

STUDENT POLICIES GOALS

The student is the focal point of all operations of a school system. This top priority is shared with no one.

Consequently, the Somerville School Committee can expect to spend much of its time in study, deliberation, and policy formulation on matters directly related to students.

The Somerville School Committee and staff will work together to establish an environment conducive to the very best learning achievements for each student through meeting the following goals regarding students:

1. To individualize the learning program in order to provide appropriately for each student according to his/her specific background, capabilities, learning styles, interests, and aspirations.
2. To protect and observe the legal rights of students.
3. To enhance the self-image of each student by helping him/her feel respected and worthy through a learning environment that provides positive encouragement through frequent success.
4. To provide an environment of reality in which students can learn personal and civic responsibility for their actions through meaningful experiences as school citizens.
5. To deal with students in matters of discipline in a just and constructive manner.
6. To provide in every way possible for the safety, health, and welfare of students.
7. To promote faithful attendance and good work.

Revised: January 18, 1996

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:00

Reviewed: September 2009

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

In recognition of the diversified characteristics and needs of our students and with the keen desire to be responsive to them, the School Committee will make every effort to protect the dignity of the students as individuals. It also will offer careful consideration and sympathetic understanding of their personal feelings, particularly with reference to their race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or physical and intellectual differences.

To accomplish this, the Committee and its staff will make every effort to comply with the letter and the spirit of the Massachusetts equal educational opportunities law which prohibits discrimination in public school admissions and programs. The law reads as follows:

No child shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and course of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.

This will mean that every student will be given equal opportunity in school admission, admissions to courses, course content, guidance, and extracurricular and athletic activities.

All implementing provisions issued by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in compliance with this law will be followed.

SOURCE: MASC

UPDATED: June 2012

AMENDED: March 2, 2015

LEGAL REFS.: Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964
Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972
Executive Order 11246, as amended by E.O. 11375
Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972
M.G.L. [76:5](#); [76:16](#) (Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971)
BESE regulations 603 CMR [26:00](#)
BESE regulations 603 CMR [28.00](#)
CROSS REF.: AC, Nondiscrimination

GRIEVANCE AND COMPLAINTS FOR TITLE IX AND CHAPTER 622

The purpose for Title IX and Chapter 622 is the elimination of discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, religion or national origin.

Complaints and grievances regarding compliance with Title IX or Chapter 622 may be addressed to the Superintendent/Designee, Title IX Chapter 622 Coordinator, Office of the Superintendent of Schools, 42 Cross Street, Somerville, MA 02145 (617-625-6600, ext. 6030).

Title IX requires the establishment of grievance procedures for parents, students, and teachers so that alleged violations of the law may be corrected. The following procedures will be followed in grieving alleged violations.

STUDENTS

1. Level One

A student with a grievance shall first discuss it with his/her principal or the principal's designee with the objective of resolving the question informally.

2. Level Two

If the student is not satisfied with the disposition of his/her grievance at Level One, or if no decision has been rendered within five (5) school days after the grievance hearing, he/she may file the grievance in writing with the Title IX/Chapter 622 Coordinator, in the Office of the Superintendent of Schools. The written grievance must be submitted to the Superintendent/Designee with fifteen (15) school days after presenting it at Level one. Within ten (10) school days after receipt of the written grievance, the Superintendent/Designee shall meet with the aggrieved student in an effort to resolve the question.

3. Level Three

If the student is not satisfied with the disposition of his/her grievance at Level Two, or if no decision has been rendered within five (5) school days after the grievance hearing, he/she may then submit his/her grievance to the Superintendent of Schools within fifteen (15) school days after having submitted it at Level Two. The Superintendent, or his/her designee, shall hear the grievance within ten (10) school days of receiving it. Within fifteen (15) school days, a written decision shall be returned to the student of complaint or hearing.

4. Level Four

If the student is not satisfied with the disposition of his/her grievance at Level Three, or if he/she has not received a decision within the specified fifteen (15) school days, he/she may carry the grievance to the Somerville School Committee within thirty (30) days of the grievance hearing at Level Three. The School Committee shall return a decision on the grievance within thirty (30) school days. The School Committee decision shall be the last recourse provided within the school system.

PARENTS

The complain procedure shall be outlined in Regulation 9.00 of Chapter 622 which is as follows:

9.01: A parent, guardian or other person or group who believes that Chapter 76, Section 5 of the General Laws or these regulations has been or is being violated, may request a written statement of the reasons thereof from the responsible Somerville School Committee through the Superintendent and may submit a copy of such requests to the Bureau of Equal Educational Opportunity of the Department of Education. If such request is made, a copy of such request shall be sent by the School Committee to the Bureau of Educational Opportunity.

9.02: The Somerville School Committee shall respond promptly, but not later than thirty (30) days, in writing, to the complaining party. The Somerville School Committee shall also send a copy of its response to the Bureau of Equal Educational Opportunity.

9.03: The Bureau of Equal Educational Opportunity shall act as the representative of the Board of Education for the purpose of receiving complaints pursuant to these regulations.

9.04: The Bureau of Equal Educational Opportunity shall, pursuant to a complaint received under Section 9.01, or on its own initiative, conduct reviews to insure compliance with Chapter 76, Section 5 of these regulations. The Somerville School Committee and the specific school(s) involved shall cooperate to the fullest extent with such review.

9.05: In the event of non-compliance with Chapter 76, Section 5 of these regulations, the Board of Education may take such action as it sees fit, including, but not limited to, withholding of funds or referral of the matter to the Office of the Attorney General for appropriate legal action.

10.01: Nothing in these regulations shall abridge or in any way limit the right of a parent, guardian, or person affected to seek enforcement of Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971 in any court or administrative agency of competent jurisdiction.

Adopted: November 2009

STUDENT-TO-STUDENT HARASSMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Superintendent will develop administrative guidelines and procedures for the implementation of this policy. SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 151B:3A

Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended
BESE 603 CMR 26:00

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

Revised: October 15, 2012

LEVELS OF INTERVENTION FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT, DATING VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual harassment is an abuse of power which is demeaning and interferes with the ability of a student to learn and participate in an educational setting. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination that is illegal under both Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Massachusetts General Law Chapter 151B, section 4.

A crisis team of Somerville High School staff and counselors has been designated to respond to and investigate all reports of sexual harassment, dating violence, and/or sexual assault among students.

The Supervisor of Guidance will head the team and will be responsible for written reports, investigation, appropriate follow-up, and designation of members to convene or to assist as needed.

All reports need to be filed with the crisis team leader. Additional reporting and intervention procedures are described below.

Crisis Team
Supervisor of Guidance
Two Guidance Counselors
Adjustment Counselor
House Master
Teen Connection Director
Headmaster
Two Police Officers

Level I

1. Sexual harassment which includes verbal or written or unwanted touching reported or random observed incidents involving complaints of unwanted actions which cause discomfort, but which do not include fear.
2. These are to be reported in writing. Students or teachers may choose to report these to a guidance counselor or house master. Whatever the course of action, a written report must then be sent to the crisis team leader. This will include discussing the desired resolution with the reporting student and evaluating the attitude of reported aggressor.
 - a. A meeting between the aggressor and the reporting student can only be part of the resolution if:
 - b. The reporting student desires the meeting and feels safe or, the reporting student and the aggressor agree to the meeting and an adult is present.
 - c. The aggressor and the reporting student are in a non-dating relationship with each other.
3. Discipline or counseling with Guidance or with RESPOND will be utilized when deemed appropriate.

Level II

Sexual harassment or dating violence complaints which include a pattern of harassment, stalking, physical or emotional intimidation, non-homicidal threats (see Level III), and fear for safety on the part of the reporting student. The goal of Level II is to assess how best to approach each student with the hope of de-escalating violence and with an outcome of helping the aggressor deal with and change behavior.

1. Written complaints are reported to the appropriate guidance counselor or building master who then makes a written referral to the crisis team and headmaster. At this level there is a need to establish the physical safety of the victim.
2. The crisis team consults other staff who knows the students involved, in order to develop a plan of intervention which takes into account information about the students involved. All possible resources are reviewed. Confidentiality is required.
3. Cases can be evaluated during the weekly guidance referral meeting, if this insures immediate follow up; otherwise, the crisis team leader must convene the team within twenty-four hours. Staff will assess factors such as danger or lethality and the best route of intervention, including possible referral to support groups. Mediation, or uniting the victim and aggressor should be avoided.
4. The headmaster and crisis team will determine at what point to notify parents/guardians or to make a referral call to the police.
5. The headmaster and crisis team make the final decision about intervention and/or discipline. Discipline can include mandating either the aggressor's participation in a support group or his/her staying away from the reporting student.

