

Westport Middle School  
Student/Parent/Guardian Handbook  
**2021-2022**

400 Old County Road  
Westport, MA 02790  
Phone: 774-309-3022

<http://www.westportschools.org/>



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**Questions Regarding the Handbook**

Any questions or concerns regarding the handbook should be brought to the attention of the Principal or Assistant Principal.

**Translations**

Contact the Superintendent of Schools at 508-636-1140 for a translation of this or any other school notice.

**Portuguese:**

Contate por favor o superintendente das escolas pelo telephone 508-636-1140 para qualquer tradução relacionada com esta ou outras noticias da escola.

**Spanish:**

Contacta por favor al superintendente de escuelas en 508-636-1140 para una traducción de esto o de cualquier otro aviso de la escuela.

**French:**

Veuillez contactez le surveillant des écoles a 508-636-1140 pour une traduction de ceci ou de n'importe quelle autre notification d'école.

**German:**

Treten Sie bitte mit dem Betriebsleiter der Schulen bei 508-636-1140 für eine Übersetzung von diesem oder von jedem möglichem anderen Schulebegriff in Verbindung.

### **District's Non-Discrimination Statement**

It is the policy of the Westport Community Schools to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from harassment, violence or discrimination based on actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex/gender, marital status, homelessness, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, family care leave status, pregnancy or any condition related to pregnancy, or military/veteran status. For further information or to redress a grievance, contact the district's Civil Rights Compliance Officer by phone at 508-636-1140, or in writing at 17 Main Road, Westport, MA 02790.

### **Westport Middle School Handbook**

The purpose of this booklet is to provide information that will aid students in adjusting to Westport Middle School. More detailed information is available in the Westport Community Schools Student Policy Handbook.

In the event of conflict between the contents of this handbook and those of the Education Policy Manual of the Westport Community Schools, the contents of the Education Policy Manual shall govern. The Policy Manual is available on the Westport Community School website under "*School Committee*."

Students and parents are requested to read this booklet carefully. Students should refer to this booklet throughout the school year.

## **Principal's Letter**

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Wildcat Students:

Welcome to the 2021-2022 school year! This is an exciting time for Westport Community Schools. While there has been a lot of change within the district, it is extremely thrilling to see the opening of a brand new building and the reformation of Westport Middle School! I am ecstatic to be working alongside the families and staff of Westport Middle School in supporting the educational, social, and emotional needs of students in Grades 5-8.

The mission of the Westport Middle School is to educate all students to become 21<sup>st</sup> century learners, to seek and value knowledge, and to emerge as productive citizens in a global community. I hold all students to high standards for their individual success and commitment to the school's mission statement while fostering an inclusive Wildcat community. This Handbook clearly defines our school's expectations as it relates to academics and student behavior. I highly encourage families to review these expectations together before the start of the school year to ensure the policies and procedures of Westport Middle School are consistently upheld throughout the year.

Education is a collaborative effort between families and the school community, and open communication is critical for a student's success. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions or concerns regarding your child(ren).

On behalf of the entire Westport Middle School administration and staff, I wish everyone a happy and healthy school year. Go Wildcats!

Sincerely,  
Laura Charette  
Westport Middle School Principal

### **Parent/Guardian Communication Dates**

- Westport Middle School Orientation - Wednesday, September 1, 2021: 6-8 PM
- Westport Middle School Open House - Tuesday, September 14, 2021: 6-8 PM
- Westport Middle School Parent Teacher Conferences - Tuesday, October 26, 2021: 6-8 PM
- Westport Middle School Parent Teacher Conferences - Wednesday, March 9, 2022: 2:15-4:15 PM

### **Progress Reports**

- Term 1: Wednesday, October 6, 2021
- Term 2: Wednesday, December 15, 2021
- Term 3: Wednesday, March 2, 2022
- Term 4: Wednesday, May 4, 2022

*\*Progress reports are typically posted in the Community Portal one week after the above dates.*

### **Term Dates**

- End of Term 1: Tuesday, November 9, 2021
- End of Term 2: Tuesday, January 25, 2022
- End of Term 3: Tuesday, April 5, 2022
- End of Term 4: Friday, June 17, 2022

*\*Report cards are typically posted in the Community Portal one week after the end date.*

### **Parent/Guardian Informational Forum Dates and Meeting Links**

- Thursday, October 14, 2021 at 6:30 PM - [meet.google.com/bao-dytm-mzs](https://meet.google.com/bao-dytm-mzs)
- Thursday, December 9, 2021 at 6:30 PM - [meet.google.com/cbk-koow-hyj](https://meet.google.com/cbk-koow-hyj)
- Thursday, January 13, 2021 at 6:30 PM - [meet.google.com/cnx-vndv-cea](https://meet.google.com/cnx-vndv-cea)
- Thursday, February 10 at 6:30 PM - [meet.google.com/nyf-xuqt-ddz](https://meet.google.com/nyf-xuqt-ddz)
- Thursday, March 24, 2021 at 6:30 PM - [meet.google.com/teu-pnyo-rkm](https://meet.google.com/teu-pnyo-rkm)
- Thursday, April 28, 2021 at 6:30 PM - [meet.google.com/drq-amky-ekv](https://meet.google.com/drq-amky-ekv)

**Given COVID-19 circumstances, all above dates and events are subject to change based on MA state guidance and regulations.**

## **Westport Middle School's Mission Statement**

The mission of the Westport Middle School is to educate all students to become 21<sup>st</sup> century learners, to seek and value knowledge, and to emerge as productive citizens in a global community.

### **21st Century Learning Expectations**

We believe:

- All students can learn
- Students learn best in a safe, supportive, and equitable environment
- Tolerance of individual differences and cooperative resolution of conflicts create a climate of respect
- Inquiry and collaboration help students actively engage in the curriculum
- Essential understanding is demonstrated through effective communication
- Personal responsibility for behavior and learning leads to success
- Collaboration among all stakeholders maximizes achievement

### **Expectations for Student Learning**

#### **Academic**

All students should acquire, integrate and apply enduring understandings, knowledge and skills.

All students should read, write and communicate effectively.

All students should use higher order thinking skills to solve complex problems.

All students should use media and technology effectively.

All students should study, research and work independently and collaboratively.

#### **Social**

All students should demonstrate personal and social responsibility.

#### **Civic**

All students should demonstrate civic responsibility.



## **Administration Directory**

### **Westport Community Schools School Committee**

Nancy Tavares (Chair), Nancy Stanton-Cross (Vice-Chair), Michelle Orlanda, Melissa Pacheco, and Antonio Viveiros

### **Westport Community Schools**

Thomas F. Aubin  
Superintendent of Schools  
[taubin@westportschools.org](mailto:taubin@westportschools.org)  
508-636-1140

Karen Augusto  
Executive Secretary to Superintendent  
[kaugusto@westportschools.org](mailto:kaugusto@westportschools.org)  
508-636-1146 x4001

### **Westport Middle School**

Laura Charette  
Principal  
[lcharette@westportschools.org](mailto:lcharette@westportschools.org)  
774-309-3022

Sean Persico  
Assistant Principal  
[spersico@westportschools.org](mailto:spersico@westportschools.org)  
774-309-302

Michael Harrison  
Executive Secretary to Principal  
[mharrison@westportschools.org](mailto:mharrison@westportschools.org)  
774-309-3022

Jason Pacheco  
Director of Athletics & Activities  
[jpacheco@westportschools.org](mailto:jpacheco@westportschools.org)  
774-309-3022

## Faculty/Staff Directory

| <i>Name</i>            | <i>Position</i>                 | <i>Email*</i><br><i>(@westportschools.org)</i> |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Arruda, Amy            | SPED Clerk - Grades 5-12        | aarruda  |
| Avilla, Rebecca        | Teaching Assistant              | ravilla  |
| Avila, Melissa         | Technology                      | mavila   |
| Beaupre, Carol         | Teaching Assistant              | cbeaupre                                       |
| Bednarz, Maggie        | Attendance Clerk - Grades 5-12  | mbednarz                                       |
| Bernier, Jon           | English Language Arts           | jbernier                                       |
| Bernier, William       | English Language Arts           | bbernier                                       |
| Borelli, Jennifer      | School Adjustment Counselor     | jborelli                                       |
| Brown, Nathaniel       | Science                         | nbrown   |
| Cabral, Heather        | LPN                             | hcabral  |
| Cardosa-Santos, Gloria | Foreign Language                | gsantos  |
| Carvalho, Elizabeth    | Chorus/Music                    | ecarvalho                                      |
| Charette, Laura        | Principal                       | lcharette                                      |
| Comeau, Diane          | English Language Arts           | dcomeau  |
| Corey, Jackie          | Guidance Clerk                  | jcorey   |
| Cottrill, Andrea       | Math                            | alcottrill                                     |
| Croft, Kelly           | English Language Arts           | kcroft   |
| Cummings, Kathy        | Teaching Assistant              | kcummings                                      |
| DaPonte, Diane         | Lead Nurse                      | ddaponte                                       |
| Dasilva, Derek         | Special Education               | ddasilva                                       |
| Daviski, Brandi        | Special Education               | bdaviski                                       |
| DeFreitas, Cynthia     | Speech and Language             | cdefreitas                                     |
| Driscoll, Lauren       | Math                            | ldriscoll                                      |
| DuBois, Amy            | Social Studies                  | adubois  |
| Duclos, Kim            | Lead Nurse                      | kduclos  |
| Fallows, Marie         | Guidance Counselor - Grades 5-7 | mfallows                                       |
| Davis, Scott           | School Resource Office          | sro  |
| Ferreira, Jody         | Science                         | jferreira                                      |
| Ferreira, Linda        | Special Education               | lferreira                                      |
| Flanagan, Thomas       | Science                         | tflanagan                                      |
| Fournier, Nadine       | Teaching Assistant              | nfournier                                      |

|                         |                                  |                 |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Gargiulo, Jennifer      | Math                             | jgargiulo       |
| Giella, Maria           | Reading Specialist               | mgrella         |
| Gong, Victoria          | Guidance Counselor - Grades 8-10 | vgong           |
| Harrison, Michael       | Executive Secretary              | mharrison       |
| Horgan, Jackie          | Special Education                | jhorgan         |
| Howland, Catherine      | Special Education                | chowland        |
| Janik, Debroah          | Social Studies                   | djanik          |
| Jennings, Judith        | Math                             | jjennings       |
| Kampper, Matthew        | Physical Education & Health      | mkampper        |
| Lees, Sherrie           | Teaching Assistant               | slees           |
| Magalheas, Branden      | Business                         | bmagalheas      |
| Medeiros, Andrea        | Special Education                | amedeiros       |
| Mello, Paula            | Teaching Assistant               | pmello          |
| Milton, Deborah         | Technology                       | dmilton         |
| Monast, Richard         | Media Center Specialist          | rmonast         |
| Monteiro-Bernard, Renee | Art                              | monteirobernard |
| Nunes, Christopher      | Band/Music                       | cnunes          |
| Pacheco, Holly          | Science                          | hpacheco        |
| Paiva, Trisha           | Science                          | tpaiva          |
| Pereira, Dianne         | Special Education                | dperreira       |
| Persico, Sean           | Assistant Principal              | spersico        |
| Ponte, Michael          | Social Studies                   | mponte          |
| Robichaud, Patricia     | English Language Arts            | probichaud      |
| Santos, Mary-Catherine  | Math                             | msantos         |
| Shunney, Matthew        | English Language Arts            | mshunney        |
| Silva, Natalia          | Teaching Assistant               | nsilva          |
| Sirois, Nicole          | Science                          | nsirois         |
| Soares, Jamie           | Teaching Assistant               | jsoares         |
| Sommer, Patricia        | Teaching Assistant               | psommer         |
| Struthers, Ryan         | Social Studies                   | rstruthers      |
| Teixeira, Amy           | Physical Education & Health      | ateixeira       |
| Texeira, Elizabeth      | Special Education                | eteixeira       |
| Tetzloff, Amanda        | Social Studies                   | atetzloff       |
| Tripp, Michelle         | English Language Arts            | mtripp          |
| Tripp, Nancy            | English Language Arts            | ntripp          |
| Williams, Jodi          | Teaching Assistant               | jwilliams       |

## Student Rights and Responsibilities

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

Among these rights and responsibilities are the following Civil Rights including:

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

It is the School Committee's belief that as part of the educational process students should be made aware of their legal rights and responsibilities and of the legal authority of the School Committee, the Superintendent, and the principals regarding the orderly operation of the schools and the protection of the rights of other students and staff members.

