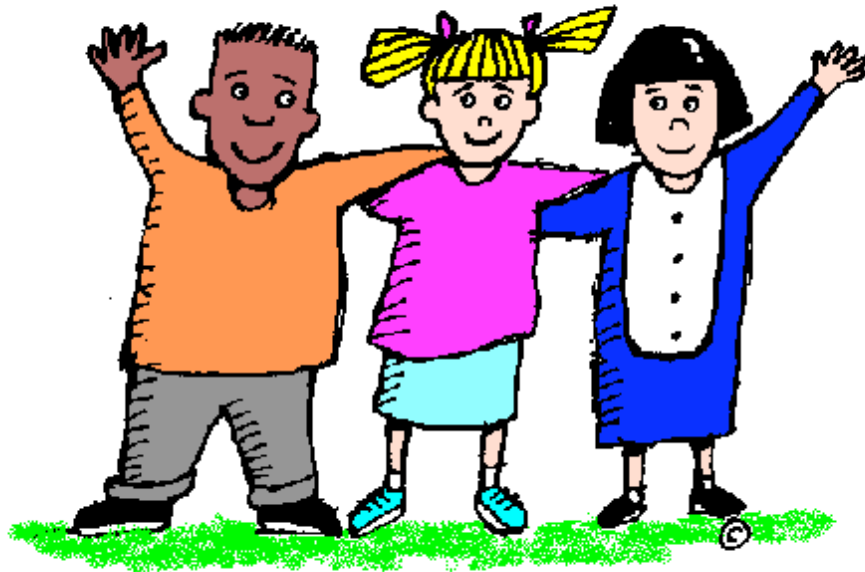


WESTMINSTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MEETINGHOUSE SCHOOL

Student Handbook
2009 - 2010



Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District

Westminster Elementary School

9 Academy Hill Road
Westminster, MA 01473
Telephone: 978.874.2043
Fax: 978.874.7308

Meetinghouse School

8 South Street
Westminster, MA 01473
Telephone: 978.874.0163
Fax: 978.874.7305

2009 – 2010 School Handbook

Superintendent:	Michael Zapantis
Principal:	Patricia Marquis
Assistant Principal:	Kathleen Kelley
Westminster Nurse:	Sue Belliveau
Meetinghouse Nurse:	Marcia Sharkey / Nancy Taylor
Westminster Secretary:	Clara Hannula / Ina Carey
Meetinghouse Secretary:	Kathleen McCarthy

Westminster Elementary School Hours:

Grade Two – Grade Five	Drop-off: 8:20 a.m.	Start: 8:30 a.m.	Dismissal: 2:55 p.m.
Early Release		Start: 8:30 a.m.	Dismissal: Noon

Meetinghouse School Hours:

Kindergarten and Grade One	Drop-off: 8:20 a.m.	Start: 8:30 a.m.	Dismissal: 2:55 p.m.
Early Release Days:		Start: 8:30 a.m.	Dismissal: Noon

PreK Classes	M-W-F	8:45 – 11:15
	T & Th	8:45 – 11:15
	M-T-W-Th	12:15 – 2:45

District Telephone Numbers:

Superintendent's Office	978.827.1434	First Student Bus Company	978.827.5103
Special Education Office	978.827.3062	Extended Day Office	978.874.0975
Food Service Office	978.827.5907	Learning Tree Preschool/	978.731.9916
	Ext. 2167	Stepping Stone Preschool	978.874.6348

INTRODUCTION

Message from the Principal

Welcome to the Westminster School Community. It is the goal of our entire School Community to help every student have a happy and productive childhood. Whether your child is at Meetinghouse School (Pre-School through Grade 1) or Westminster Elementary School (Grades 2 through Grade 5), he/she will be surrounded by adults who will do their best to help achieve this goal. We take great pride in our work, our school and our town.

Vision Statement – Meetinghouse / Westminster Elementary School

“Our school community is a place where all its members feel safe, cared for and valued. Diversity is celebrated, respected and supported, with equal access to knowledge for all.

Our school community will foster excitement about learning as a life-long process. As partners in education, we will work to develop critical thinking skills, creativity and the ability to work cooperatively. We will promote the exploration and understanding of ourselves and the world around us.

Members of our school community, students, educators, parents and the community at large, will be well-prepared for life and livelihood and able to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future.”

Mission Statement – Meetinghouse / Westminster Elementary School

“The mission of the Westminster Elementary School is to provide high expectations and challenging learning experiences for all of our students in a safe and positive environment.”

“The mission of the Meetinghouse School is to provide the highest quality education for all of our children in a safe and positive environment.”

AWRSD Strategic Plan Goals

1. The school district has necessary funding for a free and appropriate high quality public education.
2. Our community is fully informed about and supports the Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District.
3. The School Committee, administration, teachers and support staff have the knowledge and skills to provide our students with a comprehensive education.
4. Our students’ achievement continually improves through research-based educational practices and strategies.
5. The physical and learning facilities promote safe schools and high academic achievement.
6. Our school environments are welcoming, mutually respectful and responsive.

School Improvement Plan

Under the Mass. Education Reform law, each public school in the Commonwealth annually revises and submits its School Improvement Plan to the local School Committee. The following goals are the focus of the School Improvement Council (SIC) for 2008. The entire action plan is available in the school office for all to review, or from a SIC or faculty member. The School Council will be addressing new plans for the future.

School Improvement Plan Goals

1. To develop and support a budget that will ensure quality educational programming for students at Meetinghouse / Westminster Elementary School.
2. Involve parents and local community as active members of MHS and WES community.
3. To develop an environment that promotes a learning community within the school.
4. To include all students in successful learning experiences, resulting in increased student performance.
5. To provide a safe and orderly school environment.
6. To create a welcoming environment of courtesy, respect, and acceptance for everyone.
7. To provide access and instruction to current technology for students, teachers, and support staff at MHS & WES. To explore avenues for the community to utilize the WES Computer Lab after school hours.

School Improvement Action Plan '08 – '10

- **Goal: All students will meet the improvement level of 84.3 by 2010 in mathematics (present aggregate score 74.5).**
- **Goal: Special education and low income subgroup students in grades 3 – 5 at the Westminster Elementary School will meet the improvement level of 76.9 by 2009 and 90.2 by 2010 in the curriculum area of English Language Arts (present level of subgroup: 63.6).**
- **Goal: All students, grades 3 – 5 will average a score of 2.3 on 2009 and 3.0 on 2010 ELA, Mathematics, and Science Open Response of the MCAS tests (ELA presently 1.7).**

WES/MHS School Improvement SMART Goals '09 – '10

SMART Goal: Maintain or exceed established CPI performance levels for math (presently 79.0 in '08) and ELA (presently 81.1 in '08) as determined by DESE (90.2).

1. Establish and implement curriculum based measurement systems and common assessments to identify student ability level and monitor progress on students at Meetinghouse and Westminster Elementary School – District Goal #4
2. Identify, design and implement interventions to address the individual learning needs of the students at Meetinghouse and Westminster Elementary School. –District Goal #4
3. Identify, create, and provide professional development that will lead to improved student performance at Meetinghouse and Westminster Elementary School. – District Goal #3

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)

The purpose of the Westminster/Meetinghouse PTO is to promote a good relationship between home and school so that parents and teachers may work together to provide the best learning environment for our children. Good communication and cooperation is vital to the positive development and education of each child.

The PTO provides many services and funds many projects not funded by the school budget. This is possible due to your generous support of our annual fund-raiser.

The Westminster/Meetinghouse PTO is a very active and dedicated group of individuals who work extremely hard throughout the school year on a variety of projects and events.

The following is a list of the current PTO committees:

Playground	Staff Appreciation	Cultural Events	Holiday Workshop	Fingerprinting
Retirement	Christmas Tree Lighting	Publicity		
Refreshments	Fifth-grade Promotion	Fundraising	Photo Copy	Bike Rodeo
Colonial Days	Room-Parent Organizer	Spring Fling Dance	Babysitting	
Spaghetti Supper	Wish List	School Spirit	Kindergarten Orientation	

PTO business meetings are held every month. During alternate months, a speaker or workshop for parents and/or children is planned. Notices and agendas are sent home prior to each meeting. Any communications for the PTO can be left in the PTO mailbox at the WES or MHS office, or feel free to contact any of the current board members. The PTO has it's own handbook readily available in either school office. Come and support our school. Become involved!!

School Improvement Council

The MHS/WES School Improvement Council is a representative, school-based committee that was established as a result of the 1993 Education Reform Act enacted by the Massachusetts legislature. The Council's function is to advise the Principal on matters related to the school and to assist the Principal in preparing the School Improvement Plan (SIP) that reflects and supports the mission and goals of the Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District (AWRSD). The SIC conducts an annual survey to determine the educational priorities and concerns of the community; the Council tries to address these needs in its annual update to the School Improvement Plan.