Level III

Dating violence involving physical harm which rises to the level of criminal assault, threats of homicide or suicide (particularly by a known violent person), violation of an existing restraining order, or an act of sexual assault or rape. The goal of the Level III is to intervene immediately in a violent situation, interrupt serious threats of harm to self or others, and involve police in appropriate situations.

These written complaints are reported to the appropriate guidance counselor or house master who then makes a written referral to the crisis team and headmaster. At this level there is a need to ensure physical safety of victim.

Headmaster and crisis team contact police and parents. Court advocate may be notified.

Crisis team plans strategies to counsel students.

Parents/guardians and students should be aware of their rights. If they have any concerns, they may refer complaints or grievances regarding compliance with Title IX or Chapter 622 to the Superintendent/Designee, Title IX/Chapter 622 coordinator, Office of the Superintendent of Schools, 42 Cross Street, Somerville, MA 02145, (617-625-6600, ext. 6030). Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendment prohibits sex discrimination in the programs, policies and practices of educational programs and activities. Chapter 622 of the General Laws, Acts of 1971 states that "no person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any city or town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of student for such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, or national origin."

Adopted: November 2009

GENDER IDENTITY SUPPORT

The Somerville Public Schools strive to provide a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment in which all students can thrive and succeed. All students need and deserve a safe and supportive learning environment to progress developmentally and academically.

All Somerville Public School students are able to use the facilities or restrooms that correspond with the gender with which they identify.

Somerville Public Schools support and respect students' individual differences and privacy needs. For students who identify as gender nonconforming and/or transgender, a supportive strategic plan to address legal and social emotional issues will be developed by a team of school personnel who are familiar with the student. This team will include, at a minimum, the school administrator, school counselor, social worker and nurse. The plan will address the student's needs for the entire educational program, including before and after school activities.

A critical component of the student's support plan may include name changes and gender identity markers used in communication with and about the student and in written communication with the family or legal guardian/s. Somerville Public Schools will not require legal documentation to change the student's name or gender on the educational record. Whenever possible, Somerville Public Schools will respect a student's preferred name and gender identity.

Somerville Public School's administration and staff will have access to professional development related to gender identity support. Administration and staff will follow the referenced procedures for supporting the student and developing the support plan. The plan will be reviewed and revised on an as needed basis.

Adopted: January 2018

CONTROLLED CHOICE STUDENT ASSIGNMENT PLAN ASSIGNMENT OF STUDENTS TO SCHOOLS

SCHOOL CHOICES

Under the "Controlled Choice" student assignment plan, parents/guardians may be allowed to choose the schools or alternative elementary programs that are best suited for their children by their own rank order of preference. The student assignment plan gives Somerville parents/guardians and students the opportunity to apply for enrollment in any school with an appropriate program and grade structure. Parents/guardians will make at least three choices, and are encouraged to visit a range of schools before submitting their school choice applications form to the Parent Information Center ("PIC").

GRANDFATHERING

Once enrolled in their permanent school of assignment, all Somerville students will be afforded stability of assignment, unless a student must be displaced because the current school will no longer offer an appropriate placement.

RACIAL FAIRNESS ASSIGNMENTS

To ensure racial fairness and guarantee equitable access to all schools and programs of choice, all available seats in each school are open to students of the racial and ethnic majority and minority on the basis of their actual proportion in the system as a whole in each grade. In this plan, an elementary school is considered to be racially balanced when it enrolls a student body that is within plus or minus ten percentage points of the system-wide percentage of students of the racial and ethnic majority and minority in grades K- 8.

Students are assigned to available openings in order of the following fairness preferences:

1) PROGRAMMATIC PRIORITY ASSIGNMENTS

Special Education and ELL children are placed into special classes at schools with those respective programs.

2) SIBLING FAIRNESS ASSIGNMENTS

Students who have a brother or sister already enrolled in their first-choice school will be given preference for assignment to that school provided that the assignment does not violate Somerville School Committee policies. Moreover, every effort will be made to guarantee that siblings attend the same schools if their parents/guardians so desire.

3) CLOSEST TO SCHOOL FAIRNESS ASSIGNMENTS

Students who can safely walk to their school of choice will be assigned to that school. Students who are not assigned to their first choice school shall be given preference for assignment to their second-choice school based on the existence of a safe and accessible travel route between their home and that school. A similar preference shall be given for any third-choice schools or other assignments.

4) RANDOM LOTTERY ASSIGNMENTS

If the fairness preferences listed above are not sufficient to determine assignments for a given group of students, assignments shall be made based on a random lottery amongst all students within the relevant oversubscribed group.

MANDATORY ASSIGNMENTS

Students who are not assigned to a school of choice will be assigned to the school nearest to their home that has available space for the student's racial or ethnic group. Experience indicates that fewer than 10 percent of the students will be mandatorily assigned under this plan.

WAITING LISTS

Every effort will be made to accommodate parents'/guardians' preferences within the system of priorities, educational seating capacity, and the District's racial fairness guidelines. Parents/Guardians of students who are not assigned to a first-choice school may request that their child be placed on a waiting list for that school by completing a "Wait List Request Form" available at the PIC. Assignments from the waiting list will be made in accordance with the Controlled Choice Fairness preferences indicated above. Waiting lists for all schools will expire on November 1. Any parent/guardian who is still interested in transferring to a first-choice school after the expiration date will contact the [Parent Information Center] PIC.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT IN LEAST-CHOSEN SCHOOLS

Schools that are "under" chosen by one or both racial categories will be identified and will be targeted for specific school improvement initiatives.

REPLICATION OF ATTRACTIVE SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS

Schools and magnet programs that are "over" chosen by both majority and minority parents/guardians and students will be identified, and active efforts will be made to reproduce or replicate such schools or programs in buildings that have had difficulty attracting a diverse student population.

Parent Information Center

The purpose of the PIC is to assist parents/guardians in choosing schools and programs that are best suited for their children, to help parents/guardians become more knowledgeable about how the school system works, and to assign students based on the controlled choice student assignment plan. All students new to the District will enroll at the PIC. The PIC will have a Parent Coordinator and staff appropriate to serve the linguistic and educational needs of the city's diverse student population groups. The PIC staff are responsible for parent/guardian outreach and orientation to the student assignment plan, coordination of school visitations and student registrations, and all other necessary activities that will facilitate parents/guardians making informed school choices.

Student Assignment Officer

The Superintendent will designate a Student Assignment Officer who shall be responsible for supervising the establishment and staffing of the PIC and the training for the PIC staff. The Student Assignment Officer reports directly to the Superintendent and is responsible for making all final student assignments for newly enrolling and transfer students in grades K through 8. Transportation issues relating to student assignments also are under the supervision of the Student Assignment Officer.

School Transfers

Displaced students will be transferred to a school of choice prior to any transfers or assignment of newly enrolled students. Students requesting a school transfer during a school year are required to submit a school-transfer application form to the Student Assignment Officer, and such requests will be subject to the racial balance and available space provisions of the "Controlled Choice" student assignment plan and the Somerville School Committee policy on class size. This procedure will apply to all students seeking a school transfer in grades K-8. Students already enrolled in the Somerville Public Schools who submit a timely school-transfer application will be given priority before other newly enrolling students.

Central Registration, Language Testing and Placement of New LEP Students

Limited and non-English proficient students who newly enroll in the Somerville Public Schools are required to register at the PIC and receive appropriate English and home language testing prior to receiving their particular program or school assignment. This action ensures more effective compliance with state and federal ELL requirements and facilitates an educationally sound approach to the program placement and assignment of students with limited English proficiency.

Newly Enrolling Students in grades K-8

The parents/guardians of all general education students seeking to newly enroll in the Somerville Public Schools in grades 1-8 are required to register their children at the PIC. These parents/guardians are allowed to choose the schools they deem most appropriate for their children by their own rank order of preference, provided that all such assignments will be made in accordance with the provisions of the "Controlled Choice" student assignment plan.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37C; 71:37D; 71:37I; 71:37J
Board of Education Regulations Pertaining to Section 8 of Chapter 636
of the Acts of 1974, Regarding Magnet School Facilities and
Educational Programs, adopted 2/25/75
Magnet Board of Education Regulations Pursuant to Chapter 636 of the Acts of
1974, adopted 9/10/74
Board of Education Regulations Pertaining to the Preparation of Racial
Balance Plans which Involve ReDistricting, adopted 4/24/73

Revised: May 18, 2006
Revised: September 25, 2006
Approved: December 18, 2006
Reviewed: September 2009

TWINS POLICY

1. Twins (for the sake of this policy twins shall be used synonymously with twins and higher order multiples) may be placed in the same school.
2. There should be NO default policy of twin classroom separation.
3. There should be NO default policy of keeping twins together in the same classroom.
4. Twin placements should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
5. For all grades, school principals must consult with parents or guardians concerning twin placement and integrate the discussions resulting from that consultation into a classroom placement decision that is best for the educational needs of the children.
6. At the request of parents, for children who are new to the system, principals must consult with educators who have first hand experience with the twins being discussed, whenever possible.
7. In the event that parents or guardians disagree with the classroom placement decision made by the principal (whether it be for separation or together placement), and wish to challenge a placement decision, they may appeal the decision to the Superintendent.
8. District-wide, twins should be treated as a "combo slot" for purposes of school placement.

