



Norwalk Public Schools

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Student & Family HANDBOOK
Grades K - 5

2010-2013



NORWALK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

125 East Avenue • P.O. Box 6001
Norwalk, Connecticut 06852-6001
Tel: (203) 854-4001 • Fax: (203) 838-3299
Email: marks@norwalkps.org

Susan F. Marks, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Dear Students and Families,

Welcome to a new school year, and I know that this will be your best school year ever! Our staff looks forward to engaging in many partnerships with our families and community. Working together to ensure that our students have many opportunities to learn at high standards means that all our students will be ready for college and the world of work.

This handbook is a reference that we hope you find useful. It provides information on various school policies and practices such as, student rights and responsibilities, grading and reporting and the code of conduct. Please read the handbook with your child, and if you have any questions about its contents, please feel free to contact the administration of your school.

The Norwalk Public Schools is committed to the role of families as valued partners in their children's education. Family involvement is a critical link to achieve academic success and to ensure a safe and secure learning environment. Our staff will do our part by reaching out to our families and providing our families with ongoing and clear communication.

If you have any questions about this handbook or your child's school program, please do not hesitate to contact your child's school.

All the best for a great school year,

Susan F. Marks
Superintendent of Schools

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ABOUT THIS BOOK

This booklet is written for our students and their families. It contains required and useful information. Because it cannot be as personal as we would like, we address students not directly as “you” but rather as “the student,” “students,” or “children.” Also, the term “the student’s parent” may refer to the parent, legal guardian, or other person who has responsibility for the student. Both students and parents need to be familiar with the District’s Student Code of Conduct. It is intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere conducive for learning.

The Student Handbook is designed to be in harmony with Board policy. Please be aware that the handbook is updated every 2-3 years, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout. Changes in policy that affect portions of this Handbook will be made available to students and parents through newsletters, web pages, and other communications. Handbooks will be re-issued to students and families whenever they are updated.

For information about your child’s school, school year calendars, special programs and contact information for both district and school personnel, please refer to your school’s Guide for Students and Families, printed annually and distributed in August.

SCHOOL DISTRICT MISSION AND GOALS

The *mission* of the Norwalk Public Schools is to create a supportive learning community in the belief that all children can learn. Our educators will challenge students to demonstrate high levels of achievement on a wide variety of clearly defined standards. Our students will graduate with the skills, knowledge, attitudes, and experiences necessary to ensure their highest potential for success and life-long learning.

Goal One: Instruction

We will build the Norwalk Public Schools into an exemplary district characterized by a cohesive and coordinated academic system with a set of clearly defined performance based outcomes for all students. Our work as a learning community will:

- Emphasize the mastery of knowledge, strategies and skills
- Develop in our students the habits of thinking, cooperation, and self-discipline
- Focus on results
- Ensure excellence and equity of opportunity
- Value diversity
- Instill respectfulness and responsibility

Goal Two: Community Participation

We will actively seek the input and involvement of staff, parents, students, and the community when making the educational decisions necessary to ensure every student's success.

Goal Three: Communication

We shall communicate to the public, as effectively as possible, our progress, successes, and plans for the implementation of our goals.

Goal Four: Finance

We will develop annual operating and capital financial plans to implement the objectives necessary to achieve our goals and meet our contractual obligations in a manner that is fiscally responsible to our community.

Goal Five: Long-Range Planning

We will develop, communicate, and implement long range educational and facilities plans based on student needs, program needs, equity and excellence, and fiscal responsibility.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In light of the diversity of social, economic and cultural backgrounds of our student population, it is the responsibility of the Norwalk Public Schools to:

Provide each student the opportunity to obtain an education according to his/her needs and abilities.

Promote mutual support for the education of the child among school, staff, parents, students, and community.

Provide an environment in which each student exerting his/her best effort can develop at his/her own rate physically, mentally, emotionally, aesthetically and socially.

Provide a school environment that fosters self-respect, respect for others and favorable recognition of individual and cultural differences.

Provide each child, to the best of his/her ability; with the basic skills in reading, communication, and computation, as well as skills in how to learn, how to solve problems and how to organize information in order to use it.

Provide students the opportunity to learn additional skills appropriate to the individual to prepare them for the future; to enable them to make responsible decisions, work constructively with others, develop lifelong health habits, function effectively as a good citizen, continue to learn and qualify for higher education or employment.

Provide an environment, which fosters creativity, encourages imagination, exploration, and innovation.

Provide each student an opportunity to strive for and experience success in his/her endeavors.

Promote continuing improvement of service to students through staff development, in-service training, sharing of new ideas, analysis and evaluation of programs, goals and achievements.

We believe that school, staff, parents, and the community share equally in the responsibility for maximum student growth.

NORWALK PUBLIC SCHOOLS LIST

School	Address	Phone
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS		
Brookside	382 Highland Avenue 06854	899-2830
Columbus	46 Concord Street 06854	899-2840
Cranbury	10 Knowalot Lane 06851	846-3600
Fox Run	228 Fallow Street 06850	899-2860
Jefferson	75 Van Buren Avenue 06850	899-2870
Kendall	57 Fallow Street 06850	899-2880
Marvin	15 Calf Pasture Beach Rd. 06855	899-2890
Naramake	16 King Street 06851	899-2900
Rowayton	1 Roton Avenue 06853	899-2940
Silvermine	157 Perry Avenue 06850	899-2950
Tracey	20 Camp Street 06850	899-2960
Wolfpit	Starlight Drive 06851	899-2980
MIDDLE SCHOOLS		
Nathan Hale	176 Strawberry Hill Ave. 06851	899-2910
Ponus Ridge	21 Hunter's Lane 06850	847-3557
Roton	201 Highland Ave. 06853	899-2930
West Rocks	81 West Rocks Rd. 06851	899-2970
HIGH SCHOOLS		
Brien McMahon	300 Highland Avenue 06854	852-9488
Briggs	350 Main Avenue 06851	899-2820
Norwalk High	23 Calvin Murphy Drive 06851	838-4481
CENTRAL OFFICE		
Norwalk Public Schools	125 East Avenue 06852-6001	854-4000

SECTION I.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU HAVE A CONCERN

LADDER OF REFFERAL

If a parent/guardian has a question or concern regarding their child's progress or well being within the school program, we urge you to follow the steps outlined below.

Parent concerns about the teaching staff should be referred first to the teacher. If your concern is not addressed to your satisfaction, then please follow the procedure outlined below:

Teacher

As soon as you have a concern, send a note or call the teacher during school hours. Leave your name, phone number and time you can be reached. Please also follow this procedure for concerns about special programs and/or services. Teachers wish to hear more, not less, from parents. The majority of misunderstandings can be resolved with the teacher.

Assistant Principal

If the issue has not been resolved to your satisfaction, send a note or call the Assistant Principal.

Principal

If the issue has still not been resolved to your satisfaction, send a note or call the Principal.

Central Office

If necessary, the principal will direct you to staff at Norwalk Public School's Central Office.
For Instruction areas: Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction;

For	Contact
Pupil Personnel issues	Director of Pupil Personnel Services
Human Relations issues	Director of Human Relations
Health-related issues	Coordinator of Student Health Services
Bus-related concerns	Transportation Coordinator

Superintendent and Board of Education

After appropriate discussion with Central Office personnel, decisions may be appealed first to the Superintendent and ultimately to the Board of Education. Any appeal to the Board should be in writing and signed

If a parent/guardian has a question or concern regarding a child's progress or well being within the school program, please begin by contacting the teacher first. If your concern is not addressed to your satisfaction, then please follow the procedure outlined below:

- Please contact
- The Teacher
- then
- The Assistant Principal
- then
- The Principal
- then
- The Director
- then
- The Assistant Superintendent
- then
- The Superintendent
- and last
- The Board of Education

Your concerns may not always be related to a teacher. Some examples of areas of concern, staff responsibilities and sequential personnel for notification are shown below:

TEACHER	NURSE	SCHOOL SECRETARY	ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	PRINCIPAL
Adjustment Issues	Health	Attendance	Discipline	Board Policies & Regulations
Academic Issues	Health Records	Busing	Testing Information	
Classroom Policies	Immunizations	Records		
Homework	Physicals			
Summer School				

DISCRIMINATION & SEXUAL HARASSMENT COMPLAINTS

The public schools shall be open to all children five years of age or over who reach age five on or before the first day of January of any school year, and each such child shall have and shall be so advised by the appropriate school authorities, an equal opportunity to participate in the activities, programs and courses of study offered in such public schools, at such time as the child becomes eligible to participate in such activities, programs and courses of study, without discrimination on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation; provided boards of education may, by vote at a meeting duly called, admit to any school children under five years of age.

The Norwalk Board of Education ("the Board") is an equal opportunity employer. Furthermore, it is the policy of the Board to educate all children within the Norwalk Public Schools in an atmosphere that is free of discrimination/sexual harassment. As part of the Board's commitment to these policies, the Board has established the Human Relations Office for the Norwalk Public Schools, located at the Board's offices at 125 East Avenue, Norwalk, Connecticut. The Human Relations Office is supervised by the Director of Human Relations, at 854-4013.

To Process A Discrimination/Sexual Harassment Complaint:

1. If you think you have been treated unfairly or otherwise discriminated against/sexually, harassed due to your race, color, religious creed, age, gender, marital status, national origin, ancestry, present or past history of mental disorder, mental retardation, sexual orientation or physical disability, and/or Section 504 (U.S. Rehabilitation Act, 1973), you should contact the Human Relations Office ("HRO") with your complaint. In order to ensure its expeditious processing, your complaint must be filed within thirty (30) business days of the event or condition upon which the complaint is based.
2. The HRO will conduct a thorough investigation of timely filed complaints. This investigation will generally commence with a confidential interview of the complainant by the Director of Human Relations. If the Director of Human Relations, after meeting with the complainant, believes that further investigation of the complaint is warranted, the HRO will interview the person or persons against whom the complaint has been made. Additionally, the HRO will meet with any person whom the HRO believes has information regarding the event or condition upon which the complaint is based.
3. The HRO will complete its investigation within fifteen (15) business days of the initial interview with the complainant, although the HRO will have the option of extending the investigation period an additional ten (10) business days should the circumstances of the investigation necessitate such extension.
4. Within ten (10) business days of the conclusion of the HRO's investigation, the HRO will issue a written record of its findings and determination and will meet with the complainant to discuss such findings and determination.
5. If the HRO determines that there is insufficient evidence to support the complaint, it will close the case. The HRO may also close the case if the complainant cannot be located or otherwise fails or refuses to meet with the HRO following the filing of the complaint; if the complainant withdraws the complaint, if the nature of the complaint is outside the scope of the HRO's authority; or if the complainant and the person or persons against whom the complaint was made agree to a settlement.
6. If the HRO finds and determines that there is probable cause to believe that discrimination/sexual harassment has occurred, the Director of Human Relations is required to try and reach an agreement between the parties that eliminates the discrimination/sexual harassment.

7. If the complaint cannot be resolved by agreement, the HRO's findings and determination will be referred to the Superintendent of Schools for resolution. If the Superintendent of Schools is, in turn, unable to effect a settlement of the complaint between the parties, the complaint will be referred to the Board of Education for the appropriate action.

NO REPRISALS MAY BE MADE AGAINST A PERSON WHO BRINGS A COMPLAINT. THIS COMPLAINT PROCEDURE IS NOT INTENDED TO BE THE EXCLUSIVE REMEDY FOR ANY PARTY WHO MAY HAVE RIGHTS UNDER THE TERMS OF A CONTRACT OR UNDER FEDERAL OR STATE LAW.

BULLYING CONCERNS

Reporting an Alleged Incident of Bullying

Any alleged incident of bullying observed by staff (teachers, custodians, etc.) **MUST BE REPORTED** to the building administration in writing. The names, date, and a brief description should be included in the report. Buildings may use their current teacher referral forms for purposes of reporting to the building administration. Students and families are also entitled to report alleged incidents of bullying anonymously to the building administration.

Investigating the Incident

Reported incidents must be investigated by building administration to verify if in fact the alleged incident were one of bullying. Counselors or social workers are involved in this process.

Following Up

If the incident is confirmed to be a bullying incident as defined in the Board of Education Policy #5131.91, the building administration must address the issue directly with ALL students and parents involved with the incident as well as staff present during the incident. Counseling must be offered to all students involved whether a victim of the bullying or the one bullying.

SECTION II. IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

ACADEMICALLY TALENTED PROGRAM

The Academically Talented Program (AT) is a differentiated humanities curriculum for students in grades 3 – 8 who demonstrate exceptional academic talent. The program offers opportunities for these students to challenge and learn from one another, and develops the desire for excellence and sense of individual responsibility to the school community and a changing society.

Identification Measures

All grade 2 students are screened and considered for the program. Four areas are reviewed: (1) student test scores on the Degrees of Reading Power Test (DRP), (2) Structure of the Intellect Test (SOI), (3) teacher assessment, and (4) the child's academic record.

In the spring of second grade, all students are given both the DRP and SOI tests. The DRP measures reading comprehension and is used as a regular part of the state's standardized testing program in grades 3 – 8. The SOI measures student aptitude in comprehension, memory, critical thinking and creativity. The SOI is specifically designed to identify students who are gifted in all of these areas. The teacher assessment form asks teachers to rate all students who may be considered for the program in the areas of learning, creativity, motivation, leadership, reading, writing, math, and overall. Progress Reports may be reviewed to assess students' academic progress in their regular classrooms. Students who may be borderline cases will be given an individual I.Q. test with their parents' permission. These students may also be asked to do a writing sample or other performance assessment.

Process

A committee of Academically Talented teachers and Central Office administrators review all second grade student results. Parents of students who are deemed eligible for the program will be notified in early September and asked to sign a contract and permission form for their children to participate.

Classroom teachers may nominate grade three through five students for inclusion in the program by the end of March for the following year. Parents may submit nominations for their children between September and January using forms available in each building. Parents may nominate their children once during elementary school. The same measures will be used as well as any additional standardized testing (Connecticut Mastery Tests) and Progress Reports that are available. Students nominated at the end of 5th Grade will be given another DRP and SOI test. If admission to the program is declined, parents may appeal the decision once in elementary school after the end of 3rd Grade.

Participation in the Program

Students will be admitted to the program only at the beginning of each year, with the exception of students new to the Norwalk Public Schools who may be considered for mid-year entry. Students who have been successful in the elementary AT Program will continue in the program in middle school. Students who have not been successful in the program will be exited from the program no later than the end of grade 5 following a conference with the parent.

ARTISTICALLY TALENTED PROGRAM

The purpose of the *Artistically Talented Program* is to provide a special opportunity for students who demonstrate unusual talent and creativity. Pupils in this program are usually identified in second grade and enter the program at the beginning of the third grade level, remaining in the program through fifth grade. However, any third, fourth or fifth grade pupil is eligible to enter the program upon meeting the established criteria.

The screening and identification process for identifying artistically talented elementary school pupils involves testing and the judgment of professionals and interested lay people. When pupils have been identified, their parents are notified to decide whether or not they want their child to participate.

ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT

The Norwalk Public Schools have been inspected several times in the last ten years to determine the presence of asbestos and to evaluate the potential for human exposure to airborne fibers. As is the case for most schools, asbestos-containing products were found in our school buildings.

An Asbestos Management Program has been developed to maintain these materials in a condition in which they do not pose a health hazard. As part of this program, asbestos-containing materials are inspected several times each year and the Asbestos Management Program is reevaluated every three years.

Anyone wishing to know more about the Asbestos Management Program or the asbestos-containing materials found in the schools should call (203) 854-4053 and ask to see the Asbestos Management Plan which is on file in the main office of each building and in the Board of Education Facilities Office.

ATTENDANCE/ABSENCE

Attendance at school is required by state law for all students under age sixteen. The primary responsibility for ensuring that such attendance takes place rests with the parents.

Parents are responsible to contact the school office when their child is unable to attend school. If a child is absent and the school has not been notified by the parent, the school staff person will call the parent to notify the family the child has not come to school.

A student who has been absent must, upon his/her return, bring a note to his/her classroom teacher indicating the dates of, and reasons for the absence. **Without a written note or phone call, the student's absence will become an unexcused absence.** By state law, any student with four unexcused absences in any one-month is classified as a truant. Truancy, of course, requires referrals for administrative or social agency action. Below are some guidelines that we use for absences.

Excused absences when accompanied by parental/guardian notification:

- sickness
- death in the family
- religious observance/instruction
- family emergency of short duration

- medical/dental appointment
(We strongly urge that appointments be made outside the school day.)

