. Parent / Guardian Requests

As you can see from above, considerable time, thought and effort are devoted by the faculty in establishing classroom assignments. the primary goal is to do the best we can in meeting the wide range of student's needs in the realm of a total grade.

D. Other Points

1. Requests are not automatically granted.
2. A request not granted in the past does not create a preferential consideration. The same applies for the first time requests. ("First time in 7 years.....")
3. All decisions are final except for very unusual situations.
4. Please do not make requests to classroom teachers, nor ask them for their opinion regarding specific teacher placement.

Student Records

A student records' policy is mandated by the Massachusetts State Department of Education. The purpose of these regulations is to insure parents' / guardians' and students' rights to confidentiality, inspections, amendments, and destruction of such records. The term "student records" includes the transcript and the temporary record.

The transcript includes the minimum information necessary to reflect the student's educational progress, e.g. name, address, course, titles, grades (or equivalent when grades are not applicable) and grade level completed. The transcript is kept by the school system for at least sixty years after the student leaves the system.

The temporary record contains the majority of the information maintained by the school. This may include such things as standardized test results and evaluations by teachers, counselors, and other school staff. The temporary record is destroyed five (5) years after the student leaves the school system.

During the time a student is enrolled, the principal may periodically review and destroy misleading, outdated, or irrelevant information contained in the temporary record. Before any such information is destroyed, the parent / guardian and student will be notified and will have an opportunity to receive a copy of the information.

A copy of complete regulations regarding records is available from the school.

Confidentiality of Records

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

As required by M.G.L. c.71 S34, a parent who does not have physical custody of his/her child must provide certain written information to the Principal in order to access the child's student records. A description of the information that the noncustodial parent must submit can be obtained from our school office or from the Director of Pupil Services (978-264-4700, ext. 3265).

Also see file JRA – E

Testing

The Massachusetts Educational Assessment Tests are administered to students in grades 3-6 in the spring.

Notice of Nondiscrimination REVISED 9/2/97

The Acton Public and Acton-Boxborough Regional School Districts do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status or handicap in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities.

Any person having inquiries or complaints concerning the Acton Public and Acton-Boxborough Regional School Districts' compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, ADA or Chapter 622 is directed to contact Liza Huber, Director of Pupil Services, 96 Hayward Road, Acton, MA telephone #978-264-4700, who has been designated by the Acton Public and Acton-Boxborough Regional School Districts to coordinate the Districts' efforts to comply with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, ADA and Chapter 622, or write to the Office for Civil Rights, John W. McCormack Post Office and Court House, Room 222, Post Office Square, Boston, MA 02109.

Also see Appendix #2

Sexual Harassment

The school district is committed to providing an educational environment that is free of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment compromises professional relationships and undermines the quality of the educational environment. Sexual harassment is completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated in any form in the school system.

The condoning of sexual harassment or the retaliation against an individual because he or she complains of sexual harassment, or because he or she assists in the investigation of a complaint of sexual harassment is also prohibited.

A. Sexual Harassment

Employees, volunteers, contractors and students are prohibited from making unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors and from engaging in any other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when those advances, requests or conduct have a purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the education of a student or the working environment of any employee of the school by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive educational or working environment. Prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to, leering, pinching, grabbing, suggestive verbal comments, off - color jokes, and pressure for sexual activity.

B. Sexual Conduct Toward Students

It is also a violation of the school district policy for any school employee, volunteer or contractor to make any sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature toward a student, whether or not unwelcome. It is the policy of the School Committee to have all complaints of sexual harassment promptly and fully investigated and to take any steps necessary to remedy the situation. These steps or procedures are designed to correct, remedy and discipline violations of the policy. (See Appendix 3 for pertinent law)

Complaint and Investigation Procedures

If any student, employee, volunteer or contractor believes that he/she has been subjected to any form of sexual harassment, the individual shall report the incident as promptly as possible (but no later than six months from the time of the incident). A student should report the matter to a teacher or administrator with whom the student feels comfortable. An employee or volunteer should report the matter to the immediate supervisor or another administrator. A contractor should report to an administrator. The report should be written down immediately.