Revised: February 28, 2008

Approved: March 24, 2008

Reviewed: September 2009

ASSIGNMENT OF STUDENTS TO SCHOOLS – NON RESIDENTS

Any child enrolled with the Somerville Public Schools who is no longer an actual resident of the district must attend school in the district in which he/she actually resides. However, the principal, with the approval of the Student Assignment Officer, may allow the child to remain in the presently assigned school to complete the quarter.

Non-resident children of Somerville Public Schools staff members may be enrolled in the Somerville Public Schools as permitted by the Collective Bargaining Agreement approved by the Somerville School Committee or at the discretion of the Superintendent of Schools/designee.

Any student who moves out of Somerville during the senior year who desires to complete grade 12 at Somerville High School may request a waiver (Special permit) of the residency requirement through their Housemaster. Housemasters will consider the conduct, effort, punctuality, attendance and academic progress toward graduation for approval. Each request requires the approval of the Housemaster/Headmaster and the Student Assignment Officer and is valid only for the school year in which it is approved.

Notwithstanding the Somerville Public Schools' residency and school assignment policies, any otherwise eligible student displaced from residing in the City of Somerville, due to the renovation/construction of Clarendon Hill Apartments ("displaced student"), shall remain eligible for enrollment in the Somerville Public Schools in accordance with School Committee policies, in the same manner that the student would have been eligible if actually residing at Clarendon Hill Apartments. Displaced students shall include both students who are currently residing at Clarendon Hill Apartments when so displaced as well as those children who would have become eligible for enrollment in the Somerville Public Schools during the relocation period but for the renovation/construction. A displaced student shall maintain such eligibility until the end of the academic year during which phase of the renovation/construction project impacting the student is complete for occupancy and the student is permitted to resume residency at Clarendon Hill Apartments, regardless of where the student actually resides in the interim. If a displaced student does not elect to resume actual residence in the City of Somerville by the commencement of the first academic year following the academic year during which the student is permitted to resume residency at Clarendon Hill Apartments, the student shall no longer be eligible for enrollment in the Somerville Public Schools, absent special approval by the School Committee. Students displaced as described herein shall not be required or expected to obtain consent or funding from any school committee under M.G.L. c. 76, § 12. This section shall apply exclusively to those students displaced from Clarendon Hill Apartments which consists of the nine (9) buildings located at 125, 139, 153 Alewife Brook Parkway; 268, 268R, and 278 Powderhouse Blvd; and 24, 34, and 34R North Street, Somerville, MA. This section shall not apply to students displaced from residing in the City of Somerville due to private renovation or construction projects.

Approved: May 5, 2008

Amended: December 2009

Amended: January 2018

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

1. Attendance of Pupils

Pupils shall be prompt and regular in their attendance. In case of absence, tardiness, or dismissal a written or personal explanation from the parent or guardian shall be required, as tardiness without a written or personal explanation from the parent or guardian is accounted a misdemeanor. A pupil who is tardy without a satisfactory explanation shall not be sent home, but shall be required to furnish it subsequently. Dismissals by telephone request shall be permitted only upon approval of the Principal/Headmaster who has satisfied himself/herself as to their justification.

2. Marking Attendance

In recording the attendance of pupils, teachers shall observe the following rules:

- a. Every pupil who enters the room after the time for beginning the session shall be marked tardy.
- b. Every pupil who leaves school at the request of his/her parents or guardian before the close of session shall be marked dismissed.
- c. Every pupil not present at least one-half of the session shall be marked absent.
- d. Whenever a pupil leaves school without the intention of returning during the school year his/her name shall be taken from the roll of membership, but any absence recorded against him/her before the fact of his/her leaving comes to the knowledge of his/her teacher shall remain.

3. Absence for Special Instruction

No pupil belonging to a public school shall be absent from school or excused from any school exercise in order to receive regular instruction elsewhere except upon permission of the Superintendent.

Adopted: November 2009

STUDENT ATTENDANCE – HIGH SCHOOL

No student who has been absent from class more than four times during a quarter may be given a passing grade without the permission of the appropriate Department Head/Curriculum Coordinator. The teacher may elect to (1) give the student an incomplete, (2) give the student a failing grade, or (3) seek the permission of the Headmaster/Designee to give a passing grade. This rule applies to students absent three times during the fourth quarter of their senior year. Students are discouraged from taking any extra days from school for vacations, or any other reason. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts mandates that every student fulfill 900 hours of structured learning time each year.

Adopted: November 2009

ATTENDANCE POLICY ADDENDUM – GRADES K-12

“State and federal law require schools to make reasonable accommodations to the religious needs of students and employees in observance of holy days. Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 151B, section 4(1)(A) addresses this issue with respect to employees. With respect to students, Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 151C, Section 2B reads in relevant part as follows:

Any student in an educational or vocational training institution...who is unable, because of his religious beliefs, to attend classes or to participate in any examination, study or work requirement on a particular day shall be excused from any such examination or study or work requirement, and shall be provided with any opportunity to make up such examination, study or work requirement which he may have missed because of such absence on any particular day; provided, however, that such makeup examination or work shall not create an unreasonable burden upon such school. No fees of any kind shall be charged by the institution for making available to the said student such opportunity. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any student because of his availing himself of the provisions of this section.

Schools may meet their obligation to accommodate students by excusing individual absences for religious observance, or by adjusting the school calendar to provide a school year of at least 180 days, while taking into account possible days of low attendance due to religious holidays.”

“Absences due to observance of major religious holidays will not be included as absences for the purpose of attendance awards or recognition. Accordingly, parents/guardians will provide a written explanation for the absence and tardiness of a child. This will be required in advance for types of absences where advance notice is possible.”

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 151B, section 4(1)(A)

Adopted: November 18, 2002

Reviewed: September 2009

SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

1. Admission of Pupils to Kindergarten

Children who will be five years of age on or before August 31 may be admitted to kindergarten. While children transferring from other schools will be generally placed in the grade level to which they have been assigned, children who do not meet the kindergarten age requirement will not be placed in a kindergarten class unless they have completed one quarter of the current year in an approved alternate program. Successful completion will be determined by the formal evaluation of progress from this alternative program. Every student seeking admission to school for the first time must present a birth certificate or equivalent proof of age, proof of vaccination, and immunizations. Proof of residency may be required by the state and the School Committee.

2. Admission of Pupils to First Grade

To enter Grade 1, a child needs to be six years of age by August 31, or have successfully completed an accredited Kindergarten program and met the standards set by the District.

3. Placement for Students Whose Parents Seek to enroll them in Kindergarten at Age 6

When parents seek to enroll in kindergarten, a child who will be 6 years old before August 31, the District reserves the right to assess the child to determine whether the child should enter Kindergarten or first grade using the following assessment procedure.

- A. With the assistance of the Early Childhood Director, the child will receive formal and/or informal developmental and/or educational screening to help the Parent Information Center Director in making a grade placement recommendation deemed to be in the child's best interests.
- B. The Student Assignment Officer will provide the parent(s) or guardian(s) an opportunity to participate in a consultation in which he/she reviews the screening information, and discusses the grade placement recommendation with the parent(s) and/or guardian(s).
- C. The Superintendent/Designee will determine the child's placement and notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the decision in writing.

Adopted: January 18, 1996

Amended: October 2010

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 15:1G; 76:1; 76:5; 76:15; 76:15A
603 CMR 26:01; 26:02; 26:03

**PLACEMENT FOR STUDENTS WHOSE PARENTS SEEK TO ENROLL
THEM IN PRE-KINDERGARTEN AT AGE 5**

When parents seek to enroll in pre-kindergarten a child who will be 5 years old before August 31, the District reserves the authority to assess the child to determine whether the child should enter pre-kindergarten or kindergarten.

1. Child will receive screening

The Early Childhood Director and a pre-school teacher will administer an informal developmental and/or educational screening to help make a grade placement recommendation deemed to be in the child's best interest.

2. School Principal and/or Early Childhood Director will seek parental input

The School Principal and/or Early Childhood Director will provide the parent(s) guardian(s) an opportunity to participate in a consultation in which he/she reviews the screening information, discusses the grade placement recommendation with the parent(s) and/or guardian(s) and discusses the grade placement recommendation with the. Parents will be advised that pre-school placement is not guaranteed. There are limited spaces and there is always the possibility of a lottery.

3. School Principal and/or Early Childhood Director will make a recommendation to the Superintendent/Designee

The School Principal and/or Early Childhood Director will make a grade placement recommendation in writing to the Superintendent/Designee that includes a justification as to why the recommendation is deemed to be in the child's best interest.