Unexcused absences:

- any absence without a phone call or note from parent/guardian
- missing the school bus
- car trouble or other problems getting to school regarding transportation
- staying home to baby-sit
- oversleeping
- inclement weather
- family vacations

In keeping with the philosophy that students need to maintain regular attendance at school, we strongly discourage families from scheduling any trips other than during the normal school vacations. If unusual circumstances arise, contact the principal.

Dismissals

- Under special circumstances such as an appointment with a physician, parents and/or guardians may need to pick up their youngster from school before dismissal time. If this is the case, the parent or guardian must send a note with his/her signature to the school in advance, indicating the day and time of this request as well as the name of the person who will be picking up the child.
- The teacher will receive the request and send it to the principal's office for verification and approval. At the designated time, the parent or guardian should report directly to the principal's office to pick up the child. He or she will be asked to sign out in the log book and will be required to show proof of identification (driver's license, etc.). Once this is completed, the teacher releases the child to the office for dismissal. Unauthorized individuals will not be allowed to pick up youngsters.
- When a pupil is excused from school, the responsibility for make-up work rests with the pupil.

BOOKS AND OTHER MATERIALS

The school provides both textbooks and supplementary references. When assigned to pupils, the books must be properly cared for and returned in a condition comparable to their condition when issued. Average use and wear are expected. Books may be inspected periodically and fines will be levied for damage or loss.

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH PROGRAMS

Breakfast programs are offered in all Norwalk Public Schools. A variety of foods are available and students may select what they wish to eat.

Hot lunch is also provided in each elementary school. Since all food for elementary schools comes out of the Central Kitchen, it must operate strictly on a weekly ticket basis in order to control production and cost. The program teaches children the value of a completely balanced, nutritious meal every single day. A weekly ticket also protects the anonymity of the free, reduced and paid child, since all

children have the same color ticket. If your child is absent from school and a lunch ticket has been already purchased for the week, you may pick up your child's lunch.

At the beginning of each school year, the Federal Government provides all participating public schools with guidelines for free and reduced price breakfasts and lunches. Each parent receives a letter and an application from the school outlining this policy. Students requesting either free or reduced price breakfast and lunch must complete these applications. Central Office will make a determination based on Federal guidelines. Students approved for food stamps and/or AFDC will qualify automatically once they submit their proof of eligibility to the Central Office Staff responsible for the Free & Reduced lunch program.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

The Norwalk Public Schools will transport eligible students at public expense from their area to their assigned schools, whether by use of publicly owned equipment or by contracted services and equipment. Transportation is not provided to babysitters' homes, nurseries, grandparents' homes, day care centers, or places of work.

Norwalk school buses have a capacity of 77 passengers and should travel no longer than 40 minutes to arrive at their assigned school in order that each bus can service a high school, a middle school, and an elementary school daily in the morning and repeat the trips again in the afternoon.

ELIGIBILITY FOR TRANSPORTATION

Transportation will be provided for students in grades K through 5 who reside more than two miles from the school to which they are assigned.

PARENT/GUARDIAN REQUESTS AND CONCERNS

In spite of much advanced planning and careful scheduling, it is conceivable that some problems may occur with the school bus schedule especially during the first few weeks of the opening of school. In general, pupils should arrive at the bus stop at least fifteen minutes prior to the scheduled bus arrival time. The bus may arrive as much as 15 minutes before or after the scheduled time.

Each year the volume of public inquiries and complaints concerning school bus transportation has been greater than can be handled by the small staff in the Transportation Office. Parents/guardians with questions regarding transportation should follow the guidelines below.

Call the principal of your child's school for information relating to ongoing problems with:

- late buses
- early buses
- bus passenger capacities
- bus passes
- safety/hazardous conditions
- accidents
- location/placement of bus stops
- pupil control on buses or at stops
- bus numbers
- bus schedules
- new pupil enrollees
- eligibility to ride the school bus

Call the Transportation Office of the Norwalk Public Schools at 854-4074 during the hours of 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on school days if you have complaints pertaining to an immediate problem with:

- late buses

- early buses
- buses that never came
- bus passenger capacities
- behavior of driver (including rudeness, speeding, etc.)
- hazardous conditions
- safety conditions other than those that relate to pupil control
- accidents

NOTE: For additional information regarding Bus Transportation, please refer to the Student Transportation Handbook, available through your school.

CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

The appearance of the school and grounds is a strong indication of the spirit of the student body. Visitors form an unfavorable impression of the school if they are greeted by paper-littered grounds and corridors. Good citizens give as much care to public property as to their own. School property is provided for use and not abuse. Marked or defaced desks become less serviceable and add unnecessary expense to the community.

If any school property is damaged or defaced, offenders are liable for damages, replacement and repair labor.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Parents/students must immediately notify the school office of any telephone number or address changes. Parents must provide proof of residence (the lease, deed, or mortgage statement) and two utility bills.

CONFERENCES

Elementary Parent-Teacher Conferences take place twice each school year in the fall and spring. An evening conference is scheduled for the convenience of parents. Teachers send letters home in advance with suggested appointment times. Parents are encouraged to attend conferences in order to discuss their child's progress.

CRISIS PROCEDURE

In the event of a crisis in the Norwalk Public Schools (*i.e., earthquakes, severe storms, hazardous material spills, tornadoes, hurricanes*), the Crisis Procedures immediately go into effect. All principals and administrators are familiar with communications procedures, alternate school locations, responsibilities, transportation options, checklists for custodians and teachers and safety locations. A crisis plan is available at each school.

DETENTION

If a pupil is detained after school, parents are notified of the detention and the length of the detention time. The following procedures will be observed:

- If a child rides the bus to and from school, one day's notice in advance will be given before the child is detained. This notice will provide time for the parent to arrange transportation.
- If children are to attend religious instruction or are unable to serve the detention due to a need for an accommodation due to illness or disability, a day's notice will be given to parents, as above, and an alternate date of detention will be selected.
- In all other cases of detention, the school will inform the parents of the reason for the pupil's tardiness in returning home or provision will be made for the pupil to call his/her parents/guardians.

DISCIPLINARY GUIDELINES

(See Code of Conduct in Section III.)

To continuously improve the educational environment in the elementary schools, guiding principles have been established for discipline and student behavior. Maximum learning takes place when the teacher spends less time on discipline. Good discipline takes place when rules are set and understood by all.

Discipline is effective only if:

- Everyone is aware of the expected behaviors.
- There is good home-school communication and cooperation.
- Everyone is aware that there are consequences for negative behavior.
- Positive behavior is recognized as well as negative behavior.

A pupil may be suspended or expelled in accordance with Norwalk Board of Education Policy #5114.

DRESS AND GROOMING

The serious nature of our school activities and pride in the reputation of our school require neat grooming, cleanliness and appropriate dress.

Students' overall appearance should fall within the generally accepted definitions of neatness and cleanliness. The students are expected to dress and groom themselves for the business of school so that they do not (1) distract other students or teachers, (2) disrupt the education process, or (3) pose a health or safety threat to anyone. Clothing must be clean, unorn, free from promotion of or reference to drugs, alcohol, tobacco, offensive signs, symbols or words. Clothing must also be free of slogans, names or titles that could cause a substantial disruption at school. Apparel which is worn to symbolize membership in a gang or clique is not permitted.

The Board of Education encourages students to dress in clothing appropriate to the school situation. Restrictions on freedom of student dress may be applied whenever it is:

- unsafe for the student or those around the student.
- disruptive to school operations and the education process in general.
- against the law.

The following clothing is specifically prohibited:

- Black-soled shoes, boots or sneakers that mark the floor
- “See-through” and/or mesh shirts, blouses or midriff tops
- Underwear worn as outerwear
- Short shorts, athletic shorts and cutoffs. (Mid-thigh length and appropriately fitting shorts are permitted)
- Ripped jeans/cutoffs
- Spandex clothing
- Short skirts (Skirts no shorter than slightly above the knee and of appropriate fit are permitted)
- Sunglasses

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

Alcoholic beverages or controlled drugs, as defined by Connecticut law, are not allowed on school property or at a school activity conducted elsewhere. Any student in the Norwalk Public Schools using or possessing controlled substances, alcohol, or drug paraphernalia on such property shall be referred to an administrator. Appropriate disciplinary action will be governed by the Code of Conduct. Authorized personnel will notify the parents, the school health services as appropriate, and the police. Written records are to be kept of the incident and authorized personnel may search a student's locker, desk, or personal belongings. School action is governed by Board Policy #5114 and #5145.12.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Each year parents/guardians are asked to complete a reference information card. This information is used in case of emergency or an urgent need to contact parents or guardians. The reverse side of the card gives or denies permission for students to be photographed, filmed or interviewed by members of the media during events and special programming.

We are proud of the safety record in our schools. However, children do get sick while at school and occasionally pupils are injured while participating in a school activity. When this happens, we must have accurate information about how to contact the parent/guardian, your physician or someone who can act for the parent/guardian. Please contact your child's school for this card and be sure to return it promptly.

If during the school year you happen to change your phone number, place of employment, or emergency number, be sure to contact your child's school immediately.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICES

Parents/guardians of all entering students complete a "Home Language Survey" as the initial step in identifying children who may need English Language Support Services. If a language other than English is spoken in the home, further screening is done to determine the child's fluency in English. If the child is not fluent in English, the child is eligible for services. Students are screened for eligibility for these services within two weeks of arrival in the district.

English as a Second Language Services

English as a Second Language is offered in all Norwalk Elementary Schools. The ESL program directly assists children to gain fluency in the English language and provides support in academic work while the child is learning English.

Bilingual Support Services

The Norwalk Public Schools provide bilingual support services when there are 20 or more English Language Learners (ELLs) in the same school that speak the same home language. Teachers providing bilingual support services assist students in the home language, as needed.

Dual Language Program at Silvermine

The Dual Language Program at Silvermine Elementary School mingles English and Spanish-speaking students in the same classroom so that they emerge fluent in both languages and with the same knowledge and skills. Academic subjects are taught in both English and Spanish.

FIELD TRIPS

The Board of Education recognizes the value of educational trips as an inherent part of the curriculum, designed to supplement the instructional program for children.

The Board and administration only sponsor events and trips that are organized, directed and controlled by the school and considered to be part of the regular educational or classroom curriculum.

Signed parent/guardian consent forms are required for each student who plans to attend an off-campus field trip of one day or longer than one day duration. These forms are given parents for signature prior to the day of the event. Students who have not submitted a parent consent form will remain at school in a class assigned by the principal. Field trips of longer than one day require Board approval in advance.

GROUPING STUDENTS FOR INSTRUCTION

Placing students in instructional groups, classrooms, and programs of study has a significant impact on their educational and social development. No one grouping or placement practice is best for all children under all circumstances, but some general principles are common to all proper grouping and placement decisions. Board of Education policy requires that grouping and placement decisions be based exclusively on educational considerations and that their primary goal be to promote the best educational interests of the students in question.

In making grouping and placement decisions, staff members must consider the following general principles:

- Students can learn much from students whose skills and interests are different from their own in heterogeneous groups;
- Different students have different skills and interests;
- Students develop at different rates in different areas of learning;
- Students learn from other students as well as from adults.

Changes in a student's educational development may require changes in his or her placement. Grouping and placement decisions, consequently, should be flexible and reviewed regularly.

HEALTH RECORDS

When a student transfers out of our school system but remains within Connecticut, the Norwalk Schools will send the original cumulative health record to the receiving school as per Connecticut State Education Law Chapter 169, section 10-226 (d).

Cumulative health records will be maintained for six (6) years following graduation, after which they will be destroyed. Health records of students who withdrew prior to graduating will be destroyed according to the schedule of graduated students. Immunization information must be maintained by the district for fifty (50) years beyond graduation. Cumulative health records are maintained at the last school attended. Six (6) years beyond graduation those records are relocated to the Central Office records department.

HEALTH SERVICES

Students with Special Health Care Needs

Parents/guardians are encouraged to share any and all information that will ensure that their children with special health care needs receive the supports and services necessary to remain safe. This is a key factor in ensuring that students who have chronic and acute health conditions maintain their baseline health status during school.

Hearing, Vision, and Scoliosis Screenings

The school nurse performs hearing and vision screenings for students in elementary grades as mandated by the State of Connecticut. The hearing screening tests the ability to hear at normal speech frequencies. Vision screening provides information on distance acuity to identify visual difficulties that may affect learning ability and school adjustment. Scoliosis (postural) screening is mandated for grade 5 students. This screening is done to detect curvature of the spine. The school nurse notifies the parent/guardian when the student's screening results indicate a need for referral.

Medication in School

To receive any medication (*including over the counter medications*) during the school day or school activities, there must be a medication authorization form on file, signed by a doctor and a parent/guardian. All medications must be brought by the parent to the school nurse assigned to that school. It must be delivered by the parent or other responsible adult to the school nurse. All medications must be brought to school in their original containers. No more than a forty-five (45) school day supply of a medication for a student shall be brought to school. Parents/guardians should contact the school nurse for necessary forms and information when medication needs to be administered at school. Parent/guardian or a responsible adult must pick up a student's medication when the order has been discontinued or by the last day of the school year, whichever comes first. All medication not picked up by the last day of school will be destroyed.

Nurse

All of Norwalk's elementary schools have a health office and the services of nurses who are trained to promote optimum student health so that all students have the potential to do their best in our classrooms. This means that the school nurse must be constantly alert to possible health problems and must communicate health needs to staff and parents/guardians.

The school nurse maintains the cumulative health record for all students. These records include the evidence of physical examinations and immunizations which are required by law. In additions, results of

mandated screenings as well as other health related information is maintained in the student's cumulative health record.

Because we believe in good family health practices, it is suggested that physical examinations and immunizations be provided by your child's regular health care provider. If your child does not have a regular health care provider or if you do not have health care insurance for your child, advice or suggestions may be obtained from the school nurse.

Physical Examinations and Immunizations

A physical examination as well as evidence of adequate immunizations for a student new to the Norwalk School System is a condition of school entrance. Any student who does not comply with this state and district requirement will not be permitted to attend school.

HOMEBOUND PROCEDURES

1. Connecticut Agency Regulations 10-76d-15 provides that homebound instruction "shall be provided when a child's condition will cause an absence of at least three weeks' duration" and that "provided nothing in the child's condition precludes it, such instruction shall begin no later than two weeks from the first day of absence," or upon receipt of note.
2. In the event that a student will be out, according to the physician's statement, the school will make the determination whether or not the homebound procedure should be initiated. The school, with parental consultation, will arrange to send lessons to the home. Upon return to school, the student may receive additional time to make up outstanding work.
3. Upon receipt of the physician's report, the Homebound form, will be forwarded to the *Pupil Personnel* office for procurement of homebound instructors. When the teachers are selected by the *Pupil Personnel* office, they will be notified of their responsibility to make arrangements to meet with the student's teachers and/or counselor for a pre-homebound instruction conference.
4. A staff member (social worker, nurse, or administrator) can complete the Homebound Instruction form for medically diagnosed, physical or emotional reasons.
5. A parent or guardian must be present at all times during homebound instruction.
6. Homebound Instruction will be terminated after the school receives notification from the physician, from the Planning and Placement Team meeting, or from the Director of Pupil Personnel.

HOMELESS STUDENTS

Homeless students in the district will have access to education and other services needed to ensure that an opportunity is available to meet the same academic achievement standards to which all students are held.

A liaison for students in homeless situations will be designated by the district to carry out duties as required by law.

The district will ensure that homeless students are not stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless. A homeless student will be admitted to the district school in the attendance area in which the student is actually living or to the student's school or origin as requested by the parent and in accordance with the student's school of origin at the request of the parent, or in the case of an unaccompanied student, the district's liaison for homeless students.

HOMework

In establishing the homework policy at the elementary level, it is of prime importance to ensure that homework be a definite and progressive task with the maximum amount set at the discretion of the teacher according to the individual needs of each child.

Recommended *minimum weekly* requirements: (All subjects combined)

- Grade K – not to exceed a total of **25** minutes, including a minimum of **15** minutes of reading daily
- Grade 1 - not to exceed a total of **25** minutes, including a minimum of **15** minutes of reading daily
- Grade 2 - not to exceed a total of **40** minutes, including a minimum of **20** minutes of **independent** reading daily
- Grade 3 - not to exceed a total of **60** minutes, including a minimum of **30** minutes of **independent** reading daily
- Grade 4 - not to exceed a total of **70** minutes, including a minimum of **30** minutes of **independent** reading daily
- Grade 5 - not to exceed a total of **90** minutes, including a minimum of **40** minutes of **independent** reading daily

Independent reading is required as a daily expectation, including during vacations and on holidays and weekends.

