

STUDENT-PARENT HANDBOOK

2016-2017



WESTFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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Salvatore Frieri, Principal
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Cynthia Kennedy, Principal
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Highland, K-5

Mary Claire Manning, Principal
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Southampton Road, K-5

Kathy O'Donnell, Principal
Jennifer Roux, Assistant Principal
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WESTFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

<http://www.schoolsofwestfield.org>

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Mr. Ramon Diaz, Vice Chairperson

Mrs. Cynthia Sullivan, Secretary

Dr. William Duval

Mr. Jeffrey Gosselin

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SECTION 2– District Policies

In addition to the individual school information, please review the “District Policy” section that applies to each school.

SECTION I – Elementary School Handbook

Letter to Students and Parents

This handbook was developed by elementary principals to answer questions concerning general policies and practices followed in the elementary schools. For more precise statements of formal School Committee policies, consult the website www.schoolsofwestfield.org. Frequent contact and communication between parents and school personnel are essential to your child's success in school.

Abuse/Neglect Reporting

Public school teachers, principals, nurses, psychologists and counselors are mandated by law to report any signs of possible child abuse or neglect to appropriate authorities.

Dismissal

Students should not be dismissed from school for any reasons except in an emergency. The following rules are observed in our schools, and your cooperation is requested.

1. No teacher will dismiss a student without the principal's authorization.
2. If the parent does not appear in person, a note must be presented to the principal or the principal must be personally acquainted with the situation.
3. No student will be excused into the custody of any person not properly identified.
4. Students will be dismissed at the close of the school day and parents will assume responsibility at the time.

Bicycles

Bicycles ridden to school must be parked in the designated area. Helmets must be worn in accordance with the state regulations for bicycle safety. It is the rider's responsibility to secure the bicycle. They should not be left overnight or used during the school day. Parents must assume liability with regard to the use, loss, or damage to bicycle brought to school.

Building Utilization

A floor plan of each building is available upon request at the individual school offices.

Cafeteria-Breakfast/Lunch

Well-balanced breakfast and lunch meals are available at a nominal cost to students. Menus for the month are published and a copy sent home with each student. Those who bring a lunch from home may purchase milk. Free and reduced rates are available for those who meet the criteria.

Entrance Requirements

The following must be met to enroll a child in school:

1. The entrance age for all kindergarten students shall be five (5) years of age on or before September 1st.
2. A birth certificate must be presented. This will be returned to the parent/guardian.
3. A doctor's certificate must be presented certifying that the child has been successfully immunized, according to Massachusetts state requirements, against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, measles, polio, rubella, mumps, hepatitis B, and varicella unless exempted for medical

- or religious reasons. All students must present and evidence of a lead screening.
4. Registration forms available at school offices must be completed and submitted to the school office.
 5. A Massachusetts licensed physician must examine each child. Medical exemptions must be in writing from a physician.
 6. State law mandates a pre-kindergarten screening be conducted for each entering kindergarten.
 7. Parents of transfer students must complete a records release form except as otherwise provided by law.
 8. Changes of address, home phone numbers and emergency numbers should be reported to the school office promptly.

Field Trips

Field trip notices will be sent home to advise parents of field trips and the amount of money that may be needed for transportation and admission. Parents must sign notification forms for trips outside the Westfield area. When children are on field trips, they are expected to behave and follow the rules that have been set up in the classroom. A child who is disruptive or endangers the safety of other children will not be allowed to continue the field trip. The parent will be contacted to come and pick up the child. A child may be excluded from a field trip if, in the judgment of the principal, he/she has shown evidence and may present a potential safety problem.

Lost/Stolen Property

Children should not bring money or valuables to school. The Westfield Public Schools assumes no responsibility for any lost or stolen items. Lost and found items are sent to the office and placed in a box. Students should check the box for lost items. It is recommended that all articles brought to school be labeled. Parents are encouraged to look through the lost and found items at any time.

Parent – School Contacts

When a question or problem arises, parents should feel free to contact the classroom teacher first. If further information or action is required, the building principal should be contacted. If a resolution is not reached, the Superintendent of Schools should be contacted.

Report Cards/Progress Reports

The Westfield Public Schools issues elementary report cards three times each year. These trimester reports, in conjunction with parent teacher conferences, are the method for reporting your child's progress to you. The reports are curriculum based, and as such, are constructed to be directly related to particular grade levels. Teachers are always willing to confer with parents when needed regarding a child's progress in school. We urge you to maintain frequent contact with your child's teacher.

Grade/Classroom Placement

In general, students transferring into the system will be placed in the same grade level as in the school from which they transferred. Grade and classroom placement is made at the discretion of the principal. Retention may be considered when:

1. The child is achieving significantly below ability and grade level.
2. Retention would not cause an undue social and emotional adjustment.
3. Retention would have reasonable chance of benefiting the child.

Care of School Property by Students

It is the responsibility of students to ensure that books and materials belonging to the Westfield Public Schools are returning in acceptable condition. Students responsible for lost, damaged or defaced property must pay for the property.

Student Dress

Students are expected to dress in accordance with the Student Dress policy of the Westfield School Committee.