4. The Superintendent/Designee will make final placement decision

The Superintendent/Designee will determine the child's placement and notify the parent(s) guardian(s) of the decision in writing.

Adopted: November 2010

ADMISSION OF TRANSFER STUDENTS

A student may withdraw from a Commonwealth charter school at any time and enroll in the school district in which said student resides. To maintain enrollment stability, encourage promotion based on academic standards, and discourage social promotion, the school district will consult with the student's charter school regarding placement and eligibility for graduation and enroll the student at the grade level the school district determines appropriate.

The time of the school year when enrollment is sought shall be a factor in determining the student's grade level placement. The Somerville Public Schools may determine that a student seeking enrollment after the mid-point of the academic year may not be eligible for promotion or graduation in that academic year.

SOURCE: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

The Somerville Public Schools will enroll and place students who have left Commonwealth charter schools by adhering to the same policies and procedures in place for any other student enrolling in the school district including, but not limited to, examination of the course of study and level of academic attainment of the student when determining the student's appropriate grade placement or eligibility for high school graduation.

To the same extent provided for other students enrolling in the Somerville Public Schools, students who enroll in the school district from a Commonwealth charter school shall be subject to the graduation requirements of the school district, may have certain graduation requirements waived, and may make-up certain graduation requirements.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REFS.: Chapter 12, Section 11 of the Acts of 2010

Adopted by School Committee: April 4, 2011

POLICY FOR MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS EDUCATION ASSISTANCE ACT

PURPOSE

The goal of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act is to ensure that each homeless child or youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other children and youths. The Somerville Public Schools (SPS) shall ensure that every effort is made to comply with this legislation.

DEFINITION

SPS is in compliance with the Massachusetts Department of Education (MADOE) which has adopted Section 725 (2) of Act regarding the definition of homeless children and youth:

- Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence or have a primary nighttime residence in a supervised, publicly or privately, operated shelter for temporary accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill), an institution providing temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or a public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

This definition shall include:

- children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement (temporary, transitional or emergency placements);
- children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- unaccompanied youth – a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

LIAISONS

The McKinney-Vento Act requires the every school district to designate a staff person to serve as the Homeless Education Liaison whose role is to assist homeless students enroll in school, remove all barriers to enrollment, ensure that homeless students receive the educational services for which they are eligible and have access to all school activities and events. This liaison may have other duties within the school district. The liaison for the Somerville Public Schools is the Ms. Regina Bertholdo. She may be reached at 617-625-6600 x 6960. The office is located at 42 Prescott Street, Somerville, Massachusetts.

ENROLLMENT

The Somerville Public Schools will immediately enroll (students attend class) homeless students in school, even if they do not have the documents usually required for enrollment – such as school records, medical records, proof of residency, discipline records, or birth certificate. Furthermore:

- homeless students have a right to either remain in their school of origin or to attend school where they are temporarily residing;

- students who choose to remain in their school of origin have the right to remain there until the end of the school year in which they get permanent housing;
- The Homeless Education Liaison will assist students who arrive without records by contacting the previously attended school system to obtain the required records.

TRANSPORTATION

The Somerville Public Schools shall ensure that transportation is provided according to state guidelines, at the request of the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth, to and from the school or origin:

- if the homeless student continues to live in the area served by the district in which the school of origin is located, that district must provide or arrange transportation according to the established school committee policy;
- if the homeless student moves to an area served by another district, though continuing his or her education at the school of origin, the district of origin and the district in which the student resides must agree upon a method to apportion responsibility and costs for transportation to the school of origin;
and
- if the districts cannot agree upon such a method, the responsibility and costs must be shared equally.

ACCESS TO COMPARABLE SERVICES

Homeless students are to be provided services and education programs comparable to those received by other students and for which they meet eligibility criteria, such as services provided under Title I or similar state or local programs; programs for students with disabilities; programs for students with limited English proficiency; vocational or technical programs; gifted and talented programs; tutoring; MCAS remediation; homework assistance; referral to counseling; medical services; school supplies; and school nutrition programs. Homeless students will be enrolled immediately in the free breakfast and lunch program.

NOTE: To expedite the delivery of nutritional benefits, school officials may accept documentation that students are homeless from the local educational liaison or the director of homeless shelter where the students reside as the determination of eligibility for free lunch.

ACCESS TO PRESCHOOL

An important goal of McKinney-Vento is to offer homeless preschoolers the same opportunity to enroll, and attend and succeed in preschool as non-homeless preschoolers, thereby minimizing their educational disruption due to homelessness. The Somerville District Homeless Education Liaison and early care and education providers, including child development and preschool program personnel child care resource and referral agencies and other service providers, must coordinate and collaborate to review and revise practices, or policies that inadvertently act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless children in child care and early education programs.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

If a dispute arises over school selection (school of origin or school in which homeless child is residing) or enrollment, the Somerville Public Schools will immediately enroll the homeless student – pending _resolution of the dispute – and must provide the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth with both a written statement of the school placement decision and a

notice of the right to appeal the decision. The SPS shall refer the unaccompanied youth, parent or guardian to the Homeless Education Liaison, who will expeditiously carry out the dispute resolution process. Disputes which cannot be resolved within the district will be sent to the Massachusetts Department of Education, and the final decision in such a situation resides with Massachusetts Commissioner of Education.

UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH & CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN STATE CARE OR CUSTODY

Unaccompanied youth are youth who are homeless; not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian; and not in the custody of a state agency. This definition includes youth living on the street, in inadequate housing, denied housing by their families, those who have left home voluntarily, even when their parent/s want them to return home, and youth doubled up with friends or relatives. Also, in collaboration with the Department of Social Services, MADOE has determined that children and youth in state care or custody who have been placed out of their homes into temporary, transitional, or emergency living placements are awaiting foster care placement and are therefore homeless. For example, Stabilization, Assessment and Rapid Reintegration/Reunification (STARR) Programs are short-term DCF placements that have replaced the temporary, transitional, or emergency housing previously provided by “bridge” homes, diagnostic assessment centers, and shelters, and as a result, placement in STARR Programs, both latency and adolescent, are considered temporary, transitional, or emergency homeless housing under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Unaccompanied youth or students in state care or custody who are awaiting foster care are entitled to the same educational rights and services; including transportation, under McKinney-Vento as any homeless child or youth in the care of their parent(s)/ guardian(s).

Adopted: May 15, 2006

Amended: October 5, 2009

INTRA-DISTRICT TRANSFER

All K through 8 students requesting a school transfer within the Somerville Public Schools are required to submit a school transfer application form to the Parent Information Center, 42 Prescott Street, 617-625-6600 x6962 or x6263 for approval, and such requests will be subject to the available space provisions of the adopted and approved Student Assignment Plan.

Transfers will not be issued after November 1 of the academic year unless extenuating circumstances exist and it is in the best interest of the child and the schools.

Transfer applications for the upcoming school year will be accepted at the Parent Information Center beginning in January of the current school year.

Adopted: November 2009

SCHOOL CHOICE

It is the policy of this school district **not** to admit non-resident students under the terms and conditions of the Interdistrict School Choice Law (M.G.L. 76:12B.) This decision must be reaffirmed annually prior to June 1st by a vote of the School Committee following a public hearing. In the event the Somerville School Committee votes to participate, the following local conditions would apply:

1. That by May 1 of every school year, the administration will determine the number of spaces in each school available to choice students.
2. That by June 1 of every school year, a public hearing will be held to review participation in the school choice program.
3. That resident students be given priority placement in any classes or programs within the district.
4. That the selection of non-resident students for admission when the number of requests exceeds the number of available spaces be in the form of a random drawing. There will be two drawings for this purpose. The first will take place during the last week of the current school year but no later than July 1st. The second will be conducted during the week immediately preceding the opening of the next school year and will be based on the possibility of unexpected additional openings.
5. Any student who is accepted for admission under the provisions of this policy is entitled to remain in the district until graduation from high school except if there is a lack of funding of the program.
6. The School Committee affirms its position that it shall not discriminate in the admission of any child on the basis of race, color, religious creed, national origin, sex, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, ancestry, athletic performance, physical handicap, special need, academic performance or proficiency in the English language.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:6; 71:6A; 76:6; 76:12; 76:12B
BESE Regulations 603 CMR 26.00

Revised: October 15, 2012

STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential for success in school. The Committee recognizes that parents of children attending our schools have special rights as well as responsibilities, one of which is to ensure that their children attend school regularly, in accordance with state law.

Therefore, students may be excused temporarily from school attendance for the following reasons: illness or quarantine; bereavement or serious illness in family; weather so inclement as to endanger the health of the child; and observance of major religious holidays.

A child may also be excused for other exceptional reasons with approval of the Principal or designee.