Council membership includes the Principal, Assistant Principal, 4 teachers, 6 parents, and 2 community members. Parents and teachers are elected for terms of 2 years. Parents must have a child in the school for the duration of their term. The Principal appoints community members for one-year terms.

SIC meetings are held monthly and are open to the public. Time is available for unscheduled agenda items that members of the community might wish to present for the Council's consideration. Parents and community members are encouraged to read the SIP and the monthly meeting minutes and to discuss their thoughts, ideas or concerns personally with Council members, as well as at the meetings.

The School Improvement Council helps to organize a number of activities that help make our school a better place for kids. Recent efforts have included the Textbook Initiative, Community in Schools Breakfast Program, and our Parent Volunteer Program.

SCHOOL POLICIES/PROCEDURES

Entrance & Enrollment Requirements

New students in Kindergarten – Grade 5 need to register when they move into the Ashburnham-Westminster school district. Registration requires proof that the student lives in Westminster by showing a signed purchase and sales agreement, rental agreement, tax bill, or utility statement. In addition, the following information is required when you enroll your student:

1. Birth certificate
2. Immunization record
3. Completed enrollment form
- 4.. Proof of residency (as per district policy)

If the student lives with someone other than the parent, the following conditions must be met:

- A notarized statement indicating the student is living at a valid address within the school district with the name of the owner or renter of the property.
- A statement naming the adult who should be contacted for school business such as absences and emergencies.
- Both the parent and the caretaker named in these statements must be present at the registration.
- The notarized statement must be completed and presented prior to registration.

State law mandates that public schools must enroll students who live in their district, but the law clearly indicates that students not claim residency for the sole purpose of attending its schools. In cases where legal guardianship is involved, **a copy of the court record of guardianship** should be provided.

An updated Emergency Information Card is kept on file in the nurse's office. This information provides the school with emergency contact and medical history information.

For admission to kindergarten, a child must be five (5) on or before August 31st. The staff, prior to placement, will evaluate any child who completed kindergarten outside of the Ashburnham Westminster Regional School District who is not five by August 31st. A family moving to Westminster with a child who does not meet the cutoff date, but who has attended kindergarten elsewhere for six week or more, may enroll the child in kindergarten. The child will be evaluated on an equal standing with his/her peers. A yearly orientation program is held in the spring prior to September for all students and their parents entering kindergarten.

Attendance, Tardiness and Truancy

Attendance

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential to sequential learning and necessary for satisfactory student progress. The following absences will be excused when the student returns to school with an appropriate note signed by a parent or guardian:

1. Illness (may require doctor's/nurse's verification)
2. Bereavement
3. Medical, dental or legal appointments
4. Religious observances

When an absence is unavoidable, the parent/guardian should notify the school by phone prior to 9:00 am on the day of the absence. Between 4 pm and 8 am you may leave a message on our answering machine. The office phone number at W.E.S. is 874-2043 and at M.H.S. is 874-0163.

If the school **is not notified** before the school day starts, the school nurse will attempt to reach parents/ guardians or emergency contacts to verify the student's absence. This is done as a safety check to ensure each student's well being.

In cases of extended absences and/or serious medical problems, it is the policy to provide home tutoring for students who are unable to attend school because of a long-term illness. A doctor's written request is required. Arrangements may be made through School Administration.

Make-up Work

For absences longer than 2 days, please contact your child's teacher to request homework. We discourage parents/guardians from removing their student from school for family vacations outside the regular school schedule. If this is unavoidable, you should make arrangements with your student's teacher for make-up homework or an alternative assignment. This vacation time will be recorded as an unexcused absence.

Because homework reinforces the daily classroom instruction, it may not be feasible for absent students to do the same homework as their classmates. It is important to realize that there is no ideal way to make up for the lost instruction time.

Truancy

Unexcused absences are those that do not conform to excused reasons. This includes any absence without a valid note. A student will be considered truant if the absence is unexcused.

Tardiness

Students who are late for school (arrival after 8:30 am) must report to the school office for a tardy slip before reporting to their classroom. Tardies that arrive after 11:30 am will be considered an absence.

Dismissal from School

We discourage early dismissals from school and urge you to schedule doctor, dentist or other appointments outside of school hours, on school holidays, or during vacation time. Extra-curricular activities should also be scheduled to allow students to complete the school day. We will send a written reminder if the number of early dismissals becomes unreasonable or excessive.

On the day of a dismissal, the parent or guardian must send a note to school stating the time of dismissal and who will call for the student. No student will be dismissed to anyone but a parent/guardian or authorized adult, who must report to the office to meet the student.

Dismissals prior to 11:30 am will be considered an absence.

Withdrawal/transfer procedure

When a student is going to transfer from WES or MHS to another school system, the respective office and the student's teacher need to be notified at least 2 days before the student's impending withdrawal. The parent/guardian must sign a "release of records" form at their new school, giving WES /MHS permission to forward the student's school records directly to the new school upon request. Parents/guardians may receive a copy of these records with a request to the office.

“No School” Announcements

If school is to be canceled because of inclement weather, the Superintendent of Schools will notify the following radio stations:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| - WTAG: 580 AM, Worcester | - WBZ: 1030 AM, Boston/Channel 4 TV | - WEIM:1280 AM, Fitchburg |
| - WSRS:96.1FM, Worcester | - WXLO:104.5 FM, Worcester | -WCVB Channel 5 TV |
| - Fox 25 TV | - WGAW 1340 AM | - WRKO Channel 7 TV |

Parents will also be notified through Connect Ed, an automated telephone service of unexpected weather-related closings or delays.

Unexpected School Closings

If school is to be closed early due to storm conditions, or for other reasons of an emergency nature, students will take their usual means of transportation home. Although it is natural for students to want to call home in an emergency dismissal, with over 600 students in our schools, it is impossible for every student to do so. Parent notification will be provided through radio announcements on the above stations. Parents will also be notified through an automated telephone service of unexpected school closings. PLEASE do not call the schools as the phone lines need to be kept open for emergency purposes.

The school recommends that families develop a plan for such a situation and inform their children what they should do in the event that parent/guardians are not home at the time of an emergency dismissal.

If the dismissal is district-wide, remember that Oakmont Regional High School and Overlook Middle School are dismissed before the elementary schools. If you have a child at either Oakmont or Overlook, that child will be dismissed first.

Emergency Information Forms

Emergency Information Forms are sent home with each student on the first day of school. They MUST be completed and returned to school immediately, as they are our only means of reaching you or someone you designate in case of an emergency. We must have current phone numbers and contacts who are reachable in Westminister or the immediate area. Please make the designated person aware that you are giving their name and number, and inform them of what you expect them to do. Be assured that unlisted phone numbers are treated confidentially.

It is essential that you notify the school of any changes that occur in a family, such as marital status, legal issues, name changes, medical status, address, home and work phone numbers, emergency contacts, etc. Please inform the school office at once when these changes occur so emergency information can be updated in the student's records.

Phone Calls

From parent/guardians

The office staff is pleased to help with any problem or answer any questions concerning school. If you need to change dismissal plans for your child at the end of the day, a call should be made to the office **before 2:00 pm.**

Parent/guardians who wish to speak directly to a teacher should leave a message with the office staff and should expect to have calls returned before the start of school the next day. The Principal or Assistant Principal is usually available, but may need to return calls after school hours or in the evening. Please leave both home and work numbers.

From students

Students are encouraged to be responsible for their own belongings and school-related materials. We discourage calls home for forgotten items.

Notes from Parent/Guardians

Written notes from parents/ guardians are required (in addition to excused absences), when your student will be:

1. Picked up by someone other than the parent/ guardian.
2. Dismissed during the school day.
3. Given permission to ride on a bus other than his/her regular bus, or is a rider going in walking patrol to a different destination.
4. Picked up at school rather than taking the bus home, or other similar change in routine.
5. Following a standing appointment one day per week such as Brownies, Boy Scouts, etc. One note at the start of the school year will suffice. If there is any change in the schedule, another note is needed.
6. Given permission to ride a bike to school. (Grades 3 – 5 only)
7. Cared for after school by a baby-sitter or family day care provider. Please provide the school with the names and phone numbers of all after-school care providers.
8. Written notes are essential to insure your child's plans for the day. We cannot guarantee that all phone messages will be retrieved by day's end.

Building Security

We make every effort to ensure our students have a safe and secure environment in which to learn. To this end, all exterior doors to the building are locked while school is in session, with the exception of the front entrance. ALL visitors and volunteers must first report to the office to sign in and obtain a visitor badge. Visitors must sign out and badges must be returned before leaving the school building.