Bus Transportation

The Westfield Public Schools provides free bus transportation for all eligible students in accordance with applicable laws. The authority of the school begins and ends at the bus stops, both in the morning and in the afternoon. As such, all school rules apply to student activity during these times. Students who violate school rules may have their privilege to ride the school bus revoked in addition to any standard disciplinary action. If a student is suspended from riding the bus, it becomes the responsibility of the student and his/her parents to provide transportation to and from school. Additional rules that apply specifically to riding the school bus are:

1. Abusive language is prohibited on school buses.
2. No smoking will be permitted on a school bus.
3. Horseplay of any kind will not be allowed on the bus regardless of whether the bus is standing or moving. This means that all students will:
 - a. not kneel on bus seats and talk to persons on seats behind them;
 - b. not tamper with the bus and its equipment, especially the windows.
 - c. not put arms, legs, head or any part of their body out of the window;
 - d. not move around or change seats in the bus once it is in motion.
4. No throwing of objects, regardless of whether the bus is standing still or moving.
5. No rough or disorderly physical misbehavior will be permitted on the bus.
6. Chewing gum, eating food or drinking beverages is not allowed on the bus.
7. No items may be carried on the bus except materials that will be held by the student or placed on the floor under the seat directly in front of the student.
8. The emergency doors of school buses are for emergency use only.
9. Students, when getting on and off the bus, shall cross in front of the bus and only upon the receiving of a signal to cross from the bus driver.

Students being transported are under the authority of the bus driver. The bus driver is required to report rule violations. Continued disorderly conduct or refusal to submit to the authority of the bus driver is sufficient cause for a student to be refused transportation on school buses. A pupil may be suspended from bus transportation upon the principal's receipt of the pupil's third Bus Conduct Report, any subsequent Bus Conduct Reports may result in the loss of bus privileges.

BUS CONDUCT REPORTS and recommendations made with respect to students for the last day of the school year will be implemented in the following school year. Unfulfilled disciplinary assignments will be carried forward and continued in September of the following school year.

ALTERNATE BUSES: On occasion and with prior approval of the transportation company and the principal, a bus student may be eligible to ride an alternate bus.

1. No bus will be rerouted to provide transportation for any individual or group without directions from the transportation office.

2. Buses will only stop to discharge students at regularly scheduled stops. No additional stops will be scheduled without directions from the Transportation Office.
3. The principal should receive a written request from the parent for any alternative transportation. If, in the bus company's judgment, the request is valid and there is adequate room on the bus, and items #1 and #2 above are observed, the bus company may grant this request.

School Insurance

A reasonably priced accident insurance policy is available for all children. Early in the school year you will receive literature which describes the various options that are available. Children who enter school after the beginning of the year are eligible to apply for insurance by obtaining an application form from the school office. You should remember that the school department's only function in this matter is one of service. All matters relating to claims are the responsibility of the family and the insurance company.

School Sessions 2016-2017

All Elementary Schools Kindergarten through Grade 5: 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Attendance

Students are expected to adhere to the attendance policy of the Westfield School Committee. Below are set forth specific procedures applicable to the Elementary Schools.

Morning Procedures: at the elementary schools, school starts at 9:00 am. Students are allowed to enter the building at 8:45 am. Once students have arrived on school grounds they may not leave. The only exception is under special circumstances, when a principal may allow a student to leave the school grounds during the day.

Tardiness to school/homeroom: Students are expected to arrive to school and classes on time. Time missed from class constitutes absenteeism, whether in part or in whole. Students who demonstrate a pattern of unexcused tardiness may be subject to disciplinary measures. Students must be in their homeroom at 9:00 am. Otherwise they are tardy. If a student reports to school after 9:00 am, the parent must report to the office and sign the late sheet. Parents of students who are chronically tardy will be contacted informing them of the consequences of their child's further tardiness.

Children should not arrive on school grounds more than 15 minutes prior to school opening.

Visitors

The School policy is to accept those visitors who have legitimate business at the school. Visitors and guests will need to provide appropriate picture identification such as a driver's license, state I.D., or Military I.D. and must register in the school office immediately upon entering the building. All visitors and guests must display at all times the appropriate identification badge assigned by the school office. Upon completion of their business all visitors and guests must sign out in the school office, return their badge and promptly leave the building.

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Translation Statement:

If you need assistance understanding this information, please contact your building principal to arrange translation services.

Если Вы нуждаетесь в переводе, пожалуйста, сообщите директору школы, и школа обеспечит вас переводчиком. (Russian)

Якщо Вам необхідний переклад даної інформації, будь ласка, повідомте директору школи, і школа забезпечить вас перекладачем. (Ukrainian)

Si Ud. necesita ayuda para entender esta información, favor de comunicarse con el Principal para los servicios de traducción. (Spanish)

यो जानकारी बुझ्न सहयोग चाहिएमा कृपया तपाइको प्रधानाध्यापकलाई अनुवाद सुविधाको लागि सम्पर्क राख्नुहोस. (Nepali)

إذا تحتاج مساعدة لفهم هذه المعلومات, الرجاء الاتصال بمدير المدرسة لتقديم خدمات الترجمة. (Arabic)

SECTION II - DISTRICT POLICIES

This section of the policy manual is composed of district-wide policies. Should any provisions of Section I be in conflict with Section II, district policy prevails.