Students have the right to know the standards of behavior that are expected of them, and the consequences of not respecting school values. The **rights** and **responsibilities** of students, including standards of conduct, will be made available to students and their parents through the publication of student/parent handbooks distributed annually and subject to the approval of the School Committee.

## 2021-2022 Westport Middle School Bell Schedule

| Westport Middle School Bell Schedule                    |   |                          |
|---|---|--------------------------|
| Times   | Block   |                          |
| 7:30 - 7:37   | Homeroom  |                          |
| 7:40 - 8:35<br>(55 minutes)                             | Block 1   |                          |
| 8:38 - 9:34<br>(56 minutes)                             | Block 2   |                          |
| 9:37 - 10:33<br>(56 minutes)                            | Block 3   |                          |
| Block 4   |   |                          |
| 10:36 - 11:00<br>(24 minutes) <b>1st Lunch</b>          | 11:03 - 12:02 - Lunch First,<br>then Class (59 minutes) | <b><u>Grades 5/6</u></b> |
| 10:36 - 11:36 - Class First, then Lunch<br>(60 minutes) | 11:38 - 12:02<br>(24 minutes) <b>3rd Lunch</b>          | <b><u>Grade 7/8</u></b>  |
| 12:05 - 1:01<br>(56 minutes)                            | Block 5   |                          |
| 1:04 - 2:00<br>(56 minutes)                             | Block 6   |                          |

### ROTATION OF SCHEDULE

*Highlighted row is lunch block*

| Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| A     | B     | C     | D     | E     | F     |
| B     | C     | D     | E     | F     | A     |
| C     | D     | E     | F     | A     | B     |
| D     | E     | F     | A     | B     | C     |
| E     | F     | A     | B     | C     | D     |
| F     | A     | B     | C     | D     | E     |

**Honor Roll Ineligibility**

**Middle School Honor Roll Eligibility:**

- High Honors = all grades 90 and above
- Honors = all grades 80 and above

*Note: Honor Roll status is calculated based upon the term grade.*

**Academic Expectations****Citizenship Expectations of Westport Middle School****Overview**

It is one of the school's duties to assist parents and guardians in helping students develop responsible attitudes and behavior. This means preparing students for adult citizenship as well as preparing them for jobs and higher education.

For this reason, it is as important for the school to teach and evaluate both citizenship and academic work.

Parents and students should be as interested in citizenship "ability" as in academic, artistic, or athletic ability.

Teachers are required, based on the "Citizenship Rubric" to establish written classroom expectations regarding students' expected classroom behavior. These written expectations will be provided to students at the beginning of the year or when new students transfer into the class.

Teachers are also required to discuss these standards with their students and explain their expectations at the beginning of each semester.

**The Citizenship Mark**

Students will receive a term citizenship mark from each of their classroom teachers. The mark will be based solely on the citizenship displayed in each teacher's classroom.

Students will receive a mark of "outstanding", "satisfactory", or "unsatisfactory" based on the "Citizenship Guidelines" found below. The citizenship mark for each class will be shown on the student's report card.

*WMS students who earn four or more "unsatisfactory" marks on their rubric will also be ineligible for any school activities (including Athletics) through the next marking period.*

**Appeal of Citizenship Mark**

Students and parents have a right to appeal citizenship marks which they feel are in error or unjustified. If it is determined that the citizenship grade is not an error, the student and parent may request a meeting with the grade level assistant principal within two weeks after the citizenship marks are released. The Principal is the final arbiter in cases of appeals of the citizenship mark.

**Citizenship marks will not be shown on the student's transcript or other permanent records.**

**Westport Middle School Citizenship Rubric**

|                | <b>Outstanding</b>   | <b>Satisfactory</b>  | <b>Unsatisfactory</b>  |
|----------------|--|--|--|
| <b>Conduct</b> | Student models preparedness, is on time to class without exception, actively participates in class in a meaningful way, and serves as a role model; demonstrating leadership through exemplary conduct.          | Student comes to class prepared to learn, is on time to class with one or two exceptions, and shows respect for others and exercises good conduct. | Student is consistently unprepared for class (missing homework assignments and class materials), or is late to class 3 or more times. Student demonstrates a lack of respect for self, others through conduct disruptive to the educational process. |
| <b>Effort</b>  | Student consistently models exemplary effort when working independently, in a small group, or the whole class. Class work, homework, and study habits demonstrate the desire to meet and exceed the expectation. | Effort is evident in student classwork and homework. Assignments are presented in grade appropriate format and turned in on time.                  | Student does not work to ability, fails to complete assignments.   |

## Attendance

**\*Subject to change based on MA/DESE Guidelines surrounding COVID-19.**

### Absences

Every student has a right to educational opportunities that will enable the student to develop to his or her fullest potential. There is a strong correlation between good attendance and success in school.

Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 76, § 1 states that students can have only seven excused day session absences in any period of six months. Further, the law allows the school committee to define “legitimate” reasons for absence. The Westport Community Schools Attendance Policy defines legitimate reasons for excusing absences as:

- Student’s illness indicated by a doctor’s note;
- a death in the immediate family;
- observance of religious holidays;
- appearance in court;
- temporary relocation due to extreme emergencies such as fire, flood, or hospitalization of a parent;
- business which cannot be reasonably transacted when school is not in session;
- medical and dental appointments which cannot possibly be scheduled outside school hours

Students will be eligible to make-up work for credit for excused absences. **In general, a student shall receive two days for every one day to make-up work in a maximum of two weeks.** A written appeal requesting additional time for make-up work may be granted by the appropriate grade level assistant principal and/or principal.

Excused absences related to illness cannot exceed seven days in six months without specific medical evidence of incapacitation. All absences beyond **seven** day sessions in six months without such documentation are considered unexcused. Notification to state authorities of a parent’s failure to educate their children in the case of absences of more than seven (7) days within a six (6) month period (state law) will occur.

**Family vacations or non-school related sports competitions are not excused absences.** Students are required to make-up any missed work for all absences, excused or unexcused.

**If your child is going to be absent, please call 774-309-3022.**

The Principal or designee will notify by phone a student’s parent/guardian in the event the school is not informed of the absence.

The Principal or designee shall make a reasonable effort to meet with any student, and that student’s parent/guardian, who has missed five (5) or more unexcused school days (a school day shall be equal to two (2) or more class periods in the same day) in a semester. The meeting shall be to develop action steps to improve student attendance and shall be developed jointly by the Principal or designee, the student, and the student’s parent/guardian. The parties may seek input from other relevant school staff and/or officials from relevant public safety, health and human services, housing, and nonprofit agencies.



It is the student's and parent's responsibility to document the cause for an absence or tardy for one of the above listed reasons. If a student fails to present a note within two days of his/her return, the absence will be "unexcused". School personnel will not contact parents to secure notes. Telephone calls will not be accepted instead of written notes. The note should be brought to the main office.

Extremely late arrivals (more than half the school day) and extremely early dismissals (more than half the school day) are considered absences under state attendance regulations. Excessive absence is a serious matter. Consequences of excessive or unexcused student absences include but are not limited to:

### **Vacations During School Time**

Absence from school for vacation is not an excused absence. The administration and faculty believe that absence from class instruction, for any reason, is detrimental to student learning.

### **Attendance Requirement for Participation in Athletics and Activities**

Students must be present on the day of a game and/or activity in order to participate and must have an accepted excuse as outlined above. If the game/activity is on a weekend, students must be present on the Friday before the weekend in order to participate.

### **Dismissal**

Full day attendance is mandatory every day including special event days, exam days, prom days, etc. Student appointments should be scheduled after school hours if at all possible. If, however, it is necessary to schedule an appointment during school hours, **a note stating the nature of the appointment should be sent in with the student and brought to the main office before the first period bell. The note should be dated and signed and include a phone number where a parent or guardian may be reached.** Students under the age of 18 will not be dismissed from school without their parent/guardian of record picking them up, and parents must come into the main office to dismiss their child. Time missed due to the dismissal will be excused if documentation of the appointment is presented to the office.

Students who are dismissed for the day before 10:40 a.m. will be considered absent for the day and cannot participate in sports/activities. Students cannot be dismissed early to go to work. If a student is dismissed from school for health/medical reasons, he/she will not be eligible to participate in sports/activities.

### **Tardy**

Students must attend school a minimum of three hours in order to participate in interscholastic athletics and extracurricular activities. Students who arrive after 9:00 AM will be excluded from participation in extra-curricular activity that day or which may include, but is not limited to, athletic practices/contests, clubs and dances unless they provide documentation verifying a death in the immediate family, a medical/dental appointment, or an appearance in court. Students who arrive after 10:30 AM will be considered absent for the day without proper documentation.

- Students will be assigned office detention for every three tardies to school or to class.
- After the fifth tardy students will receive a Saturday School.

## **Chromebook Policy**

Students should arrive at school with their Chromebooks and only utilize their Chromebooks for academic work. Students should also abide by all provisions of the Westport Community Schools Acceptable Use Policy. Students should also not mark the Chromebook with stickers, markers, etc. or intentionally damage the Chromebook. By accepting the school Chromebook, students agree to return the Chromebook and charger to WHS in the same condition it was received if students transfer or withdraw from WHS prior to graduation.

## **Athletics/Student Activities**

### **Athletic Offerings**

Westport Middle School offers students the opportunity to play the following sports/activities (budget permitting):

#### **Fall:**

Boys' Soccer (5-12), Girls' Soccer (5-12), Field Hockey (7-12), Volleyball (7-12), Golf (7-12)

#### **Winter:**

Boys' Basketball (5-12), Girls' Basketball (5-12), Cheerleading (5-12)

#### **Spring:**

Baseball (5-12), Softball (7-12), Boys' Tennis (7-12), Girls' Tennis (7-12)

*\*Waivers will be handled on a sport by sport basis with enrollment determining whether or not Grade 7 and/or Grade 8 students will play on the MS or HS team.*

### **Athletics User Fee**

A non-refundable user fee of \$175.00 is required for student participation in each sport. Cheerleading user fee is \$125. Individual user fee cap is \$350.00 and the family fee cap is \$525.00. The fee must be paid at the time of registration and will only be refunded if a student is cut from the team by the coach or if the student quits the team during the tryout period. These cuts will be made no later than the first regular game of the season.

Waivers are available to students who demonstrate financial hardship. A separate application for the athletic fee waiver must be completed prior to the season and submitted to the athletic director. All documentation must be complete at the time of application for the Superintendent to consider the waiver.