Homework, other than daily independent reading, should not be assigned on Fridays or during weekends and holidays. While students may work on long-term projects during vacations, projects should not be due on the day immediately following vacations.

Guidelines for Teachers

Homework should never be assigned as a punishment. Conversely, being excused from homework should not be provided as a reward.

The teacher is expected to:

- Clearly explain the purpose of any given assignment.
- Clearly give directions for the method of accomplishing the assignment.
- Make sure students understand how they are being assessed (e.g. rubrics).
- Ensure availability of all necessary resources to carry out the assignment.
- Make it clear that deadlines are understood and followed.
- Acknowledge receipt of homework and provide feedback in a timely fashion.
- Provide constructive feedback to the student and use student work to plan for future learning.
- Return homework in a timely manner.
- Review homework and/or provide students additional time and opportunity to complete assignments if they are absent or did not complete it. An effort rubric on rubric on the elementary progress reports is used to document lack of homework.

Guidelines for Students

The student is expected to

- Ask the teacher questions if in doubt about the purpose, requirements or directions or the assignment.
- Meet the deadlines for homework and projects by budgeting time realistically to complete homework.
- Speak with their teacher(s) or parents/guardians when the cumulative amount of homework on a given day may exceed reasonable limits.
- Be responsible for making up work missed when absent from the classroom.

Guidelines for Parents/Guardians:

The parent/guardian is expected to:

- Understand and support the philosophy and guidelines of the Board of Education concerning homework.
- Provide students with a time and place to carry out their assignments.
- Encourage integrity and never give so much help that the value of the homework will be destroyed.
- Contact the teacher in the event of questions or concerns.
- Understand that afterschool activities are not acceptable excuses for not completing a homework assignment.
- Ensure that students and/or parents pick up assignments missed when it appear the excused absence will be prolonged (in excess of 4 days). A minimum of 48 hours notice should be given the teacher to prepare assignments

INSURANCE

Home

Valuable items, which are brought to school, i.e., *musical instruments, athletic equipment, etc.*, should be covered under your homeowner's policy. For further information, please call your insurance company.

Student

Student accident insurance is available at a nominal cost for all students and is optional. The insurance provides coverage for medical expenses that result from student accidents.

Two types of coverage are offered; (1) coverage, which is limited to the time the child, is at school and going to and from school and (2) twenty-four hour coverage which includes school time and all other time out of school and summer. *(Please note that only #2 above remains in effect should the child move to another school district during the year.)*

During the month of September, information relative to the cost and coverage is sent home with students. Students new to the school system after September will still have the option of taking the insurance. If you do not receive the information regarding this accident insurance and may wish to participate, please inquire in your school office.

The school merely makes this available to all pupils and assumes no liability for injury or subsequent

negotiations with the insurance company. Parents are urged to consider school insurance and its possible benefits.

LIBRARIES

Every elementary school has a library with books, periodicals, audiovisual materials and, often, audiovisual equipment.

These materials are available to allow students to practice the reading skills they are learning in school. Parents/guardians may also borrow material to read to their children or have their children read. The library is a prime source for school reports and research work. Generally, classes visit the library once a week to check out and return materials.

The library is staffed daily by a full-time clerk. *Volunteers are always appreciated.*

LOITERING OR CAUSING A DISTURBANCE

Any person is guilty of loitering on school grounds when he/she loiters or remains in or about a school building or grounds, not having any reason or relationship involving custody of or responsibility for a pupil or any other license or privilege to be there. For this reason it is required that all visitors register in the office of the principal. Staff members should be alert to the presence of any unauthorized visitors and report their presence to the principal promptly. (*Board Policy #1251*)

PARKING/SAFETY RULES

The safety of students is our prime concern. Parents are requested to observe the parking regulations in the front of each school and parking lots and to be especially careful when conditions are hazardous. The Norwalk Police Department makes routine visits to the schools and issues tickets to cars parked illegally.

All schools have parking regulations that are clearly marked and are usually communicated through annual bulletins. Parents and visitors must obey these regulations.

The following safety must be observed by all drivers entering and leaving school property:

- Drivers should advise children never to pass between buses or cars to a waiting vehicle or to walk home. Accidents are more prone to occur in the school parking lot. Backing up, and speeding are the main causes of accidents.
- Drivers should not park their vehicles in areas designated as No Parking Fire Lane. There is a fine for this offense. This area is needed at all times for emergency use.
- Drivers should not park in the handicapped parking spaces. The law requires that these spaces be used only by handicapped persons with permits.
- The maximum speed is 10 mph or less for all cars entering or leaving school grounds.
- Drivers should stay in line and should not try to pass each other. When dropping off or picking up children, drivers should proceed slowly forward in line. This will prevent a serious accident, and there will be less confusion for everyone involved.
- In pick up and drop off designated areas, drivers should stay in their vehicles at all times. This area is also used for emergency access. An unattended vehicle could cause a serious hazard for

response time. If it is necessary to get out, the vehicle should be parked in a designated parking space.

- School buses should be granted the right of way when trying to pick up or drop off children. State statutes require vehicles to stop 10 feet behind or in front of the school bus when lights are flashing. Never pass a school bus that has flashing red lights.
- Drivers should not call out for unattended children to cross the parking lot or street. Younger children show little or no concern when moving vehicles are near them, and simply assume that the motorist will see them and act accordingly.
- Your school may have additional practices for pick-up and drop-off to ensure the safety of all children.
- Crossing guards and parent volunteers will be utilized to the extent possible to assist with the safety of children. The Norwalk Police Department will strictly enforce all traffic and parking rules.

PESTICIDE APPLICATION

No person other than a pesticide applicator with proper certification may apply pesticides within any school building, unless there is an emergency application to eliminate an immediate threat to human health.

The staff of each school, and the parents or guardians of each child enrolled in each school may register for prior notice of pesticide applications at the school. Before applying any pesticide within any building or on school grounds, the Board of Education shall provide for a mailing of notice to persons who registered for prior notice and such notice shall be received not later than 24 hours prior to application. Notice may be given by any means practicable to the school staff who registered for such notice. The notice shall include 1) the name of the active ingredient of the pesticide being applied to the target pest; 2) the target pest; 3) the location of the application on the school property; 4) the date of the application; and 5) the name of the school administrator or designee who may be contacted for further information.

No application of pesticide may be made to any school or on the grounds of any school during regular school hours or during planned activities at any school except that an emergency application may be made to eliminate an immediate threat to human health if 1) it is necessary to make the application during that period, and 2) such emergency application does not involve a restricted-use pesticide. No child may enter an area where an application has been made until it is safe to do so according to the provisions on the pesticide label.

PHONES & PAGERS

State of Connecticut Regulations (Public Act No. 96-108) effective July 1, 1996, is the basis for the following regulation:

- No student may possess or use a remotely activated paging device in school or on school property.
- No student may possess or use a cellular mobile telephone in school or on school property.

Disciplinary action will be taken by the school administration for all offenders of this regulation.

If any student believes he/she has a reasonable basis for using a remotely activated paging device or cellular mobile telephone in or on school property, then that student and his/her parent(s) are to contact the school principal. At the discretion of the principal, such use may be allowed.

PROMOTION/ACCELERATION/RETENTION

Promotion and Retention

Decisions regarding promotion, retention or graduation will be made on an individual basis. A student's academic achievement, social, emotional, intellectual and physical maturity, and attendance record are considered in making promotion and retention decisions. A case conference or SRT (Student Response Team Meeting) process will be followed in determining whether a student should be promoted or retained. Parent/guardian and staff input is considered critically important in determining whether to promote or retain a student.

Parents and guardians will be notified in a timely manner regarding decisions about promotion, acceleration, retention and early admission to Kindergarten and First Grade.

The administration and teaching staff shall strive to create plans of instruction to provide maximum opportunity for each student to progress through school in accordance with his/her own needs and abilities and in accordance with applicable statutory requirements and state department of education guidelines.

A determination of student deviation from normal annual academic progress will be based on evaluations by classroom teachers, administrators, special services personnel, reading specialists, or other specialists as appropriate, and discussions with parents/guardians. After such evaluations and discussions, the principal will determine whether promotion or retention is in the best interest of the student. If a student is considered for retention but is promoted, the reasons for the promotion shall be documented. In all cases of possible retention, parents/guardians must be informed of such possibility in advance usually by the third reporting period.

Retention shall not occur unless all available measures, especially remedial instruction, have been exhausted. Upon recommendation of the principal, a student who has demonstrated substantial academic deficiencies that may jeopardize his/her eligibility for promotion will be provided with supplemental services. The school principal may also require the student to participate in a program of remedial instruction that is designed to assist the student in remedying such deficiencies. The Superintendent of schools may exempt an individual student from such requirement, upon the recommendation of the school principal, based on the student's documented progress with the remedial instruction. Remedial instruction shall include such concepts and practices as reading recovery, transitional grades, weekend school, and summer school.

The following will be considered in making decisions regarding promotion or retention:

- Chronological age
- Attendance
- Academic performance
- Teacher and Parent/Guardian input
- Performance on standardized tests

- Participation and performance in programs of remedial instruction
- Previous retention

Retention decisions are based on the expectation that the students will gain the skills and knowledge required for promotion. Retention is only recommended where specialized learning programs and supportive services are judged to be incapable of supporting the student at the next grade level in academic areas where it is determined that the student is substantially deficient. The final decision for retention is made by the principal after review of all data presented.

Kindergarten

A summer reading program shall be provided to all students enrolled in kindergarten who are determined by their teachers to need additional reading and reading readiness instruction.

Grades 1 to 3

Students enrolled in grades one to three shall have their reading level evaluated in January and May. The parent(s)/guardian(s) of those students who are determined to be substantially deficient in reading at the mid-year evaluation will be notified of such result. At that time, those students shall be provided with a Individualized Reading Plan. The State Board of Education guidelines for reading shall be used to determine whether a student is substantially deficient in reading. Promotion of such student from grade to grade shall be based on demonstrated reading proficiency or documented progress in achieving the goals of the student's Individualized Reading Plan.

Grade 4

A student enrolled in the fourth grade who has not met the statewide standard for remedial assistance on the fourth grade mastery examination shall be provided with remedial instruction and may be required to attend summer school. Remedial instruction will be provided until the student has achieved the statewide standard for remedial assistance. If a student is required to attend summer school and fails to attend or does not make adequate progress, he/she shall not be promoted to grade 5.

Early Admission to Kindergarten

1. A parent must submit a written request to the *Central Office* administrator overseeing Elementary Education specifying the reason the child should be considered for early admission. Only children born between January 2 and February 15 are eligible for consideration for early entrance. After review, the Central Office forwards the written request to the school.
2. The school follows an assessment protocol that looks at the child's "physical maturity, emotional maturity, social skills, current language capability and intellectual capacity, pertinent achievement/other test/assessment data where appropriate." Observation of the child is a critical component of the assessment. The team that assesses the child makes a recommendation which will be forwarded to the *Principal*.
3. The final decision on placement is made by the building principal.

First Grade

Children entering first grade in September must be at least six years old on or before December 31st of the current year. The following exceptions to the regulation are made.

Underage children transferring from another community who have already started the year in first grade will be placed in that grade for a period of observation, examination and study of first grade record

(approximately 3 weeks). If, at the end of this period, it appears to the principal, teacher, psychological examiner and reading consultant that the child in question is fully able (mentally, physically, socially and emotionally) to achieve at the first grade level, he/she will be permitted to remain in that grade. If not, the child will be placed in a kindergarten class.

Children underage for public school first grade who in the previous year have been sent to private kindergartens will be enrolled in the kindergarten for a period of observation, examination and study of previous kindergarten record (approximately 3 weeks). If, at the end of this period, it appears to the principal, teacher, psychological examiner and reading consultant that the child in question is fully able (mentally, physically, socially and emotionally) to achieve satisfactorily at the first grade level, he/she shall be placed in that grade.

If you are new to Norwalk and registering your child/children for the first time, you should:

- call the school for proper forms, or
- if school is closed, call the Board of Education Office for information about registering.

PTO/PTA – PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Every elementary school has a *Parent Teacher Organization/Association*. These groups assist in the development of strong home/school partnerships. Specific activities include arranging for special assembly programs, assistance with field trips, volunteer work, preparation of newsletters, planning programs, organizing meetings and working on school improvement projects. Both groups are represented in the *Norwalk PTO Council*, a district group concerned with the education and welfare of all Norwalk pupils. Families are encouraged to join, support and actively participate in their respective schools.

REGISTRATION

Enrollment

Registration is held in March/April for those children planning to enter kindergarten the following September. New parents may register their child in their home school at any time. The school secretary can explain what is needed to register a child.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten is an All-Day Program in our school system. All kindergarten children must be five years of age on or before the 31st of December. Parents are required to provide evidence of the child's birth date at registration.

To be in compliance with Section 10-206 of Connecticut General Statutes, the Norwalk Board of Education requires a health assessment before entering the school system. It may be done by any practicing physician provided it is recorded and signed by the examining physician on a state health assessment form. This health assessment must be dated within one year of the date that the student will enter the Norwalk Public School system. When the health assessment cannot be provided through private or community resources, an appointment for a health assessment may be explored through school health services.

A health assessment may not be required if parents/guardians object in writing on religious grounds.

All students must provide evidence of a tuberculin test with results recorded. This test must be dated within one year of the student's entry into Norwalk Public Schools.

All students must provide evidence of immunization as required under Section 10-204 and 10-204a of the Connecticut General Statutes. These would include *polio, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, measles (rubeola), German measles (rubella), mumps and HIB.*

A dental exam is also recommended, although not officially required.

Most parents of children who will be five years of age on or before December 31st will be contacted by letter and given an appointment to come to school in order to complete the appropriate forms. If you have not received this letter, we suggest you call your assigned school.

As part of the kindergarten registration program, parents will be asked to complete several forms, children will be invited to visit kindergarten and parents will have the opportunity to participate in an orientation meeting.

Early Admission to Kindergarten: (see "Promotion/Acceleration/Retention")

First Grade

Children entering first grade in September must be at least six years old on or before December 31st of the current year. The following exceptions to this regulation are made.

Underage children transferring from another community who have already started the year in first grade will be placed in that grade for a period of observation, examination and study of first grade record (*approximately 3 weeks*). If, at the end of this period, it appears to the principal, teacher, psychological examiner and reading consultant that the child in question is fully able (*mentally, physically, socially and emotionally*) to achieve at the first grade level, her/she will be permitted to remain in that grade. If the prognosis is unfavorable, the child will be placed in a kindergarten class.

Children underage for public school first grade who in the previous year have been sent to private kindergartens will be enrolled in the kindergarten for a period of observation, examination and study of previous kindergarten record (*approximately 3 weeks*). If, at the end of this period, it appears to the principal, teacher, psychological examiner and reading consultant that the child in question is fully able (*mentally, physically, socially and emotionally*) to achieve satisfactorily at the first grade level, he/she shall be placed in that grade.

If you are new to Norwalk and registering your child/children for the first time, you should do the following:

4. call the school for proper forms,
5. if school is closed, call the Board of Education Office for information about registering.

REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

BOE Policy 5141.4(A)

The Board of Education recognizes that a student's mental and physical health will have an effect on the student's ability to obtain the most benefit from attending school. In order to increase the student's ability to learn while in school, the Board of Education realizes the importance of identifying students

who may be suffering from abuse or neglect. When any school nurse, psychologist, teacher, principal, guidance counselor, paraprofessional or social worker has reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect of a child under the age of 18, he/she shall within twenty-four (24) hours and/or as soon as possible.

Reports under this policy should be made where a mandatory reporter in his or her professional capacity, has reasonable cause to suspect or believe that any child under the age of eighteen has been abused in one or more of the following ways:

- has had physical injury or injuries inflicted upon him or her other than by accidental means, or
- has injuries which are at variance with the history given of them, or
- is in a condition which is the result of maltreatment such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual molestation or exploitation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment; and
- has been so abused by a person responsible for such child's health, welfare, or care or by a person given access to such child by such responsible person

or has been neglected in one or more of the following ways:

- has been abandoned;
- is being denied proper care and attention, physically, educationally, emotionally, or morally;
- is being permitted to live under conditions, circumstances, or associations injurious to the child's well-being; or
- is placed in imminent risk of serious harm by a person responsible for the child's health, welfare, or care, or by a person given access to the child by the responsible person.