Administering Medicines to Students

This policy is designed to provide minimum standards for the safe and proper administration of medications to students in the Westfield Public Schools. Except as provided in this policy and its accompanying regulations, the Westfield School Committee prohibits the administration of any medication by school personnel, or the self-administration of any medication by any student.

[Click here for the complete policy: File: JLCD Administering Medicines to Students](#)

Administrative Regulations Regarding Physical Examinations/Assessments/Screenings

The Westfield School Committee requires each student enrolled in the Westfield Public Schools to have certain physical examinations, health assessments and screenings shall be to ascertain whether a student has any physical disability tending to prevent him/her from receiving the full benefit of school work, to ascertain whether school work should be modified in order to prevent injury to the student or to secure a suitable program of education for him/her and to insure that diseases dangerous to the public health and other contagious or communicable disease are recognized whenever they occur.

[Click here for the complete policy File: JHCA-R Administrative Regulations Regarding Physical Examinations/Assessments/Screenings](#)

Administrative Regulations Regarding Immunization of Students

In accordance with state law, the Westfield Public Schools requires that, prior to being admitted to school, each child must present a physician's certificate that the child has been successfully immunized against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, measles, poliomyelitis and such other communicable diseases as may be specified from time to time by the Department of Public Health.

[Click here for the complete policy File: JHCB-R Administrative Regulations Regarding Immunizations of Students](#)

Administrative Regulations Regarding Contagious Diseases

The Westfield Public Schools may exclude any student infected, or in a household where a person is infected, with a disease dangerous to the public health (as determined by the Department of Public Health), or in a household exposed to contagion from any such disease.

[Click here for the complete policy File: JHCC-R Administrative Regulations Regarding Contagious Diseases](#)

Life Threatening Allergies (LTA)

The Westfield Public Schools (WPS) understand that some students have life-threatening allergies and the WPS are committed to minimizing the incidence of life-threatening allergic reactions. In order for the WPS to appropriately assist the student, parents/guardians must notify school administration (including the school nurse) about allergies and health issues with their children.

[Click here for the complete policy File: JHE Life Threatening Allergies \(LTA\)](#)

Athletic Concussion Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide information and standardized procedures for persons involved in the prevention, training management and return to activity decisions regarding students who incur head injuries while involved in extracurricular athletic activities(1) including, but not limited to, interscholastic sports, in order to protect their health and safety as required by Massachusetts law and regulations.

[Click here for the complete policy File: JJIF Athletic Concussion Policy](#)

Athletic Concussion Regulations

What is a Concussion?

A concussion is defined as a transient alteration in brain function without structural damage, but with other potentially serious long-term ramifications.

[Click here for the complete policy File: JJIF-R Athletic Concussion Regulations](#)

Policy Regarding Wellness

The Westfield Public Schools promotes healthy schools by supporting wellness, good nutrition, health education, and regular physical activity as part of the total learning environment. The District supports a healthy school environment for staff and students through policies and procedures that promote safety and wellness, and encourages children to participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices.

[Click here for the complete policy File: ADF Policy Regarding Wellness](#)

Student Attendance, Absences and Excuses

The Westfield Public School System recognizes that excessive absenteeism from school is potentially detrimental to students' ability to perform successfully in school. It is expected that students should be absent from school only when conditions or circumstances render them otherwise unable to attend.

[Click here for the complete policy File: JH Student Absences, and Excuses](#)

Procedures for Attendance, Absences, and Excuses

When a student returns from an absence, the parent/guardian must provide the school with a signed, written excuse citing the date(s) and reason(s) for absence. This written excuse must be submitted even if prior notification of intended absences was provided. Parents are requested to notify the school in advance of planned absence and to make phone contact on the morning of an illness or other reasons for absence.

[Click here for the complete policy File: JH-R Procedure for Attendance, Absences, and Excuses](#)

Bus Transportation

The Westfield Public Schools provides free bus transportation for all eligible students in accordance with applicable laws. The authority of the school begins and ends at the bus stops, both in the morning and in the afternoon. As such, all school rules apply to student activity during these times. Students who violate school rules may have their privilege to ride the school bus revoked in addition to any standard disciplinary action. If a student is suspended from riding the bus, it becomes the responsibility of the student and his/her parents to provide transportation to and from school.

[Click here for the complete policy File: JICC Bus Transportation](#)

Student Dress

It is largely the responsibility of the student, with the guidance of parents, to determine what is appropriate dress for school or school related activities, however, the Westfield Public School system reserves the right to prohibit clothing or manner of dress which constitutes a health or safety concern or is so unusual as to be disruptive or distracting to the educational process.

[Click here for the complete policy File: JICA Student Dress](#)

Student Acceptable Use of Technology Agreement

The Westfield Public School District believes technology, including computers, electronic devices and the Internet, provides access to vast, diverse and unique resources in a global community. Our goal in providing electronic tools, a computer network and Internet access to teachers, staff and students is to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, communication and enabling new types of educational pursuits.

[Click here for the complete policy File: EHAA Student Acceptable use of Technology Agreement](#)

Student Discipline

The Westfield School Committee believes that all students deserve every opportunity to achieve academic success in a safe, secure learning environment. Good citizenship in schools is based on respect and consideration for the rights of others. Students will be expected to conduct themselves in a way that the rights and privileges of others are not violated.