## **Athletic Handbook**

Each year, student-athletes will receive a copy of the Athletic Handbook which contains necessary information for students and parents/guardians regarding participation in athletics at Westport Middle School. A copy of the Handbook may also be found on the Westport Community Schools website. If you have any questions, please contact the Athletic Director.

## **Clubs and Other Activities**

Westport Middle School is pleased to offer students the opportunity to explore the following extra-curricular activities. There will be a twenty-five (\$25) fee per club fee for participation in clubs or activities. The fee is used to help provide the funds necessary to offer the club or activity. Clubs and activities will be offered based on the number of participants and funding.

- Art Club
- Drama Club
- International Exchange
- Makerspace
- Math Club
- Mock Trial
- Music Club
- Newspaper
- Pep Band
- Robotics
- SADD
- Yearbook

## **Athletic & Activity Eligibility**

To participate in athletics and extracurricular activities, students must be in good standing in the school, which means academically passing 75 % of all classes. The eligibility shall be determined by the quarter grades in November, February, April, and June. The June final quarter grade will determine eligibility for the following year.

Students who receive four or more unsatisfactory citizenship marks (U) will not be eligible for Athletics or Activities through the next marking period.

**Any student who is ineligible at the start of a season shall remain ineligible for the duration of that season.**

Extra-curricular activities are:

- A. Dances
- B. School-sponsored trips
- C. Athletics
- D. Student Council
- E. Clubs

Students who are eligible for dances may bring one guest to the event providing that a Guest Permission slip is submitted prior to the event. Guests must be under 15 years old and must provide a photo ID. School Administration reserves the right to deny admission to any guest who is not enrolled as a student at Westport Middle School. .

**Financial Obligations Affecting Eligibility**

Students who have outstanding financial obligations or school debts will not be allowed to participate in related school events to include but are not limited to; extra-curricular activities, and athletic events. Parents will be notified of the outstanding obligation/debt.

**Attendance Requirement for Participation in Athletics and Activities**

Students must be present on the day of a game and/or activity in order to participate and must have an accepted excuse as outlined above. If the game/activity is on a weekend, students must be present on the Friday before the weekend in order to participate.

**Suspension**

Any student who is emergency removed, internally suspended, and/or externally suspended from school will not be permitted to participate in any school sponsored events, to include but not limited to, extra-curricular activities and interscholastic athletic events during the suspension. Students are also subject to the rules/by-laws of the club/sport in which they participate.

**Leadership Experiences for Students** *(No activity fee for participation)***Junior National Honor Society**

The purpose of the National Honor Society is to create enthusiasm for scholarship, to stimulate a desire to render service, to promote worthy leadership, and to encourage the development of character in students at Westport Middle School.

**Student Council**

The Student Council is an organization through which students participate in the governance of the school. The council promotes leadership, initiative, and self-discipline among its members.

**Student Delegate to the School Committee**

The Student Delegate to the School Committee consists of students who attend school committee meetings. It is their task to update the members of the school committee with regard to events at the Middle School. They also voice their opinions with regard to school committee issues on behalf of the entire student body.

**School Council**

School Councils were established to assist principals in planning for and implementing goals and practices that enhance the achievement of all students. The School Council consists of the Principal, teachers, students, parents, and community members.

## **School Safety and Discipline**

The Westport Middle School Student Handbook is annually reviewed by the School Council and approved by the School Committee. The Code of Conduct must be strictly adhered to by all students and enforced by all staff. Its intent is to provide a safe and orderly educational and social environment so that students can challenge themselves academically to be well-prepared to be life-long learners. It is also a reflection of the behavioral expectations of the entire school community for the purpose of helping students develop the necessary character, work-ethic and sense of personal responsibility that are necessary for students to be successful post-secondary students, employees, leaders, citizens and to be prepared to contribute to their family and community.

The Westport Middle School Student Handbook addresses the following 21st Century Learning Expectations

■ Students will demonstrate growth of character through personal responsibility, ethical behavior, and personal health and fitness.

■ Understand and exercise their rights and responsibilities as students and as citizens.

### **Student Appeals**

Students have the right to the appeal of decisions by faculty and administration. The appropriate appeal process order is teacher, assistant principal, principal, superintendent and school committee. Students shall have the right to appeal the suspension according to Massachusetts General Laws Ch. 71 § 37 H 3/4.

## **Policies**

### **Actions & Consequences**

The following policies apply to any student who is on school property, including school transportation, who is in attendance at school or at a school-sponsored activity, or whose conduct at any time or in any place interferes with or obstructs the mission or operations of the school district or the safety or welfare of students, employees, or invited guests. The Administration reserves the right to assign appropriate consequences per the WJSHS Student Handbook and Massachusetts General Laws.

Students have a personal responsibility to act in a way that does not violate others' rights. A student whose actions violate the rights of others will be subject to consequences, which may include:

### **Book Distribution**

All books should be stamped, numbered and student lease forms filled out. Textbooks are loaned to the students and each student is financially responsible for their return. If a lost book is not found, the full original price must be paid for by the student. Each student, upon receiving a textbook, will sign a form which records the name of the person, the number of the book, and the condition of the book. Therefore, when a lost book is returned, there will be no question of ownership. Lost and damaged books must be paid for.

### **Cafeteria Misbehavior**

Including the deliberate and excessive creating a mess and the folding of the tables to cause disruption of the Cafeteria. Students are expected to clean up after themselves.

**Cell phones:**

Cell phones and ALL electronic devices/smart devices/smart watches are not allowed in the possession of students during the school day.. Cell phones and all electronic devices/smart devices, if brought to school, must remain in the student's backpack/bag and turned off. Cell phones and electronic devices/smart devices will be confiscated if they are visible during the school day. Students who fail to comply with the confiscation policy will be sent home for the remainder of the school day. **A parent/guardian will be required to pick up the item. Saturday School will be assigned.** If a cell phone/smart device is visible during a testing period, the phone or device will be confiscated and the student will receive a zero on the test/quiz. No make-up test/quiz will be granted for such an infraction.

**Defiant behavior**

Choosing to blatantly defy classroom or school rules, expectations, or teacher requests

**Disrespectful Behavior**

The intentional use of inappropriate words, tone and/or body language.

**Dress Code**

Students are expected to dress in a manner that does not offend or distract from the learning environment. The administration will enforce reasonable standards of cleanliness, neatness, morality, and safety connected with pupil's apparel. Attire that may be injurious to any person or may damage any portion of the school building will not be allowed. Hats, hoods, and blankets are not permitted. Clothing providing indecent exposure or suggestive style is prohibited. These items would include but not limited to see through attire, "muscle" shirts, midriff-baring shirts/blouses, back-baring shirts/blouses, spaghetti straps, strapless, one shoulder shirts/blouses or halter tops. Bottom of the shirt must overlap the top of pants/bottoms. Undergarments such as bras and underwear, including boxer shorts, will be covered at all times.

Clothing that advertises drugs, alcohol or other illegal materials are not permitted. Clothing that exhibits language or designs that are explicit, violent, obscene, and sexually suggestive are not allowed.

**Egregious Disrespect of Staff**

Including verbal attacks of a personal nature towards, threats, and/or profanity to any member of the school community.

**Food**

Students are not allowed to have food or drinks (water is allowed) in the classrooms. Food may not be taken from the cafeteria at any time. Students who arrive at school with coffee or other drinks must dispose of them immediately upon entering the building. Students may not purchase items from the cafeteria vending machines during class time. Additionally, students should not be chewing gum while in the school building. Gum chewing, unless noted as an accommodation on an IEP or 504, is not allowed.

**Gymnasium Use**

Students are not allowed in the gym or weight room unless under the direct supervision of a staff member or coach.

**Horseplay**

The physical act includes but is not limited to including rough housing, physical joking, and creating an unsafe environment.

**Inappropriate Displays of affection**

Including but not limited to excessive touching, groping, kissing and hugging.

**Inciting a Fight**

Instigating and/or promoting a fight between any students, through any form of communication i.e. verbal, written or electronic, will be considered inciting a fight.

**Intimidation**

Knowingly frighten or threaten someone in order to persuade them to do something that you want them to do.

**Mask Protocol (subject to change per DESE/CDC/SC guidelines)**

Westport Middle School is committed to providing a safe environment during the COVID-19 pandemic. A face covering that covers the nose and mouth will be worn by individuals in school buildings, on school grounds, at school-sponsored events, and on school transportation, even when social distancing is observed. This may be a disposable 3-ply mask (or better) or a cloth mask. On school transportation, students may wear a face shield in addition to a mask that covers the nose and mouth.

When you wear a cloth mask, it should:

- Cover your nose and mouth
- Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- Be secured with ties or ear loops
- Include multiple layers of fabric
- Allow for breathing without restriction and
- Be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape.

Discretion regarding mask efficacy will be left to building administrators. Additionally, masks should not express the following: obscenities, threats, lewd or vulgar language and should not carry graphics or slogans that are disruptive to class.

**If a mandatory mask policy is put into place, students who refuse to adhere to the mask policy will be sent home.**

**Obscenity**

Language/gestures/material; These include but are limited to topics including genitals, sexual intercourse, and death and dismemberment.

**Profanity**

This includes words which are similar to profanity and used in place of profanity.

**Progressive Discipline**

The Westport Middle School Code of Conduct provides a list of common infractions and the typical corresponding consequences for violations of school rules. Students who repeat the same offense will receive stronger penalties for each subsequent offense of a similar nature at the discretion of the school administration. For example, a student who receives a 3-day suspension for a violation of school rules will likely receive a 5-day or longer suspension for repeating the violation. **The school administration also reserves the right to impose a stronger penalty for first offenses than are provided on the list of infractions.**

**Restorative Justice:**

Students who are ready to accept responsibility for their actions and attempt to repair the harm that their actions had on others may be able to participate in a restorative justice process. This process may be an

alternative to out of school suspension in order to replace suspension with a positive process that repairs harm, develops accountability, and meets the needs of all affected.

### **Weapon possession/use**

Weapons including; firearms, knives, or any other weapon or ammunition on the grounds, building or any school sponsored events of Westport Middle School. For the purpose of this document, “firearm” shall mean any pistol, revolver, or pellet that can be discharged by whatever means. A weapon is considered an instrument of combat. All state and local law enforcement statutes will be enforced as applied to firearms/weapons

## **Consequences**

### **Conferences**

Conferences are a formal warning where the school administration will clarify the behavior expectations and outline the potential consequences for future infractions. A parent/guardian must participate in the conference or be contacted by the school administrator to review the conversation.

### **Restricted Pass**

All students must be authorized in writing by a staff member to relocate during class, lunch or other educational activity by being in possession of a pass. Abuse or misuse of a pass may result in the school administration precluding a student from obtaining passes from classes and activities. The **No Pass List** may vary based on an individual’s circumstances and may include specific times, such as intervention, or require the student to be escorted at all times.

### **Social Probation**

Any student who is placed on probation at Westport Middle School will be allowed to attend only regularly scheduled classes. The student will not be allowed to participate in any extracurricular activities, including athletics. Students on social probation may appeal to the school administration to be able to participate in some activities while on probation. Administrative approval of this participation request is contingent upon the student making a contractual commitment to adhere to academic and/or disciplinary improvement goals. Students may also be placed on social probation for disciplinary reasons at the discretion of the school administration.

### **Detentions**

All students are expected to be on time and attend assigned detentions and must be prepared to be silent and complete work. Students are not allowed to have or use cell phones or electronic devices. Detention begins at 2:15 and concludes at 3:15 P.M. Students are expected to arrange their own transportation.