A student's understanding of the importance of day-to-day schoolwork is an important factor in the shaping of his character. Parents can help their children by not allowing them to miss school needlessly.

Accordingly, parents will provide a written explanation for the absence or tardiness of a child. This will be required in advance for types of absences where advance notice is possible.

In instances of chronic or irregular absence reportedly due to illness, the school administration may request a physician's statement certifying such absences to be justified.

Student Absence Notification Program

Each Principal will notify a student's parent/guardian within 3 days of the student's absence in the event the parent/guardian has not informed the school of the absence.

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

Dropout Prevention

No student who has not graduated from high school shall be considered permanently removed from school unless the Principal has sent notice to a student, and that student's parent/guardian, who has been absent from school for ten (10) consecutive days of unexcused absence. The notice shall be sent within five (5) days of the tenth consecutive day of absence and shall offer at least 2 dates and times within the next ten (10) days for an exit interview with the Superintendent or designee, the student, and the student's parent/guardian. The notice shall be in both English and the primary language of the home, if applicable. The notice shall include contact information for scheduling the exit interview and shall indicate the parties shall reach an agreement on the date/time of the interview within the ten (10) day timeframe. The timeframe may be extended at the request of the parent/guardian and no extension shall exceed 14 days.

The Superintendent or designee may proceed with any interview without a parent/guardian present, provided the Superintendent has documented a good faith effort to include the parent/guardian.

The Superintendent or designee shall convene a team of school staff to participate in the exit interview and shall provide information to the student and, if applicable, the student's parent/guardian on the detrimental effects of early withdrawal from school and the alternative education programs and services available to the student.

Revised: January 18, 1996

Amended: December 2009

Amended: October 6, 2014

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [76:1](#); 76:1B; [76:16](#); 76:18; [76:20](#)

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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

Among these rights and responsibilities are the following:

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

It is the Somerville School Committee's belief that as part of the educational process students should be made aware of their legal rights, and of the legal authority of the Somerville School Committee to make and delegate authority to its staff to make rules regarding the orderly operation of the schools.

Students have the right to know the standards of behavior that are expected of them, and the consequences of misbehavior.

The rights and responsibilities of students, including standards of conduct, will be made available to students and their parents through handbooks distributed annually.

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: September 2009

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37H; 71:82 through 71:86

STUDENT MUTUAL RESPECT

Students are expected to respect fellow students and teachers. This respect shall extend to all students and teachers-including those of different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Any action to the contrary will be dealt with severely by the principal/headmaster or his/her designee. Students have a right to the use of fair procedures in disciplinary cases.

Student's Rights Policy

Encouraging and maintaining positive attitudes is an important part of the development of the whole learner.

Certain basic, constitutional rights underlie all behavior in the schools throughout the City of Somerville. A student shall not be subject to ridicule, harassment or demeaning treatment which would diminish his/her personal dignity or exclude the student from his/her peer group.

Behavior which would consequently put a stigma of inferiority on a student because of hi/her native language or culture, or in any way demean a student's racial or ethnic origins by either another child or school official, represents a clear and unacceptable violation of the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

Students who feel they are being discriminated against or harassed because of their race, religion or national origin should report such incidents to their counselor, teacher or principal/headmaster who will listen and respond in an appropriate manner.

Adopted: November 20, 1989

Amended: December 2009

RIGHTS OF EIGHTEEN YEAR OLD STUDENTS

Students who are eighteen years old have the legal rights of adults; they can sign report cards, progress reports, field trip permission slips, and absence notes. If school officials wish to verify the truth of an absence note, they may require the signature of another adult. Because the Somerville Public Schools recognizes its obligations to keep parents/guardians informed of their student's progress towards graduation, it will not hesitate to contact parents/guardians directly if their child is at risk.

Adopted: November 2009

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 4:7

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING

As appropriate to the age of students, class or school organizations and school government organizations, such as student councils, may be formed to offer practice in self-government and to serve as channels for the expression of students' ideas and opinions.

The Somerville School Committee will take into consideration student opinions in establishing policies that directly affect student programs, activities, privileges and other areas of student sensitivity.

Students will be welcomed at Somerville School Committee meetings and granted privileges of speaking consistent with the privileges extended to the general public.

Each year, the students at Somerville High School will elect a student representative to serve as an ex-officio nonvoting member of the Somerville School Committee without the right to attend executive sessions unless such right is expressly granted by the Somerville School Committee.

Revised: January 18, 1996

Amended: December 2009

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:38M

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

The 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. They will be required to respect constituted authority, to conform to school rules and to those provisions of law that apply to their conduct.

Each Principal shall include prohibited actions in the student handbook or other publication and made available to students and parents.

Principals and staff shall not use academic punishment of any form as a consequence to inappropriate behaviors/actions by students.

The Principal may, as a disciplinary measure, remove a student from privileges, such as extracurricular activities and attendance at school-sponsored events, based on the student's misconduct. Such a removal is not subject to the remainder of this policy, law, or regulation.

Suspension

In every case of student misconduct for which suspension may be imposed, a Principal shall consider ways to re-engage the student in learning; and avoid using long-term suspension from school as a consequence until alternatives have been tried. Alternatives may include the use of evidence-based strategies and programs such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive behavioral interventions and supports.

Notice of Suspension

Except for emergency removal or an in-school suspension of less than 10 days, a Principal must provide the student and the parent oral and written notice, and provide the student an opportunity for a hearing and the parent an opportunity to participate in such hearing before imposing suspension as a consequence for misconduct. The Principal shall provide both oral and written notice to the student and parent(s) in English and in the primary language of the home if other than English. The notice shall include the rights enumerated in law and regulation. To conduct a hearing without a parent present, the Principal must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent.

Emergency Removal

A Principal may remove a student from school temporarily when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the Principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption.

The Principal shall immediately notify the Superintendent in writing of the removal including a description of the danger presented by the student.

The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days following the day of the emergency removal, during which time the Principal shall: Make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student's parent of the emergency removal, the reason for the need for emergency removal, and the other matters required in the notice; Provide written notice to the student and parent as required above; Provide the student an opportunity for a hearing with the

Principal that complies with applicable regulations, and the parent an opportunity to attend the hearing, before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for hearing is otherwise agreed to by the Principal, student, and parent; Render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day, which meets the requirements of applicable law and regulation.

A Principal shall also ensure adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation prior to removal.

In School Suspension – Not More Than 10 Days Consecutively or Cumulatively

The Principal may use in-school suspension as an alternative to short-term suspension for disciplinary offenses.

The Principal may impose an in-school suspension for a disciplinary offense under this provision, provided that the Principal follows the process set forth in regulation and the student has the opportunity to make academic progress as required by law and regulation.

Principal's Hearing – Short Term Suspension of up to 10 Days

The hearing with the Principal shall be 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 committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequences for the infraction.

At a minimum, the Principal shall discuss the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information.

The student also shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the Principal should consider in determining whether other remedies and consequences may be appropriate as set forth in law and regulation.

The Principal shall provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the Principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.

The Principal shall, based on the available information, including mitigating circumstances, determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, what remedy or consequence will be imposed.

The Principal shall notify the student and parent of the determination and the reasons for it, and, if the student is suspended, the type and duration of suspension and the opportunity to make up assignments and such other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal, as required by law and regulation. The determination shall be in writing and may be in the form of an update to the original written notice.

If the student is in a public preschool program or in grades K through 3, the Principal shall send a copy of the written determination to the Superintendent and explain the reasons for imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the short-term suspension takes effect.

Principal's Hearing – Long Term Suspension of more than 10 days but less than 90 days (consecutive or cumulative)

The hearing with the Principal shall be 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 committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequences for the infraction.

At a minimum, in addition to the rights afforded a student in a short-term suspension hearing, the student shall have the following rights: 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; The right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's/parent's expense; 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; The right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district; The right to request that the hearing be recorded by the Principal, and to receive a copy of the audio recording upon request. If the student or parent requests an audio recording, the Principal shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made and a copy will be provided to the student and parent upon request.

The Principal shall provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the Principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.

The Principal shall, based on the evidence, determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension as required by law and regulation, what remedy or consequence will be imposed, in place of or in addition to a long-term suspension. The Principal shall send the written determination to the student and parent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the Principal and the parent.

If the Principal decides to suspend the student, the written determination shall: Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing; Set out the key facts and conclusions reached by the Principal; Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school; Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of removal from school as required by law and regulation; Inform the student of the right to appeal the Principal's decision to the Superintendent or designee, but only if the Principal has imposed a long-term suspension. Notice of the right of appeal shall be in English and the primary language of the home if other than English, and shall include the following information: The process for appealing the decision, including that the student or parent must file a written notice of appeal with the Superintendent within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long-term suspension; provided that within the five (5) calendar days, the student or parent may request and receive from the Superintendent an extension of time for filing the written notice for up to seven (7) additional calendar days; and that 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 a public preschool program or in grades K through 3, the Principal shall send a copy of the written determination to the Superintendent and explain the reasons for imposing an out-of-school suspension before the suspension takes effect.