A complaint of sexual harassment by a student or by a parent on the student's behalf, may also be made to any counselor or teacher. The report should be in writing. A counselor or teacher who receives such a complaint will notify the appropriate administrator to initiate an investigation.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the administrator will prepare a report, which will be shared with both the complainant and the person or persons accused of harassment. Either party may discuss the issue directly with the Superintendent. The Title 9/622 Coordinator or the Superintendent's designee will thereafter investigate the complaint and present findings to the Superintendent and the complainant within 15 days of receipt of the written complaint.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, he/she may submit a written appeal to the Superintendent within five (5) days. The appeal should contain the specific reason why the complainant is dissatisfied with the response. The nature of the complaint, the parties involved, and the relief sought should also be delineated in the appeal. The Superintendent will consider the appeal and respond to the complainant after receipt of the appeal, normally within 15 days of receipt.

Disciplinary Action

Any employee, volunteer, contractor or student found to have engaged in any form of sexual harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. In the case of a student, disciplinary action may include suspension and / or exclusion from school. In the case of an employee, disciplinary action may include suspension and / or dismissal. In the case of a volunteer or contractor, his/ her services may be terminated.

Victims of sexual harassment are encouraged to find relief and closure through counseling services provided by the school district. Individuals who have been found to have engaged in sexual harassment may be required to seek counseling and provide documentation of involvement in a therapeutic intervention program as part of the disciplinary action.

Also see Appendix #3, File JBB and JBA

Student Absences

The Gates School believes that parents / guardians must realize that absences from school due to family vacation trips, extended weekends, dentist / doctor appointments, and special activities affect academic progress. If it is necessary to remove children from school due to these reasons, accommodations for individualized school assignments will be difficult to arrange because of the demands and time constraints placed upon the staff. Therefore, teachers are not obligated to provide assignments while the student is not in school, nor are the teachers responsible for contacting the student upon his/her return for makeup work procedures. This is the responsibility of the student and / or parent.

The staff will certainly provide reasonable time and opportunity for any necessary makeup work or tests.

We respectfully request that parents / guardians notify the student's teacher directly at least one (1) week in advance of a planned absence from school.

In instances of an absence due to an illness, we ask that in addition to calling the sick line, a note be provided to the classroom teacher upon the student's return to school.

Also see Appendix #6

Student Tardiness

Students are discouraged from coming late to school, as the day's agenda is often discussed at the beginning of the school day. It is difficult for students who are tardy to get oriented to the expectations of the day.

Early Student Arrivals

It is requested that students not arrive at school until 15 minutes before the start of school since supervision is not provided and their safety cannot be assured. Students who arrive early because they have made prior arrangements with a teacher for extra help or for a special purpose do not fall under this category.

Special Education

The special education programs at school are committed to supporting student's educational goals in the least restrictive environment. Special Educators work with students who require support services to progress in school.

Special Educators participate in building based teams that work to address the needs of students experiencing difficulty in the regular education program. Activities such as: consultation, student observations, curriculum and / or behavioral modifications, access to regular education support programs, and screening may be recommended.

As appropriate, a student may be referred for an evaluation to identify learning style and educational needs. When indicated, the student's parents / guardians, classroom teacher, and specialists are involved in the development of an Individualized Educational Plan (I.E.P.) to meet the student's needs.

Students receive support in a variety of areas including:

- * instruction in academic areas
- * perceptual-motor skill development
- * concept development and reinforcement
- * compensatory strategies
- * skill remediation
- * study skills
- * organizational skills
- * social / emotional development
- * behavior management programs

Services are outlined in the I.E.P. and may occur within regular education programs and / or in a special education setting.

Services are provided in individual, small group or full class groups according to individual needs and can vary from consultation to teacher to daily support.

Special Educators promote self-awareness and pride in one's own abilities and accomplishments to help foster continued growth and success in educational programs.

Acceptable Use Policy for Computers, Internet and Other Technology

The Acton Public Schools has "Acceptable Use Guidelines" for computers and the Internet. It is important for students to be familiar with these guidelines to ensure their understanding of the safe and appropriate uses of technology. Parents are encouraged to discuss the contents of this policy with their children. In addition, faculty will review it with their students at the beginning of each school year to establish the standards for use and to reemphasize safety guidelines. If you have any questions or concerns about the "Acceptable Use Guidelines," please contact your elementary school principal. The "Acceptable Use Guidelines" are:

1. Acceptable Use

- * At school, I may use computers and the Internet to research, to learn, and to communicate with others. I agree to follow the rules of appropriate behavior while on the Internet. I will follow these rules:
- * I will not copy material and say I wrote it myself.
- * I will only use web sites that are suitable for children.