- **Teacher Detention/Mandatory Extra-Help**

- o At their discretion teachers may require students to stay after school as a penalty for violating class or school rules or require students who have not completed work as expected to stay for extra help. Teachers will provide a minimum of a 1-day notice for teacher detention or mandatory extra help.



- **Lunch Detention**
  - o Students who violate class or school rules and are referred to the office may be required to serve detention during lunchtime. Students assigned to lunch detention are expected to get their lunch and immediately report to the designated location. Cell phones are prohibited during lunch detentions.
- **Office Detention**
  - o Students who violate class or school rules and are referred to the office may be required to stay after school and serve an office detention. Office Detentions are held Tuesday and Thursday 2:15 PM - 3:15 P.M.
- **Saturday School**
  - o Saturday School is held from 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM. Saturday School is assigned at the discretion of the administration.

#### **In-School Restriction (ISR)**

When a student is unable to be in a classroom setting for disciplinary or other reasons, the student may be assigned by an administrator to serve an in-school restriction for the remainder of the block. All in-school suspension expectations and rules apply during this restriction period. No cell phones or electronic devices are allowed during ISR.

#### **In-School Suspension (ISS)**

When a student is assigned in-school suspension (ISS) by an administrator, the student must report to the ISS room by 7:30 and must remain in the ISS room until 2:00. Students are expected to complete school work as well as any other disciplinary intervention material that may be assigned. Students assigned to ISS may not attend school events on the date(s) of their suspension. No cell phones or electronic devices are allowed during ISS.

#### **Out of School Suspension (OSS)**

When a student is suspended from school they are prohibited from attending school, may not attend school events and are prohibited from being on school grounds without prior permission from the Principal.

**Suspended students are responsible to communicate with teachers and complete all assigned work while they are prohibited from attending school.** If a student needs to meet with a teacher on a day they are suspended to get clarification on or assistance with an assignment, the student must obtain permission from the school administration, must be supervised at all times and must leave school grounds immediately following the completion of their appointment. Students who are required to take the MCAS Test when they are suspended will take the MCAS Test in ISS on the Scheduled MCAS days.

### **Disciplinary Infractions, Expectations and Consequences**

The following is a table of the common infractions of the School Code of Conduct. The table also includes behavioral expectations and the typical consequences for violating those expectations. However, each infraction has its own unique set of circumstances and the school administration reserves the right to deviate from these guidelines based on the specific details of the incident. **The school administration also reserves the authority to take disciplinary action for other offenses not listed below.**

**Code of Conduct  
2021-2022**

| <b>Conduct Infraction</b>   | <b>Typical Consequence</b>   |
|---|--|
| <b>Alcohol possession/use</b>                                     | Parent notification and hearing to determine Suspension or Expulsion (See MGL 37H1/2) and police notification  |
| <b>Assault or Threatening remarks to staff</b>                    | Hearing to determine Suspension or Expulsion Hearing (See MGL 37H1/2) and police notification  |
| <b>Bullying</b>   | Hearing to determine In/Out-of-School Suspension, No Contact Order and possible police notification  |
| <b>Bus Referral</b>   | 1 <sup>st</sup> Offense: Warning and written parent notification<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> Offense: Office detention<br>3 <sup>rd</sup> Offense: Office Detention (s) bus privilege suspension.<br>4 <sup>th</sup> Offense: Saturday School   |
| <b>Cafeteria Misbehavior</b>                                      | 1 <sup>st</sup> Offense: Parent notification and Lunch Detention<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> Offense: Parent Notification, Office Detention<br>3 <sup>rd</sup> Offense: Assigned Table for one week<br>4 <sup>th</sup> Lunch restriction in ISR for the week  |
| <b>Cell phone/Electronic Device/Accessory Violation</b>           | Saturday School and Parent/Guardian Pick-up of Phone for each offense  |
| <b>Cheating/Plagiarism</b>  | 1 <sup>st</sup> Offense: Zero on the assignment, teacher detention and parent notification<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> Offense: Zero on the assignment, parent notification, and office detention<br>3 <sup>rd</sup> Offense: Zero on the assignment, parent notification, loss of class credit<br><br>*This policy is NOT per class but rather across a student's yearly schedule. |
| <b>Chronic Tardiness</b>  | Letter sent home to parents and parent conference; Inability to participate in Athletics and Activities  |
| <b>Cut Class</b>  | 1 <sup>st</sup> Offense: Office Detention<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> Offense: Two Office Detentions<br>3 <sup>rd</sup> Offense: ISS  |
| <b>Cut Office Detention</b>                                       | 1 <sup>st</sup> Offense: Two lunch detentions and reassigned detention<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> Offense: Saturday School<br>3 <sup>rd</sup> Offense: ISS   |
| <b>Cut Teacher Detention</b>                                      | Office detention in lieu of teacher detention  |
| <b>Cut Saturday School</b>  | ISS and rescheduled Saturday School  |
| <b>Damaging school property/Vandalism</b>                         | Hearing to determine ISS/OSS, restitution and possible police notification   |
| <b>Defiant Behavior</b>   | 1 <sup>st</sup> Offense: Teacher Detention and parent notification<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> Offense: Office Detention and parent notification<br>3 <sup>rd</sup> Offense: Saturday School and parent notification<br>4 <sup>th</sup> Offense: ISS  |
| <b>Dishonesty or Lying to any members of the school community</b> | 1 <sup>st</sup> Offense: Office Detention and parent notification<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> Offense: Saturday School<br>3 <sup>rd</sup> Offense: ISS  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Disrespectful Behavior</b>  | 1 <sup>st</sup> Offense: Teacher or Office Detention and parent notification<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> Offense: Office Detention and parent notification<br>3 <sup>rd</sup> Offense: Saturday School and parent notification   |
| <b>Disturbance of the School Assembly</b>  | 1 <sup>st</sup> Offense: Parent notification and removal from assembly & Office Detention<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> Offense: ISS and removal from future assemblies<br>3 <sup>rd</sup> Offense: Hearing to determine In/Out-of-School Suspension and removal from future assemblies. |
| <b>Dress Code Violation</b>  | 1 <sup>st</sup> Offense: Change of clothes & warning<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> Offense: Parent Notification, Office Detention, and change of clothes<br>3 <sup>rd</sup> Office: Parent notification, Saturday School, and change of clothes  |
| <b>Drug possession/use</b>   | Hearing to determine Parent notification and Suspension or Expulsion (See MGL 37H1/2 and police notification  |
| <b>Egregious Disrespect of Staff</b>   | Parent notification and hearing to determine In/Out-of-School Suspension  |
| <b>Excessive Absences</b>  | See Classroom Attendance Policy; Filing of a CRA (Child Requiring Assistance) with Fall River Juvenile Court  |
| <b>Failure to comply with Administrative requests or search as per Search Policy</b> | Emergency Removal and Hearing to determine Suspension or Expulsion Hearing (See MGL 37H1/2) and police notification   |
| <b>Fighting</b>  | Hearing to determine Suspension or Expulsion Hearing (See MGL 37H1/2) and police notification   |
| <b>Food or Drink violation</b>   | 1 <sup>st</sup> Offense: Warning & Disposal of Food/Beverage<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> Offense: Teacher Detention<br>3 <sup>rd</sup> Offense: Office Detention   |
| <b>Harassment, Racial, Ethnic, and Sexual Slurs</b>                                  | Hearing to determine the level of harassment, consequence up to and including suspension, and police notification   |
| <b>Horseplay</b>   | 1 <sup>st</sup> Offense: Office Detention<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> Offense: Saturday School<br>3 <sup>rd</sup> Offense: ISS   |
| <b>Horseplay Causing Injury</b>  | Hearing to Determine consequences   |
| <b>Inappropriate Displays of affection</b>   | 1 <sup>st</sup> Offense: Warning & Notification of both student's parents<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> Offense: Parent conference, office detention<br>3 <sup>rd</sup> Offense: Parent Conference, Saturday School  |
| <b>Inciting a fight</b>  | Hearing to determine In/Out-of-School Suspension and parent notification  |
| <b>Intimidation</b>  | Hearing to determine In/Out-of-School Suspension, not contact order, and possible police notification   |
| <b>Leaving Class without permission</b>  | 1 <sup>st</sup> Offense: ISR for the remainder of the class and Office Detention<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> Offense: ISR for the remainder of the school day and Saturday School<br>3 <sup>rd</sup> Offense: ISS  |
| <b>Leaving School without permission</b>   | Parent notification and ISR for the remainder of the school day and Office Detention.   |
| <b>Profanity</b>   | 1 <sup>st</sup> Offense: Teacher detention and parent notification<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> Offense: Office Detention and parent notification<br>3 <sup>rd</sup> Offense: ISR for the remainder of the class  |
| <b>Property Damage: Accidental</b>   | Restitution   |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Pushing/Shoving</b>  | Office Detention or Saturday School  |
| <b>Refusal to comply with the request of an administrator</b> | 1 <sup>st</sup> Offense: Parent notification and ISS<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> Offense: Parent notification and hearing to determine OSS  |
| <b>Refusal to Wear a Mask (if required by DESE/CDC)</b>       | Student will be sent home as mask wearing is a state mandate.  |
| <b>Tardy to Class</b>   | 1 <sup>st</sup> Offense: Warning<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> Offense: Teacher Detention<br>3 <sup>rd</sup> Offense: Office Detention  |
| <b>Tardy to School</b>  | 5 <sup>th</sup> Tardy: Office Detention  |
| <b>Taunting, teasing, annoying other students</b>             | 1 <sup>st</sup> Offense: Teacher or Office Detention and parent notification<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> Offense: Office Detention and parent notification<br>3 <sup>rd</sup> Offense: Saturday School and parent notification  |
| <b>Threat/Verbal Assault towards another student</b>          | Hearing to determine In/Out-of-School Suspension, no contact order, and possible police notification   |
| <b>Throw/propel an object</b>                                 | Office Detention, ISS, or Saturday School  |
| <b>Tobacco use/Possession</b>                                 | 1 <sup>st</sup> Offense: ISS and parent notification and confiscation<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> Offense: Out-of-School suspension (Suspension up to and including out-of-school suspension based on the investigation)  |
| <b>Theft</b>  | Parent notification and hearing to determine In-School Suspension, restitution, and possible police notification.  |
| <b>Vaporizer possession/use</b>                               | 1 <sup>st</sup> Offense: ISS, Confiscation of Vaporizer, and parent notification<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> Offense: Out-of-School suspension, Confiscation of Vaporizer, and parent notification<br><br>*Additional consequences can be applied once the substance is identified. |
| <b>Wandering</b>  | 1 <sup>st</sup> Offense: Teacher detention<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> Offense: Office detention<br>3 <sup>rd</sup> Offense: Two Office Detentions  |
| <b>Weapon possession/use</b>                                  | Hearing to determine 10 days out of school suspension minimum, expulsion hearing, and police notification  |
| <b>Wearing a hat or hood in school</b>                        | 1st Offense: Warning & Confiscation of Hat<br>2nd Offense: Teacher or Office Detention, Parent notification, Confiscation of Hat<br>3rd Offense: Two Office Detentions, Confiscation of Hat, & Parent notification   |

### **Westport Public Schools District Bus Safety/Rider Privileges:**

Bus rider-ship is a privilege; it can be suspended if students exhibit unsafe behavior and/or violate school rules. If the severity of the incident warrants, a student can be suspended from riding from the first incident reported to the Principal/designee.