Superintendent's Hearing

A student who is placed on long-term suspension following a hearing with the Principal shall have the right to appeal the Principal's decision to the Superintendent.

The student or parent shall file a notice of appeal with the Superintendent within the time period noted above (see Principal's hearing – Suspension of more than 10 days). If the appeal is not timely filed, the Superintendent may deny the appeal, or may allow the appeal in his or her discretion, for good cause.

The Superintendent shall hold the hearing within three (3) school days of the student's request, unless the student or parent requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days, in which case the Superintendent shall grant the extension.

The Superintendent shall make a good faith effort to include the parent in the hearing. The Superintendent shall be presumed to have made a good faith effort if he or she has made efforts to find a day and time for the hearing that would allow the parent and Superintendent to participate. The Superintendent shall send written notice to the parent of the date, time, and location of the hearing.

The Superintendent shall conduct a hearing to determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense of which the student is accused, and if so, what the consequence shall be. The Superintendent shall arrange for an audio recording of the hearing, a copy of which shall be provided to the student or parent upon request. The Superintendent shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made of the hearing and a copy will be provided to the student and parent upon request. The student shall have all the rights afforded the student at the Principal's hearing for long-term suspension.

The Superintendent shall issue a written decision within five (5) calendar days of the hearing which meets the requirements of law and regulation. If the Superintendent determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the Superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than the Principal, but shall not impose a suspension greater than that imposed by the Principal's decision. The decision of the Superintendent shall be the final decision of the school district with regard to the suspension.

Expulsion

Expulsion is defined as the removal of a student from school for more than ninety (90) school days, indefinitely, or permanently as allowed by law for possession of a dangerous weapon; possession of a controlled substance; assault on a member of the educational staff; or a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, or adjudication or admission of guilt with respect to such felony, if a Principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

Any student alleged to have committed one of these acts shall be afforded appropriate **due process rights**. Any student expelled from school for such an offense shall be afforded an opportunity to receive educational services and make academic progress.

Academic Progress

Any student who is suspended or expelled shall have the opportunity to earn credits, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of his or her removal from the classroom or school. The Principal shall inform the student and parent of this opportunity in writing, in English and in the primary language of the home, when such suspension or expulsion is imposed.

Any student who is expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days, whether in school or out of school, shall have an opportunity to receive education services and

make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, through the school-wide education service plan.

The Principal shall develop a school-wide education service plan describing the education services that the school district will make available to students who are expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days. The plan shall include the process for notifying such students and their parents of the services and arranging such services. Education services shall be based on, and be provided in a manner consistent with, the academic standards and curriculum frameworks established for all students under the law.

The Principal shall notify the parent and student of the opportunity to receive education services at the time the student is expelled or placed on long-term suspension. Notice shall be provided in English and in the primary language spoken in the student's home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate. The notice shall include a list of the specific education services that are available to the student and contact information for a school district staff member who can provide more detailed information.

For each student expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days, whether in-school or out-of-school, the school district shall document the student's enrollment in education services. For data reporting purposes, the school shall track and report attendance, academic progress, and such other data as directed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Reporting

The school district shall collect and annually report data to the DESE regarding in-school suspensions, short- and long-term suspensions, expulsions, emergency removals, access to education services, and such other information as may be required by the DESE.

The Principal of each school shall periodically review discipline data by selected student populations, including but not limited to race and ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, English language learner status, and student with a disability status in accordance with law and regulation.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REF: M.G.L. [71:37H](#); [71:37H ½](#); 71:37H3/4; 76:17; 603 CMR 53.00

Amended: October 6, 2014

STUDENT CONDUCT – SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

The Individual Education Plan (IEP) of every student with special needs must indicate why the student is or is not expected to meet the regular discipline code, and, if not, what modification of the code is required. If a modified discipline code is required, such modification shall be described in the IEP.

No student with special needs may be suspended for more than ten cumulative days in a school year except under the conditions outlined below. Suspension is defined as any action which results in the removal of a student from the program prescribed in his/her IEP. The term includes in-school suspension as well as any exclusion from transportation services which prohibits the student's participation in his/her prescribed program.

When it is known that the suspension(s) of a student with special needs will accumulate to ten days in a school year, a review of the IEP will be conducted. Participants in the meeting shall include, but not limited to, individuals who are trained in the area of the student's special needs. At that review, the review team will determine whether the student's misconduct is related to the student's special needs, or results from an IEP that was not fully implemented. Depending on the results of that determination, suspension may or may not be implemented, according to the regulations outlined below. If the student has demonstrated repeated instances of dangerously assaultive or self-abusive behavior, an emergency evaluation and placement may be made with parental consent.

Circumstances under which the student may not be suspended for more than ten cumulative days in a school year:

- A. If the team concludes that the student's misconduct is related to the student's special needs or results from an inappropriate special education program/placement or from an IEP that was not fully implemented, the student shall not be suspended. Instead, the student's IEP shall be revised to reflect a new program/placement designed to meet the student's needs more effectively, or, if the misconduct resulted from an appropriate IEP that was not fully implemented, all necessary steps shall be taken by the school to ensure that the IEP is fully implemented.
- B. If a new program/placement is designed for the student as a result of the review, the new program/placement shall be implemented immediately following parental approval of the IEP. If the parent/guardian refuses consent to the IEP, the Somerville School Committee or parent/guardian may request a hearing to determine the appropriateness of the new program/placement. Alternatively, the parties may seek mediation to resolve the dispute. If a hearing is requested, during the pendency of the hearing, the student shall remain in the last agreed upon educational placement (the placement in effect when the dispute arose), unless another placement is agreed to by the Somerville School Committee and the student's parent/guardian or a court order permits the Somerville School Committee to change the student's placement based on a showing that the student's continued presence in school presents a substantial likelihood of injury to the student or others.

Circumstances under which suspension may be imposed for more than ten cumulative days in a school year:

- A. If the school wishes to impose a suspension which will result in more than ten cumulative days of suspension in a school year, and the team concludes that the student's misconduct is not related to the student's special needs and is not the result of an inappropriate special education program/placement, and the current IEP was fully implemented, the school shall:
 - I. Provide an alternative plan for the delivery of the special education services to the student during the period of suspension, which shall be referred to as "the alternative plan",
 - II. Secure the approval of the alternative plan by the Division of Special Education, and
 - III. Before the student is suspended for more than ten cumulative days in a school year, present the alternative plan to the student's parent/guardian. The failure or refusal of the parent/guardian to consent to the provision of services under the alternative plan shall not prevent implementation of the suspension.
- B. If the parent/guardian requests a hearing, the student shall continue in the last agreed upon educational placement pending the hearing unless another placement is agreed to by the parties, or a court order permits the Somerville School Committee to change the student's placement based on a showing that the student's continued presence in school presents a substantial likelihood of injury to the student or others.

Adopted: November 2009

STUDENT DRESS CODE

The responsibility for the dress and appearance of the students will rest with individual students and parents.

They have the right to determine how the student will dress providing that attire is not destructive to school property, complies with requirements for health and safety, and does not cause disorder or disruption. The administration is authorized to take action in instances where individual dress does not meet the stated requirements.

This does not mean that student, faculty, or parent groups may not recommend appropriate dress for school or special occasions. It means that students will not be prevented from attending school or a school function, or otherwise be discriminated against, so long as their dress and appearance meet the requirements set forth above.

Adopted: June 1996

Revised: March 1998

SOURCE: MASC Policy

VOCATIONAL DRESS CODE

For reasons of health and safety, vocational students will be required to adhere to the following regulations:

1. Safety glasses are to be worn in all work areas.
2. Proper footwear is to be worn in all shops. (9th graders in the Exploratory Program will wear work boots.)
3. Suitable clothing is to be worn as required by each shop.
4. Hair is to be kept tidy in accordance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards.

STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Students will enjoy the constitutional rights of freedom of expression. They will have the right to express their views in speech, writing, or through any other medium or form of expression within limitations comparable to those imposed on all citizens but specifically designed for children and youth in a school setting.

The Somerville School Committee will encourage student publications not only because they offer an educational activity through which students gain experience in reporting, writing, editing, and understanding responsible journalism, but also because they provide an opportunity for students to express their views.

All student publications will be expected to comply with the rules for responsible journalism. This means that libelous statements, unfounded charges and accusations, obscenity, defamation of persons, false statements, material advocating racial or religious prejudice, hatred, violence, the breaking of laws and school regulations, or materials designed to disrupt the educational process will not be permitted.