When an investigation by DCF has determined there is reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused by a certified school employee, the Superintendent shall suspend the certified employee with pay and without termination of benefits. The Superintendent shall notify the Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education or his representative of the reasons for and conditions of the suspension within seventy-two (72) hours after the suspension. The Superintendent shall also disclose those records provided by DCF concerning its investigation to the Commissioner of Education and the Board of Education or its attorney. If the contract of employment of a certified school employee is terminated as the result of an investigation of abuse, the Superintendent shall notify the Commissioner of Education or his representative within seventy-two (72) hours after such termination.

The Superintendent may delegate his or her responsibilities for receiving and making reports, notifying and receiving notification, and conducting investigations to a designee. The Superintendent of Schools is authorized to receive notice from the State's Attorney of convictions of certified school employees for crimes involving an act of child abuse or neglect of sexual assault.

Penalty

Under state law, any person who is required to report suspected child abuse/neglect and fails to make such a report will be fined up to \$500.00. Any person who knowingly makes a false report of child abuse or neglect shall be fined no more than \$2,000 nor imprisoned not more than one year or both.

Legal Risk

Under state law, any person who in good faith makes or in good faith does not make a report of suspected child abuse/neglect is immune from any civil or criminal liability.

Emergency Health Care and Reasonable Inquiry

When reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child has been abused or neglect exists or when a child has a visible injury, public school personnel may make reasonable inquiry of the child regarding such suspicion or visible injury.

If a school nurse or school medical advisor is not readily available and the rendering of emergency first aid is necessary, other public school personnel who have completed a course in first aid offered by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, or the Connecticut Department of Health Services may render such emergency first aid to a child. In accordance with state law, any person providing such aid is not liable for civil damages for any personal injuries that result from acts or omissions by such person rendering the emergency first aid, which constitute ordinary negligence. The immunity does not apply to acts or omissions constituting gross, willful or wanton negligence.

REPORTING TO PARENTS

Formal reporting to parents/guardians at the elementary school level is achieved through a system of parent-teacher conferences and written progress reports. The written progress reports cover competency in all areas of the curriculum as well as personal and social attributes related to school activities.

Elementary conferences take place twice each year on successive days during November and March at mutually convenient times for teachers and parents.

Other conferences can be arranged and are encouraged at any time during the year. These may be requested by the teacher or the parent/guardian.

SCHOOL CHOICE OPTION

Parents and students are encouraged to explore other educational opportunities that are offered in the school district locally and regionally. These options may include magnet, charter, lighthouse and vocational-technical schools; inter-district programs; and vocational agriculture centers. Contact the Guidance Department for further information on these School Choice options.

NCLB/SCHOOL CHOICE OPTION: The elementary schools that receive Title 1 funds are subject to legislative requirements regarding School Choice. Any elementary school in our district that receives Title 1 funds, and has not met AYP requirements for two consecutive years is required to provide students with an option to transfer to another school in the district that has met AYP goals.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER

Storm Emergency Procedures

When the weather is unusually severe and traveling conditions appear to be hazardous, pupils and parents/guardians are urged to listen to news broadcasts to determine whether the schools will be open, be delayed or remain closed. Radio broadcasts will begin between 6:00 and 6:30 a.m. over the following radio stations:

WICC	600 AM	WEFX	95.9 FM
WLAD	800AM	WKHL	96.7 FM
WFAS	1230 AM	WDAQ	98.3 FM

WNLK	1350 AM	WEZN	99.9 FM
WSTC	1400 AM	WFAS	103.9 FM

Television Stations: WTNH (Channel 8) and CABLEVISION News 12

Closings and delays will also be announced on the Norwalk Public Schools Information Line: [854-4123](tel:854-4123) and posted on [Norwalk Public Schools' website](http://www.norwalkpublicschools.org) – www.norwalkpublicschools.org.

We urge all parents/guardians to be alert to the possibility that severe weather conditions can affect school sessions; these weather conditions include *snow, sleet, high wind storm such as hurricanes, heavy rain which can cause flooding and electrical storms which can cause power failure.*

When these conditions exist, or are predicted, there is a strong possibility that school officials will close schools or change school hours. When these decisions are made, they are always made with concern for the safety and comfort of pupils. *These decisions are always announced over WNLK and other local radio stations with as much advance notice as possible. Therefore, we ask parents/guardians to be aware of the weather and weather reports.* When severe weather exists or is predicted, parents/guardians should make a habit of listening to local radio stations for announcements on the following:

Delayed Openings

Announcements on delayed openings will be made beginning at *6:00 a.m.* Delayed openings are usually necessary in order to give the city time to provide for traffic safety or to give our bus transportation system time to prepare buses for safety operation. Delayed openings will mean that your child will start school either one or two hours later than usual.

Early Closings

Occasionally, weather conditions will be such that after school opens on a given day, it becomes necessary to have an early closing. In this situation, we again utilize the radio stations to make announcements. All schools will be notified by telephone. We cannot call every parent/guardian to give individual information; therefore, it is essential that you listen to your radio.

Please arrange some plan for your child to follow in case of an early dismissal. Your child should know where to go in case of an emergency, *i.e., a relative, a friend, or a neighbor.* It would be most helpful if you would let the school know where your child should go if dismissed early in an emergency.

We try to keep emergency school closings at a minimum because of our inability to communicate effectively during such a short span of time. However, there are times when this decision cannot and, in the interest of overall safety, should not be avoided.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

Locker and Desk Searches

The Board of Education provides lockers and desks for personal belongings and school-related materials. These items must be stored only in desks or lockers.

Pupils shall be responsible for maintaining desks and lockers in an orderly and sanitary condition.

The Board of Education, through the school administration, maintains ultimate control over all pupil desks and lockers, as per Connecticut General Statutes, §54-33n. Consequently, the school administration may open and examine any desk or locker when the physical safety of members of the school community or the prevention of disruption to school operations warrant such action.

Pupil Searches

The building principal or his/her designee is authorized to search a pupil's person where there exist reasonable grounds for suspecting the search will produce evidence that the pupil has violated or is violating either the law or a school rule.

In all cases of a proposed search of a pupil's person, the Superintendent of Schools will first be consulted where possible. The building principal or his/her designee shall be expected to use sound professional judgment in deciding whether a search should be conducted. In exercising such judgment, the principal or principal's designee shall determine whether a search would be intrusive in light of the pupil's age and the nature of the infraction. A search of a pupil's person shall be conducted only by a person of the same sex as the pupil and in the presence of a witness of the same sex as the pupil, except in cases of emergency.

SMOKING

Students, Staff, Parents and Visitors

Use of tobacco is prohibited in all areas of Norwalk Public School buildings at all times and on school grounds. Students who violate this policy will be subject to suspensions and fines of \$25.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Norwalk Public School System provides a broad range of special education and related services to meet the needs of all students with exceptional needs. The Planning and Placement Team (PPT) develops the Individual Educational Plan (IEP) for each student in need of special education services in a cooperative effort between school personnel and parents.

The purpose of the PPT is to review diagnostic and evaluative data for each student who has been referred as possibly requiring special education. The goal is to assure that each student needing special education is identified and provided with a free appropriate public education which includes an IEP. The IEP is a prescriptive program planned for an exceptional student by the PPT.

Procedural safeguards for special education (parental rights) are available through the Special Education Department.

Programs in Norwalk

A variety of special education program options are available within the Norwalk Public Schools. This enables the Planning and Placement Team to prescribe individual programming for identified children, which is appropriate to their particular learning needs. The individual program for each child identified as eligible for services, the IEP, is developed in a joint effort between parents and members of the school staff.

Norwalk's broad continuum of special education instructional services include the following:

- Full-time regular classroom instruction with special education support.

- Cooperative teaching with special education and regular education in the mainstream classroom.
- Special education self-contained classes with regular education opportunities.
- In-district and out-of-district alternative programs.

Related Services

Related services in the Norwalk Public Schools are provided by the School Psychologist, Social Worker, Guidance Counselor, Nurse, Speech and Language Pathologist, Physical and Occupational Therapists, Teachers of the Visually Impaired and Hearing Impaired, and the Transportation Department. Other specialists may be involved in the process of assessing, identifying, and teaching students with special needs as recommended by the Planning and Placement Team.

Eligibility

The law requires that each child between the ages of 0 years and 21 years be identified for determination of a child's eligibility to receive special education and related services. In the Norwalk Public Schools, services are available to children with special needs beginning at age three.

Definition of Exceptional Child

"An Exceptional Child means a child who deviates either intellectually, physically, socially or emotionally so markedly from normal expected growth and development patterns that he or she is or will be unable to progress effectively in a regular school program and needs a special class, special instruction, or special services." (10-76a(c))

Category of Special Needs

STUDENTS WITH:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Intellectual Disability | Hearing Impairment |
| Visual Impairment | Speech or Language Impairment |
| Emotional Disturbance | Orthopedic Impairment |
| OHI – ADD/ADHD | Specific Learning Disability |
| Deaf-Blindness | Autism |
| Traumatic Brain Injury | Other Health Impairment |
| Multiple Disabilities | Developmental Delay (ages 3 – 5 only) |

Uncategorized is a term used with children under the age of five. Specific criterion for the determination of eligibility for special education and related services may be obtained through the special education office.

Referral Process

Persistent learning and/or behavioral difficulties may be an indication that your child needs special education or related services. If you suspect that your school age child may have special education needs, you should contact your child's teacher, guidance counselor or school administrator to discuss the concerns you may have regarding your child's performance in school.

Student Response and Planning and Placement Team

A Student Response Team (SRT), made up of school personnel, may meet at your child's school to review his/her performance and progress. An action plan may be developed to provide specific strategies within

the regular school program to help your child. If necessary, a referral may be made to the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) to assess your child's educational needs and possible eligibility for special education.

If a PPT referral is made, you will be informed in writing of the reason for the meeting and invited to attend. Notification of a PPT meeting will be sent to you at least five days before the meeting. The PPT meeting should be scheduled at a time that is mutually convenient for the parents and the school staff. Procedural safeguards for parents of children in special education will be mailed to you at the time your child is referred for special education.

A Planning and Placement Team is made up of professional staff, the student's parent(s), and sometimes the student. PPT members will generally include a school administrator, a teacher who is familiar with your child, and appropriate members of the Special Education and Student Services staff. The PPT is responsible for determining whether your child needs special education and/or related services.

Surrogate Parent

The rights of a child are protected by the appointment of a surrogate parent in the following circumstances:

- when no parent can be identified, the whereabouts of the parents is unknown, OR
- the child is a ward of the state.

The surrogate parent represents the child in all matters relating to the identification, evaluation, and educational placement and the provision of a free appropriate public education to the child. In such instances, notice is issued from the Department of Children and Family Services. The district's Director of Special Education will request from the State Department of Education the assignment of a surrogate parent.

The surrogate parent has the same legal rights as granted to parents or guardians with respect to special education and related services. These include the following:

- Consent for pre-placement evaluation, initial placement and placement in private facilities
- Written notices in dominant language and issuance of such notices five days before the Planning and Placement Team meeting
- Right to participate in IEP development
- Right to see the assigned student's records
- Right to initiate due process

STUDENT RECORDS/PARENTAL RIGHTS

Parent/Student Notification Prior to Destruction of Student Records

Enrolled Special Education Students: Parents will be notified verbally or in writing by the Custodian of

Records if after a review of the records, it is determined that certain student information is no longer necessary for educational purposes. It is recommended that whenever possible this review take place at or immediately after a PPT (but while the parent is present).

Graduated Non-Special Education Students: A notification will be placed in local newspapers stating that confidential records for students who were not identified as handicapped at the time they graduated or left the school system before graduation will be destroyed. This notice will appear six years following the student's expected graduation date.

Graduated Identified Special Education Students: A letter will be mailed to the last known address and a notification will be placed in local newspapers regarding the destruction of Confidential records for students who were identified as handicapped at the time they graduated or left the school system. This notification process will take place six years following the student's expected graduation date. The Supervisor of Special Services will only implement the procedure if he/she feels the information in the records will not be helpful to the handicapped student to obtain benefits from other government or private agencies in the future.

Cumulative Records: Notification will be placed in local newspapers regarding the destruction of cumulative records fifty years after the student's expected graduation date.

Permission for Destruction of Student Records

Before records are destroyed, the written approval of four officials must be obtained: (1) The School Superintendent, (2) The Chief Administrative Officer of the Municipality, (3) The State Public Records Administrator and (4) The State Librarian.

Parental Rights Regarding Records

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

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the District receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate or misleading.

Parents or eligible students may ask the School District to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading.

If the District decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the District will notify the parent 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 or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. 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 District 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 District has contracted to perform a special task (such as attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as 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 educational record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

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

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

Notification of Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

The PPRA affords parents as well as students who are 18 and emancipated minors (“eligible students”) certain rights regarding the conduct of student surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

1. Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following subjects (“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
 - Mental or psychological problems of the student or student’s family
 - Sex behavior or attitude
 - 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 parents or
 - Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.
2. 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
 - Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others, except to the extent notification of such activities is not required by law.

3. 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
- Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

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

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

Pupil Directory Information

Information contained in the educational record of an enrolled student is hereby designated as **directory information** and may NOT be disclosed by school officials without the prior consent of a parent or eligible student, except the following:

- The student's name
- The student's photograph/yearbook
- The student's dates of enrollment
- The student's grade level
- The student's participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- The student's weight and height as a member of an athletic team
- Honors and awards received by the student
- Alumni parent or student addresses

A parent or eligible student may refuse to allow Norwalk school officials to designate any or all of the above listed types of information as directory information. Any such refusal must be made in writing to and must be received by the principal.

SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

The summer school is an extension of our educational program offered during the regular school year. Some summer programs have specific guidelines for students who may attend. In some cases, students are required to attend summer school in order to advance to the next grade. Some programs are free while others require a modest tuition fee. Although priority is given to *Norwalk* residents (especially for remedial programs), some summer school programs are open to residents, non-residents, public, private and parochial school pupils.

The major purposes of the Norwalk Summer Educational programs are to provide learning experiences for pupils who:

- need remedial help,

- need make-up classes,
- need special learning programs, or
- want enrichment or recreational activities

In the spring of the year, summer school brochures are widely distributed. They contain full information on all programs, registration procedures and payments of funds. Further information may be obtained by calling your school office.

SUSPENSION, EXPULSION, REMOVAL FROM THE CLASSROOM

Section I – Definitions

- A. "Exclusion" is defined as any denial of public school privileges to a student for disciplinary purposes.
- B. "Removal" is defined as an exclusion from a classroom for all or part of a single class period, provided such exclusion shall not extend beyond 90 minutes.
- C. "Suspension" is defined as an exclusion from school privileges and/or from transportation services for not more than ten (10) consecutive school days, provided such exclusion shall not extend beyond the end of the school year in which such suspension was imposed.
- D. "Expulsion" is defined as an exclusion from school privileges for more than ten (10) consecutive school days and shall be deemed to include, but not be limited to, exclusion from the school to which such student was assigned at the time such disciplinary action was taken, provided such exclusion shall not extend beyond a period of one (1) calendar year. Such period of exclusion may extend to the school year following the school year in which such exclusion was imposed.
- E. "Emergency" is defined as a situation under which the continued presence of the student in the school imposes such a danger to persons or property or such a disruption of the educational process that a hearing may be delayed until a time as soon after the exclusion of such student as possible.
- F. "Days" is defined as days when school is in session.
- G. "School sponsored activity" is defined as any activity sponsored, recognized or authorized by a board of education and includes activities conducted on or off school property.
- H. "Possess" means to have physical possession or otherwise to exercise dominion or control over tangible property.
- I. "Deadly weapon" means any weapon, whether loaded or unloaded, from which a shot may be discharged, or a switchblade knife, gravity knife, billy, blackjack, bludgeon, or metal knuckles.
- J. "Dangerous instrument" means any instrument, article or substance which, under the circumstances in which it is used or attempted or threatened to be used, is capable of causing death or serious physical injury, and includes a motor vehicle and a dog that has been commanded to attack.
- K. "Firearm" means 1) any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; 2) the frame or receiver of any such weapon; 3) any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or 4) any destructive device. Firearm does not

include any antique firearm. For purposes of this definition "destructive device" means any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas, bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than 4 ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than 1/4 ounce, mine, or device similar to any of the weapons described herein.

- L. "Vehicle" means a "motor vehicle" as defined in Section 14-1 of the Connecticut General Statutes, snow mobile, any aircraft, or any vessel equipped for propulsion by mechanical means or sail.
- M. "Martial arts weapon" means a nunchaku, kama, kasari-fundo, octagon sai, tonfa or Chinese star.
- N. "Bullying" means any overt acts by a student or a group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity which acts are repeated against the same student over time.