1. Only the Principal/designee can suspend transportation privileges.
2. The bus driver or monitor shall immediately report in writing any conduct difficulties with students to the Principal/designee.
3. If the school Principal/designee, as a result of the misconduct, denies bus riding privileges, it shall be for one week. The Principal/designee shall notify the parents or guardians by telephone explaining the reason for denial. This shall be immediately followed by the written communication from the bus driver, sent by the administration.
4. If a student is denied the riding privilege for a second time within one school year, it shall be for a period of two (2) weeks. Communication to parents will be as above.
5. If a student is denied riding privileges a third time within one school year, they shall not be permitted to ride the bus again until approval has been given by the superintendent of schools.

Student behaviors, which may lead to a suspension for up to one school year:

- Unsafe boarding/departing
- Possession of an unsafe, dangerous/illegal item
- Failure to remain properly seated
- Tampering with or damaging property
- Throwing object at or from the bus
- Loud talk or yelling
- Failure to obey the bus driver
- Physical/verbal assault or intimidation of others including the driver
- Failure to ride in assigned seat
- Consuming food/drink
- Other behavior that endangers the safety and well-being of others.

No student will be suspended from the bus without notice to the parent(s)/guardian(s). Whenever possible, parents will be given reasonable advance notice to make other transportation arrangements. However, the school district reserves the right to refuse to allow a student to board a school bus on short notice if there is an obvious safety issue and/or potential disruption that would negatively impact school disciplinary standards.

### **General School Behavior**

#### **Racial, Ethnic and Sexual Slurs**

A racial, ethnic or sexual slur is defined as any derogatory remark, word, phrase, act, picture or gesture referencing or directed at or to any individual or group(s) which is of a racial, ethnic or sexual nature. The district recognizes that, regardless of intent, such slurs substantially harm both the individuals to whom slurs are addressed and the educational community as a whole.

Harassment or discriminatory behavior that denies civil rights or equal educational opportunities includes comments, name calling, physical conduct or other expressive behavior directed at an individual or group that intentionally demeans the actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex/gender, marital status, homelessness, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, family care

leave status, pregnancy or any condition related to pregnancy, or military/veteran status or creates an intimidating, hostile or demeaning environment.

Students may file a complaint regarding such discrimination with the Principal or directly to the Superintendent. The district will thoroughly investigate the complaint and will protect the rights of all parties to the complaint. A district staff member must also take such complaints to his/her supervisor.

Students may be expelled from Westport Middle School for violations of Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 71, Section 37H.

### **Threats to School or Property**

#### **Definition of a Threat**

Expression of intent to inflict harm; aggressive or hostile words or actions intended to harm others or oneself physically or emotionally and/or destroy property.

#### **Assessment of a Threat**

Students and staff should notify a building administrator without hesitation whenever they hear of a person who:

- Has a weapon at school;
- Is planning to bring one to school;
- Is planning an act of destruction; or
- Is planning a violent act at school or outside the school.

While most rumors will prove false, schools must follow up on rumors or overheard conversations. It should be stressed to students that it is their **duty** to report what they hear regarding any threat of violence. All reports must and will be taken seriously. Until investigated, comments should be taken at face value. To ensure that rumors of threatening comments are dealt with properly, trained personnel will follow up on student hearsay reports.

#### **Procedures**

When an alleged violation of this definition comes to the attention of school personnel, the building principal or, in his/her absence, the assistant principal or, in the event of his/her absence, other school administration, shall immediately notify the superintendent and assemble the members of the "Crisis Team". The team may consist of the principal, assistant principal, school resource officer, and other administrators as appropriate to the situation. The Westport Police Department will be notified if the School Resource Officer is not present or upon recommendation of the School Resource Officer and/or the superintendent.

#### **Discipline**

If a student is considered to be a threat to oneself or others, the following may occur:

1. Notification of the Westport Police Department;
2. Immediate emergency removal until the threat is investigated and a determination of the severity of the threat is determined;
3. Long-term suspension;
4. Possible exclusion or expulsion.
5. Student will undergo a dangerousness assessment by the district's school psychologist.

### **Lockers/Locker Searches**

Students are assigned lockers for storing books and coats, however, such assignment does not restrict the right of the school officials to examine the lockers when they believe it necessary to ensure the safe operation of the school. The lockers are at all times the sole property of the school.

Search of lockers is permissible by school authorities, without prior warning, when the principal has a reasonable suspicion that the health, welfare, and safety of the students under their care is in question.

School officials from time to time may invite local and/or state police to assist in such searches with or without the aid of a trained canine unit.

If a properly conducted search yields illegal or contraband materials, such findings will be turned over to the proper legal authorities for ultimate disposition.

Students may not share lockers.

### **Searches on School Grounds**

School officials from time to time may invite local and/or state police to assist in such searches with or without the aid of a trained canine unit.

If a properly conducted search yields illegal or contraband materials, such findings will be turned over to the proper legal authorities for ultimate disposition.

**School officials from time to time may invite local and/or state police to assist in such searches with or without the aid of a trained canine unit.**

All parents must be aware of the following state laws:

- (a) Any student who is found on school premises or at a school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, as defined by statute, including but not limited to, a gun or knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter 94C of the Massachusetts General Laws, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
- (b) Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, or teacher's aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal. A principal may, in her/his discretion decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b).
- (c) When a principal determines not to issue an expulsion order for a violation of sections (a) or (b) above against possession of a dangerous weapon as defined by statute, or for possession of a controlled substance as defined by statute, the principal must, within 48 hours of the incident, notify the Superintendent in writing of the circumstances and rationale for imposing a consequence short of expulsion.
- (d) When a student is expelled under the provisions of sections (a) or (b) above, states law provides that no school or school district within the commonwealth is required to admit such student or to provide educational services to said student. If the student does apply for admission to another school or school district, the Superintendent of the school district to which the application is made may request and shall receive from the Superintendent of the school expelling said student a written statement of the reasons for said expulsion.
- (e) Any student who is found on school premises or at

- school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of any weapon or object that might injure, threaten, or intimidate a person or destroy property, or for threatening physical harm to staff or other students may be subject to suspension or expulsion. When imposing a consequence of less than a forty-five day out-of-school long-term suspension for violation of this section, the principal must include with the Actions and Consequences report, a memorandum to the Superintendent stating the relevant circumstances and rationale for the imposed consequence.
- (f) Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony or upon the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may suspend such student for a period of time determined appropriate by said principal if said principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.
  - (g) Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony delinquency, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may expel said student if such principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. Upon expulsion of such student, no school or school district shall be required to provide educational services to the student.
  - (h) When a principal knows that a student has been charged with or convicted of a felony and does not issue a hearing notice for long-term suspension or expulsion, the principal will document her/his assessment supporting her/his finding that the student does not pose a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. Such a report will be filed with the Superintendent within 48 hours of learning of the felony charge or conviction.

### **Due Process Rights**

Procedures for suspension of a student from participating in school instructional programs must respect the civil rights of the student. Therefore, the School Committee has established procedures to be followed in the event that it becomes necessary for a principal to consider either short-term or long-term suspensions.

In the event a student faces suspension, one of the following due process procedures shall be used:



**Short-Term Suspension: (10 school days or fewer)**

The Principal or Assistant Principal shall advise the student verbally of the charges.

If the student denies the charges, the Principal or Assistant Principal shall explain the evidence against the student and give the student an opportunity to present the student's side of the story.

If, on the basis of this discussion, the official believes the student is guilty of the misconduct charged, and that suspension from the school society is the appropriate response under the circumstances, the Principal or Assistant Principal may suspend the student for ten school days or fewer.

In all such cases, the Superintendent and the student and her/his parents or guardians shall be informed of the circumstances and action taken. This notification will be in writing. Short-term suspensions do not require a formal hearing with the parent.

The Principal's office shall notify the parent prior to sending any student home during the school day. If the parent cannot be contacted, the student shall be kept at school until the end of the school day. A copy of the suspension shall also be sent to the parent or guardian by mail.

**Long-Term Suspension (more than 10 school days)**

Where the alleged misconduct of a student would, if proved, warrant a suspension of more than ten school days, or the remainder of the school term, semester, or year, the following procedure shall be provided prior to the long-term suspension:

NOTE: Prior to the hearing outlined below, the student may be suspended for up to 10 days if the procedures for a short-term suspension are followed.

**Notice of Charges**

The student and the student's parent or guardian shall be notified in writing of the specific charges against the student. These charges must be stated clearly enough for the student and the parent to understand the grounds of the charges and be able to prepare a defense.

**Notice of Nature of Testimony and Witnesses**

If a hearing is requested by the parent, the student and the student's parent or guardian shall be advised of the nature of the evidence against the student and be provided the names of any witnesses whose testimony may be used against the student.

**Notice of Hearing**

If a hearing is requested, the student and the student's parent or guardian shall be notified of the date of a hearing to be held before the Principal within a reasonable time after notice. The date of the hearing may be advanced at the request of the student or postponed on the showing of reasonable grounds.

**Notice of Right to Present Evidence**

At the time notice of the hearing is given to the student and the student's parent or guardian, they may present witnesses or documentary evidence to rebut the charges against the student.

**Impartial Hearing**

The student is entitled to a hearing before an impartial administrator. The Principal shall conduct the hearing. If the Principal has had such involvement in the case that the Principal feels she/he cannot be fair and impartial, the Principal shall ask the Superintendent to appoint another administrator to conduct the hearing.

**Adult Representation**

The student, or her or his parent or guardian, may be represented and/or assisted at the hearing by an attorney or other adult. A parent or guardian who is unable to attend the hearing may designate another adult to assist the student in the parent's absence. Notification of the representative's identity shall be given in advance of the hearing, or the representative shall furnish evidence of appointment at the time of the hearing.

**Right to Present Evidence**

At the hearing, the student, parent, attorney or adult representative shall have the right to present witnesses and documentary evidence to refute the charges.

**Suspension Order**

The decision to suspend the student shall be based on evidence presented at the hearing. If the evidence supports the charges against the student, a suspension order appropriate to the charges and the facts established may be issued. Written notice of the decision shall be sent promptly to the parent/student and the Superintendent.

**Record**

Minutes shall be kept of the hearing. A written copy of the minutes will be made. When the Principal determines it necessary, a hearing may be recorded by a court reporter.

**Reporting to Superintendent**

In the event any student is suspended from school for more than 10 days, the Principal shall make a written report to the Superintendent outlining the facts established at the hearing and the action taken.

**Appeals to the Superintendent**

The student and her/his guardian shall have the right to appeal her/his suspension to the Superintendent. The Superintendent must be notified of the desire to appeal within five school days after the receipt of the Principal's decision. The appeal to the Superintendent will be based upon the record (the minutes of the hearing, correspondence and any other documents used at the hearing). That is, no new evidence shall be presented to the Superintendent unless good cause can be shown why it was not previously presented. The Superintendent shall render a decision within five school days after she/he receives the notice of appeal.

**Summary Suspension**

With the approval of the Superintendent immediate suspensions of a student may be imposed by the Principal without prior notice and hearing when the student's continued presence in school poses a continuing danger to the student or to other persons or property, or an ongoing threat of disruption to the academic process. In such cases, the necessary notice of the date and place of the subsequent hearing shall be given to the student and to the parents or guardian of the student. Such hearing shall be held within ten days after the student's removal from school. The Committee may continue the summary suspension or take other action as the facts warrant.