2. Privileges

Being able to use the Internet is a privilege, and my teachers and principal are the decision makers when it comes to whether I may use it. If my behavior on the computer or Internet is not appropriate, I may lose this privilege.

3. Etiquette

I am expected to follow the rules for appropriate behavior on the Internet. Some (but not all) of those rules are listed below:

- * Be polite when writing a message.
- * Use appropriate language.
- * Remember that e-mail is not private.
- * What I write may be seen by others.
- * Information that I get from the Internet is for me to use, but I do not own it, and I did not write it. I must identify where I found it.

4. Online Security

I will follow these Internet safety rules:

- * I will not give out personal information about myself or others, (such as- home address, telephone number, parents' work address, or parents' work telephone number) to anyone on the Internet.
- * If I find anything on the Internet that makes me uncomfortable or nervous, I will get an adult to help me immediately.
- * If I get a message that is mean or frightening, I will tell a responsible adult.
- * The Acton Public School System is not responsible for the truth or quality of the information that I find on the Internet.

5. Security

I will only use the Internet when a teacher or responsible adult is present.

6. Vandalism

- * I will not cause any damage to computers or change how they are set up.
- * I will not modify or delete files that belong to others.
- * Passwords given to me are for my personal use only. I will not give them to anyone else.
- * I will not use anyone else's password.

Any of these actions will result in the loss of my privileges to use the Internet and perhaps the computers themselves.

APPENDIX 1

SCHOOL POLICIES AND DISCIPLINE (INCLUDING REGULATIONS ON STUDENT HANDBOOKS, WEAPONS, SMOKING, EXPULSION)

MASS GENERAL LAWS CHAPTER 71, SEC. 37H

The Superintendent of every school district shall publish the district's policies pertaining to the conduct of teachers and students. Said policies shall prohibit the use of any tobacco products within the school buildings, the school facilities or on the school grounds or on school buses by any individual, including school personnel. Copies of these policies shall be provided to any person upon request and without cost by the principal of every school within the district.

Each school district's policies pertaining to the conduct of students shall include the following: disciplinary proceedings, including procedures assuring due process; standards and procedures for suspension and expulsion of students; procedures pertaining to discipline of students with special needs; standards and procedures to assure school building security and safety of students and school personnel; and the disciplinary measures to be taken in cases involving the possession or use of illegal substances or weapons, the use of force, vandalism, or violation of other student's civil rights. Codes of discipline, as well as procedures used to develop such codes shall be filed with the department of education for informational purposes only.

In each school building containing grades nine to twelve, inclusive, the principal, in consultation with the school council, shall prepare and distribute to each student a student handbook setting forth the rules pertaining to the conduct of students. The school council shall review the student handbook each spring to consider changes in the disciplinary policy to take effect in September of the following school year, but may consider policy changes at any time. The annual review shall cover all areas of student conduct, including but not limited to those outlined in this section.

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

- (a). Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school district by the principal.
- (b). Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff in school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
- (c). Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal. After said hearing, a principal, may, in his/her discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b).
- (d). Any student who has been expelled from a district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of his[/her] appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.
- (e). When a student is expelled under the provisions of this section, no school or school district within the commonwealth shall be required to admit such a student or to provide educational services to said

student. If said student does apply for admission to another school or school district, the superintendent of the school district shall receive from the superintendent of the school expelling said student a written statement of the reasons for said expulsion.

Mass. General Laws Chapter 71, Section 37H as amended by Section 36 of Chapter 71 of the Acts of 1993 (the Education Reform Act), and further amended by Section 1 of Chapter 380 of the Acts of 1993.

APPENDIX 2

NOTICE ON NONDISCRIMINATION

Applicants for admission and employment, students, parents, employees, sources or referral of applicants for admission and employment, and all unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with the Acton Public and Acton-Boxborough Regional School Districts are hereby notified that these institutions do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, or handicap in admission or access to or treatment or employment in its programs and activities. Any person having inquiries concerning the Acton Public and Acton-Boxborough Regional School Districts' compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, Section 504 or Chapter 622 is directed to contact Nancy M. Kolb, Director of Pupil Services, 16 Charter Road, Acton, MA, telephone # 978-264-4700, who has been designated by the Acton Public and Acton-Boxborough Regional School Districts to coordinate the Districts' efforts to comply with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, ADA and Chapter 622, or write to:

Office for Civil Rights
John W. McCormack Post Office and Courthouse
Room 222
Post Office Square
Boston, MA 02109

TITLE IX GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The following is the procedure by which student and employee complaints alleging any action prohibited by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 may be resolved.