Parents and adult visitors are always welcome, but arrangements should be made in advance through the Principal's office and/or teacher to avoid any conflicts in activity. Visitors should not expect to confer with teachers while classes are in session. Parents/visitors must schedule conferences in advance at times mutually convenient for both teacher and parent. Students may have child visitors only with prior approval of the teacher and Principal or Assistant Principal.

Student Record Regulations

The student record comprises two sections:

1. **Transcript:** includes only minimal information necessary to reflect the student's educational progress, such as name, address, course titles, grades, credits, and grade level completed. It is kept for at least 60 years after the student leaves the system.
2. **Temporary record:** contains the majority of the information maintained by the school about the student. May include such things as standardized test results, participation in school-sponsored extracurricular activities, evaluations and comments by teachers, counselors, and others.

At the end of Grade 5, only the transcript and standardized test scores are sent to Overlook Middle School. Parents/guardians may send a note stating their desire to pick up, and sign for, the temporary record. All records not picked up by July 31 will be destroyed.

Record Inspection

Parents/guardians have the right to inspect all portions of the student record upon request. The school is required to make the record available to you no later than two days after receiving your request, unless you consent to a delay.

You also have the right to receive copies of any part of the record, although a reasonable fee may be charged for the cost of duplicating the materials.

You may request to have parts of the record interpreted by a qualified school professional, or you may invite anyone else you choose to inspect or interpret the record with you.

Record Confidentiality

With a few exceptions, only parents/guardians, their student (age 14 and over), and school personnel working directly with the student are allowed access to information in the student record without the specific, informed, written consent of the parent/guardian.

Records are stored in a locked cabinet, centrally located in the school and parents/personnel removing the record will sign them in and out.

Record Amendment

Parents/guardians have the right to add relevant comments, information, or other written materials to the student record. Additionally, parents/guardians have the right to request that information in the record be amended or deleted. You have a right to a conference with the school Principal to make any objections known. Within a week after the conference, the Principal must render a written decision. If you are not satisfied with that decision, you have the right to appeal it to the Superintendent.

Recess

Students are expected to participate in outdoor recess as it is considered part of the regular school program. Outdoor recess is not scheduled during unusually cold or inclement weather. Students should wear clothing appropriate for the weather.

Dress Code

Clothing Guidelines

- Students are expected to be neat, clean, and respectful in their appearance. The guidelines for school dress are:
- Clothing should be appropriate for the type of weather. All outerwear and any clothing that may be taken off (coats, sweaters, etc.) should be labeled with an identifying mark. If your child wears boots to school, please send an extra pair of shoes to wear in the building. *Sandals and "flip-flops" are not appropriate footwear for recess or physical education classes, therefore it is suggested all students have access to sneaker type footwear for ALL activities.*
- Outside coats or jackets are not to be worn in class unless building conditions necessitate additional clothing.
- *Students are discouraged from wearing caps, kerchiefs, and bandanas in school. Please keep these items for outside use.*
- *Appropriate clothing choices are appreciated and students are highly discouraged from wearing "short shorts", tube tops, halter-tops or any clothing items that expose the midriff. Please refrain from sending your child to school with extra accessories such as chains, as they pose a safety issue on the playground.*
- Clothing that advertises alcoholic beverages, drugs or tobacco, or with offensive or questionable slogans or messages is not allowed.
- Any student who does not dress appropriately as decided by the Principal or designee, will be sent to *the nurse* or home to change or parents will be called to bring a change of clothes to the school.

Homework

Elementary Homework Policy of AWRSD

The homework policy of the Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District is a part of our educational program that fulfills both academic and non-academic purposes. It refers to work assigned by a teacher to be completed by the student outside of class time and is not limited to that which can be written. Homework is intended to provide an opportunity for integrating home and school experiences.

The goals of our homework program are:

- to encourage shared responsibility of parents, students and teachers
- to reinforce skills through appropriate assignments
- to create a positive home-school connection
- to extend literacy into the home

Responsibilities of Parents

Promote a positive attitude toward homework and reinforce its value by:

- establishing a consistent homework routine that includes a quiet work environment with appropriate supplies and materials
- clarifying directions
- fostering pride in the completed task
- communicating with teachers regarding questions and difficulties related to homework

Responsibilities of Students

- Receive, record and take home assignments
- Ask teacher for clarification and/or help if assignment is not understood
- Show effort and do best work
- Complete and return assignments on time
- Inform teacher of any difficulty regarding the assignment

Responsibilities of Teachers

- Communicate homework expectations to parents and students
- Ensure that assignments are connected to curriculum and appropriate for students
- Create an environment where students are able to ask for clarification of assignments
- Provide feedback on homework in a timely manner
- Respond to parent concerns and keep parents apprised of homework issues

Parent Complaint Resolution Procedure Policy

Whenever there is difference of opinion or complaint, the philosophy of the Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School is to resolve all problems at the point closest to that issue. Please refer first to the staff person with whom the problem exists. If the issue is not resolved please contact the school principal. The principal may schedule an individual meeting prior to a "group" meeting of the parties involved. If in the very rare circumstance the problem is not resolved, the next meeting will take place at the superintendent's level as soon as the superintendent would be available to mediate the issue

School Choice

The Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District participates in "school choice". Requests for admission should be sent to the Superintendent's office. Each spring, the Superintendent makes public the number of available openings and the corresponding grades. A lottery is held to determine the assignment of these openings. Any parent whose child is admitted to the district under non-resident school choice must accept responsibility for the student's transportation to and from school.

Gifts

The faculty discourages the exchange of gifts of any significant value between students and teachers or other school personnel.

We know, however, that at holiday times parents often like to acknowledge their child's teacher with a gift. If you plan to do this, donations to your child's classroom and/or the school library are always appreciated.

In addition, your room parent can probably assist you in getting ideas for what is needed in a particular classroom.

Lost and Found

Articles left behind at school or turned into the office are placed in the "lost and found" area near the office. Please label everything belonging to your child (clothing, lunch boxes, etc.) with his/her name and grade so that lost items can be returned without delay. This also discourages unauthorized borrowing. Clothing left behind will be donated to local charities two or three times a year.

Books and Materials

All textbooks must be covered to keep them clean and extend their good condition. Students are responsible for the proper care and return of all books, including library books.

Students should have some type of school bag/ backpack in which to carry books and belongings. Teachers and/or administrators will inform Parents/guardians about replacement costs for lost or damaged books.

Students and parents will be accountable for the replacement cost of any lost or damaged books.

Electronics - I-pods,Radios, Tape Players, Etc.

These items are not allowed in school or on the bus. If a student should bring radios, tape players, hand-held computer games, personal stereos, cell phones, etc. to school, WES./MHS is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.

Invitations

It is the schools policy to discourage the practice of distributing birthday or party invitations. There are several reasons for this posture, many of which are legal in nature. The overriding issue is that too many children experience significant hurt when they are not invited to parties. School is definitely not a place where children should have to be subject to such embarrassment and or discomfort in front of peers. Invitations should be handled outside of school.

Medical and Health Information

Students should consult the school nurse when they have any problems or questions pertaining to health. Medical treatment consists of first aid for injuries and care for students who become ill during school hours.

A student who wishes to see the nurse during school time must secure a pass from the teacher and report directly to the nurse's office. If a student needs to leave school during the day because of illness, the nurse will notify the parent/ guardian so they may arrange for transportation for the student.

Physical Exams

Physical exams are required for ALL new students and those entering Kindergarten, Grades 3, 6 and 9. Ideally, this is done by a family physician who knows the child. Physical forms need to be returned to the school nurse, where it becomes part of the student's health record. With signed permission, a school physician will examine students if they are not seen by a family doctor.

Screening Programs

Students' **height** and **weight** are recorded annually. Vision testing will be done annually for students in grades K – 5. Hearing testing will be done for K – 3. The school nurse will notify the parent / guardian of any failures in the vision / hearing tests which will require written documentation of medical follow up.

Students in grades 1 and 4 will have BMI (body mass index) calculated and the results will be reported to parents/guardians.

Students in Grade 5 are required to have a **scoliosis/postural screening**. Parents are notified if any abnormalities are found.

Immunizations

Massachusetts general law requires all students enrolled in school to have an up-to-date Certificate of Adequate Immunization before they attend classes. This form must be obtained from the student's personal physician's office. Failure to comply with this requirement can lead to exclusion from school.

Kindergarten students are required to have five (5) or more doses of DPT, four (4) doses of Polio, two (2) doses of MMR, three (3) doses of Hepatitis B, and one (1) dose of Varicella (or documentation of chicken pox disease). Since 1997, three (3) doses of Hepatitis B are required for children born after January 1, 1992. All kindergarten students must have documented lead poisoning testing including the date obtained.