Penalties or suspensions will be served on those dates specified by the Principal (or designee). Suspensions will be served on consecutive days. The only exception to this would be to allow students to take mid-year or final exams. If a suspension ends on the day prior to a weekend or vacation, then the student is ineligible to participate in or attend any activities on the following day. When the period of suspension includes a weekend or vacation period, the student is ineligible to participate in or attend any activities throughout the entire period. Students who are suspended from school are not allowed to be in school or on school property at any time during the period of suspension and are not allowed to attend any school-sponsored activities. Students who do not fulfill outstanding disciplinary obligations by the last day of school must make arrangements with the Principal or Assistant Principal to serve detentions the next

school year. A student serving a suspension will be required to complete these obligations at the beginning of the school year. Any penalties imposed by the criminal system do not negate penalties from the school.

Our rules and regulations are based on a system of progressive discipline. This means that an administrator has the discretion to significantly increase penalties for second and third offenses.

In determining the severity of the penalty or suspension, the Principal or Assistant Principal may consider all relevant factors, including but not limited to the following:

- a. the student's previous disciplinary record;
- b. the severity of disruption of the educational process;
- c. the degree of danger to self, others, and the school in general;
- d. the degree to which the student is willing to change his/her inappropriate behavior.

All rules and regulations are subject to review through the School Council. Students and teachers are encouraged to discuss the rationale and enforcement of our rules, which are intended to make the school a positive and productive learning environment for all.

### **Regulation for Suspensions of 10 Days or Longer for Students with Disabilities 34 CFR 300.519-300.528**

Procedures for suspension of students with disabilities when suspensions exceed 10 consecutive school days or a pattern has developed for suspensions exceeding 10 cumulative days; responsibilities of the Team; responsibilities of the district

1. A suspension of longer than 10 consecutive days or a series of suspensions that are shorter than 10 consecutive days but constitute a pattern are considered to represent a change in placement.
2. Prior to a suspension that constitutes a change in placement of a student with disabilities, the Team convenes
  - a. to develop or review a functional behavioral assessment of the student's behavior to modify a behavior intervention plan or develop an assessment plan;
  - b. to identify appropriate alternative educational setting(s); and
  - c. to determine the relationship between the disability and the behavior - "a manifestation decision" (Is IEP appropriate? Is placement appropriate? If there was a behavior plan, was it implemented? Does the student understand the impact and consequences of his/her behavior? Can student control behavior?).
3. If the Team determines that the behavior is NOT a manifestation of the disability, then the district may suspend or expel the student consistent with policies applied to any student without disabilities, except that the district must still offer an appropriate education program to the student with disabilities, which may be in some other setting.
4. Regardless of the manifestation determination, the district may place the student in an interim alternative educational setting (as determined by the Team) for up to 45 days
  - a. if the behavior involves weapons or illegal drugs or another controlled substance while at school or a school function; or
  - b. if the district provides evidence that the student is "substantially likely" to injure him/herself or others and a hearing officer orders the alternative placement; and

- c. the interim alternative education setting enables the student to continue in the general curriculum, to continue receiving services identified on the IEP, and provides services to address the problem behavior.
5. If the Team determines that the behavior IS a manifestation of the disability, then the district takes steps (with the consent of the parent) to correct the IEP, the placement, or the behavior intervention plan.
6. The school district provides written notice to the parent of all rights to appeal and to an expedited hearing. If the parent chooses to appeal, during the appeal the student stays put in the placement on the last accepted IEP or the interim alternative placement, unless the parent and the school district agree otherwise

### **Media Center**

The Media Center provides faculty, staff, and students of Westport Middle School with access to a variety of information sources and assistance in learning to use these sources effectively. An open and flexible schedule allows for resources to be available whenever the student or staff member needs information.

#### **Hours of Operation**

The Media Center is open Monday through Friday from 7:15 A.M. to 2:15 P.M.

#### **Circulation**

Student IDs serve as library cards in the media center. Students are responsible for all materials checked out in his/her name. Materials are loaned for the following periods of time:

|                      |                                 |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| General collection   | 2 weeks                         |
| Reserve materials    | 1 class period or overnight     |
| Reference collection | Media Center use only           |
| Periodicals          | Current issues do not circulate |

#### **Research Specialist**

By appointment, the Media Center specialist can be utilized for special projects/research assignments etc. to aid in the gathering, acquisition, and implementation of relevant materials.

#### **Overdue Material**

Materials not returned on time are considered overdue. Overdue notices will be posted on a regular basis. Students are required to pay the current cost of materials that are lost or damaged beyond repair.

#### **Media Center Website**

The Westport Middle School Media Center web page provides links to Internet search engines, subscription data-bases, reference tools, and curriculum related web sites. Students may access these resources at <https://www.westportschools.org/westport-junior-senior-high-school/media-center/>.

#### **Student Protocol**

Students are here to work

- Students must present a valid pass and complete the Media Center sign-in procedure or be accompanied by their teacher.
- Students on a pass must report back to their classes before the period ends.
- Students must not play games.

- Students may use the Media Center telephone with permission and only for educational purposes.
- Students may only use the Internet for educational purposes.
- Students are to allow others to work
- Students must speak quietly.
- Students on a pass and students accompanied by their teacher will sit in separate areas.
- Students are respectful of Media Center property
- Water containers are not allowed in the lab areas or on a table with a laptop computer.
- Students must ask before printing anything in color.
- Students must not change computer settings.
- Students must use chairs and tables properly.
- Students must clean up after themselves.

### **Consequences**

- 1st offense: Student will be told to comply with the rules.
- 2nd offense: Student is again asked to comply, with the additional warning that the student will be asked to leave if behavior continues.
- 3rd offense: Teacher Detention assigned to the student and return to appropriate class. If behavior is disrespectful, the student will be directed to the appropriate grade level administrator.

## **Massachusetts General Laws**

### **Chapter 71: Section 37H Policies relative to conduct of teachers or students; student handbooks**

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

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

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

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

1. Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
- (b) Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
- (c) Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal.

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

- (d) Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of his appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.
- (e) When a student is expelled under the provisions of this section, no school or school district within the commonwealth shall be required to admit such student or to provide educational services to said student. If said student does apply for admission to another school or school district, the superintendent of the school district to which the application is made may request and shall receive from the superintendent of the school expelling said student a written statement of the reasons for said expulsion.

**Chapter 71: Section 37H 1/2 Felony complaint or conviction of student; suspension; expulsion; right to appeal**

Notwithstanding the provisions of section eighty-four and sections sixteen and seventeen of chapter seventy-six:

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

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

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

The student shall have the right to appeal the expulsion to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent, in writing, of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's

parent or guardian within three calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the expulsion.

Upon expulsion of such student, no school or school district shall be required to provide educational services to such student.



## Appendix

### Westport Community Schools Policies

#### Equal Educational Opportunities

State and federal laws as well as School Committee policy guarantee that no person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of a public school on account of actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex/gender, marital status, homelessness, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, family care leave status, pregnancy or any condition related to pregnancy, or military/veteran status and any other class of individuals protected from discrimination under state or federal law in any aspect of the access to, admission, or treatment of students in its programs and activities, or in employment and application for employment. Furthermore, School Committee policy includes prohibitions of harassment of students and employees, i.e., racial harassment, sexual harassment, and retaliation for filing complaints of discrimination.

This law makes it clear that all aspects of public school education must be fully open and available to all students, without discrimination. We may not exclude students from any course, activity service or resource available on account of actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex/gender, marital status, homelessness, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, family care leave status, pregnancy or any condition related to pregnancy, or military/veteran status under state or federal law in any aspect of the access to, admission, or treatment of students in its programs and activities, or in employment and application for employment. Furthermore, School Committee policy includes prohibitions of harassment of students and employees, i.e., racial harassment, sexual harassment, and retaliation for filing complaints of discrimination.

The Equal Educational Opportunity Regulations, adopted by the Massachusetts Board of Education in 1975, address five areas of school policy: school admissions, admission to courses of study, guidance services, course content, and extra-curricular and athletic activities.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this law and how it affects your children, please contact your school principal, or the Superintendent of Schools, at 508 636-1140 x 4001, or the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Copies of the law and the regulations can be obtained from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5023, 617 388-3300 x285 or x242, and are also available on the Internet at <http://info.doe.mass.edu>.

The Title IX Coordinator and the Civil Rights Coordinator, is the Director of Special Education. Direct any complaints regarding any found discrimination to the Superintendent of Schools, Westport Community Schools, 17 Main Road, Westport, MA 02790 or phone 508-636-1140.

#### Military

Section 9528 of the [2001 No Child Left Behind Act](#), requires Middle School administrations to release student contact information to military recruiters. Students and parents may “Opt-Out” of the information release by completing the “Option Out” form included in the beginning of the year packet and submitting to the Principal’s Office.

## **Prohibition of Hazing**

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, the School Committee hereby deems that no student, employee or school organization under the control of the School Committee shall engage in the activity of hazing a student while on or off school property, or at a school sponsored event regardless of the location. No organization that uses the facilities or grounds under the control of the School Committee shall engage in the activity of hazing any person while on school property.

Any student who observes what appears to them to be the activity of hazing another student or person should report such information to the Principal including the time, date, location, names of identifiable participants and the types of behavior exhibited. Students and employees of the District are obligated by law to report incidents of hazing to the police department.

Any student who is present at a hazing has the obligation to report such an incident. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action by the school against that student and could involve suspension from school for up to three days.

Any student who participates in the hazing of another student or other person may, upon the approval of the Superintendent of Schools, be suspended from school for up to ten (10) school days.

Any student determined by the Principal to be the organizer of a hazing activity may be recommended for expulsion from school but will receive no less disciplinary action than that of a participant.

In all cases relating to hazing, students will receive procedural due process.

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

The term "hazing" as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to be contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

### **CH. 269, S.18. Duty to Report Hazing**

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

### **CH. 269, S.19. Hazing Statutes to be provided; Statement of Compliance and Discipline Policy Required**

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 this section and sections seventeen and eighteen. An officer of each such 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 complied with the provisions of this section and also certifying that said school 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 a report.

### **Sexual Harassment**

All persons associated with Westport Community Schools including, but not necessarily limited to, the Committee, the administration, staff, and students, are expected to conduct themselves at all times so as to provide an atmosphere free from sexual harassment. Any person who engages in sexual harassment while acting, as a member of the school community, will be in violation of this policy. Further, any retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual harassment or retaliation against individuals for cooperating in an investigation of a sexual harassment complaint is similarly unlawful and will not be tolerated.

Because the Westport School Committee takes allegations of sexual harassment seriously, we will respond promptly 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 and school environment 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 or school conduct which we deem unacceptable, regardless of whether that conduct satisfies the definition of sexual harassment.

