

Somerset Public Schools



Chace Street School



North Elementary School

Somerset Elementary Schools Student/Parent Handbook 2016-2017 School Year



English: If you need this, or any other document, translated into a different language please notify the building principal.

Spanish: Si necesita una traducción de este documento u otros documentos, por favor notifique Ud, al director de la escuela.

Portuguese: Se necessita isto, ou qualquer outro documento traduziu numa linguagem diferente, por favor notifica o director de escola.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF.....

Weather conditions suggest that school might be cancelled or dismissed early.

Cancellation or early dismissal announcements are made through the OneCall Now System and on local radio and television stations.

I must pick up my child before the close of school.

Regular daily dismissal takes place at 3:05 P.M. While removing a child before the end of the school day is discouraged, we recognize that, under certain unusual circumstances, it may be necessary. The child should be sent to school with a note on the morning of the dismissal. The note should be given to the child's teacher at the beginning of the day. If someone other than the child's parent or guardian is picking up the student, the person's name should be included on the note and the child's Emergency Form. In this case, the school may require identification before the child is released. When it is time for the child to be dismissed, the parent must come to the office to pick up the child and sign the child out for the day. No child will be sent out to a waiting car. A child will be released ONLY to someone on an Emergency Form.

That note should contain the following information:

- When the child will be picked up
- Who will be picking up the child (full name and relationship to the child)
- If appropriate, based on the time of dismissal, whether or not the child will be ordering lunch
- The reason for the dismissal

The child's parent or guardian must sign the note.

My child will be absent.

Please call the school before 8:30 a.m. to report the absence if the child will be out for that day. Please state the child's name, grade, and teacher. It is recommended that, at the time of the call, you request missed homework and class work to be provided. Under most circumstances, the homework will be available for you by 3:15 p.m. the same day in the school's main office if the call is received before 8:30 a.m.

My child forgot his/her lunch money.

Borrowing is discouraged, but exceptions can be made if borrowing is necessary with the expectation that the amount borrowed will be paid back the next day. If borrowing is necessary, your child may go to the cafeteria to borrow for lunch.

My child must ride another bus.

Changing buses as a regular practice is discouraged as it creates concern and confusion for the child and the school personnel. The only reason to request a bus change would be for supervision purposes. Please send a note to the school, explaining:

- What bus you would like the child to take.
- The name of the person who will be at that location (bus stop) to receive the child when he/she is dropped off by the bus.
- The number of days the change will be in effect.
- The reason for the change. The note should be signed by the child's parent or guardian and be presented at the school's main office at the beginning of the school day. Phone calls for bus changes are strongly discouraged for safety reasons. **This policy may change based upon Fisher Bus expressing safety concerns about the number of daily changes and possible overcrowding.**

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SOMERSET PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Superintendent of Schools (PreK-12).....	Mr. Jeffrey Schoonover.....	508-324-3100, Ext. 215
Director of Business and Finance.....	Mrs. Lindsey Albernaz.....	508-324-3100, Ext. 212
Director of Curriculum and Assessment.....	Ms. Elizabeth Haskell.....	508-324-3100, Ext. 231
Director of Special Education.....	Mrs. Lisa Martiesian.....	508-324-3100, Ext. 217
Director of Technology.....	Mr. Stephen Levesque.....	508-324-3115, Ext. 1100

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

School Hours:	Pre-Kindergarten	9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. 12:15 p.m - 2:45 p.m.
	Kindergarten-Grade 5	8:50 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.
CHACE STREET SCHOOL	538 Chace Street	508-324-3160
PreK - 5	Principal:	Mr. Timothy Plante
	Secretaries:	Mrs. Paula Faria Mrs. Janet Ryan
	School Nurse:	Mrs. Claudine Lapriore, RN
NORTH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	580 Whetstone Hill Rd.	508-324-3170
K - 5	Principal:	Mrs. Elaine Sabra
	Vice Principal	Mr. Anthony Branco
	Secretaries:	Ms. Birgit Fogg Ms. Joan Fortier
	School Nurse:	Ms. Lisa Anderson, RN
SOUTH SCHOOL	700 Read St.	508-324-3180
K - 5	Principal:	Dr. Joann Pereira
	Secretaries:	Mrs. Donna Campbell Ms. Carol Flores
	School Nurse:	Ms. Susan Bertrand, RN

VISION STATEMENT

The Somerset Public Schools will ensure that students and teachers pursue excellence, achieve their full potential, and cherish learning as students prepare to be high school, college, career, and life ready.

Perseverance

- Our students will accept the challenge of a rigorous learning environment and work through those challenges until they experience success.

Respect and Responsibility

- We will create a safe and supportive environment for all students and adults in which everyone feels valued and respected.
- All students will respect themselves, others, and their surroundings.
- We will create an environment in which everyone takes responsibility for their individual and collective actions.

Innovation

- Students and adults will be innovative problem solvers and purposeful and responsible users of technology.
- Students and staff will be skilled at and value collaborative problem solving.

Dedication to the Community

- We will help our students build character and learn respect as they become positive and caring contributors to society.

Excellence

- We will set high expectations for all students and staff.
- Our students will become effective communicators and independent, creative, and critical thinkers.

STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVES 2015 - 2020

- Objective 1: Create a unified learning organization in which educators consistently use and collaboratively analyze data on student learning.
- Objective 2: Ensure student academic growth and success through an instructional system of personalized supports and data-driven interventions.
- Objective 3: Prepare students for success in and beyond high school by promoting STEAM and 21st Century skills.

Objective 4: Build the information management systems and technological infrastructure required to support instructional excellence.

HOME SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

An important goal of the Somerset Public Schools is to foster the development of individual students by enhancing their capacity to become active, ethical, and effective citizens in an ever-changing society. The family and the school share responsibility for this development. We welcome you, parents/guardians, into the full partnership necessary to undertake this most worthwhile challenge: to develop our nation's most valuable resource, your children.

Constant effective communication is essential to the success of our combined efforts. We hope that this guide will be helpful in informing you of policies and procedures, which are vital to the effective operation of our elementary schools. Should you have any recommendations or suggestions to refine the design of this booklet, please bring them to the immediate attention of your building principal.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

School Department Central Office	508-324-3100
Somerset Middle School	508-324-3140
Chace Street School	508-324-3160
North Elementary School	508-324-3170
South School	508-324-3180

SOMERSET SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Mr. Arastou Mahjoory, Chairperson
Mr. Michael Botelho, Vice Chairperson
Mrs. Lori Rothwell
Mr. Victor Machado
Mrs. Melissa Terra

LIAISONS

Mrs. Lisa Martiesian: Director of Special Education; Homeless Liaison
Ms. Elizabeth Haskell: Director of Title I and ELE Coordinator
Mr. Anthony Branco: 504 Coordinator for North Elementary
Dr. Joann Pereira: 504 Coordinator for South Elementary
Mr. Timothy Plante: 504 Coordinator for Chace Street Elementary

ATTENDANCE

A. ABSENCE

A telephone call to school by 8:30 a.m. is requested to indicate the reason for your child's absence.

If a student is absent and "the school has not been notified by the designated time, the school shall call the telephone number or numbers furnished to inquire about said absences"(Chap. 76, Section 1A). Extended absences should be reported immediately so that teachers may plan accordingly.

B. CHILDREN ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND SCHOOL REGULARLY

The education of children is of utmost importance to school personnel. Continuity in every grade can only be accomplished with a consistent attendance record. Illness and unforeseen personal reasons do arise within every family, which result in a child's absence. It is vitally important for each child to be present in school whenever possible. Absences become part of the student's permanent record and are reported routinely to the Massachusetts Department of Education.

In addition, Massachusetts State Law requires that every boy and girl attend school each day that school is in session unless unable to do so because of illness or some other legitimate reason (MGL, Chapter 76, §§1, 2). Absences (not necessarily sequential days over seven (7) full days and fourteen (14) half days in a period of six (6) months may be considered 'chronic.' Family vacations do not qualify as excused absenteeism under Massachusetts law. The school principal or a designee will make a reasonable effort to meet with the parent or guardian of a student who has missed five (5) or more unexcused school days (a school day shall be equal to two (2) or more class periods in the same day) to develop action steps for student attendance.

When the student returns to school, he/she should have a note from the parent/guardian documenting the reason for the absence, even if the absence was called in. The note should be given to the classroom teacher, who will forward it to the main office.

A student who is out for three or more consecutive days because of an illness or injury must bring in a doctor's note to verify the illness or injury. This doctor's note must specify the date(s) the doctor feels the student was too ill or injured to attend school.

An absence is defined as a student missing a school day. There are two types of absence: unexcused or excused. Excused absences are legitimate reasons for being absent from school. The following absences are considered excused:

1. Medical Appointment/illness with doctor's note
2. Death in Family
3. Religious Holiday
4. Court Appearance
5. Suspension
6. Disability related absences

PLEASE NOTE: All other absences are considered unexcused.

Unexcused absences are unacceptable reasons for being absent from school. Parents/Guardians of students who are determined to have excessive absences from school will be identified and may be referred to the school attendance officer, who may refer the matter to the Department of Children and Families or the Bristol County Juvenile Court for violation of state law.

C. INITIAL ENTRANCE AGE

Children who will be five (5) years of age on or before August 31st of the school year during which they wish to enroll will be eligible to enter kindergarten. Children who will be six (6) years of age on or before August 31st of the school year during which they wish to enroll will be eligible to enter first grade.

D. DISMISSALS

All children being dismissed must be picked up at the school office. Transportation must be provided by a parent or guardian. One note per year is required for attendance at regularly scheduled activities, such as scouts or gymnastics. If a child has a note to attend such meetings, he or she will not be allowed to go home on the bus unless another note is received from the parent on the day in question. Parents or guardians must notify the school, in writing, if a daycare provider or person other than the parent will be picking up the child upon dismissal from school.

Dismissals because of illness are handled by the school nurse and the office and will be considered excused absences.

The child should be sent to school with a note on the morning of the dismissal. The note should be given to the child's teacher at the beginning of the day. If someone other than the child's parent or guardian is picking up the student, the person's name should be included on the note and the child's Emergency Form. In this case, the school may require identification before the child is released. When it is time for the child to be dismissed, the parent/designee must come to the office to pick up the child and sign the child out for the day. No child will be sent out to a waiting car. A child will be released **ONLY** to someone on an Emergency Form.

That note should contain the following information:

- When the child will be picked up
- Who will be picking up the child (full name and relationship to the child and Identification)
- If appropriate, based on the time of dismissal, whether or not the child will be ordering lunch
- The reason for the dismissal

The child's parent or guardian must sign the note.

****If a child needs to be picked up at school, every attempt should be made by the parent to notify the school office/administration by 2pm.**

E. EARLY ARRIVAL

If you transport your child to school in the morning, please be sure that he/she does not arrive before 8:20 a.m., as there will be no supervision before that time. Students are not allowed to enter the building before that time. On inclement days, students may enter the building on arrival at 8:20 a.m. They are to report to the designated area in the individual school buildings until they are dismissed to their classrooms at 8:50. Children may not enter classrooms unless the teacher is in the room.

F. AFTER SCHOOL HOURS:

Personal transportation is required for students who may be remaining after school for teacher assistance, a school club, or for an activity. A student should be picked up at the time identified by the teacher/club hosting the activity.

A parent/guardian that chooses to pick up his/her child after school should do so at the main entrance in front of the building at the time identified. In the interest of safety, we ask each parent/guardian to wait for his/her child in the main lobby at the front of the school. Do not proceed to the classroom to pick up your child. Please leave cars parked in appropriately marked spaces in the lots provided.

G. SCHOOL ADMISSIONS/RESIDENCY

Any person who improperly attends the Somerset Public Schools will be required to remit full restitution to Somerset which restitution includes, but is not limited to, the cost of tuition for attending the Somerset Public Schools. Similarly, any person who assists a student in improperly attending the Somerset Public Schools will be required to remit full restitution to Somerset. Proof of residency of a student's legal guardian will also be required by the school administration.

In accordance with MGL C. 76, S. 5 & 6, students must attend the public school in the town where they actually reside. A student may not claim residence in a town for the sole purpose of attending school there. If investigation by school personnel verifies out-of-district residency, a parent/guardian may be held legally and fiscally responsible. If you have a question on this, please contact the main office of the school.

H. SCHOOL CANCELLATION OR DELAY

It is the policy of the Somerset School Department to cancel school only in the most severe weather conditions. In the event of a school delay, parents are expected to use their own judgment in sending children to school. Announcements will be made through the OneCall Now System, and on local radio and television stations.

Elementary schools start at 10:20 a.m. when a ninety (90) minute delay in opening of schools is made. School opens for the arrival of students at 9:50 a.m. Expectations for buses to pick-up students would be approximately ninety (90) minutes later than the accustomed time. Morning Preschool and before-school activities are cancelled when a ninety (90) minute delay occurs.

PLEASE NOTE: When school is cancelled because of hazardous weather conditions or other emergencies, all student practices, rehearsals, or meetings shall be cancelled. Student drop-offs by bus will be made at the normal drop-off location in the event of an emergency early dismissal.

I. TARDINESS

Please be sure that children arrive at school on time (school begins at 8:50 a.m). Late arrivals disrupt the classroom and affect the student's ability to start the day properly. If you drop your child off for breakfast, please do so by 8:30 am. This should give them time to eat and not be tardy. Children need to form good habits of punctuality and responsibility. A full day of attendance is a minimum of three (3) hours. Habitually tardy students will be brought to the attention of the administration. A meeting with the principal or assistant principal and the student's parent/guardian may be requested and notice may be provided to the attendance officer documenting this behavior.

J. TRUANCY:

By law, students are required to attend school daily. The following will be classified as truancy:

1. Students absent from school in violation of the law.
2. Students who leave the school without proper authorization.

Students classified as truant will be required to make up missed work. In addition, written notification will be forwarded to the attendance officer documenting be forwarded to the attendance officer documenting the truancy.

K. UNSCHEDULED EARLY DISMISSAL

We recognize that an unscheduled early dismissal may create some hardships on parents, especially working parents. Therefore, we will only approve unscheduled dismissal when early dismissal is warranted for safety concerns. While it remains the parents’ responsibility to make provision for the supervision of their children in the event that those students are dismissed early from Somerset Schools, we make the following suggestions:

- It is important that every child be aware of a plan in case of early dismissal if their parents are not at home.
- Share and review the plan with your child on a consistent basis.
- It is extremely important that emergency forms are kept up to date. If there are any changes in work, home, or sitter’s telephone number(s), notify the school office immediately.

If an unscheduled early dismissal occurs, it will be announced on local radio and television stations. Dismissal begins at the high school, the middle school and then the elementary schools.