PROCEDURES TO ADDRESS BULLYING

Reporting Alleged Incident Of Bullying

Any alleged incident of bullying observed by staff (teachers, custodians, etc.) MUST BE REPORTED to the building administrations in writing. The names, date, and a brief description should be included in the report. Buildings may use their current teacher referral forms for purposes of reporting to building administration.

Students and families are entitled to report any alleged incident of bullying to the building administrator. This maybe done anonymously if desired.

Investigating

Reported incidents must be investigated by building administration to verify if in fact the alleged incident was one of bullying. Counselors or social workers should be involved in this process.

Follow-Up Procedures

If the incident is confirmed to be a bullying incident as defined in the Board of Education Policy # 5131.91, the building administration must address the issue directly with ALL students involved in the incident as well as with staff present during the incident. Counseling must be offered to any and all students involved whether a victim of the bullying or the one bullying.

Record Keeping

If the incident is confirmed to be a bullying incident as defined in the Board of Education Policy # 5131.91, the building administration is required to notify the parents or guardians of the victim and the student committing the bullying. A log needs to be created to keep record of school-home communication and incidences of bullying.

Building Administration must in turn report all incidents of bullying in their data suspension report to the Office of Information Technology. Reports from buildings should also include a brief description of the incident.

Section II- Removal from Class

- A. Each teacher shall have the authority to remove a student from class when such student deliberately causes a serious disruption of the educational process within the classroom, provided

that no student shall be removed from class more than six times any year, no more than twice in one week unless such student is referred to the building principal, or his/her designee, and granted an informal hearing as set forth in section IV C of this policy.

- B. Whenever any teacher removes a student from the classroom, such teacher shall send the student to a designated area and shall immediately inform the building principal or his/her designee as to the name of the student against whom such disciplinary action was taken and the reason therefore.

Section III- Standards Governing Suspension And Expulsion

- A. Conduct on school grounds or at a school sponsored activity as set forth in Section C, herein, or that violates any other Board policy or that violates any code of student conduct in effect in the school that:
 - 1. Seriously disrupts the educational process, *or*
 - 2. Endangers persons or property will be cause for suspension and/or expulsion.
- B. Conduct off school grounds as described in paragraph A, above, that:
 - 1. Violates Board policy *and*
 - 2. Seriously disrupts the educational process will be cause for suspension and/or expulsion.
- C. The following conduct is prohibited and will be considered cause for suspension and/or expulsion:
 - 1. Threatening in any manner, including orally, in writing, or via electronic communication, injury to a member of the school community, including any teacher, member of the school administration or any other employee, or a fellow student;
 - 2. Use of physical force against another person, which is not reasonably necessary or self-defense;
 - 3. Theft of personal or school property, or taking or attempting to take personal property or money from another person, or from his/her presence, by means of force or fear;
 - 4. Willfully causing, or attempting to cause, damage to school property;
 - 5. Possession, use, transmission or being under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind;
 - 6. Possession or transmission of a facsimile of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, or marijuana;
 - 7. Knowingly being in the presence of those who are in possession of, using, transmitting, or being under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind;
 - 8. Possession or transmission of any firearm, deadly weapon, dangerous instrument, martial arts weapon, or knife, or facsimile of any weapon or instrument;
 - 9. Using or copying the academic work of another and presenting it as his/her own without proper attribution;
 - 10. Possessing or consuming tobacco products if other than a high school student, or consuming such products in an unauthorized area if a high school student;
 - 11. Open defiance of the authority of any teacher or person having authority over the student, including verbal abuse;
 - 12. Intentional and successful incitement of truancy by other students;

13. Bullying, which includes any overt acts by a student or a group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity which acts are repeated against the same student over time;
 14. Violation of any other board policy, rule, agreement, or directive dealing with student conduct, including that dealing with conduct on school buses and the use of school district equipment and;
 15. Violation of any federal or state law which would indicate that the violator presents a danger to any person in the school community or to school property.
- D. Expulsion proceedings pursuant to section V, shall be required whenever there is reason to believe that any student
1. was in possession of a firearm, deadly weapon, dangerous instrument or martial arts weapon, on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity;
 2. off school grounds, did possess a firearm or did possess and use such a firearm, dangerous instrument, deadly weapon or martial arts weapon in the commission of a crime; or
 3. on or off school grounds, offered for sale or distribution a controlled substance as defined in Connecticut General Statutes, 21a-240(9), whose manufacture, distribution, sale, prescription, dispensing, transporting or possessing with intent to sell or dispense, offering or administering is subject to criminal penalties under 21a-277 and 21a-278. A student shall be expelled for a period of one calendar year if the board of education finds that the student engaged in any of the conduct described herein, provided the period of expulsion may be modified on a case-by-case basis.

In the event it is determined by the Superintendent that a student issued a threat against a member of the school community as described in paragraph C.1, above, the matter shall be referred to law enforcement officials for possible criminal prosecution and the Superintendent shall take all available measures to ensure the safety of persons in the school community in the event of the student's return to school.

Section IV- Suspension Procedure

- A. The administration of each school shall have the authority to invoke a suspension for a period of up to ten (10) days of any student for one or more of the reasons stated in section III, above, in accordance with the procedure outlined in Paragraph C of this section. Moreover, the administration is authorized to suspend a student from transportation services whose conduct while receiving transportation violates the standards set forth in section III, above. The administration is authorized to immediately suspend any student when there is an emergency as defined in section I.

If an emergency exists, the hearing outlined in Paragraph C of this section shall be held as soon as possible after the suspension.

- B. In the case of suspension, the administration shall notify the superintendent of schools within twenty-four (24) hours of the suspension as to the name of the student who has been suspended and the reason for suspension. Any student who is suspended shall be given an opportunity to complete any class work including but not limited to examinations missed during the period of his/her suspension.

- C. Except in the case of an emergency as defined in section I, above, a student shall be afforded the opportunity to meet with the administration and to discuss the stated charges prior to the effectuation of any period of suspension. If at such a meeting the student denies the stated charges he/she may at that time present his/her version of the incident(s) upon which the proposed suspension is based. The school administration shall then determine whether or not suspension is warranted. In determining the length of a suspension period, the administration may receive and consider evidence of past disciplinary problems which have led to removal from a classroom, suspension or expulsion.
- D. No student shall be suspended more than ten (10) times or a total of fifty (50) days in one school year, whichever results in fewer days of exclusion, unless a hearing as provided in section V B of this policy is first granted.
- E. No student shall be placed on suspension more than fifteen (15) times or a total of fifty (50) days in one school year, whichever results in fewer days of exclusion, unless a hearing as provided in section V B of this policy is first granted.
- F. Whenever a student is suspended, notice of the suspension and the conduct for which the student was suspended shall be included on the student's cumulative educational record. Such notice shall be expunged from the cumulative educational record by the local or regional board of education if a student graduates from high school.

Section V - Expulsion Procedures

The board of education may expel any student for one or more of the reasons stated in section III if, in the superintendent's judgment, such disciplinary action is in the best interests of the school system. An expulsion hearing is required in any instance in which the superintendent has reason to believe a student has engaged in the conduct described in section IIID. The procedures outlined in Paragraphs A and B, below, shall be followed prior to the effectuation of any expulsion unless an "emergency" as defined in section I, above, exists. If an emergency exists, such a hearing shall be held as soon after the expulsion as possible.

- A. The board of education shall notify the student concerned and his/her parents, or the student if he/she has attained the age of eighteen (18), that expulsion is under consideration. Such notice shall contain the information required under Paragraph B of this section. Three members of the board of education shall constitute a quorum for an expulsion hearing. A student may be expelled if a majority of the board members sitting in the expulsion hearing vote to expel provided that three affirmative votes shall be required for expulsion.
- B. The procedure for any hearing conducted under this section shall be determined by the hearing officer or board chairperson, as appropriate, but shall include the right to:
 - 1. Notice of the proposed hearing, which shall include:
 - a. a statement of the time, place and nature of the hearing;
 - b. a statement of the legal authority and jurisdiction under which the hearing is to be held;
 - c. reference to the particular sections of the Connecticut General Statutes or school policies involved;

- d. a short and plain statement of the matters asserted, if such matters have not already been provided in a statement of reasons requested by the student; the statement so provided may be limited to a statement of the issues involved if it is not possible to state the issues in detail at the time such notice is served. Upon request from the student concerned, a more definite and detailed statement of the issues shall be furnished; and
 - e. a statement, where appropriate, that the board is not required to offer an alternative educational opportunity to any student between the ages of sixteen and eighteen who (1) has been expelled previously or (2) is found to have engaged in conduct that endangered persons and involved (a) possession on school property or a school-sponsored activity a firearm, deadly weapon, dangerous instrument or martial arts weapon, or (b) offering for sale or distribution on school property or at a school sponsored activity a controlled substance as defined by law. (See section VIII on Alternative Educational Opportunity);
4. The opportunity to be heard;
 3. The opportunity to present witnesses and evidence;
 4. The opportunity to cross-examine adverse witnesses;
 5. The opportunity to be represented by counsel; and
 6. Prompt notification of the decision of the board of education which decision shall be in writing if adverse to the student concerned.

C. The record of any hearing held in an expulsion case shall include the following:

1. All evidence received and considered by the board of education, including a copy of the initial letter of notice of proposed expulsion, if any, and a copy of all notices of hearing;
2. Questions and offers of proof, objections and rulings on such objections;
3. The decision of the board of education rendered after such hearing; and
4. The official transcript, if any, of the proceedings relating to the case, or, if not transcribed, any recording or stenographic record of the proceeding.

D. Rules of evidence at expulsion hearings shall include the following:

1. Any oral documentary evidence may be received by the board of education, but a matter of policy, irrelevant, immaterial or unduly repetitious evidence shall be excluded;
2. The board of education shall give effect to the rules of privilege recognized by law;
3. In order to expedite a hearing, evidence may be received in written form, provided the interest of any party is not substantially prejudiced thereby;
4. Documentary evidence may be received in the form of copies or excerpts if the original is not readily available provided, however, that any party to a hearing shall be given an opportunity to compare the copy with the original;
5. A party to an expulsion hearing may conduct a cross-examination of witnesses where examination is required for a full and accurate disclosure of the facts;
6. The board of education may take notice of judicially cognizable facts in addition to facts within the board's specialized knowledge provided, however, the parties shall be notified either before or during the hearing of material noticed, including any staff memoranda or data, and an opportunity shall be afforded to any party to contest the material so noted;

7. A record of any oral proceedings before the board of education at an expulsion hearing shall be made provided, however, that a transcript of such proceedings should be furnished upon request of a party with the cost of such transcript to be paid by the requesting party.
- E. In determining the length of an expulsion, the board of education may receive and consider evidence of past disciplinary problems, which have lead to removal from a classroom, suspension, or expulsion.
- F. Decisions shall be in writing if adverse to the student and shall include findings of fact and conclusions necessary for the decision. Findings of fact made by the board after an expulsion hearing shall be based exclusively upon the evidence adduced at the hearing.
- G. Any student who is expelled shall be offered an alternative educational opportunity consistent with the requirements of state law as set forth in Section VII of this policy.
- H. Whenever a student is expelled pursuant to the provisions of this policy, notice of the expulsion and the conduct for which the student was expelled shall be included on the student's cumulative educational record. Such notice, except for notice of an expulsion based upon possession of a firearm or deadly weapon, shall be expunged from the cumulative educational record if the student graduates from high school.
- I. Whenever a student against whom an expulsion hearing is pending withdraws from school after notification of such hearing but before the hearing is completed and a decision rendered, notice of the pending expulsion hearing shall be included on the student's cumulative educational record and the board of education shall complete the expulsion hearing and render a decision.
- J. The board of education may adopt the decision of a student expulsion hearing conducted by another school district, provided that the board shall hold a hearing pursuant to this policy which shall be limited to a determination of whether the conduct which was the basis for the expulsion would also warrant expulsion under the policies of the board of education. The student shall be excluded from school pending such hearing. The excluded student shall be offered an alternative educational opportunity in accordance with statutory requirements and this policy.
- K. Students requiring special education and related services shall be subject to discipline consistent with state and federal law. Whenever a student requiring special education services is found to have: (1) been in possession of a firearm, deadly weapon, dangerous instrument or martial arts weapon, on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity; (2) off school grounds, possessed a firearm or possessed and used such a firearm, dangerous instrument, deadly weapon or martial arts weapon in the commission of a crime; or (3) or off school grounds for sale or distribution a controlled substance as defined in Connecticut General Statutes 21a-240(9), whose manufacture, distribution, sales, prescription, dispensing, transporting or possessing with intent to sell or dispense, offering or administering is subject to criminal penalties under 21a-277 and 21a-278, said student shall be referred to a planning and placement team (PPT) for a determination of whether the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability. If it is determined that the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability the PPT shall modify the student's individualized educational plan in order to prevent the reoccurrence of such behavior and to ensure the safety of other children in the school.

Section VI - Notification to Parents or Guardian

The parents or guardian of any minor student against whom disciplinary action is taken under this policy shall be given notice of such disciplinary action within twenty-four (24) hours of the time the student was excluded.

Section VII- Alternative Educational Opportunity

The board of education recognizes its obligation to offer any student under the age of sixteen (16), who is expelled, an alternative educational opportunity during the period of expulsion. Any parent or guardian of such student who does not choose to have his or her child enrolled in an alternative program shall not be subject to the provisions of Section 10-184 of the General Statutes. Any expelled student who is between the ages of sixteen (16) and eighteen (18) and who wishes to continue his or her education shall be offered an alternative educational opportunity if he or she complies with conditions established by the board of education. Such alternative may include, but shall not be limited to, the placement of such student in a regular classroom program of a school other than the one from which the student has been excluded and, for students at least sixteen (16) years of age, placement in an adult education program. In determining the nature of the alternative educational opportunity to be offered under this section the board of education may receive and consider evidence of past disciplinary problems which have led to removal from a classroom, suspension, or expulsion.

State statutes do not require the board to offer an alternative educational opportunity to a student between the ages of sixteen (16) and eighteen (18) who has been expelled previously or who is expelled because of conduct which endangers persons and it was determined at the expulsion hearing that the conduct for which the student was expelled involved (a) possession on school property or a school-sponsored activity of a firearm, deadly weapon, dangerous instrument, or martial arts weapon or (b) offering for sale or distribution on school property or at a school-sponsored activity a controlled substance as defined in subdivision (9) of C.G.S. State Statute 21a-240, whose manufacture, distribution, sale, prescription, dispensing, transporting, or possessing with the intent to sell or dispense, offering, or administration is subject to criminal penalties under C.G.S. State Statutes 21a-277 and 21a-278. If the board expels a student for the sale or distribution of such a controlled substance, the board shall refer the student to an appropriate state or local agency for rehabilitation, intervention or job training, or any combination thereof, and inform the agency of its action. If the board expels a student for possession of a firearm or deadly weapon, the board shall report the violation to the local police department. The board shall give the name of the student and a summary of the board's action in so referring the student, to the commissioner of education within thirty (30) days after the student is expelled.

The provisions of this section shall not apply to students requiring special education who are described in subdivision (1) of subsection (e) of Connecticut General Statutes 10-76a.

VIII - Gun Free Schools Act

The board of education shall submit to the commissioner of education such information on expulsions for the possession of weapons as is required for purposes of the Gun Free Schools Act of 1994, 20 U.S.C. State Statute 8921, et. seq.

Connecticut General Statutes

4-176e through 4-180a	21a-240
4-181a	21a-277
10-76a	21a-278
10-233a through 10-233g	

TECHNOLOGY - USE OF COMPUTERS AND NETWORKS

Technology is an integral part of the classroom curriculum. A technology-rich instructional/learning environment better meets the individual learning basic skills as well as communication, critical thinking and creativity. A long-range Technology Plan is in progress throughout the district. A copy of the Technology Plan is available on request. Specific policies and procedures are being established to guide and monitor the use of instructional technology. A Parent/Student Handbook and an Acceptable Use Policy (A.U.P.) for technology will be distributed as these technologies are implemented in the schools.

Regulations for Student Use of Computers and Networks / Technology Acceptable Use Policy:

Computers and networks provide access to resources as well as the ability to communicate with other users worldwide. Such open access is a privilege and requires that individual users act responsibly. Users must respect the rights of other users, respect the integrity of the system and related physical resources, and observe all relevant laws, regulations, and contractual obligations.