The Superintendent/Designee will establish guidelines that are in keeping with the above and provide for the review of the content of all student publications prior to their distribution.

Review of content prior to publication is not censorship but part of the educational process as this concerns student publications. It can be pointed out to students, as it frequently is to journalists, that a publisher (in this case, the school system) enjoys freedom to determine what it will and will not publish.

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: September 2009

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:82

GANG ACTIVITY/SECRET SOCIETIES

The goal of the Somerville School Committee is to keep District schools and students free from the threats or harmful influence of any gang. For purposes of this policy, gang is defined as any group, secret society, organization or association that advocates drug use, violence, ethnic intimidation, or disruptive or illegal behavior. The principal or his/her designee shall maintain supervision of school premises to deter intimidation of students and confrontations between members of different gangs.

The Superintendent shall establish open lines of communication with local law enforcement agencies so as to share information and provide mutual support in this effort within appropriate legal guidelines.

The Superintendent shall provide in-service training to help staff members identify gangs and gang symbols, recognize early manifestations of disruptive activities, and respond appropriately. Staff members shall be informed about conflict management techniques and alerted to intervention measures and community resources that may help students.

Symbols

The Somerville School Committee finds that gang symbols are inherently disruptive to the educational process, and therefore prohibits the presence of any insignia, apparel, jewelry, accessory, notebook or other school supply, or manner of grooming which by virtue of its color, arrangement, trademark, or any other attribute denotes membership in gangs. The Somerville School Committee further prohibits any demonstration of gang membership through the use of hand gestures, graffiti, or printed materials. This policy shall be applied by the principal or his/her designee as the need for it arises at individual school sites. A student may be suspended or expelled for failure to comply with the provisions of this policy.

Prevention Education

The Somerville School Committee realizes that students may become involved in gangs without understanding the consequences of such membership. Early intervention is a key component of efforts to break the cycle of such memberships. Therefore, gang violence prevention information shall be made available in the elementary, middle, and high schools as appropriate.

SECRET SOCIETIES

Fraternities, sororities and/or secret societies shall not receive District or building recognition in any manner.

A student may be suspended or expelled for failure to comply with the provisions of this policy.

Revised: January 18, 1996

Reviewed: September 2009

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. No organization that uses the facilities or grounds under the control of the School Committee shall engage in the activity of hazing any person while on school property.

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

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

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

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

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

SOURCE: MASC

Adopted: November 2009

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 269:17, 18, 19

HAZING

CH. 269, S.17. CRIME OF HAZING; DEFINITION; PENALTY

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

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

CH. 269, S.18. DUTY TO REPORT HAZING

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

CH. 269, S.19. HAZING STATUTES TO BE PROVIDED; STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE AND DISCIPLINE POLICY REQUIRED

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

Each secondary school and each public or private school or college shall file, at least annually, a report with the regents of higher education and in the case of secondary schools, the Board of Education, certifying that such institution has complied with the provisions of this section and also certifying that said school has adopted a disciplinary policy with regards to the organizers and participants of hazing. The Board of Regents and, in the case of secondary schools, the Board of Education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution which fails to make such a report.

Revised: June 3, 1996

Reviewed: September 2009

BULLYING IN SCHOOLS

A safe learning environment is one in which every student develops emotionally, academically, and physically in a caring and supportive atmosphere free of intimidation and abuse. Bullying of any type has no place in a school setting. The Somerville Public Schools will endeavor to maintain learning and working environment free of bullying. The Somerville School Committee and all of the Somerville Public Schools shall not tolerate bullying.

Definition:

“Bullying” is the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target’s property;
- (ii) places the targeting reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property;
- (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- (iv) infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. For the purposes of this section, bullying shall include cyber-bullying.

“Cyber-bullying” is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying shall also include:

- (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or
- (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

Prohibition:

Bullying shall be prohibited:

- (i) on school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a school district or school, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by a school district or school and

- (ii) at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a school district or school, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the target, infringes on the rights of the target at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Nothing contained herein shall require schools to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

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

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (BPIP):

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (BPIP) shall apply to students and staff. The Somerville Public Schools has developed, will adhere to and periodically updates a plan to address bullying prevention and intervention in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians. The consultation shall include, but not be limited to, notice and a public comment period. The plan shall be updated at least biennially by the Superintendent/designee.

The Somerville Public Schools BPIP includes, but is not limited to:

- (i) descriptions of and statements prohibiting bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation;
- (ii) clear procedures for students, staff, parents, guardians and others to report bullying or retaliation;
- (iii) a provision that reports of bullying or retaliation may be made anonymously; provided, however, that no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report;
- (iv) clear procedures for promptly responding to and investigating reports of bullying or retaliation;
- (v) the range of disciplinary actions that may be taken against an aggressor for bullying or retaliation; provided, however, that the disciplinary actions shall balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior;
- (vi) clear procedures for restoring a sense of safety for a target and assessing that target's needs for protection;
- (vii) strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying or witnesses or has reliable information about an act of bullying;
- (viii) procedures consistent with state and federal law for promptly notifying the parents or guardians of a target and a aggressor; provided, further, that the parents or guardians of a target shall also be notified of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation; and provided, further, that the procedures shall provide for immediate notification pursuant to regulations promulgated under this subsection by the principal or person who holds a comparable role to the local law enforcement agency when criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor;

- (ix) a provision that a student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action; and
- (x) a strategy for providing counseling or referral to appropriate services for aggressors and targets and for appropriate family members of said students. The plan shall afford all students the same protection regardless of their status under the law.

The District's BPIP is consistent with the requirements of this policy, as well as relevant local, State and Federal laws.

Prevention Education:

The BPIP includes provisions for preventing bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation. This prevention plan shall minimally include the provision of age-appropriate, evidence-based instruction on bullying prevention in each grade that is incorporated into the curriculum of the school district or school.

Staff Professional Development:

The BPIP includes a provision for ongoing professional development to build the skills of all staff members, including, but not limited to, educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities and paraprofessionals, to prevent, identify and respond to bullying. The content of such professional development shall include, but not be limited to:

- (i) developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents;
- (ii) developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- (iii) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target and witnesses to the bullying;
- (iv) research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
- (v) information on the incidence and nature of cyber-bullying; and
- (vi) internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying.

Communication with Staff, Families and Students

The BPIP includes provisions for informing parents and guardians about the bullying prevention curriculum of the school district or school and shall include, but not be limited to:

- (i) how parents and guardians can reinforce the curriculum at home and support the school district or school plan;
- (ii) the dynamics of bullying; and
- (iii) online safety and cyber-bullying.

The school district provides to students and parents or guardians, in age-appropriate terms and in the languages that are required by School Committee policy, annual written notice of the relevant student-related sections of the plan.

The school district provides to all school staff annual written notice of the Plan. The faculty and staff at each school are trained annually on the plan applicable to the school. Relevant sections of the plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff are included in a school district or school employee handbook.

The BPIP is posted on the website of the school district.

Implementation of the Plan:

Each school Principal or the person who holds a comparable position shall be responsible for the implementation and oversight of the BPIP at his/her school. The Principal shall communicate with the Director of Student Services when an incident of bullying, cyberbullying, and/or retaliation is reported and an investigation is started.

Other personnel with responsibility for the implementation of the BPIP shall include:

- Staff professional development shall be coordinated with the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
- Classroom-based prevention education shall be coordinated with the Supervisor of Health/PE
- Family instructional programming shall be coordinated with the District Administrator of Programs and/or the Office of Family and Community Connections
- Investigation and response to incidents of bullying, cyberbullying and/or retaliation involving students with Individual Education Plans may involve the Special Education Department.

Reporting and Responding to Bullying, Cyberbullying, and/or Retaliation:

The BPIP of the Somerville Public Schools designates clear guidelines for the bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation reporting, investigation and response procedures. These provisions include the following:

- Members of the school staff and/or agents of the Somerville Public Schools including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, secretary, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, volunteers, substitute teachers, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional, are obligated to immediately report any instance of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the principal or to the school official identified in the plan as responsible for receiving such reports or both.
- All reporting, investigations and response shall be consistent with local, state and federal law regarding the anti-discrimination and the protection of civil and human rights, particularly for vulnerable populations including but not limited to LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) youth and youth in LGBT families. It is important to recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming a target of bullying and harassment on actual perceived “differentiating characteristics” that may make certain students more vulnerable to bullying including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, physical, development, or sensory disability. Consultation with District legal staff, and representatives of local, regional and state law enforcement and justice agencies may be required to ensure the rights of targets and aggressors are maintained.