L. UNSCHEDULED EARLY DISMISSAL EMERGENCY PROCEDURES – ONE SCHOOL

The following procedures shall be followed if conditions warrant the unscheduled early dismissal of one school:

- a.) Buses shall be called immediately.
- b.) Students shall be bused to the receiving school.
- c.) Teachers shall ride buses to the receiving school and supervise students.
- d.) Lunch shall be served at the receiving school depending on the situation and time of day that the situation occurs.
- e.) Activities for students shall depend upon availability of equipment and space.
- f.) Classes may combine for activities as needed.
- g.) All students shall be bused home at regular dismissal time.
- h.) Teacher shall ride the bus with the students and shall be bused to their cars at the conclusion of the bus runs.

School Being Dismissed:

Chace Street School

South School

North Elementary School

Scheduled Receiving Schools:

North Elementary School

Somerset Middle School

Somerset/Berkley Regional High School

In the event that the designated school is unavailable, students will be bused to the Somerset/Berkley Regional High School

PARENTS ARE REQUESTED TO KEEP EMERGENCY FORMS UP-TO-DATE.

Somerset School Policy File:EBCE-R

M. VACATIONS SCHEDULED BY PARENT DURING SCHOOL TIME

Student absences resulting from family vacations taken at times other than the weeks (days) identified in the school calendar are unexcused. These absences create significant learning difficulties as 90% of today's instruction involves discussion, group work and in-school practice, which cannot be replicated when a child is not in school. Also, many of the classroom activities are grouped and differentiated with the readiness, interests, and learning styles of students in mind.

Assignments will not be sent home prior to the absence, but key assignments may be saved during the student's absence and given to the student upon his/her return to school. Key assignments that are not completed in an appropriate manner within one calendar week of his/her return or student learning outcomes that have not been mastered will adversely influence the student's performance level on the progress report. The student bears the responsibility of the actual completion of all work missed due to absences because of a family vacation. The parents/guardians bear the responsibility for ensuring the completion of the work.

Textbooks are available at some grade levels in some subjects. Teachers may be able to send these textbooks home with the child after vacation. The parent is asked to assist the child in understanding the material as it progresses in the textbooks and to quiz the child with regard to this understanding. Textbooks are the responsibility of the family if lost or damaged. (Legal Refs.: M.G.L. 76:1, 76:16, 76:20.)

N. MAKE-UP WORK:

Students will be permitted to complete all of the work missed within a period of time equal to half the number of days of the family vacation (not to exceed seven school days). Any work not made up after the allotted time will receive a zero.

A parent/guardian can request make-up work by calling the main office secretary before 8:30 A.M. The make-up work will be gathered and sent to the office where it can be picked up by the parent/guardian in the afternoon by 3:15 P.M or work may be sent home with a sibling or neighboring student.

BEHAVIOR

A. GOAL

Every teacher and staff member strives for a well disciplined and safe environment at school. Students are expected to show respect to fellow students, teachers, aides, and volunteers. All students have a right to be educated, and teachers have the responsibility to provide that education.

B. SCHOOL RULES

School rules, which govern acceptable behavior in the classroom and in the cafeteria, at recess, in the corridors, and in the restrooms, on the bus, and at assemblies have been developed by the school administration with the advice and assistance of the teachers. Classroom teachers and specialists regularly review these rules.

The Somerset Public Schools expects the following general behaviors from its students:

- Speak softly and politely to others.
- Proceed in corridors quietly.
- Keep your materials in good condition.
- Be responsible for your actions.
- Respect the rights and safety of others.
- Use school facilities and materials with care and respect.
- The use of any tobacco products within the school buildings, the school facilities, the grounds, or on school buses by any individual, including school personnel is prohibited.

At the discretion of the school administration, all penalties for violating the school rules listed may be increased or decreased depending on the severity of the violation and other circumstances. In addition, any offense to school order not mentioned in this handbook will be handled at the administration's discretion.

If the disciplinary procedures herein have been implemented and have been unsuccessful in changing the unacceptable behavior of a student, the parents/guardians will be contacted by the administration and may be asked to come into school to meet with their child's team of teachers and/or the administration. Excessive and repetitive violations of school rules may result in the school filing a Child Requiring Assistance ("The Act") Petition with the Bristol County Juvenile Courts.

Discipline can include a range of options including but not limited to:

1. Documentation/Verbal Warning
2. Parent/Guardian contact: If the student continues to commit the documented infraction, the teacher will contact the student's parent/guardian.
3. Indoor recess/office lunch/after-school detention: If the student continues the unacceptable behavior, the teacher should schedule an appointment with the student's parents/guardians and/or notify the administration.

C. INFRACTIONS:

FORGERY OF SIGNATURES: This may include but is not limited to any school paper that requires a parent or teacher signature, a note for an excused absence, a letter of suspension, a permission slip to attend a school function, or any other document issued by the school or school authority requiring a parent/guardian signature.

First Offense: Consequences given by the teacher; contact with parents.

Second Offense: Referral to administration for additional consequences and contact with parents.

CHEATING: This may include any student caught copying another student's work. In addition to the following consequences, students caught cheating will receive a zero for the test or assignment on which they cheated.

First Offense: Consequences given by the teacher; contact with parents.

Second Offense: Referral to administration for additional consequences and contact with parents.

PLAGIARISM: This may include any student caught copying print or electronic sources without the appropriate documentation.

First Offense: Consequences given by the teacher; contact with parents. (Student may redo the assignment)

Second Offense: Referral to administration for additional consequences and contact with parents. (Student receives a zero on the assignment)

INAPPROPRIATE USE OR POSSESSION OF WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS OR ELECTRONIC DEVICES: See the wireless communications and electronic devices citation located in the general information section of this handbook for more information regarding these devices.

First Offense: Confiscation of the device and parent/guardian notification.

Second Offense: Confiscation of the device and referral to administration for discipline.

PICTURES/VIDEOS: Absolutely no pictures and/or videos should be taken with an electronic device, unless directed for educational purposes.

First Consequence: Confiscation of the device and the student make pick it up at the end of the school day.

Second Consequence: Confiscation of the device, and it must be picked up by a parent.

(Cell phones, like all other personal items brought to the school zone, may be subject to search. The outcome of that search may result in school sanction and/or a criminal investigation by the police)

ROUGHHOUSING: Roughhousing includes pushing, shoving, kicking, and general horseplay, even if the two involved students claim that their actions were not intended to be malicious. Roughhousing compromises the safety and orderliness of a school and will not be tolerated at Somerset Public Schools. Student safety is important at our school, and this type of behavior can lead to serious injury.

Student behavior may be addressed by the individual staff member witnessing the event, event or may be referred to administration, depending on the severity of the case. Continued behaviors will result in referral to the office and communication with parents/guardians. Discipline for this offense will depend on the nature of the offense, offense and could range from loss of privileges to suspension.

First Offense: May range from a teacher consequence to suspension, depending upon the severity of the roughhousing as determined by the administrator.

Second Offense: May range from an administrative consequence to suspension depending upon the severity of the roughhousing as determined by the judgment of the administration.

PANTSING: “Pantsing” is a form of roughhousing where a student pulls down another student’s pants. This is an unacceptable form of behavior.

First Offense: Indoor Recess or Detention or Suspension

Second Offense: Suspension for additional days

STEALING: Stealing will not be tolerated at Somerset Public Schools. Any student caught stealing will immediately return the item taken and offer an apology to the victim. This will take place in the presence of a guidance counselor or an administrator. The student’s parents/guardians will be notified, and the offending student will serve the suitable disciplinary consequence. (Police notification may also result)

First Offense: Consequences given by the teacher; contact with parents.

Second Offense: Referral to administration for additional consequences and contact with parents.

DISRESPECT TO STAFF: Students are expected to be responsible in showing respect to all staff members. Students are expected to use appropriate language and to conduct themselves in a courteous and polite manner.

First Offense: May range from a teacher consequence to suspension, depending upon the severity of the disrespect as determined by the administrator.

Second Offense: May range from an administrative consequence to suspension depending upon the severity of the disrespect as determined by the judgment of the administration.

PROFANITY/VULGARITY: Swearing, vulgar language, or derogatory remarks regarding race, color, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, intellectual abilities, exceptionalities, domicile, gender identity, gender, whether intended or not to demean or ridicule another, will not be tolerated. This includes all forms of expression. Such expressions foster prejudices and stereotyping which research has shown is often at the root of violence. We strive for our school to be a safe and comfortable atmosphere for everyone. Diversity should be celebrated, not ridiculed.

First Offense: Consequences given by the teacher; contact with parents.

Second Offense: Referral to administration for additional consequences and contact with parents

VANDALISM – DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY: Tampering with property belonging to another student or staff member is an invasion of personal rights, disrespectful, costly, and will not be tolerated. Any student vandalizing or destroying another’s property will be required to make restitution. Police notification may result.

DISRUPTING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT/PROCESS: All students have the right to an education free of disruptions. Continuous and intentional classroom disruptions of any manner, which interfere with the teacher’s ability to teach, will not be tolerated. A disruptive student will be warned to change his/her behavior; continuation of the behaviors may result in loss of privileges, or referral to the office, depending on the nature and severity of the behavior.

First Offense: Consequences given by the teacher; contact with parents.

Second Offense: Referral to administration for additional consequences and contact with parents

THREATS: VERBAL/NONVERBAL OR WRITTEN: All threats are taken seriously. Whether it be verbal or written, an investigation will be done by administration or designee. (Police notification may result)

First Offense: May range from a teacher consequence to suspension, depending upon the severity of the threat as determined by the administrator; contact with parents.

Second Offense: May range from an administrative consequence to suspension depending upon the severity of the threat as determined by the judgment of the administration; contact with parents.

FIGHTING/ASSAULTING ANOTHER STUDENT: Fighting or assaulting another student in school, at recess, on school grounds, or on school buses is dangerous and will not be tolerated. Students are expected to avoid conflicts that might escalate into fighting. Students are encouraged to seek advice from staff if a problem occurs which could escalate into a fight.

First Offense: May range from a teacher consequence to suspension, depending upon the severity of the fight as determined by the administrator.

Second Offense: May range from an administrative consequence to suspension depending upon the severity of the fight as determined by the judgment of the administration.

All cases of assault/ fighting will be referred to the office for administrative discipline.

D. STUDENT SEARCHES:

A student may be searched by the principal or a designee, whenever there is reasonable suspicion that the student is, or has been, in possession of contraband or materials indicating a violation of the discipline code or the law or where the student has violated or is violating either the discipline code or the law. The search itself will be conducted in a reasonable manner, given the age and sex of the student as well as the nature of the infraction. A witness will always be present for any search.

Whenever a student search is conducted, the following shall apply:

1. No search shall be conducted unless there is reasonable suspicion that a violation of law or school rules has occurred;
2. Searches shall be conducted by an administrator, or designated staff person in the presence of at least one other staff member;
3. Whenever a personal search is deemed necessary, the student shall be advised of the reason for the impending search prior to its implementation. School officials may examine articles of clothing such as pockets, coats, book bags, etc.;
4. In recognition that right to privacy considerations intensify as a search becomes invasive, no school official shall ever conduct a "strip search" of a student;
5. Should a student refuse to voluntarily comply with a request for a search, the student may be detained until parents, and if necessary police, can arrive to assist, as appropriate, in the investigation. A student who fails to cooperate, lies, misleads or threatens any person during or after a search or questioning, may be subject to additional disciplinary action;
6. Should a search uncover any substances or contraband, such shall be turned over to the appropriate authorities or rightful owner, as appropriate, and suitable disciplinary action shall be taken.

Nothing herein shall be construed to limit the right of the School Committee or administration to make use of external detecting resources should these become necessary or desirable.

E. DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS on 504 PLANS

School personnel may not suspend a student on a 504 plan for more than ten (10) consecutive school days without a manifestation determination to discuss whether or not the student's behavior was a manifestation of his/her disability. Procedural protections for eligible 504 students are the same as those afforded to students who receive special education services.

F. SUSPENSIONS

The most serious consequence of inappropriate behavior is suspension. Most elementary students will never be suspended from school. If a student is suspended, his/her parents will be notified by telephone and also by letter. The letter will inform the parents of the reason for suspension, how long it is for, and the date the student can return to school.

The Somerset Public Schools adheres to the Student Discipline Laws and Regulations as set forth in Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 37H, 37H ½ and 37H ¾ and 603 CMR 53.00 et seq. "Disciplinary offense under G.L. c. 71, §§37H or 37H½ " means one or more of the following alleged or determined disciplinary infractions: a) possession of a dangerous weapon; b) possession of a controlled substance; c) assault on a member of the educational staff; and d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, or adjudication or admission of guilt with respect to such felony, if a principal 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 G.L. c. 71, §§37H or 37H½.

STUDENT CONDUCT

MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS, CH. 71, S. 37H

Publication of School Committee Policies Relative to the Conduct of Teachers and Students.

(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 knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four (94c) C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

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

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

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

(d) Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten (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 provisions of this section.

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

(f) Districts shall report to the department of elementary and secondary education the specific reasons for all suspensions and expulsions, regardless of duration or type, in a manner and form established by the commissioner. The department of elementary and secondary education shall use its existing data collection tools to obtain this information from districts and shall modify those tools as necessary, to obtain the information. On an annual basis, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) shall make district level de-identified data and analysis, including the total number of days each student is excluded during the school year, available to the public online in a machine readable format. This report shall include district level data disaggregated by student status and categories established by the commissioner.

(g) Under the regulations promulgated by the department, for each school that suspends or expels a significant number of students for more than ten (10) cumulative days in a school year, the commissioner shall investigate and, as appropriate, shall recommend models that incorporate intermediary steps prior to the use of suspension or expulsion. The results of the analysis shall be publicly reported at the school district level.

POLICY AGAINST USE/POSSESSION OF WEAPONS

Possession of any weapon is strictly forbidden. A weapon is any object that may be used to assault or intimidate, such as a knife, mace, or sharp spiked jewelry. Canes or other similar devices are not to be used or carried unless the school nurse has on file a physician's recommendation that a student use them. The administration will take disciplinary action commensurate with the violation.

School staff are required to file written reports on any incidents, regardless of whether or not they occur during school hours, involving a student's possession of a dangerous weapon on school premises. A Principal receiving such report will file copies with the local Chief of Police, the Department of Children and Families, the school district's office of Student Services (or its equivalent) and the School Committee. The filing of such a report triggers an assessment of the student, referral to a counseling program, and a follow-up assessment.

Any student who is involved in a weapons "incident" whether expelled or not, is entitled to receive information on available counseling services. Such services can include counseling available within the district and provided by district personnel and/or counseling available through other agencies. Information provided to the student must include information regarding the cost to the student. The school district is required to provide counseling services at no cost to the student only if such counseling services are available on a regular basis to other students within the district.