Any student or employee who believes that he or she has a legitimate complaint alleging any action prohibited by Title IX is urged to bring it to the School Districts attention through this grievance procedure. Any such grievance should be initiated within 15 days of the incident giving rise to it. The student or employee should follow Step I as follows:

STEP I - Contact the Director of Personnel or the Director of Pupil Services who will attempt to resolve the grievance in a fair and timely manner.

Should the attempt to resolve the issue at Step I fail, the grievance may be advanced to Step II within 5 days of the Step I response.

STEP II - The Director of Personnel or the Director of Pupil Services shall forward the grievance and his/her findings, together with any additional information provided by the student or employee, in writing, to the Superintendent. Normally within seven days, the Superintendent will make a final decision, based on all available information, and will forward his or her final written decision to the grievant, normally within 45 days of the original written grievance.

Appointment of Compliance Officer

The Director of Personnel is appointed the School's Compliance Officer.

APPENDIX 3

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The school district is committed to providing an educational environment that is free of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment compromises professional relationships and undermines the quality of the education environment. Sexual harassment is completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated in the school systems.

The condoning of sexual harassment or the retaliation against an individual because he or she complains of sexual harassment or because he or she assists in the investigation of a complaint of sexual harassment is also prohibited.

A. Sexual Harassment

Employees, volunteers, contractors and students are prohibited from making unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors and from engaging in any other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when those advances, requests or conduct have a purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the education of a student or the working environment of any employee of the school by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive educational or working environment. Prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to, leering, pinching, grabbing, suggestive verbal comments, off-color jokes, and pressure for sexual activity.

B. Sexual Conduct Toward Students

It is also a violation of the school district policy for any school employee, volunteer or contractor to make any sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature toward a student, whether or not unwelcome.

It is the policy of the School Committee to have all complaints of sexual harassment promptly and fully investigated and to take any steps necessary to remedy the situation. Those steps or procedures are designed to correct, remedy and discipline violations of the policy.

COMPLAINT AND INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES

If any student, employee, volunteer or contractor believes that he/she has been subjected to any form of sexual harassment, the individual should report the incident as promptly as possible (but no later than six months from the time of the incident). A student should report the matter to a teacher or administrator with whom the student feels comfortable. An employee or volunteer should report the matter to the immediate supervisor or another administrator. A contractor should report to an administrator. The report should be written down immediately.

A complaint of sexual harassment by a student, or by a parent on the student's behalf, may also be made to any counselor or teacher. The report should be in writing. A counselor or teacher who receives such a complaint will notify the appropriate administrator to initiate an investigation.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the administrator will prepare a report, which will be shared with both the complainant and the person or persons accused of harassment. Either party may discuss the issue directly with the Superintendent.

The Title 9/622 Coordinator or Superintendent's designee will thereafter investigate the complaint and present findings to the Superintendent and the complainant within 15 days of receipt of the written complaint.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, he/she may submit a written appeal to the

Superintendent within five days. The appeal should contain the specific reason why the complainant is dissatisfied with the response. The nature of the complaint, the parties involved, and the relief sought should also be delineated in the appeal. The Superintendent will consider the appeal and respond to the complainant after receipt of the appeal, normally within 15 days of receipt.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Any employee, volunteer, contractor or student found to have engaged in any form of sexual harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. In the case of a student, disciplinary action may include suspension and/or expulsion from school. In the case of an employee, disciplinary action may include suspension and/or dismissal. In the case of a volunteer or contractor, his/her services may be terminated.

Victims of sexual harassment are encouraged to find relief and closure through counseling service provided by the school district. Individuals who have been found to have engaged in sexual harassment may be required to seek counseling and provide documentation of involvement in a therapeutic intervention program as part of the disciplinary action.

Mass. General Laws Chapter 71, Section 37H

The Superintendent of every school district shall publish the district's policies pertaining to the conduct of teachers and students. Said policies shall prohibit the use of tobacco products within the school buildings, the school facilities or on the school grounds or on school buses by any individual, including school personnel. Copies of these policies shall be provided to any person upon request and without cost by the Principal of every school within the district.