[Click here for the complete policy File: JIC Student Discipline](#)

Due Process for Suspensions

Notice of Proposed Suspension

Except in the case of an emergency removal or disciplinary offense defined under MGL C 71, Section 37H or 37 ½ H or an in-school suspension as defined by 603 CMR 53.02 (6), the school shall provide the student and the parent/guardian with written and oral notice of the proposed out-of-school suspension, an opportunity to be heard at a hearing, and the opportunity to participate at the hearing. Notice shall set forth in plain language

- a) the disciplinary offense;
- b) the basis for the charge;
- c) the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension;
- d) the opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the Principal concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and for the parent/guardian to attend the hearing;
- e) the date, time, and location of the hearing;
- f) the right of the student and student's parent/guardian to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate;

The Principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent/guardian orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. In order to conduct a hearing without the parent/guardian present, the Principal must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent/guardian. Reasonable effort is presumed if the Principal sent written notice and documented at least two attempts to contact the parent/guardian in the manner specified by the parent/guardian for emergency situations.

All written communications regarding notice of proposed suspension shall be either by hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to address provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by the Principal and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate.

Short-Term Suspensions: Hearing and Principal Determination

A short-term suspension is the removal of the student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten (10) consecutive days or less. Out-of-school short-term suspensions which do not cumulatively over the course of the school year exceed ten (10) days of suspension shall be conducted in accordance with this section.

Principal Hearing. The purpose of the hearing with the Principal is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student has committed the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts. A parent/guardian present at the hearing shall have the opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances.

Based on the available information, including mitigating circumstances, the Principal will make a determination whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequence. The Principal will provide notification in writing of his/her determination in the form of an update to the student and parent/guardian, and provide reasons for the determination. If the student is suspended, the Principal shall inform the parent/guardian of the type and duration of the suspension, and shall provide an opportunity for the student to make up assignments and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal.

If the student is in grades PreK through 3, the Principal shall send his/her determination to the Superintendent and explain the reasons prior to imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the short-term suspension takes effect.

All written communications regarding the hearing and Principal determination shall be either hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to the address provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by Principal and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate.

Long-Term Suspensions: Hearing and Principal Determination

A long-term suspension is the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. The purpose of the hearing with the Principal is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student has committed the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the Principal will consider in determining whether alternatives to suspension such as loss of privileges, detention, an apology, a student contract, restitution, and/or probation are appropriate.

Additionally, the student shall have the following additional rights:

1. In advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the Principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not;
2. The right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's and or parent's/guardian's expense;
3. The right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so; and
4. The right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;

5. the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the Principal. All participants shall be informed that the hearing is being recorded by audio. A copy of the audio recording will be provided to the student or parent/guardian upon request.

Based on evidence submitted at the hearing the Principal shall make a determination as to whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension (the use of evidence-based strategies and programs, such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive interventions and supports) what remedy or consequence will be imposed. If the Principal decides to impose a long-term suspension, the written determination shall:

1. Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing;
2. Set out key facts and conclusions reached by the Principal;
3. Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school;
4. Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive a specific list of education services to make academic progress during removal, and the contact information of a school member who can provide more detailed information;
5. Inform the student of the right to appeal the Principal's decision to the Superintendent or his/her designee (only if a long-term suspension has been imposed) within five (5) calendar days, which may be extended by parent/guardian request in writing an additional seven (7) calendar days.

The long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the Superintendent decides to reverse the Principal's determination on appeal.

If the student is in grades PreK through 3, the Principal shall send his/her determination to the Superintendent and explain the reasons prior to imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the short-term suspension takes effect.

All written communications regarding the hearing and Principal determination shall be either hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to the address provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by Principal and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate.

Appeal of Long-Term Suspension

A student who is placed on a long-term suspension shall have the right to appeal the Principal's decision to the Superintendent if properly and timely filed. A good faith effort shall be made to include the parent/guardian at the hearing. The appeal shall be held within three (3) school days of the appeal, unless the student or parent/guardian requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days, which the Superintendent shall grant.

The student and the parent/guardian shall have the same rights afforded at the long-term suspension principal hearing. Within five (5) calendar days of the hearing the Superintendent shall issue his/her written decision which meets the criteria required of the Principal's determination. If the Superintendent determines the student committed the disciplinary offense, the Superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than that of the Principal. The Superintendent's decision shall be final.

Emergency Removal

A student may be temporarily removed prior to notice and hearing when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school and, in the Principal's judgment, there is

not alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption. The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days, following the day of the emergency removal.

During the emergency removal the Principal shall make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and student's parent/guardian of the emergency removal and the reason for the emergency removal. The Principal shall also provide the due process requirements of written notice for suspensions and provide for a hearing which meets the due process requirements of a long-term suspension within the two (2) school day time period, unless an extension of time for the hearing is otherwise agreed to by the Principal, student, and parent/guardian.

A decision shall be rendered orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing, no later than the following school day. The decision shall meet all of the due process requirements of a Principal's determination in a long-term suspension.

In-School Suspension under CMR 53:02(6) and 603 CMR 53.10

In-school suspension is defined as the removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not the school premises, for not more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions over the course of the school year.