Students transferring to a new district must provide that district with complete school records containing information on suspensions, violations of criminal acts and incident reports filed against the student.

Firearms

Whoever, not being a law enforcement officer, and not withstanding any license obtained by him/her under the provisions of Chapter 140, carries on his/her person a firearm as hereinafter defined, loaded or unloaded, in any building or on the grounds of any secondary school without written authorization of the board or officer in charge of such secondary school, shall be punished by a fine not more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or by imprisonment for not more than one year, or both. For the purpose of this paragraph, "firearms" shall mean

any pistol, revolver, rifle or smoothbore arm from which a shot, bullet or pellet can be discharged by whatever means.

Any student who is determined to have brought a firearm to school will be disciplined in accordance with G.L. c. 71, s. 37H.

Firecrackers

Firecrackers and any other explosive devices are illegal and prohibited on school property. Discipline will be handled at the discretion of the administration.

MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS, CH. 71, S. 37H½

Felony Complaint or Conviction of Student; Suspension; Expulsion; Right to Appeal

Notwithstanding the provisions of Section eighty-four and Sections sixteen and seventeen of Chapter seventy-six:

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

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

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

The student shall have the right to appeal the expulsion to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent, in writing, of his request for an appeal no later than five (5) calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three (3) calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days

of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town, or regional school district with regard to the expulsion.

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

MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS, CH. 71, S. 37H³/₄

Suspension or expulsion on grounds other than those set forth in Secs. 37H or 37H¹/₂

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

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

(c) For any suspension or expulsion under this section, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled, or a designee, shall provide, to the student and to the parent or guardian of the student, notice of the charges and the reason for the suspension or expulsion in English and in the primary language spoken in the home of the student. The student shall receive the written notification and shall have the opportunity to meet with the principal or headmaster, or a designee, to discuss the charges and reasons for the suspension or expulsion prior to the suspension or expulsion taking effect. The principal or headmaster, or a designee, shall ensure that the parent or guardian of the student is included in the meeting, provided that such meeting may take place without the parent or guardian only if the principal or headmaster, or a designee, can document reasonable efforts to include the parent or guardian in that meeting. The department shall promulgate rules and regulations that address a principal's duties under this subsection and procedures for including parents in student exclusion meetings, hearings or interviews under this subsection.

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

(f) A student who has been suspended or expelled from school for more than ten (10) school days for a single infraction or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year shall have the right to appeal the suspension or expulsion to the superintendent. The student or a parent or guardian of the student shall notify the superintendent in writing of a request for an appeal not later than five (5) calendar

days following the effective date of the suspension or expulsion; provided, that a student and a parent or guardian of the student may request, and if so requested, shall be granted an extension of up to seven (7) calendar days. The superintendent, or a designee, shall hold a hearing with the student and the parent or guardian of the student within three (3) school days of the student's request for an appeal; provided that a student or a parent or guardian of the student may request, and if so requested, shall be granted an extension of up to seven (7) calendar days; provided further, that the superintendent, or a designee, may proceed with a hearing without a parent or guardian of the student if the superintendent, or a designee, makes a good faith effort to include the parent or guardian. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony, cross-examine witnesses and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal in writing within five (5) calendar days of the hearing. That decision shall be the final decision of the school district with regard to the suspension or expulsion.

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

STUDENT DISCIPLINE AND DUE PROCESS RIGHTS

Consistent with the Massachusetts student discipline law (Chapter 222 of the Acts of 2012) and the student discipline regulations (603 CMR 53.00), Somerset Public Schools' student discipline policy includes specific procedures related to student suspensions and expulsions and is designed to provide students who are suspended or expelled the opportunity to make academic progress. Our goals are:

1. To keep schools safe and supportive for all students while ensuring fair and effective disciplinary practices;
2. To promote engagement of a student and a student's parent or guardian in discussion of the student's misconduct, and the options for responding to it;
3. To assure that every student who is expelled or suspended, regardless of the reason for suspension or expulsion, has the opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of suspension or expulsion; and
4. To limit the use of long-term suspension as a consequence for student misconduct until other consequences have been considered and tried as appropriate.

In all cases, the principal reserves the right to apportion discipline as he/she deems to be in the best interests of the student and the overall school environment.

A. Due Process

Except in cases of emergency or when the student's continued presence poses a danger to person or property, the principal may not impose a suspension without first providing the student and the parent or guardian oral and written notice of the offense, the basis for the charge and the potential consequences, and providing the student an opportunity for a hearing on the alleged offense and the parent or guardian an opportunity to participate in the hearing. The principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent or guardian orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. A hearing may be conducted without the parent or guardian present if, after reasonable, good faith efforts to include the parent or guardian, the principal is unable to secure their participation.

This section does not apply to the suspension of a student 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 the principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school, as provided in G.L. c. 71, §§37H or 37H½.

i. Principal's Hearing

The principal shall determine the extent of the rights afforded to a student at a disciplinary hearing based on the anticipated consequences for the offense. Students facing a long-term suspension will be afforded greater minimum rights than students facing a short term suspension. For additional information refer to 603 CMR 53.08.

- a. Short-term Suspension: At a minimum, the principal shall discuss the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts that the principal should consider in determining whether other remedies or consequences (other than suspension) may be sufficient and appropriate. If present, the parent or guardian shall be provided an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and other information, including mitigating circumstances that the principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.

Following the hearing, the principal shall notify the student and parent or guardian of the determination, the reasons for the determination, and length of any suspension being imposed. The determination shall be in writing. Students shall be provided with the opportunity to make up assignments and such other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal.

- b. Long-term Suspension: At a minimum, a student facing a long-term suspension shall be afforded all of the rights afforded a student in a short-term suspension hearing. In addition, a student facing a long-term suspension shall have the following additional rights:
- In advance of hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the principal may rely in making his/her determination;
 - The right to be represented by counsel or a lay person at the student's choice and at the student's/parent's or guardian's expense;
 - The right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf;
 - The right to cross examine witnesses presented by the school district; and
 - The right to request that the hearing be recorded.

The principal's determination shall be in writing and sent to the student and parent or guardian. If the principal decides to suspend the student, the written determination shall:

- Identify the offense, the date on which the hearing took place and the participants at the hearing;
- Set out the key facts and conclusions reached by the principal;
- Identify the length and effective date of suspension;
- Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the suspension;
- Inform the student of the right to appeal the decision to the superintendent (or designee). Appeal to the superintendent is only provided in those cases where the principal has imposed a long-term suspension.

In every case of misconduct for which suspension may be imposed, the principal shall exercise discretion in deciding the consequence for the offense.

ii. Superintendent's Hearing

A student placed on long-term suspension following a hearing with the principal shall have the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent. The appeal must be filed within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long-term suspension. The superintendent shall hold the hearing within three (3) school days of the student's request, unless the student or parent or guardian request an extension of up to seven (7) additional

calendar days, in which case the superintendent shall grant the extension. A good faith effort will be made to include the parent or guardian in the hearing.

The superintendent shall send written notice to the parent or guardian of the date, time, and location of the hearing.

The superintendent shall arrange for an audio recording of the hearing, a copy of which shall be provided to the student or parents or guardian upon request. The student shall have all of the rights afforded at the Principal's Hearing for long-term suspension.

The superintendent shall issue a written decision within five (5) calendar days of the hearing. While the superintendent may modify the principal's decision to reduce the suspension or consequence imposed on the student, under no circumstances may the superintendent impose a suspension which is greater than that imposed by the principal's decision. The decision of the superintendent shall be the final decision of the school district.

iii. Emergency Removal

Nothing in these rules and regulations shall prevent the principal from removing a student from school temporarily when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially alters and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption. The principal shall immediately notify the superintendent in writing of the removal and the reason for it, and describe the danger presented by the student. The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days following the day of the emergency removal, during which time the principal shall:

- Make immediate and reasonable efforts to notify the student and the student's parent or guardian of the emergency removal, the reason(s) for the removal and other matters set forth in 603 CMR 53.06(2);
- Provide written notice to the student and parent or guardian pursuant to 603 CMR 53.06(2);
- Provide the student with an opportunity for a hearing and the parent or guardian an opportunity to attend the hearing, before the expiration of two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for the hearing is agreed to by the principal, student and parent or guardian.
- A decision must be rendered (orally) on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day.

A student may not be removed from school on an emergency basis for a disciplinary offense until adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation.

Expulsion

Although suspension is limited to no more than ninety (90) school days in a school year under M.G.L. c. 71 s. 37H³/₄, principals continue to have discretion under M.G.L. c. 71, sections 37H and 37H¹/₂ to impose a longer suspension or expulsion on a student for one of the statutory offenses, such as possession of a dangerous weapon or a controlled substance on school grounds, or assault on school staff.

The student shall receive written notification of the charges and the reasons for such expulsion prior to such expulsion taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his or her right to appeal and the process for appealing such expulsion; provided, however, that the expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

WEAPONS, DRUGS AND ASSAULT ON STAFF: In accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, §37H:

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

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

Students should not bring in any toy or other object which resembles a weapon, knife, or gun of any kind. Objects of this nature will be confiscated and may result in the student being referred to the principal for further action, depending on the individual situation.

FELONY CHARGES AND CONVICTIONS:

In accordance with M.G.L. c.71 §37H ½:

Notwithstanding the provisions of section eighty-four (84) and sections sixteen (16) and seventeen (17) of chapter seventy-six (76):

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

The student shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent in writing of his request for an appeal no later than five (5) calendar days following the effective date of the suspension. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three (3) calendar days of the student's request for an appeal. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent

shall render a decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the suspension.

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

The student shall have the right to appeal the expulsion to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent, in writing, of his request for an appeal no later than five (5) calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three (3) calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the expulsion. Upon expulsion of such student, no school or school district shall be required to provide educational services to such student.

In accordance with M.G.L. c.76 §17 a school committee may permanently expel a student but not without first giving the student and his/her parent or guardian and opportunity to be heard.

G. DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students on IEP's and 504 plans are expected to abide by the same rules as students without disabilities. There are different procedures for the discipline of students with disabilities under the federal IDEA and Massachusetts law. Parents/Guardians will be provided with copies of these procedures.

The school may suspend or remove a child with a disability from his/her current educational placement for a period not to exceed ten (10) cumulative school days in any school year.

Anytime the school wishes to remove a child with a disability from his/her current educational placement for more than ten (10) consecutive school days in any school year, or for more than ten (10) cumulative days when a pattern of removal is occurring, this constitutes a "change of placement." A change of placement invokes certain procedural protections under the IDEA, the federal special education law.

If the school decides to make a removal that constitutes a change of placement, the school must inform the parent(s)/guardian no later than the day on which the decision is made. Prior to any removal that constitutes a change of placement, the school must also provide the parent(s)/guardian with a procedural safeguards notice. No later than ten (10) days after a decision to make a change of placement occurs, the student's I.E.P. Team must reconvene to consider whether or not the behavior that forms the basis for the removal is related to the student's disability. This consideration is called a manifestation determination. The parent(s)/guardian have the right to participate as a member of the Team.

H. DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Consideration of whether the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability:

The law provides that the Team must consider evaluation information, observational information, the student's IEP and placement, and must determine whether the behavior prompting disciplinary removal was a manifestation of the student's disability. The behavior is considered a manifestation of the student's disability if the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability or was a direct result of the school district's failure to implement the student's IEP.

If the Team determines that the behavior was related to your child's disability, then your child may not be removed from the current educational placement until the IEP Team develops a new IEP and decides upon a new placement and you consent to that new IEP and placement or a Hearing Officer orders a removal from the current educational placement to another placement.

If the Team determines the behavior was not related to your child's disability, then the school may suspend or otherwise discipline your child according to the school's code of student conduct, except that for any period of removal exceeding ten days, the school district must provide your child with a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). The school district must determine the educational services necessary for FAPE and the manner and location of providing those services.

In the case of a disagreement with the Team's determination:

If the parent(s) disagrees with the Team's decision on the "manifestation determination" or with the decision relating to placement of the student in an interim alternative education setting or any other disciplinary action, the parent(s) have the right to appeal the Team's decision by requesting an expedited hearing from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA).

Removals that do not require a manifestation determination:

School personnel may remove a student to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) school days without regard to whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability, in cases where a child carries or possesses a weapon to or at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function; knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function; or has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function.

I. PROCEDURE FOR EXPULSION

- The student is suspended and a report is submitted by the principal to the Superintendent of Schools.
- If the Superintendent, based on the evidence presented in the report, determines that there are possible grounds for expulsion, arrangements for a preliminary hearing with the student and parent/guardian will be made.
- Any student who is found in possession of a dangerous weapon or a controlled substance on school premises or at a school-sponsored or school-related event, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal. Additionally, any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

- If the Superintendent, upon completion of a preliminary hearing, decides to recommend expulsion, the Superintendent will furnish, within five (5) school days, the parent or guardian and the student with a written statement of the facts leading to the recommendation.
- The Superintendent will arrange for a hearing before the School Committee pursuant to General Laws, Chapter 76, Section 17.

I. PROCEDURES FOR EXPULSION (Continued)

Hearing Process for Expulsion

In an expulsion proceeding, the student is entitled to the following:

- Advanced written notice of the charges.
- The right to be represented by an attorney or other person acting on the student's behalf.
- Adequate time to prepare for the hearing.
- The right to question witnesses.
- If warranted--a reasonable, prompt, written decision by the School Committee including specific grounds for the decision.

Questions concerning this procedure should be directed to the school principal.

J. STUDENTS NOT YET ELIGIBLE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

Students who have not been determined to be eligible for special education and related services and who have engaged in behavior that violates the District's Code of Conduct may assert any other protections provided to students with disabilities if the school district had knowledge that the student was a student with a disability before the behavior that resulted in the disciplinary action occurred.

The school district may be considered to have prior knowledge if, before the behavior that resulted in the disciplinary action occurred:

- The parent expressed concern in writing to administrative personnel of the student's school or to the student's teacher that the student is in need of special education and related services, or
- The parent requested an evaluation of the student, or
- District staff expressed, directly to the Director of Special Education or other supervisory personnel, specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the student.

The District may not be deemed to have had knowledge if the parent/guardian has not consented to an evaluation of the student or has refused special education services, or if an evaluation of the student was completed and resulted in a determination of ineligibility.

If the District had no knowledge that the student is a student with a disability, the student may be subjected to disciplinary measures applied to students without disabilities. However, if the parent/guardian requests an evaluation during the time period in which the student is subjected to these disciplinary measures, the District must conduct an expedited evaluation to determine whether the student is eligible for special education and related services. Until the evaluation is completed, the student remains in the educational placement determined by the District which can include suspension or expulsion without educational services. If, after the evaluation, the student is determined to be eligible the district must provide special education and related services in accordance with the IDEA.

K. PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OF STUDENTS (Somerset Policy Book JKAA)

PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY:

Physical restraint shall be used only in emergency situations of last resort, after other lawful and less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate, and with extreme caution. School personnel shall use physical restraint with two goals in mind:

- (a) To administer a physical restraint only when needed to protect a student and/or a member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm; and
- (b) To prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of physical restraint.

DEFINITIONS:

The following definitions appear at 603 CMR 46.02:

1. **Physical Restraint:** Direct physical contact that prevents or significantly restricts a student's freedom of movement. Physical restraint does not include: brief physical contact to promote student safety, providing physical guidance or prompting when teaching a skill, redirecting attention, providing comfort, or a physical escort
2. **Physical Escort:** A temporary touching or holding, without the use of force, of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a student who is agitated to walk to a safe location
3. **Time-out:** A behavioral support strategy developed pursuant to 603 CMR 46.04(1) in which a student temporarily separates from the learning activity or the classroom, either by choice or by direction from staff, for the purpose of calming. During time-out, a student must be continuously observed by a staff member. Staff shall be with the student or immediately available to the student at all times. The space used for time-out must be clean, safe, sanitary, and appropriate for the purpose of calming. Time-out shall cease as soon as the student has calmed.
4. **Seclusion:** The involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area from which the student is physically prevented from leaving. Seclusion does not include a time-out as defined in 603 CMR 46.02 **Seclusion is prohibited under 603 CMR 46.03.**

TRAINING:

Required training for all staff. Each building principal will determine a time and method to provide all staff with training regarding the District's restraint prevention and behavior support policy and requirements when restraint is used. Such training shall occur within the first month of each school year and, for employees hired after the school year begins, within a month of their employment. Training shall include information on the following:

At the beginning of each school year, the building principal shall identify school staff who are authorized to serve as a school-wide resource to assist in ensuring proper administration of physical restraint. Such staff must participate in in-depth training in the use of physical restraint. The Department recommends that such training be competency-based with at least one refresher training occurring annually thereafter.

ADMINISTRATION OF PHYSICAL RESTRAINT:

Only school personnel who have received training pursuant to 603 CMR 46.04(2) or 603 CMR 46.04(3) shall administer physical restraint on students. Whenever possible, the administration of a restraint shall be witnessed

by at least one adult who does not participate in the restraint. The training requirements contained in 603 CMR 46.00 shall not preclude a teacher, employee or agent of a public education program from using reasonable force to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

A person administering a physical restraint shall use only the amount of force necessary to protect the student or others from physical injury or harm.

A person administering physical restraint shall use the safest method available and appropriate to the situation subject to the safety requirements set forth in 603 CMR 46.05(5). Floor restraints, including prone restraints otherwise permitted under 603 CMR 46.03(1)(b), shall be prohibited unless the staff members administering the restraint have received in-depth training according to the requirements of 603 CMR 46.043(3) and, in the judgment of the trained staff members, such method is required to provide safety for the student or others present.

All physical restraint must be terminated as soon as the student is no longer an immediate danger to himself or others, or the student indicates that he or she cannot breathe, or if the student is observed to be in severe distress, such as having difficulty breathing, or sustained or prolonged crying or coughing.

Safety requirements. Additional requirements for the use of physical restraint:

(a) No restraint shall be administered in such a way that the student is prevented from breathing or speaking. During the administration of a restraint, a staff member shall continuously monitor the physical status of the student, including skin temperature and color, and respiration.

(b) Restraint shall be administered in such a way so as to prevent or minimize physical harm. If, at any time during a physical restraint, the student expresses or demonstrates significant physical distress including, but not limited to, difficulty breathing, the student shall be released from the restraint immediately, and school staff shall take steps to seek medical assistance.

(c) If a student is restrained for a period longer than 20 minutes, program staff shall obtain the approval of the principal. The approval shall be based upon the student's continued agitation during the restraint justifying the need for continued restraint.

(d) Program staff shall review and consider any known medical or psychological limitations, known or suspected trauma history, and/or behavioral intervention plans regarding the use of physical restraint on an individual student.

(e) After the release of a student from a restraint, the public education program shall implement follow-up procedures. These procedures shall include reviewing the incident with the student to address the behavior that precipitated the restraint, reviewing the incident with the staff person(s) who administered the restraint to discuss whether proper restraint procedures were followed, and consideration of whether any follow-up is appropriate for students who witnessed the incident

Physical restraint is prohibited as a means of punishment, or as a response to destruction of property, disruption of school order, a student's refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive, or verbal threats that do not constitute a threat of imminent, serious physical harm to the student or others.

REPORTING:

School staff must report the use of any physical restraint as specified in 603 CMR 46.06(2).

The staff member who administered the restraint shall verbally inform the principal of the restraint as soon as possible, and by written report no later than the next school working day. The written report shall be provided to the principal for review of the use of the restraint. If the principal has administered the restraint, the principal shall prepare the report and submit it to an individual or team designated by the superintendent. The principal or his/her designee must maintain an on-going record of all reported instances of physical restraint, which shall be made available for review by the parent/guardian or DESE upon request.

The principal or his/her designee must make reasonable efforts to verbally inform the student's parent/guardian of the restraint within twenty-four (24) hours of the event, and must notify the parent/guardian by written report sent either within three (3) school working days of the restraint to an email address provided by the parent/guardian for communications about the student, or by regular mail postmarked no later than three (3) school working days of the restraint. If the school provides a parent/guardian of a student with report cards and other necessary school-related information in a language other than English, the written restraint report shall be provided to the parent/guardian in that language. The principal must provide the student and the parent/guardian an opportunity to comment orally and in writing on the use of the restraint and on information in the written report.

The written report required by 603 CMR 46.06(2) and (3) must include:

- (a) The name of the student; the names and job titles of the staff who administered the restraint, and observers, if any; the date of the restraint; the time the restraint began and ended; and the name of the principal or designee who was verbally informed following the restraint; and, as applicable, the name of the principal or designee who approved continuation of the restraint beyond twenty (20) minutes pursuant to 603 CMR 46.05(5)(c).
- (b) A description of the activity in which the restrained student and other students and staff in the same room or vicinity were engaged immediately preceding the use of physical restraint; the behavior that prompted the restraint; the efforts made to prevent escalation of behavior, including the specific de-escalation strategies used; alternatives to restraint that were attempted; and the justification for initiating physical restraint.
- (c) A description of the administration of the restraint including the holds used and reasons such holds were necessary; the student's behavior and reactions during the restraint; how the restraint ended; and documentation of injury to the student and/or staff, if any, during the restraint and any medical care provided.
- (d) Information regarding any further action(s) that the school has taken or may take, including any consequences that may be imposed on the student.
- (e) Information regarding opportunities for the student's parents/guardians to discuss with school officials the administration of the restraint, any consequences that may be imposed on the student, and any other related matter.
- (f) Please see the Somerset Public Schools' *Physical Restraint Reporting Form*.

The principal shall conduct a weekly review of restraint data to identify students who have been restrained multiple times during the week. If such students are identified, the principal shall convene one or more review

teams as the principal deems appropriate to assess each student's progress and needs. The assessment shall include at least the following:

- (a) review and discussion of the written reports submitted in accordance with 603 CMR 46.06 and any comments provided by the student and parent about such reports and the use of the restraints;
- (b) analysis of the circumstances leading up to each restraint, including factors such as time of day, day of the week, antecedent events, and individuals involved;
- (c) consideration of factors that may have contributed to escalation of behaviors, consideration of alternatives to restraint, including de-escalation techniques and possible interventions, and such other strategies and decisions as appropriate, with the goal of reducing or eliminating the use of restraint in the future;
- (d) agreement on a written plan of action by the program.

If the principal directly participated in the restraint, a duly qualified individual designated by the superintendent or board of trustees shall lead the review team's discussion. The principal shall ensure that a record of each individual student review is maintained and made available for review by DESE or the parent/guardian, upon request.

The principal shall conduct a monthly review of school-wide restraint data. This review shall consider patterns of use of restraints by similarities in the time of day, day of the week, or individuals involved; the number and duration of physical restraints school-wide and for individual students; the duration of restraints; and the number and type of injuries, if any, resulting from the use of restraint. The principal shall determine whether it is necessary or appropriate to modify the school's restraint prevention and management policy, conduct additional staff training on restraint reduction/prevention strategies, such as training on positive behavioral interventions and supports, or take such other action as necessary or appropriate to reduce or eliminate restraints.

When a physical restraint has resulted in an injury to a student or staff member, the school shall send a copy of the written report required by 603 CMR 46.06(4) to DESE postmarked no later than three (3) school working days of the administration of the restraint. The program shall also send DESE a copy of the record of physical restraints maintained by the principal pursuant to 603 CMR 46.06(2) for the thirty (30)-day period prior to the date of the reported restraint. DESE shall determine if additional action by the school is warranted and, if so, shall notify the school of any required actions within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the required written report(s).

Every school shall collect and annually report data to DESE regarding the use of physical restraints. Such data shall be reported in a manner and form directed DESE.

L. BULLYING

Most bullying starts out verbally with teasing and put-downs and may become progressively worse, assuming physical dimensions.

Bullying of any type has no place in a school setting. The Somerset Public Schools will endeavor to maintain a learning and working environment free of bullying.

Bullying is defined as an act of one or more individuals intimidating one or more persons through verbal, physical, mental, or written interactions. Bullying can take many forms and occur in virtually any setting. It can create unnecessary and unwarranted anxiety that will affect attending school, walking in corridors, eating in cafeterias, playing in the school yard or recreation areas, participating in or attending special and extra-curricular activities, or riding on the bus to and from school each day.

Examples of bullying include but are not exclusive to:

- Intimidation, either physical or psychological
- Threats of any kind, stated or implied
- Assaults on students, including those that are verbal, physical, psychological and emotional;
- Attacks on student property
- Cyber bullying: sending or posting harmful text or images using the internet or other communication device.

The School Committee expects administrators and supervisors to make clear to students and staff that bullying in the school building, on school grounds, on the bus or school sanctioned transportation, or at school-sponsored functions will not be tolerated and will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion for students, and termination for employees.

The district will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of bullying. The principal of each building will be responsible for handling all complaints by students alleging bullying.

Reporting bullying or retaliation. Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member may be recorded in writing. A school or district staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously. The district will make a variety of reporting resources* available to the school community including, but not limited to, an Incident Reporting Form, a voicemail box, a dedicated mailing address and an email address.

Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others

The Somerset Public Schools expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or designee. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the principal or designee.

The contact names for each school are:

Chace Street School
North Elementary School
South School

Mr. Timothy Plante, Principal
Mrs. Elaine Sabra, Principal
Dr. Joann Pereira, Principal

REFS.: National School Safety Center, Maine Project Against Bullying, The Wellesley College Center for Research on Women

LEGAL REFERENCES: Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended
Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO Commission
Board of Education 603 CMR 26:00

MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS, CH. 71, S. 370

School Bulling Prohibited; Bullying Prevention Plans

Bullying shall be prohibited:

- (i) on school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a school district or school, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by a school district or school, and
- (ii) at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a school district or school, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Each school district, charter school, approved private day or residential school and collaborative school shall provide age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention in each grade that is incorporated into the curriculum of the school district or school. The curriculum shall be evidence-based.

Each school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school and collaborative school shall develop, adhere to and update a plan to address bullying prevention and intervention in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians. The plan shall apply to students and members of a school staff, including, but not limited to, educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity and paraprofessionals.

The plan shall be publicized and widely available for members of the school community.

1. Bullying is defined as an act of aggression with the intent to cause embarrassment, pain or discomfort to another. Bullying involves an abuse of/or imbalance of power. Individuals or groups may be involved.
2. Bullying may include, but is not limited to:
 - a. Physical bullying: hitting, pushing, pinching, tripping, spitting on others, physically threatening, uninvited personal contact that does not cause physical harm (e.g., pulling off hats/backpacks, grabbing or shoving books, backpacks)
 - b. Verbal: teasing, using offensive names, ridiculing, spreading rumors, verbally threatening
 - c. Indirect Verbal: egging on bullying, speaking up in support of the bully or helping bully verbally
 - d. Non-verbal: writing offensive names or graffiti about others, rude gestures, cyber bullying
 - e. Extortion: threatening to take someone's possessions, food or money
 - f. Property: hiding
 - g. Cyber bullying: sending/posting harmful/cruel text
3. Bullying can occur:
 - a. between students
 - b. between staff and students, i.e., bullying of a student by a staff person, or bullying of a staff person by a student.
4. A witness to bullying should also report it to the appropriate school personnel (administration, guidance/adjustment counselor and/or school resource officer).
5. Bullying is considered a serious school offense. Be advised that the administration will consider the following options in disciplining the bully: 1-10 days out-of-school suspension, parental notification, parental conference, and/or possible police referral.

I. HARASSMENT

Harassment of students by other students will not be tolerated in the Somerset Public Schools. This policy is in effect while students are on school grounds, school district property or property within the jurisdiction of the school district, school buses, or attending or engaging in school activities.

Harassment prohibited by the district includes, but is not limited to, harassment on the basis of race, sex, creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, marital status or disability. Students whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion.

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

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

Harassment as described above may include, but is not limited to:

- Verbal, physical or written harassment or abuse
- Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature
- Implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, or other school matter
- Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at the student.

The district will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of harassment. The principal of each building will be responsible for handling all complaints by students alleging harassment.

Retaliation against a student because another student has filed a harassment complaint or assisted or participated in a harassment investigation or proceeding is also prohibited. A student who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion.

REFS.: "Words that Hurt", American School Board Journal, September, 1999 National Education Policy Network, NSBA

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 151B:3A Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended Board of Education
603 CMR 26:00

J. PLAYGROUND/RECESS

Recess provides the opportunity to socialize with other children, to exercise, and to release energy. Recess periods are monitored by school staff who circulate through the play area and reinforce all school rules and expectations.

- Students will obey playground supervisors and act in a safe and orderly manner.
- Students are to proceed in a quiet and orderly manner when leaving and entering the building.
- Students must stay in designated areas.
- Students will dress in accordance with the weather and the dress code.
- Students are allowed to enter the building during recess only with the permission of a supervisor.
- When recess ends, students will end play activity immediately and line up with a supervisor.
- A time out area will be used for settling playground incidents and disputes.

K. TRESPASSING:

Playgrounds are available for public use. However, the Somerset Public Schools is not liable for any injury to an individual resulting from playground usage. Such injuries are at the liability of the user. Any individual who enters the school without permission when school is not in session or who gains access to the roof of the building will be considered a trespasser.