Each school district's policies pertaining to the conduct of students shall include the following: standards and procedures for suspension and expulsion of students; procedures pertaining to discipline of students with special needs; standards and procedures to assure school building security and safety of students and school personnel; and the disciplinary measures to be taken in cases involving the possession or use of illegal substances or weapons, the use of force, vandalism, or violation of other student's civil rights. Codes of discipline, as well as procedures used to develop such codes shall be filed with the department of education for educational purposes only.

APPENDIX 4

SEX EDUCATION PARENT NOTIFICATION POLICY

Pursuant to Chapter 291 of the General Laws of Massachusetts, the School

Committees direct the Superintendent to ensure timely parental/guardian notification of any curriculum used in the Acton Public or Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools which primarily involves human sexuality issues or human sexual education.

This policy allows parents/guardians the flexibility to exempt their children from any portion or completely from the curriculum being offered. The Committees want to encourage the flow information while recognizing the rights of parents.

The following courses contain sexuality issues or human sexual education:

- * Bio Forum
- * Senior Seminar
- * Health/Fitness
- * Biology

Parents with questions should contact the school nurse or Health Educator Coordinator to review the material.

SEX EDUCATION PARENT NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES

1. Central Office/Principals will notify parents in writing, through newsletters and posting, in advance, so that parents may review the materials that will be used. Parents should call the school nurse or Health Educator Director in order to review the material.
2. Parents must write a letter to their child's Principal exempting them from participation.
3. No child exempted shall be penalized.
4. The school will determine which alternative experience will be offered.
5. Any appeal of decisions made should follow the Acton and Acton-Boxborough appeals process.

APPENDIX 5

Policy J750 IMMUNIZATION POLICY RELATING TO NEW STUDENTS

The School Committees support the Massachusetts School Immunization Law, Chapter 76, Section 15 which states, "No child shall, except as hereinafter provided, be admitted to school except upon presentation of a physicians' certificate that the child has been successfully immunized against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, measles, and poliomyelitis and such other communicable diseases as may be specified from time to time by the Department of Public Health.

Adopted: July 24, 1997

APPENDIX 6

TRUANCY AND ATTENDANCE PARENT INFORMATION

There is no doubt that one of the keys to academic achievement is good attendance. Consistent participation in school and school-based activities is important for making a successful transition from youth to adulthood. Student tardiness and truancy are challenges that confront many communities in Middlesex and across the state. Often, these behaviors are the first indicators that a student may be experiencing stress or other difficulties in his or her life.

The following is a summary of some of the Massachusetts General Laws pertaining to attendance:

School Attendance

Chapter 76, section 1 of the Massachusetts General Laws states that all children between the ages of six and sixteen must attend school. A school district may excuse up to seven day sessions or fourteen half day sessions in any period of six months. In addition to this law, each school may have its own attendance policy with which parents and guardians should be familiar.

Who is a Supervisor of Attendance

Chapter 76, section 19 of the Massachusetts General Laws states that each school committee must employ a supervisor of attendance. A supervisor of attendance has the power to apprehend and take to school any child who is truant and is required to investigate all cases where a child in the district fails to attend school.

What is a CHINS?

A "CHINS" (Child in Need of Services) petition may be filed in court by a supervisor of attendance if a child between the ages of six and sixteen persistently violates lawful and reasonable regulations of her or her school. The Court's authority pursuant to a CHINS petition includes the power to place a child in the custody of the state agency known as the Department of Social Services.

What is a 51A?

A 51A is a report of suspected child abuse or neglect that is filed with the Department of Social Services. Under Chapter 119, section 51A of the Massachusetts General Laws, a report can be filed on behalf of a child under the age of eighteen for educational neglect if a child is not attending school on a regular basis.

Parent Responsibility

Parents or guardians are legally responsible for ensuring that a child under their control attends school. It is a crime for a responsible parent or guardian not to cause such a child to attend school. If a child fails to attend school for seven consecutive days or fourteen half day sessions within any six month period, the supervisor of attendance may file a criminal complaint in court against the responsible parent and/or guardian.

Inducing Absences

It is a crime to induce or attempt to induce a minor to miss school, or unlawfully to employ or to harbor a minor who should be in school.

STUDENTS IN CRISIS

The School Committees recognize that throughout the school year there may be several students who experience crisis situations. Because the school plays a major role in the lives of students, educators are in a strategic position to identify and help students in crisis. The Committees also recognize the intricate role of the family in the resolution of crisis situations and encourage clear and open communication between the school and the home.