Use of computers by students and access by students to computer networks and to the Internet are services made available to further the educational mission of the Norwalk Public Schools. In order to be granted these access privileges and to retain them, students must abide by the guidelines set forth in these regulations.

All school computer systems, including equipment and operating systems are the sole property of the Norwalk Public Schools. Use of the Norwalk Public School's computer systems, including internet access and email, is not guaranteed to be private. As such, the user does not have an expectation of privacy in his/her use of such systems, and the Norwalk Public Schools reserves the right to monitor the use of such systems to ensure compliance with school policies and use guidelines such as, bypassing passwords where appropriate.

Information Networks

The Norwalk Public Schools' network connects all schools and offices to make sharing information and communicating possible. This network supports activities that have educational value for administration, instruction and learning by teachers and students. The Internet is a collection of many worldwide networks that support the open exchange of information. The Internet provides immediate access to information anywhere in the world. Users can view or print articles, documents and pictures that can be used in the instructional-learning process.

Student Behavior

Students are expected to use all computer equipment and network access to pursue intellectual activities, to seek resources, to access libraries and for other types of learning activities. Students must explore this new "space" to discover what is available there. They will learn new information and can share their newfound knowledge with classmates, teachers, parents and global learning partners. For the safety of all involved, caution must be exercised when communicating with people anywhere.

Because the Norwalk Public Schools' network is used as part of a school activity, the Code of Conduct for each student's school applies to network activity. Therefore, the Acceptable Use Policy is an extension of each school's behavior code. These rules apply to vandalism of computer equipment, unauthorized access to information, computer piracy, hacking, and tampering with hardware and software.

The network may not be used to annoy, harass, or otherwise offend others. These rules also apply to other types of damage or information loss on the information networks that might be caused by destructive devices such as computer viruses. Any person responsible for a computer becoming infected with viruses, worms or any other type of destructive device will be liable. *Improper behavior may result in penalties, sanctions, and other consequences.*

Copying Software

With a few exceptions, software on the Norwalk Public Schools' computers and network are licensed for use on the Norwalk Public Schools' computers only. Copying software from a computer or network is prohibited unless specifically authorized in writing by an appropriate authority. *Illegal copying of software is subject to civil damages and criminal penalties, including fines and imprisonment.*

Moral and Ethical Issues

The Norwalk Public School District wants to provide a stimulating educational environment in which students, teachers and parents can grow as a learning community. While the Norwalk Public School District wants this valuable educational tool used, the use of inappropriate information on the Internet will not be condoned. Some materials exist which are inappropriate to the instructional setting, and reasonable measures will be taken to prevent them from being accessed. Users must clearly understand that access to such material in any form is strictly forbidden.

The network is designed to achieve and support instructional goals and is *not intended to be used for financial gain*. Any information that does not support classroom learning should be avoided. Although the actual percentage of unacceptable materials is small, it can cause concern for students and parents if a student accesses those materials while doing legitimate research. If you have a question or concern regarding any materials found, students should apprise the teacher or computer lab supervisor.

Digital Content

Materials on the Internet can be considered part of a vast digital library. Electronic database and information search tools to access the Internet are becoming part of school media centers and libraries. Many public libraries also offer some type of Internet access as part of their services. Guidelines for access to information have already been established in the *Library Bill of Rights* of 1980. These principles can be applied to the Internet as well. This document states that "attempts to restrict access to library materials violate the basic tenets of the *Library Bill of Rights*;" however, school librarians are required to devise collections that are "consistent with the philosophy, goals and objectives of the school district." This means that students have the right to information, but the school has the right to restrict any information that does not apply to the approved curriculum.

Using Resources

Information networks have limited capacities. The more users there are on the network, the more congested the network becomes, and access to information will take longer. The following guidelines will help ease congestion:

- Do not tie up the network with idle activities.
- Do not play games with others on the network or on Internet.
- Do not download huge files unless directed to do so by a teacher.
- Download only information that is needed.
- Use access time efficiently.

TESTING PROGRAM

The State of Connecticut requires all public school students in grades three through eight to take the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT). In March, students are tested in Math, Reading, and Writing. The CMT reflects the State's high expectations for student achievement, and allows districts to continually monitor student progress. Beginning in 2007-08, each student enrolled in grades five and eight will also take a statewide mastery test in Science.

In addition, the State of Connecticut requires students enrolled in priority school districts, such as Norwalk, to take a set of tests called the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) in grades one through three. Students are tested one-on-one to assess the development of their reading skills. DRA results are reported on the student's progress report.

In the Spring of second grade, all students are given a Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) test, as well as Structure of Intellect learning abilities tests (SOI). The DRP measures reading comprehension and is used as a regular part of the state's standardized testing program in grades three through eight. The SOI measures student aptitude in comprehension, memory, critical thinking, and creativity.

Individual student reports are provided for parents/guardians for all system-wide testing. The reports for the Connecticut Mastery Test are generated by the State and mailed to parents/guardians by the local district, as soon as the State Department of Education makes them available. Second Grade Screening results are mailed to parents/guardians in late June.

TRUANCY

See Section III: Code of Conduct: Part XV – Other Rules Related to Attendance

VISITORS

Parents and the public are always welcome at our schools. It is recommended that all visitors, including parents, call the school in advance for an appointment for a school tour or classroom visit. All visitors must report directly to the main office upon entering the school. All visitors must register in the school office by signing in and signing out as well as obtaining a Visitor's Pass.

VOLUNTEERS

The *Norwalk Public Schools* encourage parents/guardians and other citizens to serve as volunteers in our schools. Some of the interesting and rewarding volunteer activities include assisting the teacher with regular or special programs, helping individual children or small groups, sharing special talents or knowledge, helping in the library, chaperoning students on field trips, helping in the school office and reading or telling stories. The time that volunteers give is most helpful and greatly appreciated.

SECTION III. CODE OF CONDUCT, Elementary Level K-5

This code consists of a set of administrative guidelines for the purpose of establishing consistency and fairness among the elementary administrative teams. These guidelines are not intended to constrain or limit the judgment of the administrator or the authority of the board of education to expel a student.

The principal and/or his/her designee shall execute the following guidelines with discretion. Each incident will be thoroughly investigated and “due process” followed. It is important to realize that these guidelines pertain to all students when they are in school, on the school grounds, on a school bus or at any school activity.

Parents will be notified of any disciplinary action.

I. PREFACE

This STUDENT HANDBOOK (Elementary Level) contains a summary of rules governing discipline in the Norwalk Public Schools. The STUDENT HANDBOOK is intended to provide a clear and concise description of student disciplinary offenses, penalties for those offenses, and the procedures to be followed in handling disciplinary problems.

II. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION STATEMENT

“It is the policy of the Norwalk Board of Education not to discriminate on the basis of sex in any of its educational programs, activities, and employment policies as required by Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments”.

IIIA. EQUAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY

No student shall be excluded by removal, suspension, or expulsion or otherwise disciplined based on race, sex, color, religion, national origin, poverty, pregnancy, parenthood, marriage, handicapping condition, special needs, or language difficulty.

IIIB. TITLE IX OPPORTUNITY

Pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and its implementing regulations, no individual may be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program receiving Federal financial assistance.

Persons who feel they have been denied equal opportunities on the basis of sex may file a complaint with the Norwalk Public Schools/ Board of Education Title IX Compliance Officer, Bruce V. Morris. The Compliance Officer can be reached at:

Norwalk Public Schools, 125 East Avenue, Norwalk, Ct 06856 or (203) 84-4013.

IV. DISCIPLINE POLICY

The policy of the Norwalk Board of Education is that school discipline and due process are essential to equality of educational opportunity and to a safe and effective educational environment. It is the Board’s policy to encourage teachers and administrators to handle discipline problems in the classroom

or at building level, and to employ all possible, positive, productive, progressive, and preventive alternatives, approaches, and avenues prior to the imposition of disciplinary penalties.

The Norwalk Board of Education further, views school discipline as a partnership of shared responsibilities among the students, the school, and the parents. Parents are encouraged to plan an active role in the discipline of their children and will be called upon by the school to assist in and attend disciplinary proceedings. Parental cooperation, communication, contact, and conferences are critical if a child's behavior problems are to be controlled and corrected.

The Code is to be implemented in a fair, consistent, and equitable manner, mindful of the rights of students, as well as the security, safety, and educational interests of the schools. Accordingly, the Board believes this Code is one step in creating an atmosphere in the schools to improve learning, build morale, and teach students responsibility, character education and accountability for their own conduct and education.

The principal and/or his/her designee shall execute the following guidelines with discretion. Each incident will be thoroughly investigated and "due process" followed. It is important to realize that these guidelines pertain to all elementary students when they are in school, on the school grounds, on a school bus or at any school activity.

V. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students have the responsibility to conduct themselves in a responsible, mature manner in the school and around the campus, which will promote an educational climate free from interference and interruptions. Student's responsibilities are to:

- be informed about and adhere to, this Code and other rules and policies established by the Board, school authorities, administrators, and teachers.
- respect the rights of fellow students, as well as teachers, administrators, other school personnel, and school guests.
- respect the educational process and learning environment by refraining from tardiness, truancy, and unexcused absences and by full participation in the academic life of the school.
- behave in a responsible and reasonable manner while in attendance at all school or school related functions held on or off school grounds.
- be prepared for class and prepared to complete assignments and make-up work on time.
- initiate and inquire of the appropriate teacher as to when and how class work and examinations, missed during absences, can be completed.

VI. PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents have the responsibility to:

- be informed of school rules and policies.
- insure that their children attend school regularly.
- keep in regular communication with the school concerning their children's conduct and progress.
- be knowledgeable about and have access to, all educational, medical and similar records of their children.

- inform, instruct and assist their children to behave in a responsible and reasonable manner, respecting the rights and property of others in conformity with this Code.
- bring to the attention of school authorities any academic or disciplinary problems and assist school authorities in the correction of such problems.
- attend and participate fully in the disciplinary proceedings and school conferences arranged for the benefit of their children.

VII. SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

School administrators and teachers have the responsibility to:

- be informed of state law, school rules and policies set forth in the Code of Conduct.
- inform students and parents of their rights under the Code of Conduct
- maintain discipline in the school in a fair, consistent and equitable manner
- conduct the disciplinary hearings and conferences in an impartial, objective and professional manner
- attempt to resolve disciplinary problems by every reasonable means short of exclusion from school and reach non-punitive, productive solutions to problems of student conduct.
- encourage parental participation, cooperation and communication with the school.
- provide students with reminders, homework, notices and other opportunities, to complete any class work, including examinations, missed because of absences.
- utilize the services of special personnel, guidance counselors, and community agencies to assist with discipline problems.

VIII. PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS

Those who administer discipline are asked to remember that a disciplinary response must be developmentally appropriate and should be administered only after proper review of the incident by the disciplinary team (teacher, administrator and/or appropriate support or other staff). It is the joint responsibility of the teachers and administrators to communicate in regard to a disciplinary response and to cooperate in the solution of the problem. Removals from class and the various forms of suspension are only a temporary response to behavioral issues. While many times an appropriate response to a behavioral violation, suspension requires a school to have a well-planned and supportive reception for the returning student to insure the behavior is not repeated and to gain an understanding of what caused the behavior initially. Our work as educators requires that we educate students in acceptable and appropriate behavior in the school setting. In many cases, this may require counseling, social work services and other interventions that must be part of a planned and sustained response. The Department of Pupil Personnel Services can be a valuable resource in this effort. With these issues in mind, please note the following procedural safeguards:

Removal from Class

A “removal” is a disciplinary exclusion from a classroom from all or part of a single class period, provided such exclusion shall not exceed 90 minutes. Teachers are authorized to remove students from class when the student deliberately causes a serious disruption of the educational process within the classroom by engaging, for example, in persistent, loud or unnecessary talking out of turn, playing radios or recorders, refusing to sit in chairs or at desks, or pushing, moving, or banging on furniture. No student shall be removed from class more than six times in any school year or more than twice in one

week unless the student is referred to the building principal/assistant principal and granted the opportunity for an informal hearing accordance with the procedures governing suspensions as described below. Any teacher who removes a student from a classroom shall send the student directly to a supervised area or room designated by the principal and shall immediately inform the principal/assistant principal or the designee as to the student's name and reason for such disciplinary action. After an informal conference, the principal/assistant principal may reinstate the student to the class, from which the student has been removed, if the principal/assistant principal is satisfied that the student shall not continue the disruptive conduct that led to the removal in the first place.

The principal/assistant principal, with the cooperation of a teacher, may remove a student from class for a brief conversation or conference and place that student in another class or other educational setting such as a resource room for consultative, non-disciplinary or preventive purposes when such student is having difficulty adjusting to a substitute teacher or experiencing other emotional or educational problems. Such disciplinary removal shall not subject to the hearing requirements of suspension.

IX. IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS

The in-school suspension is a procedure in which the assigned student spends the full day in a restricted area away from the rest of the students.

The in-school suspension class will be held in an appropriate location in the school and will be properly supervised.

The student will be assigned a date to report to in-School Suspension. This will allow the student and school time to receive parental acknowledgement of the assignment and allow teachers to provide meaningful assignments. The school will also supply pertinent material with which the in-school suspension supervisor can make assignments.

A student assigned to in-school suspension will be considered present for the day. The supervisor will be allowed to assign only one additional day of in-school suspension. After serving in-school suspension, the student will not have to return to school with a parent or guardian. Each school should attempt to limit the number of in-school suspension students to no more than 20 such suspensions in a school year. A student who intentionally misses in-school suspension will be subject to further administrative action.

X. SUSPENSION

A suspension is an exclusion from school attendance and privileges for a definite period, not to exceed 10 consecutive school days, provided such exclusion should not extend beyond the end of the school year in which the suspension was imposed. Each day of suspension shall be considered a day of authorized excused absence with no possibility of waiving the absence.

XI. EMERGENCY SUSPENSION

An emergency suspension means exclusions from school attendance and privileges for as long as the emergency exists, but no more than three consecutive school days. An emergency shall mean a situation where the continued presence of the student in school poses such a danger to persons or property, or such a disruption of the educational process, that a hearing cannot be effectively held prior to excluding the student from school. The unavailability of an administrator shall not be a basis for postponing a hearing. The principal may suspend a student without prior notice or informal hearing if an emergency as described above exists. In so suspending, the principal shall announce in turn the

duration of the disciplinary action and inform the student that the student is to return to school at the end of that period. In an emergency situation, the notice shall be given and an informal hearing shall be held as soon as possible after the exclusion.

The administrator shall schedule the hearing at the earliest practicable and convenient time for the student and parent but not later than three school days after the emergency exclusion.

The principal/assistant principal may extend the suspension up to the maximum of 10 school days (including the days of emergency suspension) provided an informal hearing has been held and the principal/assistant principal determines that the student committed a suspendable offense.

At this informal hearing, the principal/assistant principal shall inform the student of the reasons for the proposed suspensions and shall determine whether the student understands those reasons. The student shall be given an explanation of the evidence against the student and an opportunity to explain the situation or the student's side of the story. The principal or designee shall perform such fact-finding investigation as is deemed necessary to ascertain the accuracy of the charges and of the rebuttal by the student.

The principal/assistant principal shall carefully weigh the evidence and explanation, seek additional evidence, and conduct a more formal hearing if the circumstances surrounding the incident justify further inquiry for full and true disclosure of the facts. The formality of the hearing may vary with the seriousness of the situation and with the possible length of suspension being contemplated by the principal/assistant principal.

No student shall be suspended more than 10 times or a total of 50 days in one year, whichever occurs first, unless the student is granted a formal hearing as described under the Expulsion section of the handbook.

The principal/assistant principal who suspends a student shall, within 24 hours of the decision to suspend, send notification in writing to the student's parent, informing parent of the reason for the disciplinary action, the penalty, the dates of readmission, and requesting a parental conference on the readmission date or sooner. Such notification shall be sent to the parent by first class mail, postage pre-paid. The notification may include a statement that if the parent attends a conference with the principal and if the principal is satisfied that the student's misconduct will not be repeated, then the principal may readmit the student before the expiration of the suspension period. The principal who suspends a student shall, within 24 hours of the suspension, notify the superintendent or designee of the student's name, the reason for the suspension, and the penalty using the appropriate forms.

When using the Elementary Level Code of Conduct, it is important to remember that suspension is a serious intervention in managing student behavior and is considered reasonable for grades K-5 when all other interventions have been utilized.