STUDENT PROGRESS

A. HOMEWORK

Homework is a vital tool, which is part of the student’s learning experience. Homework assignments allow for the reinforcement of what is being taught in the classroom while also developing the student’s individual skill of retention and application. It is used to reinforce material that has been covered in class, to develop a sense of responsibility and organization. The cooperation of each and every parent in reinforcing the importance of homework is vital to the success of the overall educational program.

Grades 1-3	-	Maximum of 30 minutes per day, Monday through Thursday
Grade 4-5	-	Maximum of 60 minutes per day, Monday through Thursday

Homework assignments that are not completed in an appropriate manner within a minimum of one day to a maximum of five school days, dependent on the length of absence, will adversely have an effect on the student’s performance marks on the progress report. Homework and/or assignments that are not completed as stipulated may impact participation in school based events, such as field trips or special events, associated with the content area of the assignment.

B. PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

The Parent-Teacher Conference is a way of exchanging information relative to a child’s progress in school. Formal conferences are held each school year, following the issuance of the first progress report. For the 2016-2017 school year, Parent-Teacher Conferences will be on Wednesday, December 14 and Thursday 15, 2016.

Conferences between parent and teacher may be held at any time throughout the school year. Parents and/or teachers may initiate these conferences whenever they feel it is necessary by communicating by phone call, in person, or through written message.

C. PROGRESS REPORT

A progress report is an important means of maintaining communications between home and the school. Historically, the education of children in our society has been best served when there is a partnership between home and school.

Somerset's elementary trimester progress reports have been designed to communicate all-important information about a child's achievement as well as conduct in all areas.

STUDENT SERVICES

A. ART, MUSIC, HEALTH, TECHNOLOGY AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Students in grades kindergarten through five are scheduled for one art, one health and one technology class as well as two classes of music and physical education each week. Parents are encouraged to ask their children when art and physical education classes occur so that children dress appropriately.

B. EARLY CHILDHOOD

The Somerset Public Schools' Early Childhood Program is an integrated preschool program. The preschool program is designed to give each three (3) and four (4) year old child an educational experience which is appropriate to his/her stage of development. The curriculum encourages each child to be actively involved in the learning process, to experience developmentally appropriate activities, and to pursue his/her own interests. The program seeks to develop each child's social/emotional skills and assist with the adjustment from the home setting to the school setting. In addition, the program broadens the child's experiences and offers challenging opportunities for the development of his/her creative abilities. Please contact the office of the Director of Special Education (508-324-3100, Ext. 217, Ext. 226) for additional information.

C. MUSIC PROGRAM, INSTRUMENTAL LESSONS

Students in Grades 4 and 5 have the opportunity to take string lessons in each school. Grade 5 students may take band instrument lessons at the school. Rental instruments are made available. Students must be marked present in school to participate in extracurricular activities that day. If an emergency situation occurs which requires a student to be absent on the day of an extracurricular activity, the principal may allow that student to participate in such activity. Such an emergency might include a funeral or a doctor's appointment. If a student is serving a suspension, he/she may not participate in any school sponsored extracurricular activities on that day.

D. SPECIAL EDUCATION

State and federal law provides certain rights to students who require special education and to the parents/guardians of those students. In Massachusetts, those rights are found in M.G.L.c.71B (popularly known as Chapter 766) and its implementing regulations, 603 CMR28.00.

One of the purposes of M.G.L.c. 71B is to identify and evaluate any child who may have a special need so that child may receive a free and appropriate education where he/she can access the curriculum and make educational progress. A parent/guardian concerned with their child's development may refer their child for an evaluation. For more information on the special education process, please contact the office of the Director of Special Education at 508-324-3100, Ext. 217, Ext. 226.

E. ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION (ELE)

The District's English Language Learning (ELL) program model is organized by the following grade-spans:

Kindergarten: Identified Limited English Proficient (LEP) students are placed in English-only language general education classrooms with assistance in English language acquisition. LEP students are provided ELL

support services through the general education program. This includes immersion in content instruction that is based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, integrated language-based classrooms, specialized language support, and language interpretation and translation services as needed.

Grades 1-5: Identified Limited English Learning (LEP) students are being placed in general education classrooms and provided ELL support services through the regular general education program. This support includes immersion in content that is based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, language-based classroom, specialized language and speech support, in-class paraprofessional support, reading/language support (both in-class and reading clinic), Title 1 reading support, extended-day MCAS academic support (ELA and mathematics), and language interpretation and translation services, as needed. English Language Education (ELE) support is provided by reading specialists, literacy intervention teachers/tutors, speech and language specialists and paraprofessionals.

HEALTH SERVICES

A. STUDENT ILLNESS GUIDELINES:

Parents/guardians have the primary responsibility for the health of their children. Please keep the school informed of any illnesses or restrictions that your child may have. Good communication between school and home is essential.

Please follow these guideline to determine if you should keep your child home from school:

- **Fever:** if your child has a fever (100 degrees or higher), they CANNOT be in school.
- Students MUST be fever free for 24 hours without the aid of fever-reducing medications (e.g. Tylenol, Motrin, etc) before returning to school.
- **Rash:** A rash may cover the entire body or only one area. A child that has a rash that is draining, has open areas or is causing the child to itch excessively should not attend school. A rash accompanied with other symptoms such as: a fever, sore throat, irritability, vomiting, etc. should not attend school. If your child is dismissed from school for a rash and physician contact has been recommended, please have your child's physician write a note that they are not contagious and may return to school.
- **Vomiting/Diarrhea:** A child who has vomited should wait 24 hours and be able to retain solid foods before returning to school. A child who is having frequent diarrhea stools should not attend school. If there is cramping/abdominal pain with diarrhea, the student may be more comfortable at home.
- **Cough/Runny Nose:** Minor cold symptoms are common and usually don't interfere with school attendance. A persistent, frequent cough and/or constant nasal drainage may affect your child's performance at school, and he/she may be more comfortable at home.
- **Conjunctivitis and/or Strep Throat:** If you suspect your child has conjunctivitis ("pinkeye") or strep throat, they should be seen by a doctor. A student needs to be on the prescribed medication for 24 hours before returning to school. A doctor's note is REQUIRED upon returning to school.
- **Head Lice/Nits(eggs):** Head lice is a common condition in elementary school and is a reason for excluding children from school until fully recovered. Parents/guardians are responsible to check their child's hair on a regular basis and if head lice/nits are found, parents need to contact their child's physician for proper diagnosis and treatment. Child may return to school with a note from physician stating that all head lice/nits have been removed.

*A Note From The Physician: any time your child sees his/her physician regarding illness, rash, injury, surgery, etc., your child must return with a note stating specific date child “may return to school” and any restrictions or limitations that may be required (no PE, recess, etc) and specific date when activities can be resumed.

**Very Important: As always, whenever your child is going to be out ill or for any other reason, please give the school a quick call that morning by 8:30 AM. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

B. IMMUNIZATIONS

In accordance with the General Laws of Massachusetts, it is necessary that your child be immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, poliomyelitis, measles, mumps, and rubella (German Measles), HIB, chicken pox and Hepatitis B. The Superintendent has been directed by the Commissioner of the Department of Public Health and the Commissioner of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) exclude children from attendance who have not been immunized.

C. OUTSIDE AGENCY REQUEST

In the event an outside provider requests information pertaining to your child the following is required:

- Signed parental “Authorization for Release of Educational and Medical Information” form.
- Ten days processing time.
- Original document is directly mailed to provider.

D. PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS

Massachusetts Department of Public Health regulation requires that the public schools have on file a physical examination upon entrance or transfer into the school system and every three or four years thereafter. It is recommended that parents/guardians submit a yearly physical examination with all mandated screenings documented to the School Nurse for the purpose of maintaining current and up-to-date health records at all times.

E. REQUIRED SCREENINGS

The following are the required screenings for each grade level:

Lead: Grades Pre-K & K

Tuberculous: Grades Pre-K, K, & New Students

Vision: Grades Pre-K - 5

Hearing: Grades K - 3

BMI: Grades 1 & 4

Postural: Grade 5

It is highly recommended and encouraged that ALL required screenings be done by your own physician. Any screenings performed in school, parents/guardians will be notified of abnormal findings.

F. MEDICATION AT SCHOOL

It is recommended that medication be administered at home. However, students who must receive medication, including over-the-counter medication, during the school day are required to comply with the following. In accordance with 105 C.M.R. 210.000, the following forms must be on file in your child’s health record before we begin to give any medication at school:

Signed Medication Order form for each medication:

- Section 1 to be completed & signed by the parent/guardian.
- Section 2 to be completed & signed by child’s physician or nurse practitioner and returned to the School Nurse for each medication.

Please return completed medication order(s) and action plan(s), along with the medication, to the School Nurse, on or prior to the first day of school in September.

This order must be renewed at the beginning of each academic year and as needed. No prescription drug or over-the-counter medication, including topicals (lotions), eye drops, ear drops, cough drops, etc. will be given in elementary schools without a written order from a physician. Medication should be delivered to the school in a pharmacy or manufacturer labeled container by parent/guardian or a responsible adult whom parent/guardian designate. No medication should ever be brought in by student. Please ask your pharmacy to provide separate bottles for school and home. No more than a thirty (30) day supply of the medication should be delivered to the school. Also, please make sure that the medication will not expire prior to the last day of school.

When your child needs medication to be given during the school day, please act quickly to follow these policies so we may begin to give the medication as soon as possible. In the event that the School Nurse is unavailable, the parent/guardian will be called to come to school and administer the medication to their child with a dose from home. An unlicensed person cannot administer your child's medication.

G. END OF SCHOOL YEAR:

Please retrieve any remaining medication on last day of school. Any medication not picked up will be discarded.

H. LIFE-THREATENING ALLERGIES

Please inform the School Nurse regarding your child's life-threatening allergies. At the discretion of the principal, various locations throughout a school may be designated as allergy aware zones. Families are expected to adhere to these safeguards to help to protect all of our students. For additional information, please refer to the District's Life-Threatening Allergy Policy.

I. EMERGENCY/HEALTH & CONTACT INFORMATION FORMS:

Emergency forms and Health & Contact Information forms are required of all students and must be on file in the principal's office and School Nurse's office, respectively. These forms must be current and up-to-date at all times. Should serious injury or emergency occur, this form provides vital emergency information.

The school nurse reserves the right to dismiss students, who in her professional opinion, are possibly contagious or are too ill to be in school. She/he is there to provide a healthful and safe school environment that facilitates learning.

Any questions regarding Health Service issues should be directed to the nurse at each school site.

TESTING

In compliance with M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 34D the Somerset Public Schools hereby notifies parents/guardians of public school students of its plan to gather information regarding students’ abilities, aptitude, and achievement in order to meet his/her individual needs.

A. ASSESSMENT TESTING

State mandated assessment tests are administered annually in several grades. Parents/Guardians will be notified of the testing schedule and testing results.

During this academic year, the following assessments will be administered at the elementary schools.

GRADE	TEST	REASON
Preschool	Early Screening Inventory	Readiness
Kindergarten	Early Screening Inventory	Readiness
Grades 3, 4 and 5	MCAS/ (State-mandated testing)	Academic aptitude and achievement

Please note that changes in testing schedules and test types may be made by the Massachusetts Department of Secondary and Elementary Education (DESE) at any time. Modifications of the program outlined above will be made accordingly.

In addition to group testing, individualized assessments are administered as needed for instructional or informational purposes. Other details pertaining to M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 34D are included elsewhere in this handbook. If you have any questions regarding these regulations, please feel free to contact the principal of your child’s school.

District Contact Person: Director of Curriculum & Assessment:
Ms. Elizabeth Haskell: 508-324-3100, Ext.214

B. SCHOOL ABILITY AND ACHIEVEMENT TESTING

School Ability and Achievement tests may be administered to our elementary school students. The purpose of these tests is to measure the academic achievement of children in the areas of reading, language, math, science, and social studies. Parents/Guardians may be notified and results are available on request.

C. SCREENINGS

An early childhood screening is required for children in the town of Somerset between the ages of three (3) and four (4) as of August 31st if registering for Somerset’s Early Childhood program or if parents/guardians have concerns. Screenings are held throughout the year and are advertised in locations that may include but are not limited to, i.e. local newspaper, local library, local pediatrician offices.

The primary purpose of this screening is to identify any possible needs for special services upon school entrance. Such service may include physical therapy, speech therapy, etc. Kindergarten screening is mandated by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE) for children who are five (5) years old by August 31st of the school year when planning to enter Kindergarten.

TRANSPORTATION

I. PURPOSE:

The primary purpose of the transportation system is to provide transportation for eligible pupils to and from the vicinity of their homes to the school they attend. Careful consideration shall also be given to efficiency and economy of the operation. Use of transportation equipment for field trips, co-curricular activities, and other authorized educational, cultural, and recreational activities is permitted when it does not conflict with the primary purpose for transportation.

II. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY:

1. The Superintendent or his/her designee, working with the bus contractor and other appropriate administrators, will be responsible for establishing bus schedules, routes, stops, and all other matters relative to the transportation program.
2. The Parent/Guardian/Student: will cooperate with school authorities and bus drivers in promoting efficient transportation service.

III. STUDENT TRANSPORTATION POLICY

At no time shall a student be on a scheduled single bus ride to or from school for more than fifty (50) minutes.

By the end of the first month of school, each school will furnish to the contracted transportation provider a list of designated individuals who may pick up each student at his/her drop-off. School Administrators will continually provide a current and updated list the transportation provider throughout the school year.

All Kindergarten, elementary and middle school students are transported using the District's funds to provide safe transportation for eligible pupils to and from the vicinity of their homes to the school they attend.

If the parent/guardian or designated individual is not at the bus stop when the bus arrives, the student will be returned to their school. If a student is returned to school, the parent/guardian will be notified. Please see the "Bus Students Returning to School" section below to review consequences for violations of this policy

If a student is brought back several times because a parent/guardian or designated individual is not there at the drop-off, the school may contact the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and possible file for neglect.

BUS STUDENTS RETURNING TO SCHOOL:

There have been several incidences where there has not been anyone present at the end of the school day to receive their child from their bus drop-off location. When this occurs, the bus driver must return the student to their school at the end of the route. When a parent/guardian is not present at the student's drop-off location at the end of the school day, the following procedure will be instituted per school year:

1st Incident: Parent is notified

2nd Incident: Parent is notified and a letter is sent home

3rd Incident: Loss of transportation (1) day after notice to the parent and the opportunity to explain the situation

4th Incident: Loss of transportation (2) days after notice to the parent and the opportunity to explain the situation

5th Incident: Loss of transportation (3) days after notice to the parent and the opportunity to explain the situation.

6th Incident: Loss of transportation (5) days after notice to the parent and the opportunity to explain the situation

After the 6th incident based on individual circumstances DCF will be notified

7th Incident and beyond: Loss of transportation (30) days after notice to the parent and opportunity to explain the situation.