Contagious Illness

The Department of Public Health has published guidelines concerning a student's return to school after experiencing a contagious illness: strep throat, scarlet fever, lice, chicken pox, impetigo, conjunctivitis, scabies. If your student is diagnosed with any of these illnesses/ conditions, please contact the school nurse immediately to discuss guidelines for returning to school. For any students who have had illnesses that exhibit vomiting, diarrhea or fevers, it is recommended to return to school 24 hours after symptoms have subsided.

Medication Policy

The Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District has a policy to ensure the health and safety of students needing medication during the school day. The following summarizes the policy:

Our school district ***requires the written consent of the parent/guardian as well as a doctor's order on all medications (prescription and over-the-counter) before they can be administered at school.***

1. The pharmacy label on short-term prescription medications (7-10 days/antibiotics) can be used as the doctor orders.
2. All medications should be delivered to school by an adult in a pharmacy or manufacturer-labeled bottle.
3. If your child takes medication on an "as needed" basis for headaches, asthma, allergies, etc., parental consent and doctor's order can be written to cover the school year.
4. Psychotropic drugs must be delivered to or picked up from school by the parent/guardian. They are NOT allowed on the bus with your child.

School Insurance

School *Accidental* Insurance

In the beginning of each school year, an application for school *accidental* insurance is sent out. If you have any questions, contact the school nurse.

Health Insurance

Mass. Health and Medical Security Plan applications are available from the school nurse, for those parents who do not currently have a health insurance plan for their children.

EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM

The Westminster Extended Day Program provides safe and convenient childcare before and after school and is open to all students from MHS and WES. Supervised activities, games and crafts are offered each day. Students are also provided with a quiet area in which to do their homework. The program takes place in the WES building, making it a convenient place for students to go to before and after school-based activities such as Scouting, music lessons, etc. Scheduling is very flexible and can meet most families' needs. The program is financially self-sustaining.

All students must be pre-registered in the program before attending. A yearly registration fee is required, with discounts available for families with more than two children. Periodic enrichment courses are also offered through Extended Day. For more information, contact the Program Coordinator, at 874-0975 or 827-4701.

SAFETY AND TRANSPORTATION

Bus Policy

The Ashburnham-Westminster School District's bus policy is set by the A-W School Committee and is subject to state regulations. At this time, a .5 mile policy is in effect; children who live within .5 mile of the school are NOT eligible to ride the bus and must walk or have their parents provide their transportation to school.

Buses must not be defaced in any way. The bus driver has the same authority during a student's transit that the teachers do in the classroom.

Students should remember this: bus drivers are teachers and the bus is their classroom. Students should treat them that way and follow all the rules of bus safety and conduct listed below:

- Crowding or pushing are NOT allowed when entering or exiting the bus.
 - When waiting for the bus at home or at school, approach the bus only AFTER it comes to a complete stop.
 - When approaching or leaving the bus, look both ways before crossing the street. Cross in front of the bus; the flashing lights will protect you, but you must still proceed with caution.
 - Always stay in your seat while the bus is in motion.
 - Keep your hands and head inside the bus.
 - Shouting or loud talking is NOT allowed on school buses.
 - Littering or eating is NOT allowed on the bus.
 - Never run between a line of buses

The School Administration has the right to suspend bus privileges as consequence for inappropriate behavior.

Walkers

Students are required to walk to school if they live .5 or less miles from school. A crossing guard is stationed at the intersection of Bacon and Main Streets to assist children with crossing in the morning. A second guard is located at the crosswalk on South Street. At dismissal, WES walkers are released to the office. MHS walkers are released to the gym. An adult then escorts them as a group to the intersection of Bacon and Main. Please note that there is NO supervision beyond this point. The crossing guard has the same authority en route as a bus driver and, when necessary, will use disciplinary documentation (see bus incident report, Appendix A) which will be forwarded to the Principal.

Academy Hill walkers meet at the office and are escorted to the road by an adult. Parents should be aware that there is no organized patrol for students walking home in this direction.

Bicycles

MHS students are not allowed to ride bikes to school. Bike racks are provided for WES students who wish to ride their bikes to school. Students may ride their bikes if:

- a) They have their parent's or guardian's consent (one note for the year is sufficient).
- b) The path they must follow is not deemed unnecessarily DANGEROUS.
- c) They have a safety helmet.

The school reserves the right to deny or rescind permission for a student to ride a bike to school.

Mass. State Law requires all children under age twelve to wear a safety helmet when riding a bicycle. No student will be knowingly dismissed from WES to ride a bike home without a helmet.

Students are encouraged to lock their bikes at all times. Students should also be aware of bicycle safety rules and use caution and courtesy when approaching pedestrians. Every bike should be registered with the Police Dept. and should be in excellent working condition.

Bikers are dismissed after all of the buses have been called.

Drop Off / Pick Up

Parents who wish to drive their children to school should drop them off at 8:20 am. Please pick up students at the designated pick-up area after school, not at their classroom, at 2:50 pm.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE/PROGRAMS

Student Placement Procedure

During May and June of each school year, the faculty, the Principal and Assistant Principal collaborate to organize students into classes for the next school year. Individual classes are balanced whenever possible by the ratio of boys to girls, overall range of performance, learning styles, special needs and various behavioral concerns and combinations.

Classroom teachers provide information gained by working closely with your student all year. The Special Subject Teachers, the Guidance Counselor and Special Education personnel also make recommendations.

Whenever possible, each student's teacher assignment for the next year is included in the final report card.

The role of parents/guardians in this process is important to your child's transition to the next grade. The staff wants and respects your insights as they pertain to any new and additional information you can provide in this process.

Reporting Process

In an ongoing effort to improve the quality of education at MHS & WES, the professional staff conducts trimester report cards (November and March); as well as two progress reports throughout the school year.

Parents' Night

The Westminster Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) sponsors Parents' Night each September, when parents/guardians can meet their child's teacher and discuss the teacher's educational philosophy and plans for the school year.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Conferences are scheduled in November and March to review and discuss your student's academic and social progress/goals and any related issues/concerns. Parents sign up for their preferred day and time at Parents Night and/or Open House.

Special subject teachers are also available for conferences at these times if you wish and are scheduled upon request by parents.

Integrated Preschool

The Ashburnham-Westminster Integrated Preschool is a public preschool servicing 3 and 4 year-old special needs children throughout the school district. "Typically developing peers" also attend the program at a nominal charge. The preschool is currently staffed by special education teachers and teaching assistants.

Students attend two or three mornings per week from 8:45 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.; class sizes range from 8-15 students. There is also an afternoon session, which runs from 12:15 – 2:45.

Children with special needs are referred to the program through Early intervention, physicians, or parents who are concerned about their child's development. For more information about the Pre School, please call 978 874 9916.

Kindergarten Screening

Kindergarten screening is a function of the Special Education Department. Each community is required by Chapter 766 to screen all children entering kindergarten. The purpose is to identify any problems which might interfere with schoolwork. The screening includes: a developmental history form completed by the child's parent or guardian; a vision screening; a hearing screening; a speech/language screening; a readiness evaluation; and a comprehensive health assessment by your child's doctor.

Kindergarten screening is usually held in May, with the readiness evaluation conducted in September. Please call Meetinghouse School at 874-0163 for more information.

Environmental Camp at Nature's Classroom

Each spring, the 5th graders at WES are offered the opportunity to attend a weeklong educational experience called "Nature's Classroom". The classroom location is Freedom, NH on Lake Ossipee. WES students attend Nature's Classroom with the 5th grade from Briggs School in Ashburnham. This is believed to be a good experience for students from both schools and attempts will be made yearly to continue this joint venture.

Teachers and staff accompany students from WES and by parent chaperones. Students are given the opportunity to participate in a fund-raiser to raise some or all of their tuition. Parent volunteers organize this fund-raiser. Details are sent home with each 5th grade student

Lunch Program

The Food Service Department provides lunch for a cost of \$2.50 (subject to change) per meal. Parents are encouraged to pre-pay lunch by sending in the pre-payment amount on Mondays for the total cost of the number of lunches they desire to pay. A record is kept of each child's balance and purchases. Lunches not purchased due to absence or lunches brought by the child will be credited on the next day. You will be informed when your child's pre-payments have been exhausted.

By using the pre-payment system, time collecting money is reduced, therefore allowing more eating time for your child. Should you prefer to pay on a daily basis, please try to limit small change, as small children are apt to lose it. Less change will also speed up the cashier, allowing more time to complete the child's lunch.

Free/Reduced Lunch Forms are available through the school office. While the anonymity of families involved in the Free/Reduced Lunch program is insured, the school district does receive grant money dependent upon the number of people involved. By participating in the program, you may be increasing the district's chance of being eligible for various grants.

All questions about Food Service should be directed to the Director.