XII. EXPULSIONS

Expulsion is an exclusion from school attendance and privileges for more than 10 consecutive school days. According to Connecticut General Statute section 10-233a(e), an expulsion period may extend beyond the end of the school year in which such expulsion was imposed, but not beyond, a period of

one calendar year. The expulsion process is begun when the principal notifies the Superintendent's staff that expulsion is being recommended.

If the superintendent's staff concurs in the recommendation, the student and parent shall be sent a written notice. The notice shall include: (a) a statement of the time, place, and purpose of the hearing; (b) a statement of legal authority and jurisdiction under which the hearing is to be held; (c) a reference to the particular section of the State of Connecticut statutes and regulation as well as the Norwalk Public School's Code of Conduct; (d) a statement of the reasons for the recommended expulsion; (e) a statement of the student's rights at the hearing' and (f) if applicable, a statement that the student is not entitled to alternative educational services during any period of expulsion.

The Public Schools may expel any student whose conduct is classified as a behavioral offense warranting expulsion under this Code or whose conduct on school grounds or at a school sponsored activity is seriously disruptive of the educational process or endangers persons or property. Connecticut Statute mandates expulsion proceedings whenever there is reason to believe that a student possessed a firearm on school grounds, or possessed and/or used a firearm or dangerous weapon in commission of a crime or offered for sale or distribution of illegal drugs, whether the foregoing occurred on or off school property. No student shall be expelled without a formal hearing before the Board of Education or its Hearing Officer. While the expulsion hearing and decision are pending, the student shall be entitled to attend their regularly assigned school program unless they have been suspended under the usual procedures or the principal, in consultation with the Superintendent's staff, concludes that an emergency suspension is warranted with regards to the student's continued attendance to school.

The Board of Education or its Hearing Officer shall conduct hearings as soon as possible, or within 10 school days after a written administrative recommendation for expulsion.

Such a hearing shall be rescheduled at a convenient time and place to encourage one or both parents to attend and participate. The hearing may be held without parental attendance or participation if the parents are unable or unwilling, or refuse to participate. In these instances, the Board of Education or its Hearing Officer may appoint a temporary guardian.

A student shall have the following rights at an expulsion hearing: (a) to be accompanied and advised by counsel or other individuals of the student's own choosing; (b) to present witnesses, evidence, and argument on the student's behalf; (c) to confront and cross examine all witnesses and school personnel; (d) to make a written stenographic record or electronic tape recording of such hearing at the student's own expense; (e) to attend, be present, testify, or remain silent; (f) to have a hearing open to the public, unless the student wished it to be private.

Any oral or documentary evidence may be received at the hearing, but the Board of Education or its Hearing Officer shall give effect to the rules of privilege. Documentary evidence may be received in the form of copies or excerpts if the original is not readily available. Upon request, parties shall be given an opportunity to compare the copy with the original.

The student and parent shall have access to any administrative report, recommendation, record, staff memoranda, or other materials unless privileged under state law, and shall be afforded an opportunity to contest such material.

The parties may call witnesses, examine and cross-examine witnesses, and introduce documentary materials. If the Board of Education or its Hearing Officer have reasonable cause to believe that disclosure of the name of any student, staff, or other witness adverse to the student will result in retaliation or fear of personal safety, then the Board of Education or its Hearing Officer shall have discretion to consider a summary report of such testimony without disclosure of the name.

The Board of Education or its Hearing Officer shall proceed with reasonable dispatch to conclude any expulsion pending before it and shall render a final decision within 10 days following the close of the case. The decision to expel shall be made by a majority vote of those members of the Board of Education who are present and who hear the case or read the complete record of evidence, arguments, and briefs or by a Hearing Officer as provided by Connecticut General Statute 10:233d who is present and who hears the case or reads the complete record of evidence, arguments, and briefs. Board of Education Members or the Hearing Officer shall be impartial and render a final decision in writing, based exclusively on the evidence and material introduced. The decision shall state full findings of fact, reasons for, and the duration of the expulsion. In determining the length of an expulsion and whether the student will receive an alternative educational program, the Board of Education may receive and consider evidence of past disciplinary problems, which have led to removal from a classroom, suspension, or expulsion of such student.

The student and parent shall be notified immediately, either personally by phone, or by mail, and a copy of the decision shall be delivered or mailed to the student and parent, their attorney of record, and the school principal/Board of Education within five days of taking such action. Any student who is expelled shall be offered an alternative educational opportunity during the period of expulsion to the extent provided by Connecticut Statutes. Such alternatives may include, but shall not be limited to, the placement of the student in a regular classroom program of a school other than the one from which such student has been excluded, a suitable program of work-study, training supervises apprenticeship, a private school program, or other forms of equivalent education and instruction. The student and parent shall be consulted and involved in the selection and/or formulation of such alternative program.

XIII. SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

1. Discipline of Students with Disabilities

Students previously identified as having a disability, under the IDEA and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, who engage in or are suspected of behavior that violates any rule or code of conduct of the school district can be disciplined by suspension, transfer to an appropriate interim alternative education setting or other setting, including expulsion (if such disciplinary action would also apply to students without disabilities) only in accordance with the following conditions:

A student with disabilities or who is suspected of having disabilities must not be suspended for more than 10 days per school year, without the district's conducting a manifestation PPT. In case of a recommendation for expulsion or suspension for more than 10 school days after the recommendation for such discipline was made in order to review the relationship between the student's disability and the behavior that led to the recommendation for such discipline, in order to determine whether the student's behavior was a manifestation of his/her disability and/or to consider whether evaluations are necessary.

All disciplinary matters related to the expulsion of special education students should be sent to the appropriate Assistant Superintendent of Schools for final determination.

2. Section 504 Students

Section 504 students who engage in behavior that violates any rule or code of conduct of the school district can be disciplined by suspension, transfer to an appropriate interim alternative setting or other educational setting, including expulsion.

XIV. ATTENDANCE/ABSENTEEISM

State law requires attendance at school. Being in the classroom, doing assigned work, and contributing to the class on a regular basis are important to success in school.

There are certain forms of student behavior, which, although they require some disciplinary response from school officials, are not, classified as Level I, Level II, Level III Disciplinary Offenses, or I. However, to ensure that such problems do not go unnoticed in this Code, special rules have been provided. The following are the offenses for which there are special rules.

Class Absences

If a student is not physically present in class, he/she is marked absent, either excused or unexcused. School related absences are not included in full day attendance records but are included in class attendance.

Authorized Reasons for Excused Absences (Examples)

- Medical problems (documentation may be required; an attempt to schedule doctor appointments after school is expected)
- Family emergencies
- Court appearances
- Death in family
- Other specific excused dependent on the judgment of the building administrator

Unauthorized Reasons for Absences (Examples)

- Truancy
- Class cutting
- Oversleeping
- Missed bus
- Family vacations
- Other reasons dependent on the judgment of the building administrator

Absenteeism - Procedures

- Student attendance is determined officially from school records only.
- Students entering school tardy must report to the administrative office, and their homeroom teacher will be notified of their presence through that office.
- If students have not reported properly to either the school or an administrator, they are recorded as being absent from school even if they attend some of all classes.

- In the case of an absence, parents or guardians are expected to call their child’s school on the day of the absence no later than noon.
- In the event of no notification of absence by the parent or guardian, the school will make a reasonable attempt, by phone, to contact the parent or guardian at home or work concerning the student’ absence on the day of the absence.
- On the morning a student returns to school, it is expected that the student will bring a written note signed by a parent/guardian with the reason for the absence(s). (Without a note, all absences become unexcused absences).
- Each school must alert parents to the possibility of failure because of a serious absence record.

XV. OTHER RULES RELATED TO ATTENDANCE

1. Truancy

TRUANCY/ATTENDANCE

Each parent or other person having control of a child five years of age and over and under eighteen years of age shall cause such child to attend a public school regularly during the hours and terms the public schools in the district in which such child resides is in session, unless such child is a high school graduate or the parent or person having control of such child is able to show that the child is elsewhere receiving equivalent instruction in the studies taught in the public schools. The parent or person having control of a child five years of age shall have the option of not sending the child to school until the child is six years of age and the parent or person having control of a child six years of age shall have the option of not sending the child to school until the child is seven years of age. Such parent or person having control shall exercise this option by personally appearing at the school district office and signing an option form; the school district shall provide that parent or person with information on the educational opportunities available within the school system.

The **Board of Education** believes that regular school attendance is essential to the academic success of students. Therefore, it is the policy of the **Board of Education** to monitor school attendance so as to identify students who are truant and to enlist the cooperation of parents/guardians, and when necessary, the **Juvenile Justice System**, in order to address the problem when it arises.

TRUANCY MONITORING PROCEDURES

In accordance with the **Truancy Policy** of the **Board of Education**, the following procedures are hereby adopted.

For purposes of these procedures, “*truant*” means a child who has four (4) unexcused absences from school in any one month, or ten (10) unexcused absences from school in any school year. “*Parent*” means the parent, guardian or other person having control of a child.

When a student is identified as a truant, the **Superintendent** or his/her designee (*i.e.; Principal, Housemaster, Assistant Principal*) will conduct a meeting with the parent, the student, (*if appropriate*) and with such school personnel where involvement is determined appropriate. The meeting will occur not later than ten (10) school days after the child's fourth (*4th*) unexcused absence in a month or tenth

(10th) unexcused absence in a school year and will be for the purpose of reviewing and evaluating the reasons for truancy.

The parents of each child enrolled in the school district will be notified in writing annually at the beginning of the school year of their statutory obligation to insure that their child attends school. Parents of children enrolling during the school year will be similarly notified.

When parents are notified in accordance with paragraph 2 above, they will be asked to provide the principal of the school in which their child is enrolled with a telephone number or some other means of contacting them during the school day.

Parents will be informed by the school principal or his/her designee that it is their responsibility to contact the school office when it is necessary for their child to be absent from school. If a child is absent and no notification has been received from the parent, the school principal will designate a staff member to notify the parent of the child's absence.

If the parent of a child who is truant fails to attend the meeting held pursuant to paragraph 1 above, or fails to otherwise cooperate with the school in attempting to solve the truancy problem, the Superintendent will file a written complaint with the Superior Court pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes 46b-149, alleging that the acts or omissions of the child are such that his/her family is a family with service needs.

Please refer to Section XIV – Absences

In keeping with the philosophy that students need to maintain regular attendance at school, we strongly discourage families from scheduling any trips other than during the normal school vacations. If unusual circumstances arise, contact the principal. The parent of each child enrolled in the school district will be notified in writing at the beginning of each school year of their statutory obligation to insure that their child attends school. Parents of children enrolling during the school year will be similarly notified.

When parents are notified in accordance with paragraph 2 on the previous page, they will be asked to provide the principal of the school in which their child is enrolled with a telephone number or some other means of contacting them during the school day.

Parents will be informed by the school principal or his/her designee that it is their responsibility to contact the school office when it is necessary for their child to be absent from school. If a child is absent and no notification has been received from the parent, the school principal will designate a staff member to notify the parent of the child's absence.

If the **Superintendent** or his/her designee determines that further assistance is required for a truant child and his/her family, he/she **may** file a written complaint with the **Superior Court** pursuant to **Connecticut General Statutes 46b-149**, alleging that the acts or omissions of the child are such that his/her family is a family with service needs.

When a child has been identified as a truant child, a written complaint pursuant to **46b-149 shall** be filed.

After the close of each school year, the **Superintendent** shall submit to the **State Department of Education** a report on the number of students with unexcused absences during the school year and for each student the number of unexcused absences.

2. Tardiness to Class

Tardiness to school will be separated from tardiness to class with consequences for both as follows: Tardies to class will be managed by classroom teachers. Three tardies to an individual class during the marking period may result in the student's referral to the administration for further disciplinary action. Each marking period is to be considered as separate entity.

No student is to be sent home from a school building until parental/guardian contact has been made. A school cannot send children under the age of 16 home. Other consequences can include assignment to after school or community service.

XVI. OTHER RULES RELATED TO DISCIPLINE

Searches

All lockers and desks are the property of the Norwalk Public Schools, and their use by students is a privilege. Students shall not place, keep, or store in their lockers or desks any firearm, knife, explosive, or other dangerous object, or any other item prohibited in the Code of Conduct. Students shall not have any expectation of privacy relative to the contents of their lockers or desks. Accordingly, school officials retain the right to open and search lockers and desks at any time to enforce school policies, rules, regulations, or for any other reason.

In schools where locks are provided by the school, no lock shall be used on any locker except the lock provided by the school. All such locks remain the property of the Public Schools and may be opened at any time by school officials in accordance with this policy. In schools where students provide their own locks, this shall not create any reasonable expectation of privacy with respect to the contents of their lockers, as all such lockers may be opened at any time by school officials in accordance with this policy.

Reporting Crimes to the Police

It is the policy of the Norwalk Public Schools not to shelter students from the police when a violation of Connecticut criminal laws has occurred. Accordingly, whenever school officials become aware of criminal conduct in the schools, they will notify the police and the parent(s) of the student involved except in those cases that have been determined to be "slight transgressions" and may be attended to by the principal/assistant principal of that building.

Completion of Class work

The Code provides that any student who is suspended from school has the opportunity to complete class work missed during the suspension. However, it is the student's responsibility to request assignments for the missed class work. Teachers do not have the responsibility of seeking out the students who have missed class work, because of a suspension, to give them the assignments. In addition, students must complete all missed class work within two weeks after returning to school.

Physical Force

School personnel may use reasonable and prudent physical force upon a student when necessary to:

- Protect themselves or others from immediate injury.
- Take a dangerous instrument or illegal drugs away from a student.

- Protect property, or
- Restrain or remove a student to maintain order

Drug-Related Consequences

All consequences and disciplinary procedures for students involved in substance abuse related activities are accounted for in the Norwalk Public Schools' Code of Conduct. Other information is listed in the Norwalk Public Schools Policy on Drug & Alcohol Use by Students, which is available in the principal's office for review and inspection.

Confiscation

School officials shall confiscate any object or substance considered contraband prohibited by the Code of Conduct.

Hazing Policy

A. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a safe learning environment for students and staff that are free from hazing. Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational goals of the school district and are prohibited at all times.

B. Statement of Policy/Definition

Hazing in any form is prohibited. Hazing is regarded as a Code of Conduct Type III offense and will subject the student to discipline appropriate for Type III offenses. In addition, students should be aware that hazing can also constitute a violation of Connecticut Criminal Statute as a form of assault and can make the student liable for arrest and prosecution, as well as for civil liability.

Dress Code

It is the responsibility of all students and their parents to ensure that students wear appropriate school dress. Any school dress which impairs safety or increased the risk of injury to self or others, causes discomfort to others (e.g., uncleanliness, malodorousness, obscene or offensive language), causes distraction or disruption of the learning environment (e.g. gang insignia), advertise or advocates the use of alcohol or drugs, or is pornographic, libelous or inherently likely to upset others, is prohibited.

In furtherance of the security, safety and educational interests of the schools, the following are among clothing, which may not be worn in school:

- Coats (designed for outdoor wear)
- Halters/bare midriff
- Hats/headwear
- Transparent clothing
- Pants with undergarment visible
- Any non-prescription eyewear

Violation of the Dress Code is a Type I Offense

Bullying

As the Norwalk Public Schools are committed to providing an educational environment where the rights and dignity of all students is respected, any acts of bullying by one or more students against another is

prohibited. This includes any physical or verbal conduct which is demeaning, intimidating, hostile, or which could result in physical or emotional harm to another student. Bullying generally involves a real or perceived imbalance in power between the bully and the victim. The behaviors which are prohibited, include:

- Physical violence and attacks
- Verbal taunting, name calling and put downs
- Threats and intimidation
- Extortion or stealing of money or things
- Exclusion from peer group
- Racially, ethnically, or gender based abuse
- Violations of this policy may constitute a Type I, II, or III disciplinary offense. Where the underlying conduct is not specifically categorized, the responsible administrator shall determine the appropriate discipline based upon the severity of the act.

Cheating

All forms of cheating are not acceptable. The misrepresenting by students of homework, class work, tests, reports or other assignments as if the material were entirely their own work shall be considered forms of cheating. Consequences of cheating shall be academic in nature unless repeated incidences require disciplinary action.

Network/Internet/E-Mail Policy

The Norwalk Public School District has an acceptable use Internet Policy to promote the exchange of information that supports learning and encourages research. This goal is accomplished by providing user access to software located on the District's file server, the Internet and the ability to send e-mail. This is consistent with the mission of the Norwalk Public School District. The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a student right, and should be used for education purposes only. Students who abuse this privilege will have their access revoked and may face disciplinary action.