**Definition of Sexual Harassment:** Unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature may constitute sexual harassment where:

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

### **The Grievance Officer:**

Ms. Elaine Santos - Special Education Director

17 Main Road, Westport, MA 02790

508-636-1140 x4011

The Superintendent will appoint a sexual harassment grievance officer who shall be vested with the authority and responsibility of processing all sexual harassment complaints in accordance with the procedure set out below:

**Complaint Procedure:**

1. Any member of the school community who believes that he/she has been subjected to sexual harassment will report the incident (s) to the grievance officer. All complaints shall be investigated promptly and resolved as soon as possible.
2. The grievance officer will attempt to resolve the problem in an informal manner through the following
  - a. The grievance officer will confer with the charging party in order to obtain a clear understanding of that party's statement of the facts, and may interview any witnesses.
  - b. The grievance officer will then attempt to meet with the charged party in order to obtain his/her response to the complaint.
  - c. The grievance officer will hold as many meetings with the parties as is necessary to establish the facts.
  - d. On the basis of the grievance officer's perception of the situation he/she may:
    - Attempt to resolve the matter informally through reconciliation.
    - Report the incident and transfer the record to the Superintendent or his/her designee, and so notify the parties by certified mail.
3. After reviewing the record made by the grievance officer, the Superintendent may attempt to gather any more evidence necessary to decide the case, and thereafter impose any sanctions deemed appropriate, including a recommendation to the committee for termination or expulsion. At this stage of the proceedings the parties may present witnesses and other evidence, and may also be represented. The parties, to the extent permissible by law, shall be informed of the disposition of the complaint. All matters involving sexual harassment complaints will remain confidential to the extent possible. If it is determined that inappropriate conduct has occurred, we will act promptly to eliminate the offending conduct.
4. The grievance officer, upon request, will provide the charging party with government agencies that handle sexual harassment matters.

## **Student Records: Regulations**

### **Inspection of Record**

A parent, or a student who has entered the ninth grade or is at least 14 years old, has the right to inspect all portions of the student record upon request. The record must be made available to the parent or student no later than two days after the request, unless the parent or student consents to a delay. The parent and student 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. Finally, the parent and student may request to have parts of the record interpreted by a qualified professional of the school, or may invite anyone else of their choosing to inspect or interpret the record with them.

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 34H specifies detailed procedures that govern access to student records by parents who do not have physical custody of their children. For more information, please contact the school principal.

### **Confidentiality of Record**

No individuals or organizations but the parent, student, and the school personnel working directly with the student are allowed to have access to information in the student record without the written consent of the parent or the student.

### **Amendment of Record**

The parent and student have the right to add relevant comments, information, or other written materials to the student record. In addition, the parent and student have a right to request that information in the record be amended or deleted. The parent and student have a right to a conference, and the Principal must render a decision in writing. If the parent and student are not satisfied with the decision, the regulations contain provisions under which decision may be appealed to the Superintendent.

### **Destruction of Records**

A student's temporary record is destroyed within five years after the student transfers, graduates, or withdraws from the school system. School authorities are also allowed to destroy misleading, outdated or irrelevant information in the record from time to time while the student is enrolled in the school system.

In either case, the school must first notify the parent and eligible student and give them the opportunity to receive a copy of any of the information before it is destroyed.

## **Wellness Policy on Physical Activity & Nutrition – Policy ADF**

The School Committee recognizes the relationship between student well-being and student achievement as well as the importance of a comprehensive district wellness program. Therefore, the school district will provide developmentally appropriate and sequential nutrition and physical education as well as opportunities for physical activity. The wellness program will be implemented in a multidisciplinary fashion and will be evidence based.

### **Wellness Committee**

The school district will establish a wellness committee that consists of at least one (1): parent, student, nurse, school food service representative, School Committee member, school administrator, member of the public, and other community members as appropriate. If available, a qualified, credentialed nutrition professional will be a member of the wellness committee. The school committee designates the following individual(s) as wellness program coordinator(s): Nurse Leader or Superintendent designee. Only employees of the district who are members of the wellness committee may serve as wellness program coordinators. Wellness coordinators, in consultation with the wellness committee, will be in charge of implementation and evaluation of this policy.

### **Nutrition Guidelines**

It is the policy of the school district that all foods and beverages made available on campus during the school day are consistent with School Lunch Program nutrition guidelines. Guidelines for reimbursable

school meals will not be less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture pursuant to law. The district will create procedures that address all foods available to students throughout the school day in the following areas:

- guidelines for maximizing nutritional value by decreasing fat and added sugars, increasing nutrition density and moderating portion size of each individual food or beverage sold within the school environment;
- separate guidelines for foods and beverages in the following categories:
  1. foods and beverages included in a la carte sales in the food service program on school campuses;
  2. foods and beverages sold in vending machines, snack bars, school stores, and concession stands;
  3. foods and beverages sold as part of school-sponsored fundraising activities; and
  4. refreshments served at parties, celebrations, and meetings during the school day; and
  5. specify that its guidelines will be based on nutrition goals, not profit motives.

Please see the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* at <https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/>

### **Nutrition and Physical Education**

The school district will provide nutrition education aligned with standards established by the USDA's National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program in all grades. The school district will provide physical education training aligned with the standards established by the Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education. The wellness program coordinators, in consultation with the wellness committee, will develop procedures that address nutrition and physical education.

### **Nutrition Education**

- Students receive nutrition education that teaches the skills they need to adopt and maintain healthy eating behaviors.
- Nutrition education is offered in the school cafeteria as well as in the classroom, with coordination between the foodservice staff and other school personnel, including teachers.
- Students receive consistent nutrition messages from all aspects of the school program.
- Division health education curriculum standards and guidelines address both nutrition and physical education.
- Nutrition is integrated into the health education or core curricula (e.g., math, science, language arts).
- Schools link nutrition education activities with the coordinated school health program.
- Staff who provide nutrition education have appropriate training.
- The level of student participation in the school breakfast and school lunch programs is appropriate.

### **Physical Education Activities**

- Students are given opportunities for physical activity during the school day through physical education (PE) classes and the integration of physical activity into the academic curriculum where appropriate.
- Students are given opportunities for physical activity through a range of before- and/or after-school programs including, but not limited to, intramurals, interscholastic athletics, and physical activity clubs.
- Schools work with the community to create ways for students to walk, bike, rollerblade or skateboard safely to and from school.
- Schools encourage parents and guardians to support their children's participation in physical activity, to be physically active role models, and to include physical activity in family events.
- Schools provide training to enable staff to promote enjoyable, lifelong physical activity among students.

### **Other School-Based Activities**

The wellness program coordinators, in consultation with the wellness committee, are charged with developing procedures addressing other school-based activities to promote wellness.

- An adequate amount of time is allowed for students to eat meals in adequate lunchroom facilities.
- All children who participate in subsidized food programs are able to obtain food in a non-stigmatizing manner.
- Environmentally-friendly practices such as the use of locally grown and seasonal foods, school gardens, and non-disposable tableware have been considered and implemented where appropriate.
- Physical activities and/or nutrition services or programs designed to benefit staff health have been considered and, to the extent practical, implemented.

### **Evaluation**

The wellness committee will assess all education curricula and materials pertaining to wellness for accuracy, completeness, balance and consistency with the state and district's educational goals and standards. Wellness program coordinators shall be responsible for devising a plan for implementation and evaluation of the district wellness policy and are charged with operational responsibility for ensuring that schools meet the goals of the district wellness policy. Wellness program coordinators will report to the School Committee annually.

### **WCS Education Policy After Hours**

WHEREAS, the school committee wishes to address the circumstances under which students may be allowed to remain in its buildings after the conclusion of the academic school day so as to avoid having students unsupervised and/or to prohibit students from behaving in a disruptive manner without appropriate supervision;

Now, therefore, The Westport School Committee does hereby establish the following policy on “Use of School Buildings After School:”

- Students who are not otherwise engaged in extracurricular activities within the school or the school district, which shall include but not be limited to, interscholastic athletics, intramural athletics sponsored by the school department, or other school-sponsored clubs, must exit the school buildings and grounds by no later than the end of the school day. In each such instance, the extra-curricular activity in question must be supervised by either a member of the professional staff and/or an adult authorized by the Westport School Department to supervise the activity in question.
- Students who are staying after school to receive additional academic assistance shall be deemed to be in compliance with this policy. However, at the conclusion of receiving after-school help from a teacher or other member of the Westport School Department staff, the student in question shall be expected to promptly exit the building.
- The school department shall ensure that this policy is distributed to all students either as part of the student handbook or as a separate handout. Violations of this policy shall be deemed to be knowing and shall be addressed through the student disciplinary process.
- Repeated violations of this policy shall be referred to the Sof schools for additional disciplinary action consistent with the nature of the violation(s).



### **Internet Acceptable Use Policy**

The Internet is a vast electronic network linking computers at universities, Middle Schools, science labs, and other sites throughout the world. Use of the Internet provides the opportunity for students and staff to research and support educational and curriculum initiatives by enabling users to explore thousands of libraries, databases, museums, and other repositories of information and to exchange communications with other Internet users around the world. Because of its enormous size, the Internet's potential is boundless.

However, with such great potential for education also comes some potential for abuse. It is the purpose of the Acceptable Use Policy as well as the associated Contract for Internet Use, to ensure that all who use the Internet through the Westport Community Schools use this valuable resource in an appropriate manner.

The Westport Community Schools offer students and staff access to the Internet through their classrooms, libraries and school computer labs. To gain access, all Internet users must agree to abide by the guidelines set forth in the Acceptable Use Policy. Students will be required to have parental permission for Internet access. Should a parent prefer that a student not have Internet access, she/he will have use of the computer for traditional educational purposes.

To use the Internet through the Westport Community Schools, the user agrees to take full responsibility for his or her own actions. The Westport Community Schools, along with the other organizations sponsoring this Internet link-up, will not be held liable for the actions of anyone connecting to the Internet through this hook-up. Therefore, all users shall assume full liability, legal, financial, or otherwise, for their actions.

Due to the manner in which information can readily be placed on the Internet, the school system will not be held responsible for the accuracy or the quality of the information obtained by the user through the Internet.

System and building facilitators will make reasonable efforts to maintain reliable service and user privacy, but they cannot absolutely guarantee that the system will always be available, that files will always be saved, and that privacy will be completely guaranteed.

The Westport Community Schools' Internet connection is provided to further the educational goals of the school system and those of the students and staff using the service. In keeping with the educational purposes intended with its use, the Internet connection is not to be used for any non-educational purposes such as commercial solicitations, product advertisement, political lobbying, etc. No attempt will be made to obtain computer software illegally, known as pirating, through the provided Internet connection.

The user of the Internet connection becomes an extension of the Westport Community Schools throughout the Internet. Westport Community Schools Internet users are expected to abide by the rules of the Student or Staff Handbook where applicable, and follow accepted network etiquette. Inappropriate behavior will not be condoned. The use of vulgar, profane or obscene language is not to be used. Threatening or sexually harassing language is unacceptable and against school rules as well as the law.

The safety of the Internet user as well as the system itself is of utmost concern. Personal safety of the user means never giving out personal information such as home addresses or telephone numbers for yourself or others. A user must never agree to meet with someone contacted through the Internet. The safety of the system is also a concern of the Westport Community Schools. Users will not give out their passwords or anyone else's nor attempt to gain access to any files for which the user is not authorized. Users will not download software (Freeware, Shareware), files or documents which may compromise the system by means of a virus, tying up the Internet connection for extended periods of time or some other activity which places the server system at risk.

With all the information available to the Internet user, the temptation to use obtained or uncredited information is great. The user agrees not to plagiarize the works, ideas or thoughts of others, and abide by the Copyright Infringement Laws.

The manner in which information is placed on or accessed through the Internet allows for the possibility of the user to encounter inappropriate material. The user agrees not to access material that is obscene, advocates illegal acts of violence or discriminates toward other people. Should a user encounter an unacceptable or inappropriate Web Site, the user will immediately close the connection to the site and refrain from downloading any material. The user will not identify or share the Web Site address with

anyone and will report the access of the site to the person in charge of the Internet hook-up site where the violation took place. The Westport Community Schools reserve the right to periodically review the Web Sites accessed by individual users. These reviews will help to assure that the educational purposes for which the Internet connection is provided are being followed.