Proper respect and manners are expected of students at all times. If students are having a problem with any other student, they should inform the teacher or supervisor on duty. When in the cafeteria, students need to talk quietly at their table, raise their hand to get permission to leave their table, and be responsible for their own trash on the table and on the floor.

Discipline Code

Respect and Responsibility in all aspects of school life and at all times are the code of behavior for all students at MHS and WES. The Principal, Assistant Principal, faculty and School Improvement Council believe these are essential to fostering a nurturing, safe and orderly environment and to maintaining a positive climate for learning.

There will be times that children will make poor choices in the area of behavior. The faculty strongly believes that it has a responsibility to help students recognize how to make better choices in the future.

In all cases, the students will be asked to take responsibility for their actions and the faculty will help them work out the logical consequences that will follow.

Suspension, either in-house or at-home, is reserved for those students who are physically or verbally abusive toward others or equally serious offenses. The length of suspension will reflect the severity of the behavior. When a student is suspended, the parent/ guardian is notified and the student cannot return to school until a parent/student conference with the Principal or Assistant Principal is held.

When a student is sent to the Principal's office, he or she will report directly and will carry a note from the teacher explaining the circumstances. If the Principal or Assistant Principal is unavailable, Guidance Counselor will intervene.

Discipline of Special Needs Students

The disciplining of special needs students is governed by federal and state special education law and the regulations promulgated there under. These laws include the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. Section 1400, *et seq.*, 34 C.F.R. section 300.519, *et seq.*, and Massachusetts General Laws c.71B.

If a special needs student has violated school rules, the school may suspend the student from his or her educational placement for up to ten school days without consideration of manifestation rights. If a student on an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) is suspended for more than ten days in a school year, the team must conduct a manifestation determination.

During a manifestation determination meeting, if the team answers yes to either of the following questions, the student's conduct is considered to be a manifestation:

1. Was the conduct in question caused by or did the conduct have a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability; or
2. Was the conduct in question the direct result of the district's failure to implement the IEP?

When the conduct in question is deemed to be a manifestation of a student's disability, the team must conduct a functional behavioral assessment and implement a behavior intervention plan. Regardless of whether a behavior is deemed to be a manifestation or not, the district is obligated to provide services that will enable the student to continue to receive a free appropriate public education.

School personnel may order a change in the placement of a student with a disability to an interim alternative educational setting for up to forty-five (45) days if a student 1. carries a weapon to school or to a school function; or 2. knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school or at a school function. Under the described circumstances in this section, or if the removal of a student will constitute a change in the student's placement, a student's IEP team may convene to review the student's educational program and the misconduct.

State Regulated Discipline (Chapter 766)

All students are expected to meet the requirements as set forth in this handbook. The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) developed for every identified special needs student will indicate whether the student can be expected to meet the regular discipline code or if the student's handicapping condition requires modifications. Any modifications will be identified in the IEP. The suspension/expulsion of special needs students will be handled in accordance with Section 338.0 of the regulations for Chapter 766.

After-School Detention

In the event that after-school detention is determined to be an appropriate consequence for a behavioral situation, parents will be given 24 hours notice so that they may make transportation arrangements for their child.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Inclusion

Since the passage of the *Education for All Handicapped Children Action* in 1975 (PL 94-142), there have been significant changes in how the educational community -- including parents, business and civic leaders, teachers and administrators -- view quality education for all. "Inclusion" is a vehicle for special education students to maximize their potential and to bridge learning and social gaps in a regular classroom setting. W. E. S. and M.H.S. practice inclusion.

Teachers or parents who have concerns about a student's progress should submit their concerns to the Student Assistance Team at that student's grade level. The Guidance Counselor or classroom teacher will assist with this. Following a pre-referral process, if it is recommended a student be formally referred for a core evaluation, parents will be asked to sign a permission form to test. A support system used to accommodate the needs of these students is a team approach in the development of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

To develop an IEP, a realistic picture of the whole child is created with input from a team of parents, guidance counselor, teachers, the Principal, special education staff, and specialists, who consider test results, classroom performance, motivation, and learning styles. Goals are created and carried out with mutual accountability to ensure success. Participation in a special education program is subject to the approval of the parents. Progress toward IEP goals are monitored and adjusted annually at a minimum.

Changes necessary to meet the developing needs of special education students are supported as they evolve. Modifications are implemented to show learning has taken place so that students may experience success. Inclusion is a model based on the belief that all children can learn and meet higher standards of success. The job of special education is to take a leadership role in the development and implementation of plans to optimize learning for special education students in school and at home so they may approach their future as full members of society.

Title I Program

Title I is a federally funded program to assist first graders with language and reading skills. Eligibility for Title I services is based on classroom performance. Once a student is identified, the Title I teacher will provide Reading Recovery support service to the student on a daily basis for one-half of the school year. Title I services are separate from special education. Students do not need to have a special education evaluation to receive services.

504 Accommodation Plans

A Section 504 Plan is part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities. A Section 504 Plan “levels the playing field” for students with medical, physical, and emotional disabilities by eliminating barriers in the academic setting. This is accomplished by creating a plan of accommodations that will benefit the student’s academic needs. Disabled students, that also have learning difficulties, are serviced through Special Education.

Guidance Services

For the '09 – '10 school year, the position of school adjustment counselor has been eliminated for WES/MHS. Students in need of emotional/social services will receive support from existing personnel. Outside agencies such as LUK and YOU, Inc. will be approached to possibly assist the schools with specific needs of students and families.

All classroom teachers and special education teachers are trained in the social curriculum “Responsive Classroom”. This curriculum helps our students to develop their self esteem and learn skills that will enable them to cope with life’s stresses in ways that are conducive to maintaining and building confidence. Through morning meetings, class meetings, recess social groups, etc. students are taught about the values of respect, responsibility, honesty, tolerance, perseverance, empathy, and self-control.

List of Community Resources

North Central Human Services (NCHS)

NCHS is a licensed community mental health center serving the Westminster area. NCHS provides a wide range of psychiatric services, including outpatient counseling, emergency assistance, and substance abuse counseling. 978.632.9400.

The Lipton Center

The Lipton Center is a comprehensive licensed mental health agency. The center provides a variety of psychiatric services, including child, couple, and family therapy. 800.469.9888 or 800.345.9500.

Family Continuity Programs (FCP)

FCP is a licensed non-profit mental health center that specialized in home-based family counseling and crisis intervention. 800.469.9888 or 800.345.9500.

Mount Wachusett Community College

The college offers a variety of free basic skills and GED preparation classes to the community. 978.632.6600.

Hotline Numbers

Parents Anonymous	1.800.882.1250
Alcohol and Drug Abuse Information	1.800.327.5050
Smoking Cessation Information	1.800.422.623

APPENDIX A

Detention, Suspension and Expulsion Policy

The following policy is enacted through the 1993 Massachusetts Education Reform Act. A copy of these laws is available through the Principal, Superintendent, and the Massachusetts Department of Education.

In-School Suspension

- As an alternative to being sent home for behavioral problems, students may be placed in another classroom to work for a day. During that time, the student can not participate in recess and is not allowed to eat lunch with his/her peers. The student is expected to work quietly on assignments, and not talk to other students.

Out of School Suspension

- Every member of the school community has the right to a safe and constructive environment. Each student is expected to behave in a way that does not disrupt or interfere with the educational process of others. Therefore, the Principal may decide to suspend any student who has repeatedly failed to follow the school's expectations and rules for student behavior.
- Students will be subject to suspension when involved in incidents of severe misbehavior, such as, but not limited to:
 - Threatening, creating, or carrying out any action that is potentially harmful to others or themselves.
 - Leaving the classroom, building or school grounds without permission.
 - Using obscene, abusive or improper language.
 - Defacing or vandalizing school property.
 - Taking school or personal property without permission.
- Suspensions may be issued by the Principal for a period of one to ten days and are considered a "last resort" to develop appropriate behavior. The purpose of suspending a student is to remove that student from the situation where the misbehavior has occurred. Depending on the circumstances, suspended students may be given "in-school" or "at-home" suspension. Students who receive "in-school" suspension remain in school but are separated from their classmates for the duration of their suspension. Students who receive "at-home" suspension may not visit the school at any time during the period of their suspension.
- Suspended students may not participate in any school activities, attend any evening functions at the school, or take part in any school sponsored event held on or off school premises. Because of the seriousness of suspension, we also feel that suspended students should not be allowed to participate in any sports related activities. All academic work missed during a school suspension must be made up according to the schedule established by the classroom teacher.