Drug-Related Penalties

The penalties and disciplinary procedures for students involved in substance abuse related activities are stated in the Norwalk Public Schools Code of Conduct. Copies of Norwalk Public Schools Alcohol and Drug Policy are available in the principal's office for review and inspection.

XVII. DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

DRUG OFFENSES AND WEAPONS

Pursuant to Connecticut statute, students who are in possession of a firearm on school grounds or who use a dangerous or deadly weapon in the commission of a crime or offer for sale or distribution illegal drugs on or off school grounds shall be expelled for one calendar year. The Board of Education or Hearing Officer may modify the length of the expulsion on a case-by-case basis. The Norwalk Board of Education has a zero tolerance policy for students who are in possession of a firearm and/or a dangerous or deadly weapon. Any student who threatens a staff member or assaults any student or staff will be subject to expulsion.

In Norwalk Board of Education strongly endorses the concept of prevention through education and intervention and will implement this policy with the cooperative efforts of faculty and administration, students and parents. We recognize and affirm the individual value and potential of each member of the school community. We also recognize that drug abuse and dependency seriously impair the ability of individuals to develop their full potential.

School and local law enforcements officials will work as a team to help students understand the serious legal, social and medical consequences of alcohol and drug abuse and to help students overcome alcohol and drug abuse.

We believe that it is essential for adults to set good examples for students to follow; therefore the members of the Norwalk school community, including the Board of Education, the administration, the teaching staff, and other support staff, will comply with all the laws that govern the use of drugs and will exercise prudent judgment when legally using any drugs or alcoholic beverages. This policy is based on the belief that drug dependency is a life-threatening illness that affects individuals in all areas of their lives-spiritual, emotional, physical, intellectual and social.

Drugs (Including Alcohol)

For the purpose of this policy, the term “drug” means any alcoholic beverage, controlled substance, and illegal substance or prescribed medication for which the student does not have a prescription from a licensed physician or dentist.

Further, the Board directs that all procedures and regulations comply with Sate Statutes with regard to both the illicit use of drugs and the establishment of an educational program in compliance with Connecticut General Statutes 10-19 inform students about drugs and their potential dangers.

It is the policy of the Norwalk Board of Education to prevent and prohibit the possession, use and/or distribution of any drug or drug paraphernalia on school property, at school-sponsored events, on school buses and en route to and from school or school-sponsored events by any means of travel.

The administrator of a school is authorized by law and is delegated the responsibility for maintaining discipline and providing a healthy environment for learning. Since Connecticut Statutes are explicit regarding possession, use, and sale of drugs, it becomes the administrator’s responsibility to insure that they are enforced, and that means in each school informing students about the illegal aspects of drug use, rights of students, teachers and law enforcement agencies, rules on the control over the property and disciplinary action for violations of the drug policy. Parents of elementary, middle and high school students will also be advised of the policy, procedures and disciplinary measures.

In the interest of health and safety, school properties may be inspected by school authorities. When there is reasonable suspicion to believe that a student is in possession of drugs, there is an obligation on that part of school personnel to search for and seize such drugs. Such search and seizure may involve school lockers, cars on school property, clothing, purses, book bags, books and other personal property. Reasonable efforts will be made to secure the student’s voluntary agreement of the search.

All confiscated drugs will be turned over to the police within three days in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes 10-15a. The source of the drug will be determined if possible by a cooperative effort of the police and the school administration.

Even though the school is clearly responsible for protecting all students under its control, due consideration will always be given to the rights of individual students. School authorities will establish effective working relations with the Police Department and other law enforcement officials. Questioning of a student on school premises will take place only in the presence of a school official; every effort will be made to include the parent or guardian in such a session; a student's right to remain silent or to speak through an attorney or parent/guardian may not be abridged; a school official will maintain a record of all proceedings showing time, place, persons and a summary of discussion and findings. Questioning a faculty member on school premises concerning a student will take place only in the presence of a school official; every effort will be made to include union representation in such a session.

Recognizing that drug use and abuse may be indicative of serious, underlying problems, every effort will be made to provide student help and assistance, including early identification and referral to the Student Response Team. Referrals will be made to the SRT as appropriate. The SRT will make referrals to appropriate outside agencies dedicated to and effective in treating and preventing substance abuse. Disciplinary procedures will be administered with the best interests of the student, school population and community in mind. Discipline of students requiring special education will be handled by the Planning and Placement Team.

Personal privacy rights of students shall be protected as provided by law. School personnel shall be protected from legal suit for maintaining confidentiality in not disclosing information acquired through a professional communication with a student when such information concerns alcohol or drug abuse. If physical evidence indicating a crime has been, or is being committed, such employee shall not be required to disclose the name of the student giving such evidence and such employee shall be immune from arrest and prosecution for possession of such evidence obtained from such student.

If any instance of suspected abuse of drugs, consultation with parents and a mutual effort to help the student should be undertaken.

All violations of this policy, including the possession, use, distribution of any drug or drug paraphernalia and being under the influence of any drug will be dealt with in accordance with this policy and the corresponding administrative procedures, and will result in the disciplinary action cited, including possible expulsion.

XVIII. STUDENT/STAFF SEXUAL HARRASSMENT POLICY

The Norwalk Board of Education recognizes that sexual harassment is unlawful conduct and wrongful discrimination against the rights of others. Sexual harassment can occur adult to student, student to student, between members of the opposite sex or between members of the same sex. The Board will not condone or tolerate any verbal or physical conduct that would constitute sexual harassment. It is the policy of the Norwalk Board of Education to create and maintain a learning environment that is free from unlawful sexual harassment and discrimination on the basis of sex. Sexual harassment is prohibited whether on school grounds, school buses or at school-sponsored activities, programs and events. This policy applies to both males and females, to student, employees, or other individuals doing business or volunteering in the Norwalk Public Schools. Individuals who engage in sexual harassment will be subject to appropriate action, including but not limited to educational counseling, reprimand, probation, suspension, expulsion, termination from the Norwalk Public Schools, or civil or criminal action.

The Norwalk Board of Education encourages all victims of sexual harassment and persons with knowledge of sexual harassment to report the harassment immediately. All complainants have the right to be free from retaliation of any kind. Complaints of sexual harassment will be promptly investigated.

Students are expected to adhere to a standard of conduct that is respectful and courteous. Furthermore, any romantic or sexual relationship between employees of the Board and students is highly inappropriate and unacceptable, whether or not such conduct constitutes sexual harassment as defined in this policy.

Definitions

1. Sexual harassment is defined as any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, made by someone within the work or educational setting. Sexual harassment occurs when:
 - a) submission to the conduct is explicitly or implicitly made a *term or condition* of an individual's employment, academic status, participation in school-sponsored activities or another aspect of the individual's education or employment;
 - b) submission to, or rejection of, the conduct is used as the
 - c) *basis* for employment and/or educational decisions affecting the individual's work or school performance, academic status, participation in school-sponsored activities or another aspect of the individual's education or employment;
 - d) the conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with or having a negative impact upon the individual's work or academic performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or educational environment.

2. Sexual harassment may include but is not limited to the following:
 - a) sexually suggestive or obscene letters, notes, derogatory comments, slurs, jokes,
 - b) epithets, sexual rumors, obscene gestures, display of sexually suggestive
 - c) objectives, pictures, cartoons, or graffiti.
 - d) unwelcome or unwanted sexually oriented verbal comments, suggestions,
 - e) requests, physical contacts, or attention.
 - f) coercive sexual behavior used to control, influence, or threaten other employees or students to participate in activities.
 - g) coercive sexual behavior used to control, influence, or affect the employment or educational opportunities, work performance or grades, and/or learning or working environment of a student or employee.
 - a) students in predominantly male/female classes being subjected to sexual remarks.
 - b) any other unwelcome gender-based behavior that is offensive, degrading, intimidating or demeaning.

3. Complaint Procedures

STEP I – Building/Work Site Location

Any employee, student, or other individual within the school community who is the victim of sexual harassment by a student or other individual should promptly report the matter to a teacher, guidance counselor, or administrator or supervisor who will direct him/he to the designated sexual harassment officer. The complainant will be requested to complete a complaint form. A student may request or be given assistance in filling out the complaint form.

The administrator or supervisor shall schedule a meeting promptly with the complainant to discuss the complaint. But in no event shall the meeting be held later than fourteen (14) days from the receipt of the meeting request.

If the complainant is a student, the parents will be immediately informed of the alleged sexual harassment immediately by an administrator.

If the complainant is a student, the sexual harassment officer will determine if the conduct constitutes the basis for a child abuse report and, if so, will follow district child abuse reporting procedures.

If for any reason the student or employee feels uncomfortable discussing the matter with the administrator or supervisor, the individual can request a meeting with the Human Relations Officer regarding the alleged harassment.

A substantiated charge against a student shall subject to disciplinary action including suspension or expulsion. As a general rule, verbal or written sexual harassment shall constitute a Type I Disciplinary Offense, and physical sexual harassment shall constitute a Type II or Type III Disciplinary Offense, depending on the severity of the misconduct. Repeated misconduct may constitute a Type III Disciplinary Offense.

The sexual harassment officer shall make a written report to the Superintendent of Schools summarizing the results of any investigation and the action taken within fifteen (15) days, and the complainant and the alleged harasser shall be advised of the outcome of any investigation and the action taken.

STEP II – DISTRICT LEVEL

If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution or disposition of the complaint at the BUILDING LEVEL, he or she may file a written appeal or formal complaint to the Human Relations Officer, who shall review the sexual harassment officer's written report and may conduct further investigation. The Human Relations Officer shall determine if further actions are warranted and shall file a report with the Superintendent of Schools as to action taken on the appeal or formal complaint. A copy of the report shall be provided to the complainant and the alleged harasser.

Complaint forms may be obtained from the school or work site, from the office of the Human Relations Officer or from the office of the Superintendent of Schools.

Any student who is the victim of sexual harassment by an employee or other individual doing business or volunteering in the Norwalk Public Schools should promptly report the matter to a teacher, guidance counselor, administrator, or the Human Relations Officer for Norwalk Public Schools. If the complainant is a student, the administrator or the Human Relations Officer will determine if the conduct constitutes the basis for a child abuse report and, if so will follow district child abuse reporting procedures. All such complaints shall be promptly investigated by the administrator or Human Relations Officer or designee; appropriate action shall be taken. The complainant shall be advised of the outcome of the investigation and action taken by the responsible official.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution or disposition at the DISTRICT LEVEL, he or she may file a written appeal within ten (10) working days to the Superintendent of Schools who shall review the record of investigation and may conduct further investigation. The Superintendent shall prepare a report of the investigation and recommend a decision to the Board of Education.

XIX. DISCIPLINARY OFFENSES

Disciplinary offenses for the purposes of the Norwalk Public Schools Code of Conduct include acts committed:

- on school grounds
- during or shortly before or shortly after regular school hours
- during a school-sponsored activity on or off school grounds
- while awaiting transportation or traveling on a school bus or other forms of school provided transportation en-route to or from school or a school-sponsored activity.
- off school grounds at any time, whether or not the incident was initiated in the school or on school grounds, if such conduct is violative of publicized policy of the Board of Education and seriously disruptive of the educational process.

The disciplinary offences listed in this Code do not address every situation, and students will be disciplined for any conduct on school grounds or during school sponsored activities, which is seriously disruptive to the educational process or endangers persons or property. Intent, frequency and severity of the violation are factors that determine the categorization of the offenses as Type I, II, or III. School administrators or hearing officers may consider the student's past disciplinary problems in determining the length of any suspensions or expulsions. Disciplinary procedures will be initiated in the school the student is enrolled.

XX. NOTIFICATIONS

Notice of policy shall be circulated to all schools and departments in the Norwalk Public Schools and incorporated into student handbooks.

It will also be distributed to all community organizations having cooperative agreements with the public schools. Failure to comply with this policy may result in termination of the cooperative agreement.

TYPES I, II, III DISCIPLINARY OFFENSES AND PENALTIES

TYPE I DISCIPLINARY OFFENSES	PENALTIES FOR TYPE I DISCIPLINARY OFFENSES
<p>Engaging in pranks that endanger persons or property Throwing food or other objects. Leaving a classroom without proper permission. Refusing to identify one's self to school personnel. Entering or remaining in a classroom, in a school building, or on the grounds without an authorized purpose. Directing profane, vulgar or disrespectful language at any school staff member or other students. Disrupting class, including but not limited to electronic devices. Violation of the Dress Code.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teacher may remove the student from class, if the offense took place during class. 2. The teacher may warn the student and send a notice to the parents 3. The teacher may deprive the student of school privileges for a period not to exceed three school days. 4. The principal/assistant principal may refer the student for appropriate counseling. 5. The principal/assistant principal may assign the student to an in-school suspension class. 6. The principal/assistant principal may suspend the student.

TYPE II DISCIPLINARY OFFENSES	PENALTIES FOR TYPE II DISCIPLINARY OFFENSES
<p>Fighting Intentionally defying a valid request of a school staff member. Intentionally threatening another person with physical injury or property damage. Forcing other persons to engage in conduct that they have a legal right to refuse to do. Disrupting the educational process in an area larger than a classroom. Harassing conduct, including physical, written or verbal conduct, directed at a person because of his/her sex, race, ethnicity or sexual preference. Stealing, damaging or defacing school property or the property of others. Violating emergency evacuation regulations. Being found with any type of paraphernalia normally associated with the use of drugs, e.g., tobacco, rolling papers, bong, clips, pipes, and needles. Leaving school building or grounds without proper permission. Engaging in inappropriate sexual behavior. Possessing, using, or being under the influence of any controlled drug, hallucinogenic substance, barbiturate, amphetamine, marijuana, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant. Possessing or using a remotely - activated paging device or cellular telephone while in school or while attending any school sponsored function on or off school property.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The student may be removed from class if the offence took place during class. 2. The teacher will request a conference with the student and parent. 3. The student will repair, restore, or provide restitution for any damaged or stolen property where appropriate. 4. The teacher may deprive the student of school privileges for a period not to exceed five school days. 5. The teacher may require the student's attendance before or after the regular school day not to exceed one hour per day per day for five school days. 6. The principal/assistant principal may refer the student to law enforcement officials, the school security staff, the in-school program, and/or the community counseling program. 7. The teacher or administrator may call an SRT (Student Response Team) meeting. 8. The principal/assistant principal may suspend the student or, in the event of repeated, aggravated, or flagrant offenses, may recommend the student for expulsion. The Board of Education or its Hearing Officer may expel students who engage in such offenses. 9. In the case of possession of drugs, the principal may recommend interventions as outlined in the Norwalk Public Schools, Code of Discipline Staff Manual. Recommendations may include disciplinary actions and/or referral to support services.

TYPE III DISCIPLINARY OFFENSES	PENALTIES FOR TYPE III DISCIPLINARY OFFENSES
<p>Threatening staff or using threats or force to make other persons give up money or property they have a right to possess.</p> <p>Stealing school property or the property of others by using force against another person.</p> <p>Causing serious injury to another person by using force.</p> <p>Starting a fire or causing an explosion with intent to damage school or personal property.</p> <p>Possessing or transmitting any firearm, knife, explosive or other dangerous object of no reasonable approved school usage.</p> <p>Selling, giving, possessing with intent to sell, or administering to another person any drug, hallucinogenic substance, barbiturate, amphetamine, marijuana, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant.</p> <p>Engaging in violent conduct, which intentionally or recklessly caused physical injury or substantial property damage.</p> <p>Physical or sexual assault on another person, any school staff member or volunteer.</p> <p>Sounding or reporting a false emergency alarm.</p> <p>Hazing (The term “<i>possessing</i>”, includes holding, carrying, or storing a prohibited object or substance on or in a student’s body, clothing, hat, purse, wallet, handbag, carrying case of any type, locker, desk, chair, automobile, bicycle, motorcycle, book, tablet, pen, pencil, or in any way or manner whatsoever.)</p>	<p>The student will be removed from class if the offense took place during class.</p> <p>The student will repair, restore, or provide restitution for any damaged or stolen property.</p> <p>The principal/assistant principal will refer the student to law enforcement officials, the school security staff, the in-school support program, and/or the community counseling program.</p> <p>The principal may recommend the student for expulsion. (Student may be placed on suspension pending the expulsion hearing.)</p> <p>The teacher may deprive the student of school privileges for a period not to exceed 10 school days.</p> <p>The principal/assistant principal may suspend the student and/or recommend the student for expulsion. The Board of Education or its Hearing Officer may expel students who engage in Type III misconduct.</p>

Norwalk Public Schools
125 East Avenue
Norwalk, CT 06852-6001