If the bus has to return the student to school over seven (7) times, the school may consider a permanent possible loss of transportation. If the school is considering a potential permanent loss of transportation, the Principal will convene an informal hearing and provide the student's parents an opportunity to explain the situation. The Principal will issue a written decision after the hearing. The parents may appeal the Principal's decision to the Superintendent within five (5) days after receiving the Principal's decision. The Superintendent will also convene an informal hearing within ten (10) days of the appeal request. The Superintendent will issue written findings of whether to uphold or overturn the Principal's decision. The Superintendent's decision will be the final decision of the school district.

Middle school students will have pick-ups and drop offs at designated bus stops.

Exceptions to these guidelines may be made at the discretion of the Superintendent with the assistance of the Somerset Police Department and the transportation provider.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS/STUDENTS

The responsibility of transporting students safely to and from school each school day requires the cooperation of the parents/guardians of the students transported. A complete understanding of the school transportation policy is essential in aiding the School Administration and the School Committee to maintain a successful transportation program.

1. The purpose of school transportation is to provide safe, comfortable and economical transportation for our students. It is not intended to be door to door service for children, parents/guardians or unauthorized persons.
2. Parents/Guardians can make suggestions in writing to the School Administration and the Bus Company for the improvement of school transportation.
3. Parents/Guardians must cooperate with school authorities and bus drivers in promoting efficient service.
4. Parents/Guardians will have children at the bus stop on time and insure proper conduct of their children going to the bus stop, at the bus stop and going to and from bus stop.
5. Parents/Guardians will insure the cooperation of children with the authorities responsible for transportation. Parents/Guardians should understand that children riding on school buses must obey all regulations governing school transportation or shall be subject to disciplinary action by the School Principal or designee and may forfeit their right to ride on the bus.
6. Students shall be picked up and returned to their designated bus stops
7. Discipline problems will be reported to the Building Principal or designee in writing.
8. Eligibility for bus transportation inquiries should be referred to the Building Principal or designee.

GUIDELINES FOR SAFE TRANSPORTATION SERVICE

1. For safety reasons, it is imperative that the School has control of where children are picked up and dropped off after school. Please do not ask drivers to change pick up or drop off times or locations. If you have questions or concerns, contact your child's school. This will assist in processing your request, school's safety and security measures.
2. If your child will need to ride a bus other than the one to which he/she is assigned, give your child a note for his/her principal at least one day before your request. The teacher/principal will initial the note and notify the driver. Following this procedure helps school staff members know where your child is in case of an emergency.
3. If a child needs to be picked up at school every attempt should be made by the parent/guardian to notify the school administration by 2pm.

4. Take time periodically to go over bus conduct rules for safe ridership.
5. When you see a school bus turn on overhead red flashing lights and the bus is stopped, remember that you must stop your vehicle. When the overhead amber lights or hazard lights are flashing, you may proceed very cautiously, if safe to do so.

RULES FOR STUDENTS RIDING SCHOOL BUSES

Bus riding is a privilege extended to students as a means of transportation to and from school. Bus regulations apply from the time a student arrives at the bus stop. They remain in effect until the student leaves the bus stop on the return ride home. Any student who fails to follow bus regulations or who endangers the safety of other pupils renders himself/herself liable for suspension of bus riding privileges. Referrals by bus driver will result in the following: first referral, warning and parent notification, second referral, detention and parent notification, third referral, suspension of bus riding privilege.

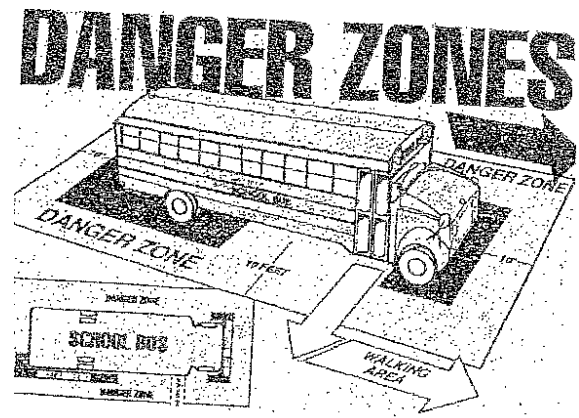
1. Students must not stand or play in the roadway while waiting for the bus. Students should leave home early enough to arrive at the bus stop five minutes before the bus is due.
2. There will be no pushing or shoving while boarding the bus. While waiting for buses, pupils are to wait at designated pick-up points. Be courteous of private property.
3. Parents/Guardians are not allowed to board a school bus without the expressed permission of the bus company.
4. Be seated promptly without disturbing others, and remain seated at all times. No student shall sit in the driver's seat at any time.
5. Keep head, arms, and hands inside the bus.
6. Outside of ordinary conversation, classroom conduct must be observed at all times.
7. Shouting, making loud noises, or using vulgar language are not allowed.
8. Aisles are to be kept clear of backpacks, books, sports equipment, and musical instruments. Objects of any kind are not to be thrown either from or on the bus.
9. Any inappropriate conduct that distracts the driver and/or endangers the safety of self or others is prohibited. When it is necessary to cross the road, cross in front of the bus and use extreme caution to be sure no traffic is approaching from either direction.
10. Students are to take only the bus designated for them by the school department. Parents/Guardians may obtain permission from the school's main office for a student to ride another bus.
11. No student shall be permitted to leave the bus except at his or her designated stop.
12. Each student may be assigned a seat in which he will be seated at all times, unless permission to change is given by the school principal and/or driver.
13. The bus driver is in charge of the bus and is responsible for the safety of all bus riders. Students are to follow instructions promptly and without question.
14. State law (M.G.L. Chapter 90, Section 78 as amended by Chapter 250 of the Act of 1973) prohibits the use of any tobacco products on school buses.
15. Students are expected to help maintain the cleanliness of the bus-no papers or other articles should be thrown on the floor. Food of any kind may not be eaten on the school buses.
16. Students shall not open or close bus windows without the permission of the driver. Students will report any accident or unsatisfactory conditions to the bus driver and/or Principal. Parents/Guardians of students damaging school buses will be responsible for proper reimbursement to the District.
17. Concerns or complaints should be addressed through the School Principal or designee.
18. When the bus approaches take at least 10 feet (5 giant steps) from the road while waiting for the bus. Younger children should practice taking 5 giant steps to become familiar with 10 feet.
19. Please stand still and in a line as the bus approaches
20. Parents/Guardians may approach the bus only after the driver has opened the door.
21. When required to cross, always cross in front of the bus, and only at the driver's signal.

RULES FOR STUDENTS CROSSING THE STREET

1. If you have to cross the street after exiting the bus, always cross in front of it. Make sure the bus driver is able to see you. Walk along the side of the road at least 10 feet in front of the bus until you can see the bus driver, before crossing the street. If you cannot see the bus driver, the driver is not able to see you.
2. Wait for the bus driver to give you a signal that it is safe to cross the street. Even with the signal from the bus driver pay attention to the traffic in the road. Make sure to look in both directions before walking across the street.
3. If you drop something in the street do not go back to get it. The bus driver will not be able to see you if you are close to the front of the bus
4. Do not cross the street behind the school bus. The bus driver cannot see you
5. Never go near the back wheels of a school bus.
6. If you meet your child at the bus stop after school, wait on the side where the child will be dropped off, not across the street. Children can be so excited at seeing you after school that they may dash across the street and forget the safety rules.

SCHOOL BUS DANGER ZONE

The “Danger Zone” is the area on all sides of the bus where children are in the most danger of not being seen by the driver (ten feet in front of the driver where the driver may be too high to see a child, ten feet on either side due to possible driver’s blind spot, and the area behind the bus).



SCHOOL BUS LAW HIGHLIGHTS

M.G.L. ch. 90, §14 (¶1) A motor vehicle or trackless trolley operator approaching a stopped school bus must stop and not proceed until the flashing red lights are deactivated, unless directed to the contrary by a police officer duly authorized to control the movement of traffic.

§7B (¶1) clause (7) Red lights must flash when school pupils are entering or leaving the bus but not at any other time.

§14 (¶1) Traffic approaching from the opposite direction on a divided highway need not stop.

§14 (¶1) Fine 100 ~ 200; 2nd offense within 2 years: fine 300 ~ 400 and revoke license for 30 days; 3rd offense within 4 years: fine 500 ~ 1000 and revoke license for 1 year

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE: The Somerset Public Schools maintains the use of video cameras on school buses and on school grounds for the purpose of enhancing security and safety, maintaining order, and undertaking disciplinary investigations. Video cameras are installed in public areas only and no sound will be monitored or recorded in connection with these video cameras.

Any video recordings on school buses, in school buildings or school grounds are the sole property of the Somerset Public Schools. Consistent with applicable law, authorized school officials may access and use

recorded information as necessary. Release of video recordings to non-school officials are generally prohibited and, in limited circumstances, will be released only as permissible pursuant to applicable law and with the advance permission of the Superintendent or his/her designee.

CRISIS EMERGENCY DRILLS:

From time to time, schools will practice mock responses to potential crisis situations such as bomb threats, intruders, missing children, etc. Drills may require practice in school evacuations and lockdowns.

Questions regarding bus issues should be directed to the building principal.

GENERAL INFORMATION

A. SCHOOL INSURANCE

The Somerset School Committee has authorized the expenditure of funds for the purpose of insuring all students enrolled in the Somerset Public Schools. This insurance is designed to supplement any other accidental insurance plan parents may have and will provide coverage for every student during the school year. This school-time plan will provide coverage for interscholastic athletics, intramurals, field trips, and other school-related activities under the supervision of a teacher.

There will also be a 24-hour Accidental Protection Plan available (for a fee to be announced) for any parent desiring coverage above and beyond school-related activities.

B. PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)

A Parent-Teacher Organization operates for parents/guardians of students in grades Pre-K-5. Information about the Parent-Teacher Organization will be made available at the beginning of the school year. Board meetings are held periodically and are attended by any interested parents, teacher representatives, and administration.

The goals of the PTO include improving communication and support for student activities. The organization aids the school to facilitate the educational goals of the school. All parents are encouraged to participate in PTO functions.

C. FIELD TRIPS

A field trip is an extension of the classroom environment and, as such, all school rules and policies apply. A signed permission slip is required for participation in any school-sponsored field trip. Students are supervised on these trips, and parent chaperones may be requested. Anyone chaperoning children will be expected to pass a criminal records background check (CORI check) and complete the "Agreement to Maintain Student Confidentiality".

Field Trip Protocol Regarding Chaperones:

1. The teacher(s) determines the number of chaperones needed for each field trip based on the site requirements, distance of the trip, and safety issues.
2. **If more parents/guardians wish to chaperone than needed, a lottery will be held. Parents/Guardians not selected in the lottery should not drive to the site on their own to meet their child at the site, as this disrupts the supervision plans that have been established and is not following the field trip protocol.**
3. Chaperones must ride on the bus, unless other arrangements have been made by the teacher and must follow the bus rules (ex. No beverages or food when riding the bus).
4. Chaperones must stay with their assigned student group. Chaperoned groups are discouraged from joining with other chaperoned groups because larger groups may increase supervisory concerns and affect safety and security.
5. Chaperones may not bring anything from home for students nor buy any treats for students at the site.
6. **Siblings and/or other children may not accompany a chaperone on a field trip.**
7. **A nurse will attend each field trip if needed.**

Parents/Guardians who violate the field trip policy, will not be permitted to chaperone future trips.

D. LOST AND FOUND

All unidentified articles go to the lost and found box/area located in each school. Parents/Guardians and children should check on a regular basis for items that have been lost. Unclaimed items after an extended period of time will be donated. It is strongly recommended that names be put on articles of clothing and lunch boxes.

When you send money to school, please put it in an envelope and label it with the name of the child, the amount of money, name of the teacher, and purpose.

E. SCHOOL PICTURES

Students will be given the opportunity to have school pictures taken in the fall. The purchase of pictures is voluntary. Parents/ Guardians will be notified before the photographer is scheduled for each school. Pre-payment is required to order pictures. Make-up days are arranged for those students who were absent or had forgotten their money.

F. TRANSFERS/WITHDRAWALS

Education is provided for students living in Somerset. If a move out-of-town is planned, parents/guardians are requested to visit the respective school office to obtain transfer forms and to sign a release of school records for the new school. Please be prepared to provide the name and address of the new school to which your child will be attending and your new place of residence. Students will then be issued a transfer card, immunization records, academic grades up to the point of withdrawal/transfer, a current IEP if applicable, etc. If it is found that a student has moved from the district without notifying the Somerset Public Schools, the student's records may be forwarded to their new school without written consent.

G. PARTY INVITATIONS

It is requested that party invitations be mailed from home and not passed out during school time unless the whole class is invited to a party outside school. We understand that you must limit the numbers of children in your home; however, the children who do not receive an invitation feel left out. This puts students who are not invited (and many times the student doing the inviting) into unnecessarily uncomfortable situations.

The school cannot give out addresses or phone numbers of other students, so please do not request them from any of the school staff. Your cooperation in this matter is appreciated.

H. CLASS ASSIGNMENT

We would like to remind parents/guardians of the process the staff utilizes to assign students to the next grade. Much articulation takes place when students are assigned to particular teachers. The staff uses its experience, knowledge of children and their developmental processes, and understanding of educational fundamentals to develop successful class placements and to make sure each student is placed in the most supportive classroom that meets his/her needs. The assignment of next year's classes is accomplished through grade level meetings with teachers, the principal, and other appropriate school personnel. Many factors are considered, including individual needs and strengths, whole class needs, learning styles, academic levels, peer relationships, leadership qualities, behavioral factors and gender balance. Therefore, requests for classroom placement will not be honored.

I. VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL

Parents/ Guardians are welcome to visit the school occasionally to observe classes and tour the building. To insure the safety of the children and to avoid disrupting the educational process, visits must be arranged through the principal's office. All visitors must report to the office. All parents/guardians volunteering/observing will be expected to pass a criminal records background check (CORI check) and to complete the form Agreement to Maintain Student Confidentiality. Forms are available from building principals.

Parents/ Guardians bringing lunches or other items to the children are asked to leave them in the school office for distribution.

Parents/Guardians who attend school programs are strongly discouraged from dismissing their child prior to 3:00.

J. OBSERVATIONS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS: Pursuant to M.G.L. c.71B &3, upon request by a parent/guardian, the school will provide timely access to parents/guardians and parent/guardian designated independent evaluators and educational consultants for observations of a child's current or proposed special education program, including both academic and non-academic components of any such program.

The District's policy for such observations, including the steps to follow in requesting such an observation, is available at the district web-site or at the main office of the school.