Due Process

- A student is entitled to a meeting with the Principal prior to the suspension period. This meeting will include:
 - A verbal notification for the reason of the suspension.
 - An opportunity to present their side of the story.
 - An explanation of the evidence and basis for the suspension.
- Every effort will be made to notify the parents by phone of the suspension and their responsibility to pick their child up from school. In addition, parents will receive a letter outlining the reason for suspension and any related conditions.
- If a student leaves school grounds, is destroying school property, or presents an immediate danger to himself/herself or others, a parent or guardian must pick their child up from school immediately. If a parent or guardian cannot or will not pick up their child, the police will be called to remove the child from school. A meeting with the Principal or designee will be held as soon as possible after the suspension has begun.

- A student will not be re-admitted to school without a meeting with the Principal or designee, student and parents, to determine if the student is ready to follow the behavioral guidelines of the school.

Expulsion

- In certain circumstances such as those listed below, a student may be subject to a school committee hearing with a recommendation for permanent removal from the school and school district.
 - Any student who is found on school premises or at school sponsored or school related events in possession of a dangerous weapon
- Any student who is found on school premises or at school sponsored or school related events in possession of a controlled substance
- Any student who assaults school personnel on school premises or at school sponsored or school related events

Due Process

- A student subject to expulsion will be given a hearing with the school committee that contains the following procedural rights:
 - Written notice of the charges in the student's primary language.
 - The right to be represented by an attorney or advocate at the student's expense.
 - Adequate time to prepare for the hearing.
 - Access to documented evidence prior to the hearing.
 - The right to request that witnesses attend the hearing and to question them.
 - A reasonably prompt written decision including specific grounds for the decision.
- The student will have the right to appeal to the Superintendent of Schools within 10 days of the written decision. However, the student does not have the right to attend school during the appeal process.

Discipline of Students with Special Needs

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in this handbook. However, students with special needs demand a greater degree of flexibility and understanding when applying the rules and considering the consequences. In fact, Chapter 766 of the Massachusetts general laws requires that additional provisions be made for students who have been found to have special needs by an evaluation team and whose program is under an individualized education plan (IEP). The following policy is enacted through these laws.

- The IEP for every special needs student will indicate whether the student can be expected to meet the school's discipline code. If the student's needs prevent him from meeting the code, a modified program will be described in the IEP.
- Every teacher and staff member in regular contact with the student will be informed of the modified program described in the IEP.
- A student whose misbehavior is not a result of his special needs as defined in his IEP, is subject to all the consequences of misconduct including suspension from school. A student whose misbehavior is a manifestation of his special needs is exempt from suspension except in an emergency situation.
- If a special needs student is suspended, the Principal will notify the special education office of the length and reason for the suspension. A record of such notices will also be kept at the school.
- In the event the suspension(s) of a special needs student exceeds ten days (cumulative) in one school year or the student's misconduct is serious enough to warrant expulsion, an emergency team meeting will be held to review and determine the appropriateness of the student's placement and IEP.

APPENDIX B

MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAW - CHAPTER 269, SECTION 17

Hazing Regulations

Hazing as described by Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 2690, Section 17 is prohibited. Participants will be suspended from school for 5 days. Organizers of the incident will be suspended for 10 school days. All such incidents will be reported to law enforcement authorities for further action.

An Act Prohibiting the Practice of Hazing

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

Chapter 269 of the General Laws is hereby adding the following three sections:

Chapter 17: Whoever is a principle organizer or participant in the crime of hazing as defined herein shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or by imprisonment in the House of Corrections for not more than one hundred (100) days, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

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

Section 18: Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such a crime shall, to the extent such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars (\$500).

Section 19: Each secondary school and each public and private school or college shall issue to every group or organization under its authority or operating on or in conjunction with its campus or school, and to every member, plebe, pledge or applicant for membership in such group or organization, a copy of said sections seventeen and eighteen. An officer of each group or organization, and each individual receiving a copy of said sections seventeen and eighteen shall sign an acknowledgment stating that such group, organization, or individual has received a copy of said sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each secondary school and each public or private school or college shall file, at least annually, a report with the Regents of Higher Education and in the case of secondary schools, the Board of Education, certifying that such institution has adopted a disciplinary policy with regards to the organizers and participants of hazing. The Board of Regents and in the case of secondary schools, the Board of Education, shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the Attorney General any such institution which fails to make such report.

APPENDIX C – AN ACT PROVIDING FOR DRUG FREE SCHOOLS

Effective July 1, 1989, anyone convicted of dealing drugs within 1000 feet of an elementary, vocational or secondary school will face a two-year mandatory prison sentence. It will not matter whether the dealer knew he/she was near a school, whether it is a public or private school, or in session at the time of the offense. The law will pertain to drug distributors, manufacturers or persons possessing a controlled substance with intent to distribute it. A fine of up to \$10,000.00 may also be imposed but not in lieu of the two-year term of imprisonment.

APPENDIX D

Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District

WEBPAGE PUBLISHING POLICY

Our district has chosen to adopt the following regulations with respect to all of our school webpages.

Supervision of Webpages

Responsibility for the content of a school's website will rest solely with the building principal. The principal, at his or her discretion, may select a person, or persons (hereafter referred to as the webmaster) to maintain the school website in a fashion that is consistent with the regulations set forth in this policy.

Quality of Content

Each school webpage will be designed and maintained in such a way as to meet with the following criteria:

1. anything that appears on the school webpage will be grammatically correct and free of spelling mistakes
2. the webpage should be well organized, professional in appearance, and offer ease of use for those who visit the site
3. the only links (quick connections to other sites on the World Wide Web) which will be posted on the webpage are those which have been thoroughly checked out by the webmaster and deemed to be of educational value
4. the webpage will not contain ANY links to staff or student homepages

It must be clearly understood that any material submitted for publication (by either a student, staff member, or community member) may be accepted or rejected by the building principal based on its educational merits and the needs of the school at that point in time.

Publication of Student and Staff Information

Publication of student information will be implemented in a tiered approach.

At the high school level: the following information, in any combination, may appear on the school webpages: individual and/or group photographs, student work, and a student's full name.

At the middle school level: group photographs and side profiles may appear on the school webpages. However, no names shall ever be linked to a photograph. Student work shall be identified by first name and last initial only.

At the elementary school level: NO student photographs, either group or individual, shall appear on any school webpages. Student work shall be identified by first name and grade level only.

For purposes of this policy, student work shall be understood to be (though not limited to) writings, artwork and musical pieces. Additionally, information at any level may only be published with the expressed written permission of the student's parent or guardian (see Permission Form).

Permission Form

At the beginning of each school year, the Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District Webpage Publishing Permission Form will be sent home with each student in the district. Parents/guardians must indicate on the form if they grant or deny permission for their child's name and/or picture to appear on a school webpage. If a parent/guardian fails to complete the form, the district will treat that act as a DENIAL of consent, until otherwise notified in writing by the parent/guardian. This permission form will then be kept on file at the student's respective school. If the student is eighteen, s/he may sign the permission form for her/himself. Student telephone numbers and/or home addresses will not be posted on any school webpage.

A staff member's full name, picture, and school e-mail address can be published on a school webpage provided that the staff member has signed a release form authorizing the publication of such information. Staff home telephone numbers and/or home addresses will not be posted on any school webpage.

Copyright issues

When student or staff work is published on any school webpage, the webmaster will post a copyright notice prohibiting the copying of this work without written consent.

If a webmaster chooses to incorporate material (text files, graphics, audio files) from another source on the school webpage, s/he must first obtain permission from the copyright owner. The district will furnish each webmaster with a Copyright Permission Form that can be used to garner said permission. Once permission is granted and the material is used, a notice must be placed at the bottom of the school webpage crediting the original producer.

Policy Review

The School Committee will periodically assess the appropriateness of the language contained herein and make any necessary changes to stay current with technological advances.

First Reading: 3 /21/ 00

Adopted: 3 /28/ 00

APPENDIX E

ASBESTOS HAZARD EMERGENCY RESPONSE ACT (AHERA) MANAGEMENT PLAN NOTIFICATION

To: School Faculty, Parents, Maintenance Personnel, Contractors,
Students, and the General Public

From: AHERA Compliance Officer
Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District

In accordance with the AHERA regulations 40 CFR 463, the Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District must notify, in writing, to the aforementioned persons that the AHERA Management Plans of each school will be available for review in the office of the Head Custodian of each school between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. Monday through Friday or by appointment.

APPENDIX-F

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY OF ASHBURNHAM-WESTMINSTER REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

I. Introduction

It is the goal of the Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District to promote a workplace that is free of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment of employees occurring in the workplace or in other settings in which employees may find themselves in connection with their employment is unlawful and will not be tolerated by this organization. Further, any retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual harassment or retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a sexual harassment complaint is similarly unlawful and will not be tolerated. To achieve our goal of providing a workplace free from sexual harassment, the conduct that is described in this policy will not be tolerated and we have provided a procedure by which inappropriate conduct will be dealt with, if encountered by employees.