Violations of the Acceptable Use Policy carry serious consequences and will result in the immediate suspension of the users' Internet privileges. Further disciplinary actions may be taken by the Administration of the Westport Community Schools and/or Town, State, or Federal authorities. Any questions or allegations concerning adherence to the Acceptable Use Policy should be brought to the attention of the Education Technology Coordinator, Principal or a faculty member immediately.

### **Health Services/Nurse's Office**

Students who need the services of the nurse's office must go to their classroom first and procure a pass from their classroom teacher. Students may go to the nurse after school without a pass. Students must have a pass at all other times in order to visit the nurse's office. Students who are obviously ill will be sent out of class to the nurse's office by their classroom teacher. This time out of class will be considered an absence for that class.

The nurse's office will be closed daily for lunch from 12:10 p.m. to 12:40 P.M. Students will not be seen during this time unless it is an emergency.

### **Vision / Hearing Testing**

Testing is completed during the school year. Parents will be notified if a student fails to pass either test.

### **Immunizations**

Students who receive the required school immunizations by a hospital or private physician must notify the school nurse so that records can be kept up-to-date.

### **Medications**

1. All medications prescribed by physicians must be delivered to the school by a parent or guardian.
2. All medications must be in properly marked containers with the following information:
  - A. Student Name
  - B. Name of Medication
  - C. Physician's Name
  - D. Amount and Time to be Dispensed
3. All medication will be administered by the school nurse according to prescription regulations. No medicines, including over the counter, will be administered without a doctor's note and parent signature.

## **Emergency Forms**

It is the parents'/students' responsibility to ensure that the school's emergency form is returned to the school nurse immediately at the beginning of the school year. The information provided on the form is necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of our students.

## **Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)**

PPRA affords parents/guardians and students who are 18 or emancipated minors (eligible students) certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams.

These include the right to: Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED) –

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent/guardian;
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
- Sex behavior or attitudes;
- Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
- Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
- Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
- Religious practices affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parent/guardians; or
- Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility. Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
- Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others. Inspect, upon request and before administration or use
- Protected information surveys of students;
- Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
- Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

Parent/guardians/eligible students who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

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

## **Homelessness**

In compliance with the McKinney Vento Act and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Westport Community Schools acknowledges the following definition of homeless children and youth:

- Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence or have a primary nighttime residence in a supervised (publicly or privately) operated shelter for temporary accommodations including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill.
- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters.
- Abandoned in hospitals.
- Awaiting foster care placement.
- Unaccompanied youth (a homeless youth who is not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian, and not in the custody of a state agency).

Students who are considered homeless will be able to attend his/her school of origin (the school where the child/youth attended when permanently housed or last enrolled), and fully participate in all school activities and services including preschool programs, Title 1, Special Education, English Language Learner Program, School Nutrition Programs and all other programs available to resident students.

If you have any questions about McKinney Vento, please contact the school principal. All information is kept confidential.

## **Notification of Rights Under FERPA**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents/guardians and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records.

These rights are:

- The right to inspect and review the student's educational records within 45 days of the day the School 38 receives a request for access. Parent/guardians or eligible students should submit to the School principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent/guardian or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
- The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent/guardian or eligible student believes are inaccurate. Parents/guardians or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate. They should write the School principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent/guardian or eligible student, the School will notify the parent/guardian or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent/guardian or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
- The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
- One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the School has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent/guardian or student serving on an official committee, such as a

disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

- A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.
- Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Westport Middle School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

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

### **Non-Custodial Parent Guardian Rights**

As required by G.L.Ch. 71, § 34H, a non-custodial parent/guardian may have access to the student record in accordance with law and Department of Education Regulations. The school district will follow the law and the attachments recommended by the Massachusetts Department of Education to standardize the process by which public schools provide student records to parents/guardians who do not have physical custody of their children (“non-custodial parent/guardians”). The implementation of this policy will hopefully encourage parents/guardians to be involved in and informed about the education of their children, while protecting the rights and safety of all parties.

### **Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Physical Challenge**

The School Committee has designated the Student Services Supervisor as the responsible employee to coordinate school district compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and its administrative regulations. The Student Services Supervisor, as the district's Section 504 compliance officer, shall be responsible for continuing compliance with Section 504 and its administrative regulations. Any student has a ready means of resolving any claim of discrimination on the basis of physical challenge in the educational programs or activities of the district. In the event a student believes that there has been a violation of Section 504, s/he shall deliver to the Student Services Supervisor a written statement setting out the alleged violations, describing the incident or activity involved, the individuals involved and the dates, times and locations involved. The Student Services Supervisor shall provide the individual filing the written statement an 15 opportunity to discuss the matter personally, if requested. The Student Services Supervisor shall make such investigation as is necessary to determine the complete facts involved. The Superintendent shall then take action as appropriate to bring the district in compliance with all federal and state regulations or refer the matter to the School Committee for action as appropriate. If the student submitting the written statement of an alleged violation is not satisfied with the handling of the matter by the district, s/he may present the matter directly to the School Committee by contacting the Committee Chairperson.

### **Admission to Classes and Course of Study**

Each and every course of study offered by a public school shall be open and available to students regardless of actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex/gender, marital status, homelessness, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, family care leave status, pregnancy or any condition related to pregnancy, or military/veteran status of the access to, admission, or treatment of students in its programs and activities, or in employment and application for employment. Furthermore, School Committee policy includes prohibitions of harassment of students and employees, i.e., racial harassment, sexual harassment, and retaliation for filing complaints of discrimination. This does not prohibit the use of prerequisite requirements that have been demonstrated to be essential to success in a given program. However, if participation in a course or program is dependent

upon completion of a prerequisite which was previously limited to students of one gender, or if scrutiny reveals that administrative arrangements have limited the opportunities of any class of students to participate in such prerequisites, then all members of the previously excluded group shall be given the opportunity to acquire the prerequisites or be allowed to enter the program without such prerequisites. If it cannot be shown that a prerequisite is essential for success in a given program, the prerequisite shall be abolished. The determination of what courses or units of study are to be required of any student shall also be made without regard to the actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex/gender, marital status, homelessness, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, family care leave status, pregnancy or any condition related to pregnancy, or military/veteran status of the access to, admission, or treatment of students in its programs and activities, or in employment and application for employment. Furthermore, School Committee policy includes prohibitions of harassment of students and employees, i.e., racial harassment, sexual harassment, and retaliation for filing complaints of discrimination. This policy shall not be construed to prevent particular segments of a program of instruction from being offered separately to each gender when necessary in order to respect personal privacy.

### **Bullying Prevention**

The School Committee is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive educational environment where students can achieve the highest academic standards. No student shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyber-bullying.

“Bullying” is the repeated use by one or more students or school staff members of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target’s property;
- places the target in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself, or of damage to his/her property;
- creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

“Cyber-bullying” means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a:

- wire
- radio
- electromagnetic
- photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Bullying and cyber-bullying may occur in and out of school, during and after school hours, at home and in locations outside of the home. When bullying and cyber-bullying are alleged, the full cooperation and assistance of parents and families are expected.

For the purpose of this policy, whenever the term bullying is used it is to denote either bullying, or cyber-bullying.

Bullying is prohibited:

- On school grounds;
- On property immediately adjacent to school grounds;
- At school-sponsored or school-related activities;
- At functions or programs whether on or off school grounds
- At school bus stops;
- On school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the school district; or,
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school district;

Bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the school district if the act or acts in question:

- create a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringe on the rights of the target at school; and/or
- materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

#### Prevention and Intervention Plan

The Superintendent and/or his/her designee shall oversee the development of a prevention and intervention plan, in consultation with all district stakeholders, which may include teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians, consistent with the requirements of this policy, as well as state and federal laws. The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be reviewed and updated at least biennially.

The Principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the bullying prevention and implementation plan within his or her school.

#### Reporting

Students, who believe that they are a target of bullying, observe an act of bullying, or who have reasonable grounds to believe that these behaviors are taking place, are obligated to report incidents to a member of the school staff. The target shall, however, not be subject to discipline for failing to report bullying.

Each school shall have a means for anonymous reporting by students of incidents of bullying. No formal disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Parents or guardians, or members of the community, are encouraged to report an incident of bullying as soon as possible.

A member of a school staff shall immediately report any instance of bullying the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the school principal or their designee.

#### Investigation Procedures

The Principal or their designee, upon receipt of a viable report, shall promptly contact the parents or guardians of a student who has been the alleged target or alleged perpetrator of bullying. The actions being taken to prevent further acts of bullying shall be discussed.



The school Principal or a designee shall promptly investigate the report of bullying, using a Bullying/Cyber-bullying Report Form which may include interviewing the alleged target, alleged perpetrator, staff members, students and/or witnesses.

Support staff shall assess an alleged target's needs for protection and create and implement a safety plan that shall restore a sense of safety for that student.

Confidentiality shall be used to protect a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or is witness to or has reliable information about an act of bullying.

If the school Principal or a designee determines that bullying has occurred he/she shall take appropriate disciplinary action and if it is believed that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator, the principal shall consult with the school's resource officer and the Superintendent to determine if criminal charges are warranted. If it is determined that criminal charges are warranted, the local law enforcement agency shall be notified.

The investigation shall be completed within fourteen school days from the date of the report. The parents or guardians shall be contacted upon completion of the investigation and informed of the results, including whether the allegations were found to be factual, whether a violation of this policy was found, and whether disciplinary action has or shall be taken. At a minimum the Principal or his/her designee shall contact the parents or guardians as to the status of the investigation on a weekly basis.

Disciplinary actions for students who have committed an act of bullying or retaliation shall be in accordance with district disciplinary policies.

Each school shall document any incident of bullying that is reported per this policy and a file shall be maintained by the Principal or designee. A monthly report shall be provided to the Superintendent.

Confidentiality shall be maintained to the extent consistent with the school's obligations under law.

#### Retaliation

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying, shall be prohibited.

#### Target Assistance

The school district shall provide counseling or referral to appropriate services, including guidance, academic intervention, and protection to students, both targets and perpetrators, affected by bullying, as necessary.

#### Training and Assessment

Annual training shall be provided for school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students in preventing, identifying, responding to, and reporting incidents of bullying.

Age-appropriate, evidence-based instruction on bullying prevention shall be incorporated into the curriculum for all K to 12 students.

#### Publication and Notice

Annual written notice of the relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to students and their parents or guardians, in age-appropriate terms.

Annual written notice of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to all school staff. The faculty and staff at each school shall be trained annually on the bullying prevention and intervention plan applicable to the school.

Relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff shall be included in the school employee handbook.

The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be posted on the school district website.

Westport Middle School

Thomas Aubin - Superintendent  
Laura Charette - Principal  
Sean Persico - Assistant Principal

ELECTRONIC COPY RECEIPT OF PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK 2021-2022 FROM THE WEBSITE:

[https://www.westportschools.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC\\_ID=287185&type=d&pREC\\_ID=675148](https://www.westportschools.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=287185&type=d&pREC_ID=675148)

I acknowledge, with my signature below, the receipt of the required annual notification of parent/student rights on behalf of my son/daughter. We have reviewed the information together and understand the expectations of Westport Middle School.

Please PRINT the name, grade, and birth date of your child.

STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB : \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide us with an updated phone number and email you prefer we use for our primary methods of communication. We will be sending emails and phone calls to keep families updated each week on any school news and information.

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

CELL PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_