K. RETENTION POLICY:

Report cards, grades, and parent conferences should reflect the academic difficulties of a student considered for retention. When a student is experiencing difficulty developmentally or academically the following procedure will take place:

- a. During and/or at the end of the first trimester, the teacher will arrange a conference with the child's parents/guardians to explain the student's strengths and weaknesses that they have observed.
- b. At the end of the second trimester, the teacher will arrange a conference with the parents/guardians to inform them of the possibility of retention. At this conference, the principal, Title I, or other support personnel may be asked to participate.
- c. Before the end of the third trimester, a conference will be arranged with the parents/guardians. At this time the teacher will update the parents/guardians about the progress of the student. If it is deemed necessary, the principal will be involved in the conference. The principal should be notified if the parents/guardians are not in agreement with the recommendation of retention.
- d. If the teacher and the principal agree that the student is to be retained, the parents/guardians shall be notified before June 5. A letter from the principal recommending retention will be sent no later than June 10 and will be filed in the student's permanent record folder at the close of the school year.

L. BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT

Parents have the opportunity to visit schools sometime in the fall to meet teachers and see the classrooms. For the 2016-2017 school year, Back to School Night will be on Wednesday, September 14, 2016. At this time, parents/guardians will be introduced to curriculum, school programs, and other expectations for the school year.

M. PUBLICATION OF STUDENT INFORMATION

Under DESE's regulations, the school may release for publication certain information concerning your child from time to time without first obtaining your consent, unless you indicate that we should not do so. The information which may be released for publication includes only the student's name, class, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, degrees, honors, and awards, and post-high school plans.

N. SCHOOL COUNCILS

Each school has a school council composed of the principal, parents, teachers and community members who meet on a regular basis. The number of parent/guardian representatives is equal to the number of teachers who serve on the council plus the principal. School parents/guardians select those members that represent them on the council. Councils are an integral feature of Education Reform and are the main instrument for practicing the participatory site-based management that is called for in the Education Reform Act. This law outlines four major areas of responsibility for councils to assist principals:

- Adopting educational goals for the school that are consistent with local educational policies and statewide student performance standards.

- Identifying educational needs of students attending the school.
- Reviewing the annual school building budget.
- Formulating the school improvement plan.

(Additional information can be found at www.doe.mass.edu/lawregs/advisory/schoolcouncils/)

O. STUDENT RECORDS, RIGHTS, CONFIDENTIALITY

Both Massachusetts and the federal government have laws that exist to insure parents'/guardians' and students' rights of confidentiality, inspection, amendment, and destruction of student records, and to assist school authorities in their responsibilities for the maintenance of school records. In Massachusetts those laws are found at M.G.L.c.71 sections 34A, 34D, 34E and 34F and at 603 CMR23.00. The federal student records law is called the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and is found at 30 U.S.C. section 1232g.

P. ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS: The student record contains all information concerning a student that is kept by the school district and which personally identifies the student. It consists of the temporary record and the transcript. For purposes of these procedures, custodial parent refers to a divorced or separated parent who has physical custody of the child, and the non-custodial parent is the parent who does not have physical custody of the child. Non-custodial parents may not be eligible to access their child's student record or may have to follow certain procedures in order to access the student record. See below.

Access by the Eligible Student or Parent (Except Non-Custodial Parents): The parent (except non-custodial parents) may request access to the student record and shall have access within ten days after the initial request. Upon request, copies of any information contained in the student record shall be provided to the eligible student or the parent. A reasonable fee, not to exceed the cost of reproduction, may be charged. If an eligible parent would like access to the student's record, please contact the main office at (508) 324-3160.

Any student, regardless of age, shall have the right pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, section 34A to receive a copy of his/her transcript. The eligible student or the parent shall have the right, upon request, to meet with professionally qualified school personnel and to have any of the contents of the student record interpreted.

A student over the age of 18 may limit the rights and provisions of the Massachusetts Student Records regulations that extend to his/her parent by making such request in writing to the school principal or superintendent. However, the student may not limit the parent's right to inspect the student record.

Access by Third Parties: A parent may have the student record inspected or interpreted by a third party of their choice. Such third party shall present specific written consent of the eligible student or parent prior to gaining access to the student record.

Access by Non-Custodial Parents: It is necessary for non-custodial parents to submit a copy of the custody agreement or order, and any subsequent changes made thereto, to the District so that district personnel may identify which of the parents has physical custody of the child. The non-custodial parent may access his/her child's record unless:

1. the parent has been denied legal custody or has been ordered to supervised visitation, based on a threat to the safety of the student, and the threat is specifically noted in the order pertaining to custody or supervised visitation, or
2. the parent has been denied visitation, or
3. the parent's access to the student or to the custodial parent has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record, or

4. there is an order of a probate and family court judge which prohibits the distribution of student records to the parent.

In the case of a non-custodial parent who is eligible to access the student record, i.e., does not fit any of the four (4) categories under 1-4 above, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student record to the school principal. Upon receipt of the request, the principal and/or his/her designee shall immediately notify the custodial parent by certified and first class mail, in English and the primary language of the custodial parent, that it will provide the non-custodial parent with access after 21 days, unless the custodial parent provides the principal with documentation that the non-custodial parent is not eligible to obtain access as set forth under 1-4 above.

When the student record is released to the non-custodial parent, the school will delete all electronic and postal address and telephone number information relating to either work or home locations of the custodial parent from student records provided to non-custodial parents. In addition, such records will be marked to indicate that they shall not be used to enroll the student in another school.

If you have any questions regarding the student record's policy or desire more detailed information concerning the state regulations, please contact the Main Office. Upon request, a copy of the state regulations can be provided to you.

Q. SOMERSET PACE (Parent Advisory Council for Education)

PACE is an information organization, and a resource for support and networking for parents/guardians in Somerset whose children have a disability(ies). The mission of the Somerset PACE is to work towards the understanding, respect, and support for all children with special needs in the community. Workshops and/or meetings are held monthly throughout the school year. All parents/guardians of children with special needs or other interested parties are invited to attend. Specific information concerning dates and other announcements are distributed throughout the school year.

R. TOYS AND VALUABLES

Students will not bring toys or valuables (including cell phones) to school. The school is not responsible for breakage or loss of any of these items.

S. CHAIN OF COMMAND

Constructive criticism of our schools is welcomed on the assumption that it is motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of the educational program and to equip the school to perform its tasks more effectively. Complaints are resolved most expeditiously if they are first taken to the staff member or administrator immediately in charge of the area in which a problem arises, then through successive administrative levels to the Principal, Superintendent, and subsequently to the School Committee, if necessary.

T. SOCIAL MEDIA

Parents/Guardians/Students should refrain from derogatory comments about students/staff on social media. Deformation towards a teacher, administrator, staff or students will not be tolerated and may have legal ramifications. The Somerset Public Schools hopes that parents/guardians will use caution when uploading and/or posting pictures of other students to a public website

U. FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

Family Life Education is provided in Grades 4 and 5.

1. We strongly recommend that all students participate fully in our family life classes.
2. Parents/Guardians will be notified every year regarding the instruction of the Family Life units.
3. Parents/Guardians will be given the opportunity to exempt their child/children from any portion of the said curriculum.

4. No student shall be penalized by reason of such exemption.
5. Each year parents/guardians will be informed of such policy.
6. Any student who is exempted by request of the parents/guardians under this policy may be given an alternate assignment.
7. Program instruction materials for said curriculum shall be made reasonably accessible to parents, guardians, educators, school administrators, and others for inspection and review.
8. The department of education shall promulgate regulations for adjudicatory proceedings to resolve any and all disputes arising under this section.

V. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DRESS CODE (Approved by School Committee-5/25/05)

1. Shirts, blouses, and dresses must completely cover the abdomen, back and shoulders. Shirts or tops must cover the waistband of pants, shorts or skirts with no midriff visible.
2. Shorts and skirts should adhere to the “fingertip” rule. Shorts or skirts should reach or exceed the tips of the fingers when standing with arms to the side. When necessary, the principal’s discretion may be used.
3. Head apparel is not to be worn inside the school building, with exceptions for religious or medical purposes or on designated spirit days.
4. Footwear must be safe and appropriate for indoor or outdoor physical activity, as well as prompt exits from school for emergency purposes. Flip-flops, footwear without backs, platforms, and higher heeled footwear are examples of inappropriate footwear for school.
5. Clothing or accessories may not display suggestive, profane, violent or vulgar language or images and may not display products which students may not legally purchase.
6. Spandex and skin-tight outfits of any type or material are deemed inappropriate attire.
7. Jewelry or chains which present a safety risk are not appropriate.

Principals will determine appropriateness of school attire in the event solutions to situations not covered in these guidelines are necessary.

W. GIFTS TO PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS AND STAFF

(From the Official Website of the Massachusetts State Ethics Commission)

“In general, a public employee may not accept any gift worth \$50 or more that is given because of the position he or she holds...”

The law prohibits gifts to public employees, not gifts to public agencies. You may give a gift to a public school, or a particular classroom, and the \$50 limit does not apply...

The Ethics Commission recently created an exemption to permit class gifts to teachers. A teacher may accept a gift, or several gifts during the school year, from public school students and/or their parents and guardians, with an aggregated value up to \$150, if the gift is identified only as being from the class, and the identity of the givers and the individual amounts given are not identified to the recipient...”

X. CAFETERIA

The school lunch program is organized to provide students’ meals. Students may participate in the school lunch program or bring an appropriate lunch from home. It is strongly recommended that lunch money be in a sealed enclosure (i.e., envelope, Ziploc bag, or change purse), labeled with the child’s name and teacher’s name.

Students are required to conduct themselves in an orderly manner to and from the cafeteria. Once in the cafeteria, good manners, courtesy, and proper eating habits are expected. Students generally sit within the class groups at assigned tables. However, some seating arrangements may be different, depending on the individual grade level.

Hot lunches and milk are available daily under the direction of the food service manager. The cost of school lunch will be available on the school website. Food and/or drinks are not to be removed from or consumed outside of the cafeteria.

The cafeteria utilizes a “point of sale” system. Parents/Guardians may go online to www.mynutrikids.com at any time to view their child’s balance, add money to their account, or to view what their child has been purchasing during lunchtime.

Y. LUNCH LOANS:

The loan is made only when a student has lost or forgotten his/her lunch money. The loan is for one lunch or milk and must be repaid on the next day of school. The parents/guardians of habitual borrowers may be contacted to devise a plan to remediate the issue. Students may not borrow money for snacks.

* If a student needs to borrow money for lunch, he/she may do so as long as the money is promptly returned the next day.

** For safety reasons, no glass containers are permitted at school.

*** Soda or candy is not allowed at school.

Z. BREAKFAST PROGRAM:

All elementary schools serve breakfast beginning at 8:20am. Monthly lunch/breakfast menus are distributed to students at the end of the previous month and are also available online at each schools website. Parents are invited to pre-pay their child’s account by personal check (checks to be made out to Somerset School Lunch). The cafeteria also utilizes a “point of sale” system. Parents/Guardians may go online to www.mynutrikids.com at any time to view their child’s balance, add money to their account, or to view what their child has been purchasing during lunchtime.

The price for a daily breakfast is \$1.50 and \$.30 for the reduced rate. A healthy breakfast is invaluable to academic success.

Z1. FREE/REDUCED LUNCH:

Parents/Guardians must correctly fill out the free and reduced lunch form in order for their child to qualify for free or reduced lunch. Please note: If a parent/guardian has one child in the elementary school, and one child in the middle school and/or at the high school (or more than one in each), a separate form does not need to be filled out for each child.

Upon receiving a child’s free and reduced lunch form, a school administrator will determine if the child is eligible for free or reduced lunch. A student will qualify for the program if the parents/guardians receive food stamps or TANF, if the student is a foster child, or if the parents/guardians meet the income eligibility guidelines published every year by the federal government.

If your child received free or reduced lunch the previous school year, this does not automatically make him/her eligible to receive free or reduced lunch the following year, as the federal income eligibility guidelines change annually. You must fill out a new form every year.

Z2. SUPPLIES & MATERIALS:

Students are expected to come to school with the tools necessary to do their work. Students should have a supply of pencils, pens, notebooks, book covers, and other general supplies that may be needed. Students are also responsible for materials needed to complete home projects, reports, or other projects which are assigned as part of their classroom curriculum. Refer to the schools website for specific grade level school supplies.

Z3. LOST OR DAMAGED SCHOOLBOOKS:

Examples of schoolbooks include: library books, textbooks, and any other book for use in school. Students are expected to be prepared for class by bringing all materials expected of them including books. Students are responsible for the care and protection of each schoolbook issued. Parents/Guardians of students who damage or lose a schoolbook must pay the school to have it replaced. An administrator will take into consideration the initial cost of the item, condition of the item when issued, and the copyright/purchase date, when determining the cost of repayment. A letter will be sent from the school to any student who has lost or damaged a school textbook or book. Charges for lost or damaged books must be paid in full within thirty (30) days of the mailing of the letter.

Somerset Public Schools
580 Whetstone Hill Road
SOMERSET, MA 02726
508-324-3100

Internet Acceptable Use Policy

In order for students to use the Somerset Public Schools' Internet connection directly, they must read these guidelines and sign the contract. The contract must be returned signed by a parent or guardian. These same guidelines are the expectations for all those using this connection as guests via connections from other Internet providers

Internet --Guidelines for Use

The Internet is a vast, global network, linking computers at universities, high schools, science labs, and other sites. Through the Internet, one can communicate with people all over the world through a number of discussion forums, as well as through electronic mail. In addition, many files are available for downloading on the Internet, many of which are of educational value. Because of its enormous size, the Internet's potential is boundless. It is possible to speak with everyone from prominent scientists to world leaders to a friend at college. However, with such great potential for education also comes some potential for abuse. It is the purpose of this list of guidelines, as well as the contract for Internet use, to make sure that all who use the Internet, both students and faculty, use this valuable resource in an appropriate manner.

The most important prerequisite for someone to receive an Internet account is that they take full responsibility for their own actions. The Somerset Public School system, along with the other organizations sponsoring this Internet link-up, will not be liable for the actions connecting to Internet. All users shall assume full liability, legal, financial, or otherwise, for their actions.

In addition, the Somerset Public School system takes no responsibility for any information or materials that are transferred through Internet.

Because of the size of the Internet, many kinds of materials eventually find their way onto the system. Should any user happen to find materials which may be deemed inappropriate while using the Somerset Public Schools Internet account, they shall refrain from downloading this material, and shall not identify or share the location of this material. Be aware that the transfer of certain kinds of materials is illegal, and punishable by fine or jail sentence. Downloading of music is forbidden and will not be tolerated. Playing of computer games is not authorized.