A Principal may impose an in-school suspension as defined above according to the following procedures:

The Principal shall inform the student of the disciplinary offense charged and the basis for the charge, and provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident. If the Principal determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the Principal shall inform the student of the length of the student's in-school suspension, which shall not exceed 10 (ten) days, cumulatively or consecutively, in a school year.

On the same day as the in-school suspension decision, the Principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding that the student committed the infraction, and the length of the in-school suspension. The Principal shall also invite the parent to a meeting to discuss the student's academic performance and behavior, strategies for student engagement, and possible responses to the behavior. Such meeting shall be scheduled on the day of the suspension if possible, and if not, as soon thereafter as possible. If the Principal is unable to reach the parent after making and documenting at least two (2) attempts to do so, such attempts shall constitute reasonable efforts for purposes of orally informing the parent of the in-school suspension.

The Principal shall send written notice to the student and parent about the in-school suspension, including the reason and the length of the in-school suspension, and inviting the parent to a meeting with the Principal for the purpose set forth above, if such meeting has not already occurred. The Principal shall deliver such notice on the day of the suspension by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or by other method of delivery agreed to by the Principal and parent.

Suspension or Expulsion for Disciplinary Offenses under MGL 71 section 37H and 37H ½

1. The due process procedures above do not apply to a) possession of a dangerous weapon; b) possession of a controlled substance; c) an assault on a member of the educational staff; or d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, or adjudication or admission of guilt with respect to such felony if the Principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school, as provided in MGL c. 71 section 37H or 37H ½.
2. The Principal will inform the student of the specific charges in writing, informing the student of the right to be represented by counsel (at the student's expense) and the right to provide evidence and question witnesses, on the proposed hearing date.

3. The student may appeal the Principal's expulsion determination to the Superintendent of Schools within ten (10) days of notification of the expulsion.
4. The Superintendent may uphold, reduce, or reverse the disciplinary action after the appeal hearing. Note that a failure to make an appeal to the Superintendent within the ten (10) day period will exhaust any further right of appeal.
5. All students who have been suspended or expelled who remain residents of the District shall have an opportunity to make academic progress during their period of suspension, expulsion, or removal from regular classroom activities.
6. If the Superintendent upholds the expulsion decision, if the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student under an education service plan.

Student Interrogations, Searches, and Arrests

The storage, on one's person, in one's belongings or in school property, of contraband such as, but not limited to, illegal substances or articles or any item prohibited by district policy or building rules, is strictly forbidden. Violations will result in confiscation of such materials. The student in violation will be subject to disciplinary action.

[Click here for the complete policy File: JIH Student Interrogations, Searches, and Arrests](#)

Drug & Alcohol use by Students

The Westfield Public School System believes controlled substance use is a community issue necessitating the commitment of a broad range of individuals, organizations, departments and the business sector a collaborative effort at education, assistance and interdiction. Our district is committed to playing a significant role in meaningful endeavors to address substance use issues. The school system also believes that a student's involvement with drugs or alcohol constitutes a family, individual and school problem. Given that position, we commit our support and assistance to students and families whenever possible. We expect parents/guardians to cooperate with our efforts and, should a problem arise, act appropriately in a mutual effort to secure resolution that will ensure the well-being of the student.

[Click here for the complete policy File: JICH Drug & Alcohol use by Students](#)

Procedures – Drug and Alcohol use by Students

Secondary school principals will hold assemblies for students during the fall of each school year. Presentations will include comprehensive overviews of the Drug and Alcohol and Student Discipline policies. All school principals will provide students and families with information regarding educational and assistance efforts available through their school. Each building will maintain, or have access to, a substance related resource guide inclusive of early warning signs and community resources.

[Click here for the complete policy File: JICH-R Procedures – Drug and Alcohol use by Students](#)

Teaching about Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs

In accordance with state and federal law, the District shall provide age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate, evidence-based alcohol, tobacco and drug prevention education programs in grades K-12.

[Click here for the complete policy File: IHAMB Teaching about Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs](#)

Bullying and Cyberbullying

Bullying of any type is prohibited in the school setting or connected with the school setting as provided below. The Westfield Public Schools will endeavor to maintain a learning and working environment free of bullying. Bullying can take many forms and can occur in virtually any setting. It is unacceptable in a school or work environment. As a result, no student or employee shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying or cyberbullying in any public educational institute.

[Click here for the complete policy File: JBA Bullying and Cyberbullying](#)

Prohibition of Hazing

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 536 of the Acts of 1985, the School Committee hereby deems that no student, employee or school organization under the control of the School Committee shall engage in the activity of hazing a student while on or off school property, or at a school sponsored event regardless of the location.

[Click here for the complete policy File: JICFA Prohibition of Hazing](#)

Hazing Policy

[Click here for the complete policy File: JICAF-E Hazing](#)

Policy Regarding Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment (students)

It is the policy of the Westfield Public Schools that any form of sex discrimination or sexual harassment is forbidden, whether by students, school employees or third parties subject to the control of the board. Students, school employees and third parties are expected to adhere to a standard of conduct that is respectful of the rights of students. Any student or employee who engages in conduct prohibited by this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action.