For the purpose of this policy, a crisis is defined as an unexpected event which affects the entire school community (or broader population) or individual members within the school environment. It is any threatening or dangerous situation which involves the physical and/or emotional well being of the student(s).

Some examples of crises are the following:

- Suicide or suicidal gestures
- Death of relative, friend, classmate or faculty/staff member
- Serious injury of student or faculty/staff member
- Excessive violence
- Child abuse or neglect (Policy JLDBD)
- Disaster, as caused by fire, explosion
- Natural disaster, as caused by flood, hurricane, blizzard

All professional staff members should develop a thorough understanding of the School Districts' crisis procedures and to comply with them.

STUDENT RECORDS

Acton Public and Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools Annual Notice The Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act Massachusetts Student Records Regulations

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") and the Massachusetts Student Records Regulations ("Massachusetts Regulations") together provide parents and eligible students (those who have reached the age of 14 or who have entered the ninth grade) certain rights with respect to the student's education records. A general overview of those rights is provided below. Parents and students may obtain a complete copy of their rights under the Massachusetts Student Records Regulations by contacting the Director of Pupil Services, 978-264-4700, extension 3265. These rights include:

1. The **right to access** the student's education records. Parents or eligible students should submit their request for access to the building principal. Access is generally provided within ten days of a request. Massachusetts General Laws Ch. 71, Section 34H, however, provides specific procedures that must be followed prior to release of records to a parent who does not have physical custody of a child. Information about these procedures can be obtained from the building principal or the Director of Pupil Services.
2. The **right to request amendment** of the student's education records. Parents or eligible students should direct their request to the principal, clearly identifying the part of the record they wish to have amended and why.
3. The **right to consent to disclosures** of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA and the Massachusetts Regulations authorize disclosure without consent.

Some of the Exceptions:

- One exception that permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibilities. Such school officials include professional administrative and clerical staff who are employed by or under agreement with the Acton Public and/or Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools.
- The Acton Public and Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools also disclose all student records (which includes health records and special education records, if any) without parent/eligible student consent to officials of other schools in which the student seeks or intends to enroll, upon receipt of a request from such school officials.
- The Acton Public and Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools may disclose, without written consent, designated "directory information," which is information generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the district to include this type of information from your child's records in certain school publications. Information that a district designates as directory information may be disclosed to outside organizations (for example, class ring manufacturers and yearbook publishers) without prior consent.

Acton Public has designated elementary students' names, address, telephone number, date of birth, grade level, and classroom assignment as "directory information." Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools has designated middle and high school students' names, address, telephone number, date of birth, team/class assignment (middle school), graduation class, participation in recognized activities and sports and honors and awards as "directory information."

In addition, federal law requires that Acton-Boxborough provide military recruiters or officials of institutions of higher education, upon request, with three categories of directory information - names, addresses and telephone listings - of all secondary students. If a parent or eligible student does not want the district to disclose any of the above directory information, the parent/eligible student must notify the building principal in writing by a certain date, otherwise the information will be released without further notice or written consent.

4. The right to file a complaint concerning alleged failures by the district to comply with the regulations and laws governing student records. Complaints may be filed with the Massachusetts Department of Education, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148 and/or the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20202-5901.

Approved by APS/AB School Committees on 1/4/07

DISCIPLINE OF SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and related regulations provide eligible Acton and Acton-Boxborough students with certain procedural rights and protections in the context of student discipline. A brief overview of these rights is provided below.

In general, Acton and Acton-Boxborough special education students may be excluded from their programs, just as any other student can be, for up to ten school days per year. However, when a special education student is excluded from his/her program for more than ten school days in the school year, school staff may be required to provide alternative educational services for the student. In addition, in many instances, the student's special education Team must convene to determine whether the student's behavior was a direct result of his/her disability (a "manifestation determination").

If the Team determines the behavior was not a direct result of the student's disability, the school may discipline the student according to the school's code of student conduct, except that the district must continue to provide the student with educational services during the period of suspension or expulsion. However, if the Team determines that the behavior was a direct result of the disability, the student may not be excluded from the current educational placement (except in the case of weapons, drugs, or serious bodily injury) until the Team develops and the parent(s)/guardian(s) consent(s) to a new Individualized Educational Program. The Team also must conduct a functional behavioral assessment and develop or revise a behavioral plan for the student.