The Somerset Public Schools system makes no guarantees, implied or otherwise, regarding the reliability of the data connection. Neither Somerset Public Schools, nor the sponsor organizations, shall be liable for any loss or corruption of data resulting while using the Internet connection. The Somerset Public Schools system reserves the right to examine all data stored in the machines involved in the Internet link to make sure that all users are in compliance with these regulations. No student shall use this Internet link to perform any act that may be

construed as illegal or unethical, including the use of the link to gain unauthorized access to other systems on the network.

The Somerset Public School administration reserves the right to change these rules at any time without notice.

The Somerset Public School system strongly condemns the illegal distribution of software, otherwise known as pirating. Any students caught transferring such files through Internet, and any whose account are found to contain such illegal files, shall immediately have their accounts permanently revoked. In addition, all users shall be aware that software piracy is a federal offense and is punishable by fine or imprisonment.

Finally, all users shall keep in mind that when they use the Internet, they are entering a global community, and any actions taken by them will reflect upon the school system as a whole. As such, all users must behave in an ethical and legal manner.

Before individuals gain access to the Internet, they need to familiarize themselves with the following rules of conduct:

- * Adhere to copyright agreements.
- * Avoid the deliberate or inadvertent spread of computer viruses.
- * Do not use another person's files without permission.
- * Do not destroy, abuse, or modify in any way the school's hardware or software.
- * Do not place unlawful information on the Internet.
- * Do not use the Internet for commercial purposes, product advertisement, or political lobbying.
- * Do not download, store, or print files that are profane or obscene.
- * Do not post personal information. This includes yours or another student's home phone number and address.

**FYI:
For Your Information**

The following supplement to the Elementary Handbook contains documents for general reference which may change on an annual basis. It is provided for your information.



Somerset Public Schools
580 Whetstone Hill Rd.
Somerset, Massachusetts 02726
508-324-3100

Chace Street School. 508-324-3160
 North Elementary.....508-324-3170
 South Elementary.....508-324-3180
 Middle School.....508-324-3140

September 2, 2016

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The following materials are being forwarded in accordance with regulations in support of laws affecting the rights of students, their parents or guardians and of the school department employees relative to the 2016-2017 school year.

It is our hope that you will review these notices and become familiar with the information provided.

Should you have any questions, please call your child's principal.

<u>School</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Principal</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
Chace Street School	538 Chace Street	Mr. Timothy Plante	508-324-3160
North Elementary School	580 Whetstone Hill Rd.	Mrs. Elaine Sabra	508-324-3170
South School	700 Read St.	Dr. Joann Pereira	508-324-3180
Somerset Middle School	1141 Brayton Avenue	Dr. Pauline Camara	508-324-3140

Sincerely,

Mr. Jeffrey Schoonover
 Superintendent

Somerset Public Schools
Somerset, MA 02726

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The Somerset Public School District does not discriminate in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its services, programs and activities, on the basis of race, color or national origin, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Right Act of 1964 (Title VI); on the basis of sex, in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; on the basis of age, in accordance with the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1975 (Age Discrimination Act); on the basis of domicile in accordance Title VIIB of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001; on the basis of native language in accordance with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, on the basis of disability, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); or on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or religion in accordance with *Mass. Gen. Laws, Chapter 71 and 151B*.

To file a complaint alleging discrimination or harassment by Somerset Public Schools on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, age, domicile, native language, sexual orientation, or religion or to make inquiry concerning the application of Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, the Age Discrimination Act, and their respective implementing regulations, please contact:

Mr. Jeffrey Schoonover, Superintendent
Somerset Public Schools
580 Whetstone Hill Road
Somerset, MA 02726
Telephone: (508) 324-3100

To file a complaint alleging discrimination or harassment by Somerset Public Schools on the basis of disability or to make inquiry concerning the application of Section 504 and the ADA and their respective implementing regulations, please contact:

Mrs. Lisa Martiesian
Director of Special Education
Somerset Public Schools
580 Whetstone Hill Road
Somerset, MA 02726
Telephone: (508) 324-3100

Inquiries concerning the applicability of the aforementioned federal laws and regulations to Somerset Public Schools may also be referred to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights (OCR), 33 Arch Street, Ninth Floor, Boston, MA 02110, telephone number (617) 289-0111, Fax (617) 289-0150

SOMERSET PUBLIC SCHOOLS SOMERSET, MASSACHUSETTS

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

Statement of Policy

The Somerset Public Schools is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is free of harassment. Sexual harassment will not be tolerated in the Somerset Public Schools. The School Committee prohibits the unlawful sexual harassment of any student or employee by any student, employee, or other person at school or at any school-related function.

Persons found in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary sanctions as referenced below. This policy is implemented pursuant to the terms of state and federal law. It applies equally to all students and personnel.

Definition:

Sexual harassment shall include, but not be limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- a. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment;
- b. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment/academic decisions affecting such individual; or
- c. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating a hostile, or offensive, working environment.

Responsibility:

- a. Any employee having knowledge of conduct by another employee, volunteer, student or individual in the school community, which may constitute sexual harassment of any person, is required to immediately report such conduct to any of the individuals specified in this policy.
- b. Employees are hereby placed on notice that if an employee engages in acts which the district determines to be acts of sexual harassment, such acts are outside of the course and scope of the employee's employment. Such conduct may result in the employee having to obtain his/her own legal counsel and sexual harassment may result in a judgment against the employee personally.
- c. Private, personal, consensual conduct may at some point become unwelcome. Any student advised that a fellow student, or any employee advised that a fellow employee believes certain conduct to be unwelcome shall cease such conduct immediately. Any conduct within the definition of sexual harassment as referenced above and following such notice may be considered to be sexual harassment.

NOTE: Any persons, including students, who participate in a consensual relationship and who at some point wish to discontinue the relationship, should tell the other participant, either verbally or in writing, that the conduct is no longer consensual or welcome and therefore all such conduct must cease.

- d. All employees and students shall cooperate with any investigation conducted by the district of an alleged act of sexual harassment/discrimination. No employee of the district shall take any action to discourage a victim of sexual harassment from reporting such an instance.

Reporting

- a. Employees who believe that they have suffered sexual harassment shall report such matters to their supervisor and/or to the principal of the school to which they are assigned. The supervisor and/or Principal will then notify the Superintendent's Office. Claims regarding sexual harassment may also be reported by the employee to the Superintendent.
- b. Students who believe that they have suffered sexual harassment shall report such matters to the Principal in the school to which they are assigned. Any student or parent on behalf of the student, who feels that he/she is being sexually harassed may pursue the complaint with the Principal or may file a complaint with the Superintendent in the central administration office.
- c. Complaints reported to a teacher, supervisor or administrator shall be addressed in a timely and confidential manner. Information regarding an investigation of sexual harassment shall be confidential and those individuals involved in the investigation shall not discuss information regarding the complaint outside the investigation.
- d. It shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent to determine what further action should be taken on a complaint of sexual harassment by a Principal or district administrator. The Superintendent may assign a designated member of the central administration office to investigate the allegations of sexual harassment further. Said investigation will include a report to the Superintendent regarding the matter.
- e. It shall be the responsibility of all students and employees of the Somerset Public Schools and any other persons having business with or contact with the school district to act appropriately under this policy. It shall be the responsibility of the Somerset Public Schools to inform and educate school district personnel about sexual harassment.
- f. Any requirements stated and included in the current employment contracts between the Somerset School Committee and district personnel shall be followed regarding all employment issues.

Notification

A copy of the district's sexual harassment policy and procedures shall:

- a. be included, by reference, in the Student/Parent Handbooks as published at each educational level of the district;
- b. be published in the Somerset Public Schools policy book located in each school's office in the district as well as in the policy book in the district central administration office and Town Library;
- c. be provided as part of any orientation program for new employees and students at the beginning of each school year; and
- d. appear in any school or district publication that sets forth the school's or district's comprehensive rules, regulations, procedures, and standards of conduct.

Sanctions

- a. A substantiated charge against an employee of the district shall subject the employee to disciplinary action in accordance with the appropriate employee employment contract, up to and including discharge.
- b. A substantiated charge against a student shall subject that student-to-student disciplinary action including suspension or expulsion, consistent with the district's student disciplinary policy.

A sexual harassment policy was adopted by the Somerset School Committee on October 20, 1994.

This revised policy was adopted by the Somerset School Committee on: May 17, 2007.



Somerset Public Schools

Statement of Civil Rights Policy

The Somerset Public School District recognizes the right of each student and employee to perform in an atmosphere free of harassment, intimidation, ridicule, hostility or offensiveness. The Somerset Public School District extends its policy of non-discrimination to students, staff, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business. No person shall be excluded or discriminated against on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, age, domicile, native language, disability, sexual orientation, or religion. Anyone aggrieved by or complaining of discrimination because of race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, age, domicile, native language, disability, sexual orientation, or religion may register a complaint with the Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator at the Office of the Superintendent, 580 Whetstone Hill Road, Somerset, MA 02726 (508-324-3100). The Title VI and IX Coordinator is the Superintendent, Mr. Jeffrey Schoonover, and the Section 504 Coordinator is the Director of Special Education, , Lisa J. Martiesian.

I. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Once the Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator, principal or supervisor is notified, an immediate investigation of the allegation(s) will be conducted and necessary corrective action shall be taken through the grievance process. No employee or student shall be subjected to adverse treatment because the employee or student made a complaint. All appropriate confidences shall be maintained.

II. GRIEVANCE PROCESS

Students and employees are encouraged but not required to directly object to acts or behavior felt to be discriminatory. If (s)he feels uncomfortable in doing so, or if the issue is unresolved after direct discussion, (s)he should inform the school principal and/or Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator.

The Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator may advise the aggrieved of various options:

- Formal or informal implementation of the grievance process;
- Filing a complaint with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)
- Filing a complaint with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination
- Filing a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights
- Filing a private lawsuit

III. INFORMAL PROCESS

Once the grievance is brought to the attention of the Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator, (s)he shall attempt to resolve the matter through fact finding.

If the Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator is unable to resolve the complaint, the complainant may move to the formal grievance procedure. The Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator then becomes a resource to all parties.

IV. FORMAL PROCESS

A. For any employee who is covered by a collective bargaining agreement, they would access the formal grievance process that is outlined in their respective collective bargaining agreements.

B. For students, parents, guardians, employees not covered by a collective bargaining agreement and any other aggrieved party the following formal procedure will be followed:

1. **1**The complainant may file a formal grievance with the principal or supervisor within 30 (thirty) working days (school days for students and school year employees) of the date that the complaint was made to the Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator. If all of the parties involved in the complaint process desire to extend the formal process, the thirty (30)-day requirement may be waived. If the complainant does not file a written complaint to the principal or supervisor, the principal or supervisor will record the complaint in writing. If the complaint process begins with the principal, then the formal process ensues.
2. Within fourteen (14) days (school days for students or school year employees) from receipt of the complaint, the principal/supervisor must investigate and respond in writing with her/his review of the incident and of any action taken or decision made. The principal/supervisor may notify the parent/guardian in accordance with established school policy if a student under eighteen (18) years of age is involved. The investigation may include but is not limited to the following:
 - meeting with the person charged to obtain a response to the complaint;
 - conducting interviews of possible witnesses to any alleged events;
 - report the matter to local police if criminal activity is involved (see M.G.L. Chapter 265 section 43, which prohibits stalking, and chapter 269 section 17 which prohibits hazing) and/or suspected child abuse to the Department of Children and Families as required by M.G.L. 119 section 51A;
 - subject to the requirements of due process, take disciplinary action against the person charged pursuant to any collective bargaining agreement, student handbook, and state and federal law, including without limitation, a letter of reprimand or warning or a suspension of one (1) to ten (10) (ten) days;
 - Superintendent and/or his/her designee may impose further disciplinary action.
3. The written report must contain the following information:
 - All facts and circumstances of the incident;
 - Verification of parent or guardian notification if a student under eighteen (18) years of age is involved;
 - A summary of the investigation of all allegations which will include interviews with all individuals reasonably believed to have relevant information: the complainant, the person charged, and if either is under the age of eighteen (18), their parent(s)/guardian(s), witnesses, and anyone who may have been the victim of similar conduct.
4. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response of the principal or supervisor, (s) he may submit a written request for review to the Superintendent of Schools within thirty (30) days (school days for students and school year employees). The Superintendent of Schools or designee must respond, in writing, within fourteen (14) working days.
5. An employee, student or parent/guardian acting on behalf of a student may at any time file a grievance with the following agencies:

United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights
Region 1, John W. McCormack Building, C.H. Room 222
Boston, MA 02109-4557 Telephone: (617) 223-9317

Massachusetts Human Rights Commission
51 Inman St. Second Floor
Cambridge, MA 02139 Telephone: (617) 349-4396



Somerset Public Schools

NOTIFICATION OF SECTION 504 AND TITLE IX

COMPLIANCE OFFICERS

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and its accompanying regulations prohibit the discrimination towards any individual on the basis of his/her disability. Accordingly, all employees of the Somerset Public Schools are expected to adhere to School Committee policy which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. Any employee or parent who feels that he/she or his/her child has been discriminated against on the basis of a disability should file a written complaint with the school department's compliance officer. The written complaint should state in detail the basis of the complaint, the names of the persons involved and the dates of the specific complaint.

The school department's compliance officer for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the address is as follows:

Mrs. Lisa Martiesian
Director of Special Education
Somerset Public Schools
580 Whetstone Hill Road
Somerset, MA 02726
(508) 324-3100

It is the policy of the Somerset Public School District to maintain a working and learning environment for all its employees and students by providing fair and equitable treatment including freedom from sexual discrimination and sexual harassment. Any employee or parent who feels that he/she or his/her child has been subjected to sexual discrimination or sexual harassment should file a written complaint of the alleged act to the Title IX Compliance Officer. The written complaint should state in detail the basis of the complaint, the names of the persons involved and the dates of the specific complaint. The Title IX Compliance Officer for the Somerset Public Schools and the address is as follows:

Mr. Jeffrey Schoonover, Superintendent of Schools
Somerset Public Schools
580 Whetstone Hill Road
Somerset, MA 02726
(508) 324-3100

PLEASE SIGN, AND RETURN THIS PAGE TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER

Please sign below to indicate that you and your child have read the rules, regulations, and policies that pertain to the Somerset Elementary Schools and that you and your child agree to abide by the regulations and policies set forth herein.

Thank you.

_____ Parent/Guardian Signature	_____ Date	
_____ Student Signature	_____ Date	
_____ Printed Student's Name	_____ Grade Level	_____ Homeroom

English: If you need this, or any other document, translated into a different language please notify the building principal.

Spanish: Si necesita una traducción de este documento u otros documentos, por favor notifique Ud, al director de la escuela.

Portuguese: Se necessita isto, ou qualquer outro documento traduziu numa linguagem diferente, por favor notifica o director de escola.