[Click here for the complete policy File: ACAC Policy Regarding Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment \(students\)](#)

Physical Restraint Procedures

The use of physical restraint as a behavior management technique will be utilized only with extreme caution in emergency situations, after other less intrusive alternatives have either failed or been deemed inappropriate. In the event that physical restraint is required to protect the safety of school community members, the Westfield School District has enacted the following policies and procedures to ensure the proper use of restraint and to prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of restraint.

[Click here for the complete policy File: JKAA-R Physical Restraint Procedures](#)

Procedures Student Complaints and Grievances

The procedures apply only to situations not otherwise specifically provided by other district policy or procedure.

[Click here for the complete policy File: JII-R Procedures Student Complaints and Grievances](#)

Student Privacy

In accordance with federal law, the Westfield Public Schools adopts, in consultation with parents, the following provisions related to student privacy.

[Click here for the complete policy File: JS Student Privacy](#)

Student Records

In order to provide students with appropriate instruction and educational services, it is necessary for the school system to maintain extensive and sometimes personal information about them and their families. It is essential that pertinent information in these records be readily available to appropriate school personnel, be accessible to the student's parents or legal guardian and/or the student in accordance with law, and yet be guarded as confidential information.

[Click here for the complete policy File: JRA Student Records](#)

Student Records - Regulations

603 CMR 23.00 is promulgated by the Board of Education pursuant to its powers under M.G.L.c.71, s.34D which directs that "the board of education shall adopt regulations relative to the maintenance of student records by the public elementary and secondary schools of the Commonwealth," and under M.G.L.c.71, s.34F which directs that "the board of education shall adopt regulations relative to the

retention, duplication and storage of records under the control of school committees, and except as otherwise required by law may authorize the periodic destruction of any such records at reasonable times.” 603 CMR 23.00 was originally promulgated on February 10, 1975, and was reviewed and amended in June 1995. 603 CMR is in conformity with federal and state statutes regarding maintenance of and access to student records, and is to be construed harmoniously with such statutes.

[Click here for the complete policy File: JRA-R Student Record – Regulations](#)

Free Speech Policy (High Schools)

The Westfield Public Schools recognize the free speech rights of high school students in the public schools. In order to protect the valid exercise of those rights as well as the maintenance of a sound educational process and a constructive school environment in which to conduct the goals of teaching and learning, this policy provides guidelines for oral and written speech offered within the confines of the high school campus or its off campus sponsored events and activities.

[Click here for the complete policy File: JFA Free Speech Policy \(High Schools\)](#)

Student Speech at Elementary and Middle Schools

The Westfield Public Schools recognizes its responsibility to create an educational environment that encourages appropriate student expression and speech. In order to promote an educational atmosphere conducive to learning, and which balances student rights against the need to maintain an orderly and efficient school environment, the school district reserves the right to regular student speech during the school day, on school grounds and at school-sponsored activities and events. Any regulation of student speech will be done in accordance with state and federal law. Students who engage in activities that violate any district rule, regulation or policy may be subject appropriate disciplinary consequences.

[Click here for the complete policy File: JFAAA Student Speech at the Elementary and Middle Schools](#)

Parental Notification Law

The Westfield Public Schools will ensure that parents and/or guardians are afforded the flexibility to exempt their children from any portion of the human sexual education or human sexuality issues curriculum that is taught within the PreK-12 grade levels. Parents and/or guardians who wish to avail themselves of this flexibility shall do so through written notification to their child’s school principal. No child so exempted shall be penalized by reason of such exemption.

[Click here for the complete policy File: IGAI Parental Notification Law](#)

Non-Custodial Parents Rights

As required by Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 34H, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with law and Department of Education Regulations. The school district will follow the law and the regulations developed by the Massachusetts Department of Education to standardize the process by which public schools provide student records to parents who do not have physical custody of their children (“non-custodial parents”).

[Click here for the complete policy File: KBBA Non-Custodial Parents Rights](#)

Student Progress Reports to Parents

Parents are entitled to information concerning the progress of their child. The information shall emphasize the positive aspects of a child's progress in school indicating, therefore, what he/she has accomplished.

[Click here for the complete policy File: IKAB Student Progress Reports to Parents](#)

Student Assistance Program

The goal of the district is to provide students needing educational supports with the opportunity to receive educational assistance within the general education program whenever possible. The first level of intervention for students who may require such educational supports will typically be referred to the

Student Assistance Team. The purpose of Student Assistance Team is to assess the needs of any student who is having academic difficulty and to provide educational supports and/or develop appropriate accommodations for the student.

[Click here for the complete policy File: IGB Student Assistance Program](#)

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Under Section 504, a person with a disability is anyone who (a) has, (b) has a record of having or (c) is regarded as having, a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits a major life activity such as learning, self-care, walking, seeing hearing, speaking, breathing, working and performing manual tasks and includes major bodily functions .

[Click here for the complete policy File: ACC Grievance Procedure Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#)

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

The requirements regarding special education are based upon state and federal law. The relevant laws are as follows:

- A. State Law: The state special education law, Section 28, popularly known as “Chapter 766” after the session law number under which it was passed in 1972, is contained in the Massachusetts General Laws (MGL) at Chapter 71B.
- B. The regulations implementing the statute are found in the Code of Massachusetts Regulations (CMR), 603 CMR, Section 28.00.
- C. Federal Law: The federal special education law is known as “IDEA” (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). The statute is located in the United States Code (USC) at 20 U.S.C. §1400. In 1997, Congress re-authorized the IDEA and the amended statute is popularly known as “IDEA-2004”.

Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES)

Students may be assigned to an Interim Alternative Educational Setting (I.A.E.S.) in accordance with the policy of the Westfield School Committee.

English Language Learners

The District shall provide suitable research-based language instructional programs for all identified English language learners in grades Kindergarten through 12 in accordance with the requirements of state and federal statutes and Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regulations and guidelines.

[Click here for the complete policy File: IHBEA English Language Learners](#)

Nondiscrimination

Public schools have the responsibility to overcome, insofar as possible, any barriers that prevent children from achieving their potential.

[Click here for the complete policy File: AC Nondiscrimination](#)

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

The Westfield Fire Department requires a standard evacuation procedure for all Westfield Public Schools. This procedure allows students to learn the evacuation procedure when they first enter the school and follow the same instructions until they leave the Westfield Public Schools. Each room will have a sign at the primary exit door to be used during an emergency. The sign will instruct students to leave the room and follow the arrows to the nearest exit. The standard procedure is as follows: IN CASE OF EMERGENCY: EXIT ROOM THROUGH THIS DOOR AND FOLLOW RED ARROWS TO NEAREST EXIT. STAY TOGETHER AND WITH YOUR TEACHER. IF EXIT IS BLOCKED REVERSE DIRECTION AND PROCEED TO EXIT IN OPPOSITE DIRECTION. STAY IN SAFE LOCATION OUTSIDE THE BUILDING AND AWAIT FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS.

Visitors and Parking

VISITORS: Our policy is to accept visitors who have legitimate business at school. Visitors and guests must register in the school office immediately upon entering the building. All visitors and guests must display, at all times, an appropriate identification badge assigned by the school office. Upon completion of their business all visitors and guests must sign out in the school office, return their badge and promptly leave the building.

PARKING REGULATIONS: Parents/guardians, students, and visitors should familiarize themselves with the parking regulations of the school and park in a legal parking space only. Violators will be subject to fines or towing of their vehicles. This applies to morning drop-off and after school pick-up as well as evening programs, workshops and conferences.

Gifts to and Solicitations by Staff

Ethics Commission Exemption for “Class Gifts” to Teachers

Under MGL c. 268A, public school teachers (and other public employees) are generally prohibited from accepting gifts valued at fifty dollars or more, unless that gift falls within certain exemptions. The State Ethics Commission recently created a new exemption for “class gifts” whereby a public school teacher may accept a class gift up to one hundred fifty dollars in value if a group of students and/or parents wish to pool their contributions towards a gift.

[Click here for the complete policy File: GBEBC Gifts to and Solicitations by Staff](#)

Summer Reading

The Westfield Public Schools remain committed to the improvement of reading, a primary component of the learning process. The goals of summer reading are to reinforce the habit of reading for pleasure, enrichment and gathering information. Research indicates that the more students read or listen to books, the better they will read. Research also indicates that students who do not read regularly throughout the summer lose reading skills that must be rebuilt once school begins again. Our expectation is that every student will read over the summer. Please refer to the Westfield Public School district webpage at www.schoolsofwestfield.org under Students for detailed information about summer reading.

Teacher Mailboxes

Teacher mailboxes are private and under no circumstances are students or visitors to REMOVE OR PUT ANYTHING in a teacher’s mailbox.

Cancellation of School

There will be days when the Westfield Public Schools will be closed or have a delayed opening due to inclement weather, hazardous traveling conditions and/or other emergencies. We have a telephone notification system that will place calls to parents notifying them of closings, delays, or an early release. In addition, such closings will be broadcast: WHYN, WAQY (FM-102), WRNX (FM-100.9), KIX (FM-97.9), Channel 40, Channel 22, CBS 3, local Channel 15 or you may call the School Information Line 572-6417. During periods of potential and actual storms the school administration is in contact with all relevant public safety and municipal agencies. The decision to close or not close school is made as early as possible to cancel all school transportation and lunch programs and to notify the media, traffic, and school personnel. On occasion, it may be wiser to have a two-hour delayed opening of school instead of closing for the full day. There may also be weather conditions that would necessitate the closing of school during normal school hours. Every child should know what to do and where to go in case of an early dismissal. If there is school during bad weather, the final decision concerning school attendance must rest with the individual parent.

Summary of Westfield Public Schools Safety Policies

The complete School Committee Policy manual can be found on the district website schoolsofwestfield.org . Select District – School Committee – Policy Manual

Criminal Offender Registration (CORI): The Human Resources Office processes all CORI checks. The CORI will be utilized only for employment purposes and not disseminated to any other party. (Contact Human Resources Office) (Policy File: ADDA)

Emergency Procedures: Advance planning for emergencies and disasters is essential to provide for the safety of students and staff. Schools must be prepared to respond immediately and responsibly to any combination of events which threaten to result in an emergency and/or disaster. (Policy Files: EBC, EBC-R, EBCB-R, EBCD)

Fire Safety: Building principals will meet all requirements for conducting fire drills to give students practice in moving with orderly dispatch to designated areas under emergency conditions. (Policy Files: EBC, EBC-R, EBCB-R)

Identification of Students and Staff: A picture identification system enhances the control and management of the school system.