In the event a student possesses, uses, sells or solicits a substance or possesses a weapon, or seriously injures an individual at school or a school function, a school may place a student in an interim alternative education setting for up to 45 days. Hearing officers may also order the placement of a student in an appropriate interim setting for up to 45 days upon determination that the current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others.

When a parent(s)/guardian(s) disagrees with the Team's decision on the "manifestation determination" or with a decision regarding placement, the parent(s)/guardian(s) has a right to request an expedited due process hearing from Bureau of Special Education Appeals.

Additional information regarding the procedural protections for special education students can be obtained from the Director of Pupil Services who can be reached at 978-264-4700, extension 3265.

Discipline of Students Subject to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act provides eligible students some of the same procedural rights and protections as does IDEA. Additional information regarding the procedural protections for students eligible for services under laws providing for services for students with disabilities can be obtained from the Director of Pupil Services who can be reached at 978-264-4700, extension 3265.

POLICY AGAINST SEXUAL HARASSMENT TOWARD STUDENTS

The Acton Public Schools and the Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools (collectively the "Schools") are committed to providing an educational environment free of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment compromises professional relationships and undermines the quality of the educational environment. Sexual harassment is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated in any form in the school systems.

The condoning of sexual harassment or the retaliation against an individual because he or she complains of sexual harassment or because he or she assists in the investigation of a complaint of sexual harassment is prohibited.

A. Sexual Conduct towards Students

All school employees, volunteers or contractors are prohibited from making any sexual advances or requests, sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature toward a student, whether or not unwelcome.

B. Sexual Harassment

Employees, volunteers, contractors or students are prohibited from making any unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors and from engaging in any other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when those advances, requests or conduct have a purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the education of a student by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive educational environment. Prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to, leering, pinching, grabbing, suggestive verbal comments, off-color jokes, and pressure for sexual activity.

All complaints of sexual harassment will be promptly and fully investigated and steps taken necessary to remedy the situation. These steps or procedures are designed to correct, remedy and discipline violations of the policy. An employee, volunteer or contractor who engages in sexual harassment is subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or other services. In the case of a student, disciplinary action may include suspension and/or exclusion from school.

CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT REPORTING

The School Committees recognize and accept the Acton Public and Acton-Boxborough Regional School Districts' responsibility to comply with the Massachusetts Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Statute, Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 119, Section 51A.

The Acton Public and Acton-Boxborough Regional School Districts recognize that because of their sustained contact with children under the age of eighteen years, school employees will actively carry out the letter and spirit of the law. It is expected then, that when any staff member in his or her professional capacity has reasonable cause to believe that a child under the age of eighteen years is suffering from the effects of any form of child abuse and neglect, that the staff member will report his or her concerns in conformance with the Acton Public and Acton-Boxborough Regional School Districts' procedures for reporting suspected abuse and/or neglect to the Department of Social Services.

HOMELESS STUDENTS: ENROLLMENT RIGHTS AND SERVICES

To the extent practical and as required by law, the school districts will work with homeless students and their families to provide stability in school attendance and other services. Special attention will be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless students not currently attending school. Homeless students will be provided district services for which they are eligible, including pre-school programs, Title I, similar state programs, special education, bilingual education, vocational and technical education programs, gifted and talented programs and school nutrition programs.

Homeless students are defined as lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, including:

1. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship;
2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
3. Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
4. Being abandoned in hospitals;
5. Awaiting foster care placement;
6. Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
7. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings;
8. Migratory children living in conditions described in the previous examples.

The Superintendent shall designate the Director of Pupil Services to be the districts' liaison for homeless students and their families.

POLICY PROHIBITING HARASSMENT - STUDENTS

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

Definitions

Harassment includes communications such as jokes, comments, innuendoes, notes, e-mails, voice mails, display of pictures or symbols, gestures, or other conduct that offends or shows disrespect to others based upon race, color, religion, national origin, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, or disability, when such communications or conduct is sufficiently serious to deny or limit the ability of a student to participate in or benefit from the educational program or the ability of a staff member to perform his/her duties.

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

RESTRAINT OF STUDENTS

The Acton Public and Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools comply with the Massachusetts Department of Education's restraint regulations, 603 CMR 46.00 et seq. ("Regulations"), to the extent required by law.

According to their terms, the Regulations apply not only at school but also at school-sponsored events and activities, whether or not on school property.