Because Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District takes allegations of sexual harassment seriously, we will respond to complaints of sexual harassment and where it is determined that such inappropriate conduct has occurred, we will act promptly to eliminate the conduct and impose such corrective action as is necessary, including disciplinary action where appropriate.

Please note that while this policy sets forth our goals of promoting a workplace that is free of sexual harassment, the policy is not designed or intended to limit our authority to discipline or take remedial action for workplace conduct which we deem unacceptable, regardless of whether that conduct satisfies the definition of sexual harassment.

II. Definition of Sexual Harassment

In Massachusetts, the legal definition for sexual harassment is this:

“sexual harassment” means sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- (a) submission to or rejection of such advance, requests or conduct is made either or implicitly a term or condition of employment or as a basis for employment decisions;
- (b) such advances, requests or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive work environment.
- (c) Under these definitions direct or implied requests by a supervisor for sexual favors in exchange for actual or promised job benefits such as favorable reviews, salary increases, promotions, increased benefits or continued employment constitutes sexual harassment.

The legal definition of sexual harassment is broad in addition to the above examples, other sexually oriented conduct, whether it is intended or not, that is unwelcome and has the effect of creating a workplace environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating, or humiliating to male or female workers may also constitute sexual harassment.

While it is not possible to list all those additional circumstances that may constitute sexual harassment, the following are some examples of conduct which if unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment depending upon the totality of the circumstances including the severity of the conduct and its perverseness:

- Unwelcome sexual advances – whether they involve physical touching or not;
- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one’s sex life; comment on an individual’s body, comment about an individual’s sexual activity, deficiencies , or prowess;
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons;
- Unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, suggestive or insulting comments;
- Inquires into one’s sexual experiences; and,
- Discussion of one’s sexual activities

All employees should take special note that, as stated above, retaliation against an individual; who has complained about sexual harassment, and retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a sexual harassment complaint is unlawful and will not be tolerated by this organization.

III. Complaints of Sexual Harassment

If any of our employees believes that he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment, the employee has the right to file a complaint with our organization. This may be done in writing or orally.

If you would like to file a complaint you may do so by contacting the District’s Compliance Officers. Their names and address are posted in the main office of each building. These person are also available to discuss any concerns you may have and to provide information to you about our policy on sexual harassment and our complaint process.

IV. Sexual Harassment Investigation

When we receive the complaint we will promptly investigate the allegation in a fair and expeditious manner. The investigation will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances. Our investigation will include a private interview with the person filing the complaint and with witnesses. We will also interview the person alleged to have committed sexual harassment. When we have completed

our investigation. We will, to the extent appropriate inform the person filing the complaint and the person alleged to have committed the conduct of the results of that investigation.

If it is determined that inappropriate conduct has occurred, we will act promptly to eliminate the offending conduct, and where it is appropriate we will also impose disciplinary action.

V. Disciplinary Action

If it is determined that inappropriate conduct has been committed by one of our employees, we will take such action as is appropriate under the circumstances. Such action may range from counseling to termination from employment, and may include such other forms of disciplinary action as we deem appropriate under the circumstances.

VI. State and Federal Remedies

In addition to the above, if you believe you have been subjected to sexual harassment, you may file a formal complaint with either or both of the government agencies set forth below. Using our complaint process does not prohibit you from filing a complaint with these agencies. Each of the agencies has a short time period for filing a claim (EEOC-180 days; MCAD-6 months).

1. The United State Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (“EEOC”)
1 Congress Street – 10th Floor
Boston, MA 02114
617.565.3200
2. The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (“MCAD”)
Boston Office: Springfield Office:
One Ashburton Place–Rm. 601 424 Dwight Street–Rm. 220
Boston, MA 02108 Springfield, MA 01103
617.727.3990 413.739.2145

First Reading: 11.26.96

Approved: 12.10.96

APPENDIX G

AWRSD Physical Restraint Policy

In accordance with 603 CMR 46.00 and MGL CH69, Section 1B and CH71 Section 37G, the following policy for physical restraint is hereby established by the Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District.

This policy governs the use of physical restraint on students in publicly funded elementary and secondary education programs offered by the Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District.

The purpose of this policy is designed to ensure that students participating in the AWRSD public education program are free from the unreasonable use of physical restraint. Physical restraint shall be used only in emergency situations, after other 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 member of the school community from imminent, serious physical harm; AND
- b. To prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of physical restraint.

This policy does not limit the protection afforded publicly funded students under other state or federal laws, including those laws that provide for the rights of students who have been found eligible to receive special education services. Nothing in this policy precludes any teacher, employee or agent of a public education program from using reasonable force to protect students, other persons, or themselves from assault to imminent, serious physical harm.

Physical Restraint Regulations

Definition:

The following terms shall have the following meanings as regards this policy:

1. Extended restraint: A physical restraint the duration of which is more than twenty (20) minutes. Extended restraints increase the risk of injury and, therefore, require additional written documentation as described in 603 CMR 46.06.
2. Physical escort: Touching or holding a student without the use of force for the purpose of directing to student.
3. Physical restraint: The use of bodily force to limit a student's freedom of movement.
4. Public education programs: Public schools, including charter schools, collaborative education programs, special education schools approved under 603 CMR 28.09, except as provided in 603 CMR 18.05(5)(h), and school events and activities sponsored by such programs.
5. Restraint-Other: Limiting the physical freedom of an individual student by mechanical means or seclusion in a limited place or location, or temporarily controlling the behavior of a student by chemical means.
 - a. Mechanical Restraint: The use of a physical device to restrict the movement of a student or the movement or normal function of a portion of his or her body. A protective or stabilizing device ordered by a physician shall not be considered mechanical restraint.
 - b. Seclusion Restraint: Physically confining a student alone in a room or limited space without access to school staff. The use of "time out" procedures during which a staff member remains accessible to the student shall not be considered "seclusion restraint."
 - c. Chemical Restraint: The administration of medication for the purpose of restraint.
 - d. Prone Restraint: Placing a student in a horizontal position face down
 - e. Side-lying Restraint: Placing a student in a horizontal position on their side
 - f. Supine Restraint: Placing a student in a horizontal position, on their back, face upward.

The use of chemical or mechanical restraint is prohibited unless explicitly authorized by a physician and approved in writing by the parent or guardian. The use of seclusion, prone, side-lying, and supine restraints is prohibited in the Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District.

6. School Working Day: Any day or partial day that students are in attendance at the public education program for instructional purposes.

Procedures and Training:

This policy outlines appropriate responses to student behavior that may require immediate intervention. These procedures shall be reviewed annually and made available to school staff and parents of enrolled students.

Each building Principal shall be responsible for arranging for the provision of training, as approved by the Massachusetts Department of Education, regarding the school district's restraint policy. This training will occur within the first month of school or, for new hires, within one month of employment.

The components of the general staff training shall be:

1. Physical restraint policy;
2. De-escalation techniques;
3. Types of restraints and related safety considerations; and
4. Administering physical restraint in accordance with known medical or psychological limitations and/or behavioral intervention plans applicable to an individual student

At the beginning of each school year, each building Principal shall also be responsible for identifying staff that have received in-depth training in the use of physical restraint. This in-depth training will be at least sixteen (16) hours in length and shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Appropriate procedures for avoiding the need of physical restraint;
2. A description and identification of dangerous behaviors on the part of students which may require physical restraint and methods for evaluating the risk of harm;
3. Simulated experiences in the administration and reception of physical restraint;
4. The effects of physical restraint including monitoring physical signs of distress and assessing the need for medical assistance;
5. Instruction regarding documentation and reporting requirements and investigation of injury and complaints;
6. Demonstration of proficiency in administering physical restraint

Determining When Physical Restraint May Be Used:

Physical restraint may be used only in the following circumstances:

1. Non-physical interventions have failed or been deemed inappropriate; and
2. The student's behavior poses a threat of imminent serious harm to self or other.

Physical restraint is prohibited:

As a means of punishment or as a response to property destruction, 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.

Nothing in this policy prohibits:

1. The right of any individual to report to appropriate authorities a crime committed by a student or other individual;
2. Law enforcement, judicial authorities or school security personnel from exercising their responsibilities, including the physical detention of a student or other person alleged to have committed a crime or posing a security risk; or
3. The exercise of an individual's responsibilities as a mandated reporter pursuant to MGL CH 119 section 51A. These regulations shall not be used to deter any individual from reporting neglect or abuse to the appropriate state agency.

Proper Administration of Physical Restraint:

Only school personnel who have received training pursuant to 603 CMR 46.03(2) or 603 CMR 46.03(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 person, or themselves from assault of imminent serious physical harm.

A person administering 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 46.03(5).1 Floor restraints, other than those prohibited by this policy (prone, side-lying, and supine), are prohibited unless the staff member administering the restraint has received in-depth training according to the requirements of 603 CMR 46.03(3).