Injury Reports: All injuries must be reported to the classroom teacher/school nurse as soon as possible. The injury report form must be completed.

Inspections (Playgrounds, Buildings, Buses, Etc.): Regular inspection of buildings, grounds, facilities, equipment and buses to uncover hazards and/or dangerous conditions in an ongoing effort to address any safety concerns.

Locker and Student Search: Lockers issued to students by the school system for their temporary use remains the property of the school. The storage, on one's person, in one's belongings or in school property, of contraband such as, but not limited to, illegal substances or articles or any item prohibited by district policy or building rules, is strictly forbidden. (Policy File: JIH)

Westfield Police Department: The Westfield Police Department and the Westfield Public Schools are committed to safe schools. The parties agree to meet to collaborate and establish lines of communication to support a safe, secure school and community.

Reporting requirements to the Department of Children & Families: Section 51A, Chapter 119, of the Massachusetts General Laws, requires that certain identified professionals, among them school personnel, report suspected instances of child abuse/neglect, including sexual abuse and domestic violence, to the appropriate staff of the Massachusetts Department of Social Services. (Policy Files: JLF, JLF-R)

Reporting requirements to Law Enforcement: Cooperation with law enforcement agencies is essential for the protection of students, for maintaining a safe environment in the schools, and for safeguarding all school property. The Westfield Public Schools will comply with all Federal, State and Local mandates with respect to reporting requirements. (Policy Files: JICH-R, JIH)

Student Interrogation: It is the policy of the Westfield Public Schools to cooperate with law enforcement and social service agencies in the interest of the welfare of all citizens. At the same time, schools have responsibility to parents for the welfare of the students while they are in the care of the school. (Policy File: JIH)

Additional information regarding any of the information outlined in this handbook may be obtained by contacting the office of the Superintendent of Schools, 94 North Elm Street, Westfield, or any building principal at their respective school.

SCHOOL CALENDAR FOR 2016-2017

August 25	New Teacher Opening Day
August 29	Staff Development Day
August 30	Staff Development Day
August 31	Staff Development Day
September 1	First Day of School Grades 1-12/No Kindergarten
September 5	Labor Day Holiday/No School
September 8	First Day of Kindergarten & Preschool
October 10	Columbus Day Holiday/No School
October 20	Early Release Day for ELEMENTARY Students FULL Day for SECONDARY Students ELEMENTARY Parent/Teacher Conferences
October 31	Early Release Day for Students/District Professional Development
November 8	Election Day/Staff Development Day/No School for students
November 11	Veterans Day Holiday/No School
November 23-25	Thanksgiving Recess/No School
December 9	Early Release Day for Students/District Professional Development
December 23-30	Holiday Recess/No School (schools reopen January 3)
January 2	New Year's Day Legal Holiday
January 13	Early Release Day for Students/District Professional Development
January 16	Martin Luther King Day Holiday/No School
February 10	Early Release Day for Students/District Professional Development
February 20-24	Winter Vacation/No School
March 9	Early Release Day for ELEMENTARY Students FULL Day for SECONDARY Students ELEMENTARY Parent/Teacher Conferences
April 14	Good Friday/No School
April 17-21	Spring Vacation/No School
May 5	Early Release Day for Students/District Professional Development
May 26	Early Release Day for Students/District Professional Development
May 29	Memorial Day Holiday/No School
June 9	Early Release Day for Students/District Professional Development (makeup day if needed)
June 23	Last day of School/Early Release Day for Students (District Professional Development make-up day, if needed) *Includes 5 emergency closing days

Last day will be June 16 (if no emergency closing days are used)
For every day not used, a day will deducted from the calendar

*revised: July 21, 2016 school committee meeting

Support Resources and Hotlines

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

Dilmira Liquori, Police Department: 562-5411 extension 5

YWCA ARCH Program: 733-7100 (hotline) Shelter, counseling and information for battered women and their children, sexual assault services

New Beginnings: 562-5739 counseling and information

Safe Link 24-hours 877-785-2020

Psychiatric Services

Westfield Crisis Intervention Program: 568-6386

24- hour service for psychiatric crisis and suicidal behavior

Individual, group and family counseling for youth and families:

The Carson Center: 572-4132

James Levine and Association: 534-7400

MSPCC, Holyoke: 532-9466

Child and Family Services, West Springfield: 737-4718

Agawam Counseling Center: 786-6410

Substance Abuse Services

Massachusetts Substance Abuse Information Helpline: 800-327-5050

(information and referral for inpatient and outpatient services in Massachusetts)

Providence Hospital, Holyoke

- Clinical Assessment Center for outpatient services: 539-2973
- Clinical Assessment Center for inpatient services: 539-2981

Baystate Medical Center, Central Intake for inpatient and outpatient services: 794-5555

Alcoholics Anonymous meeting schedule: www.westernmassaa.org or listed in your local paper

Al-Anon and Alateen: 782-3406/ 888-425-2666

Hotlines and Other Support Services

United Way: 737-2691

AIDS information and support: 800-235-2331

Missing children: 800-843-5678

National Runaway Switchboard (24 hours): 800-RUNAWAY

Department of Children and Families, Holyoke Office: 493-2600

Parental Stress Line: 800-632-8188

Western Mass Legal Services (Legal Aid): 781-7814