A person administering physical restraint shall discontinue such restraint as soon as possible. If, due to unusual circumstances, a restraint continues for more than twenty (20) minutes, it shall be considered an "extended restraint" for purposes of the reporting requirements in 603 CMR 46.06.

Additional requirements for the use of physical restraint are as follow:

1. 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 color and respiration. A restraint shall be discontinued immediately upon a determination by the staff member administering the restraint or another witnessing the restraint that the student is no longer at risk of causing imminent harm to him or herself or to others.
2. 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 demonstrates signs of significant physical distress, such as changes in respiration or skin color, the student shall be released from the restraint immediately, and school staff shall take steps to seek medical assistance.
3. Program staff shall review and consider any known medical or psychological limitations and/or behavioral intervention plans regarding the use of physical restraint on an individual student.
4. Following the release of a student from a restraint, the program shall implement follow-up procedures. These procedures shall include reviewing the incident with the student and his/her parents/guardians 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.

Reporting Requirements:

School staff shall report the use of all physical restraints.

The school staff member who administered the restraint shall verbally inform the Building Principal or his/her designee of the immediately, or as soon as possible, upon the conclusion of the restraint and the safe transfer of the student's supervision to another staff member. In addition, he/she shall provide a written report no later than the next school working day. The written report shall be provided to the Building Principal or his/her designee, except when the Building Principal or his/her designee has administered the restraint. In such an instance, the written report shall be provided to the Superintendent. The principal or his/her designee shall maintain an on-going record of all reported instances or physical restraint, which shall be made available for review by the Department of Education upon request.

The Building Principal or his/her designee shall attempt to verbally inform the student's parents or guardians of the use of physical restraint immediately, or as soon as possible, following his/her notification by the school staff member who administered the restraint. If repeated attempts to reach the student's parents or guardians are unsuccessful by the time for student dismissal, the Emergency Contact Sheet will be used to inform emergency contacts. Failure to reach the parent/guardian or an emergency contact will prompt notification to the police.

The Building Principal or his/her designee shall provide a written report postmarked no later than three school working days following the use of restraint, except when the restraint occurs within three school days of a vacation. In this event, the Building Principal or his/her designee shall provide a written report to the student's parents within one calendar week. If the school customarily provides a parent or guardian of a student with report cards and other necessary school-related information in a language other than English, the written report shall be provided to the parent or guardian in that language.

The written report will follow the requirements of 603 CMR 46.06(2) and 603 CMR 46.06(3) and shall include:

1. 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 administrator who was verbally informed following the restraint.
2. 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 de-escalate the situation; alternatives to restraint that were attempted; and the justification for initiating physical restraint.
3. 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.
4. For extended restraints, the written report shall describe the alternatives to extended restraint that were attempted, the outcome of those efforts and the justification for administering the extended restraint.
5. Information regarding any further action(s) that the school has taken or may take, including any disciplinary sanctions that may be imposed on the student.
6. Information regarding opportunities for the student's parents or guardians to discuss with school officials the administration of the restraint, any disciplinary sanctions that may be imposed on the student and/or any other related matter.

When a restraint has resulted in a serious injury to a student or staff member or when an extended restraint has been administered, the school shall provide a copy of the written report required by 603 CMR 46.06(4) to the Department of Education within five school working days of the administration of the restraint. The school shall also provide the Department with a copy of the record of physical restraints maintained by the Superintendent or his/her designee pursuant to 603 CMR 46.06(2) for the thirty (30) day period prior to the date of the reported restraint. The Department shall determine if additional action on the part of the AWRSD is warranted and, if so, shall notify the AWRSD of any required actions within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the required written report(s).

Special Circumstances:

Restraint administered to a student with a disability pursuant to an Individualized Education Plan ("IEP") or other written plan developed in accordance with state and federal law to which the AWRSD and the student's parent/guardian have agreed shall be deemed to meet the requirements of 603 CMR 46.00, except that the limitations on mechanical and seclusion restraint set forth in 603 CMR 46.02(5), the training requirement set for in 603 CMR 46.03, and the reporting requirements set forth in 603 CMR 46.06 shall apply.

The school may seek a parent's or guardian's consent to waive the reporting requirements of 603 CMR 46.06 for restraints administered to an individual student that do not result in serious injury to the student or staff member and do not constitute extended restraint. Extended restraints and restraints that result in serious injury to a student or staff member will be reported in accordance with the requirements of 603 CMR 46.06 regardless of any individual waiver to which the parent or guardian may have consented. Individual waivers will be sought only for students who present a high risk of frequent, dangerous behavior that may require the frequent use of restraint. The following limitations apply to individual waivers:

1. The school may not require a parent's or guardian's consent to such a waiver as a condition of admission or provision of services.
2. A parent or guardian may withdraw consent to such a waiver at any time without penalty.

The school will maintain the following documentation on site in the student's file and shall make such documentation available for inspection by the Department of Education at its request at any time:

1. The informed written consent of the parent or guardian to the waiver which shall specify those reporting requirements(s) in 603 CMR 46.06(1-4) that the parent or guardian agrees to waive; and
2. Specific information regarding when and how the parent or guardian will be informed regarding the administration of all restraints to the individual student.

Nothing herein shall be construed to allow the AWRSD to receive an exemption or waiver from any of the requirements of 603 CMR 46.00 on behalf of all students enrolled in the classrooms of the Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District.

Grievance Procedure:

The Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District has established an internal procedure in order to provide for prompt and equitable resolutions of complaints regarding the administration of physical restraints.

Definitions:

A "Grievance" is a complaint made pursuant to, and arising out of, the Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District obligations to comply with state regulations regarding the use of physical restraints.

An "Aggrieved Party" is a person or persons making the complaint.

Purpose:

The purpose of this grievance procedure is to secure prompt and equitable solutions to grievances which may, from time to time, arise pursuant to 603 CMR 46.00.

General:

No aggrieved party will be subject to coercion, intimidation, interference or discrimination for registering a complaint or for assisting in the investigation of any alleged complaint within the context of this grievance procedure.

All documents, communications and records dealing with the filing of a grievance will be kept confidential to the full extent provided by law.

Forms for filing grievances will be provided upon request by building principals or the Superintendent of Schools, Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District, 11 Oakmont Drive, Ashburnham, MA 01430.

Procedure:

1. The aggrieved party should complete the Grievance Form and return it to the building principal or his/her designee at the school building in which the alleged grievance occurred. The complaint should be filed within fifteen (15) days after the complainant becomes aware of the alleged violation. Assistance will be provided, upon request, to enable an individual to complete the Grievance Form and pursue the grievance process.
2. Within ten (10) school days after receiving the grievance, the building principal or his/her designee shall meet with the aggrieved party in an effort to resolve the grievance. This investigation into the complaint is contemplated to be thorough, but informal, in nature. All interested persons and their representatives, if any, shall be afforded an opportunity to be heard and to submit evidence relevant to the complaint. If the grievance is not resolved, it will be forwarded to the Health Coordinator.

3. Within thirty (30) school days of receipt of an unresolved grievance, the Health Coordinator will conduct a hearing to determine what, if any, action shall be taken in response to the grievance. The hearing shall be held at a time and place mutually convenient to all parties. The hearing procedure will follow appropriate due process procedures, including:
 - a. the opportunity for the aggrieved party to present the grievance in any suitable manner;
 - b. the right of the aggrieved party to an impartial hearing officer;
 - c. the right of the aggrieved party to be represented by counsel or an advocate at the aggrieved party's expense;
 - d. the right of the aggrieved party to a prompt decision.Parents/legal guardians should provide advance notice to the Health Coordinator that they will be represented by counsel or an advocate at the grievance hearing. Failure to provide such notice will likely result in a postponement of the hearing.
4. A written determination of the validity of the complaint and a description of the resolution, if any, shall be issued by the Health Coordinator and forwarded to the complainant no later than fifteen (15) working days after the hearing. The determination of the validity of the complaint and the description of the resolution will be provided in an alternate format, upon request, if needed for effective communication.
5. The complainant can request a reconsideration of the case in instances where he or she is dissatisfied with the resolution. The request for reconsideration should be made within fifteen (15) working days following receipt of the written determination to the superintendent of the Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District.
6. The right of a person to a prompt and equitable resolution for the complaint file hereunder shall not be impaired by the person's pursuit of other remedies such as the filing of an ADA, Section 504 or other complaint with the responsible federal department of agency. Use of this grievance procedure is not a prerequisite to the pursuit of other remedies.
7. These rules shall be construed to protect the substantive rights of the interested persons to meet appropriate due process standards and to assure that the Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District comply with 603 CMR 46.00.
8. Copies of all resolutions and findings made under this procedure shall be filed with Superintendent's Office of the Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District.

Adopted: February 12, 2002