- The District will strive to create school environments where it is safe for students and families to report incidents of bullying, cyberbullying and/or retaliation. This shall include publicizing reporting mechanisms and making reporting mechanisms accessible linguistically and developmentally. This shall also include ensuring there is at least one mechanism for making reports anonymously.
- Upon receipt of such a report, the Principal or a designee shall promptly conduct an investigation.
- If the Principal or a designee determines that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Principal or designee shall
 - (i) notify the local law enforcement agency if the Principal or designee believes that criminal charges may be pursued against a aggressor;
 - (ii) take appropriate disciplinary action;
 - (iii) notify the parents or guardians of a aggressor; and
 - (iv) notify the parents or guardians of the target, and to the extent consistent with state and federal law, notify them of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation and notify parents and guardians of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Educations Problem Resolution System.
- If an incident of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation involves students from more than one school district, the Somerville Public School district, or a Somerville Public school, if the *first* school or district informed of the bullying or retaliation shall promptly notify the appropriate administrator of the other school district(s) or school(s) so that appropriate action may be taken.
- If an incident of bullying or retaliation occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in a local school district, the school district or school informed of the bullying or retaliation shall contact law enforcement.

Whenever the evaluation of the Individualized Education Program team indicates that the child has a disability that affects social skills development or that the child is vulnerable to bullying, harassment or teasing because of the child's disability, the Individualized Education Program shall address the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment or teasing.

MGL: Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010

MGL: Chapter 71, section 37O

Adopted: June 28, 2010

Revised: December 20, 2010

Revised: December 16, 2013

Amended: October 6, 2014

TOBACCO USE BY STUDENTS

The use of any tobacco products* within the school buildings, the school facilities or on the school grounds or on school buses by any individual, including school personnel, is prohibited. In addition, tobacco use by students is banned at all school-sponsored events, wherever the event takes place.

*Tobacco Product: Any product containing, made, or derived from tobacco or nicotine that is intended for human consumption, whether smoked, chewed, absorbed, dissolved, inhaled, snorted, sniffed, or ingested by any other means, including, but not limited to: cigarettes, cigars, little cigars, chewing tobacco, pipe tobacco, snuff, or electronic cigarettes, electronic cigars, electronic pipes, electronic hookah, or other similar products, regardless of nicotine content, that rely on vaporization or aerosolization. "Tobacco product" includes any component or part of a tobacco product. "Tobacco product" does not include any product that has been approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration either as a tobacco use cessation product or for other medical purposes and which is being marketed and sold or prescribed solely for the approved purpose.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:37H

Adopted: December 2009

Amended: December 2015

DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE BY STUDENTS

In view of the fact that the use of alcohol can endanger the health and safety of the user, and recognizing the deleterious effect the use of alcoholic beverages can have on the maintenance of general order and discipline, the Somerville School Committee prohibits the use of, serving of, or consumption of any alcoholic beverage on school property or at any school function.

The Somerville School Department and the Somerville School Committee prohibit the possession, use, purchase or sale of drugs, alcohol, drug paraphernalia, or any controlled substance in any place or vehicle under the school jurisdiction and at all school-sponsored activities regardless of location.

If a student finds himself/herself in the presence of students using drugs/alcohol, that student must leave the area immediately or be subject to the same penalties as the users.

Additionally, any student, regardless of age, who has been drinking alcoholic beverages prior to attendance at, or participation in, a school sponsored activity, will be barred from that activity and subject to disciplinary action.

Revised: January 18, 1996

Amended: November 2009

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 272:40A
 M.G.L. 71:37H

PREGNANT STUDENTS

School-age mothers, unless they receive adequate assistance, might drop out of school without acquiring the necessary education or without marketable skills.

Pregnant students will be permitted to continue in school. The student and her physician, in cooperation with the school staff, will develop an appropriate educational plan if it is agreed she should no longer attend school regularly.

Every effort will be made to see that the educational program of the student is disrupted as little as possible; that health counseling services, as well as instruction are offered; that return to school after delivery is encouraged; and that every opportunity to complete high school is provided.

Adopted: January 1996

Revised: March 2009

Reviewed: September 2009

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:84
Title IX: 20 U.S.C. 1681

SEARCHES AND INTERROGATIONS

Searches by Staff

The right of inspection of students' school lockers is inherent in the authority granted Somerville School Committees and administrators. This authority may be exercised as needed in the interest of safeguarding children, their own and school property.

Nevertheless, exercise of that authority by school officials places unusual demands upon their judgment. Thus, school officials shall act to protect each child's constitutional rights to personal privacy and protection from coercion and in the best interest of all students and the schools.

Searches by school officials of students' automobiles or the student will be conducted in a way that protects the students' rights consistent with the responsibility of the school system to provide an atmosphere conducive to the educational process.

Interrogations by Law Enforcement Officials

The schools have legal custody of students during the school day and during hours of approved extracurricular activities. It is the responsibility of the school administration to make an effort to protect each student's rights with respect to interrogations by law enforcement officials.

Therefore:

1. If law enforcement officials assert the need to enter school premises during the school day or during hours of extracurricular activity to either question students or take students into custody, law enforcement officials may enter school premises to do so only with the written approval of the Superintendent, a valid warrant issued by a neutral magistrate or judge, or under exigent circumstances. The principal or his/her designee will be present when possible. An effort will be made to contact the student's parent or guardian so that the responsible individual may be notified of the situation.
2. If custody and/or arrest are involved, the principal will request that all procedural safeguards, as prescribed by law, be observed by the law enforcement officials.

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: September 2009

Amended: March 2017

LOCKER, DESK, AND OTHER SCHOOL PROPERTY SEARCHES

All lockers, desks and other school property assigned to students, wherever located, are the property of the school district, and remain the property of the school district while they are being used by students. Students are required to provide their principal with the combination or a key to all locks used on school lockers. If a student uses a lock without providing the principal with the combination or a key, the lock will be removed by the principal upon detection.

Lockers and desks are made available for the use and convenience of students while in school. Students are permitted to use lockers and desks only to store books, school supplies and personal items that are necessary for use in school, such as coats, footwear, athletic gear and lunches. Lockers and desks are not to be used to store items that cause, or are reasonably likely to cause, interference with the educational process, that create a potential threat to the health, safety or security of others, or that are forbidden by law or school rules.

School administrators or designees are authorized to search lockers and desks, including any personal effects such as purses, pockets, knapsacks, etc. that are found therein. School administrators or designees may conduct periodic random inspections of lockers, desks and their contents, to ensure that school property is being properly used and maintained. Such random inspections may be conducted at any time, with or without notice, and with or without the consent of the student or his/her parent or guardian. Any contraband (i.e., any item that is illegal, prohibited by school rules, potentially dangerous or evidence of a crime or violation of school rules) that is found as a result of a search of school property will be seized by school authorities and turned over to the appropriate legal authorities. The parent/guardian of a student who is under eighteen (18) years of age will be notified of any such items that are seized by school authorities.

The following rules shall apply to the search of school property assigned to a specific student and the seizure of any item found therein:

- A. A school administrator or designee may search a specific student's locker or desk if there is reasonable suspicion to believe that the locker or desk contains contraband, as described above.
- B. A search of property assigned to a specific student should be conducted in the presence of a witness and, when reasonably possible, in the presence of the student.
- C. Any contraband that is found as a result of a search of school property will be seized by school authorities and turned over to the appropriate legal authorities. The parent/guardian of a student who is under eighteen (18) years of age will be notified of any such items that are seized by school authorities.

The Superintendent shall distribute this policy to all students, annually.

Adopted: January 2010

STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

The School Committee recognizes that there may be conditions in the school system that are in need of improvement and that students should have some means by which their concerns may be effectively expressed, considered, and dealt with fairly. Such means, if well-conceived and understood in advance, can do much to maintain harmonious relationships among the schools and the students and community.

The traditional "open door" policy in the public school system will be continued. Students--and their parents and/or guardians--who believe that a student has received unfair treatment may bring forward their grievance. Appeals of individual disciplinary cases will be required to follow the district's policy on student discipline. Any applicable provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws or federal law will be followed by school officials in conducting hearings and reviews of student grievances. In general, procedures will begin with the authority imposing the penalty (for example, Principal or teacher) and may ultimately be referred to the Superintendent and on to the School Committee if a policy needs to be approved or changed.

Every attempt will be made to seek a satisfactory solution to any legitimate grievance in a friendly and informal manner.

Adopted: January 1996

Amended: November 2009

Amended: October 6, 2014

SOURCE: MASC

CROSS REF: JIC Student Discipline

STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

The School Committee recognizes that there may be conditions in the school system that are in need of improvement and that students should have some means by which their concerns may be effectively expressed, considered, and dealt with fairly. Such means, if well-conceived and understood in advance, can do much to maintain harmonious relationships among the schools and the students and community. Every attempt will be made to seek a satisfactory solution to any concerns in a friendly and informal matter.

Students--and their parents and/or guardians--who believe that a student has received unfair treatment may bring forward their grievance through appropriate channels. Appeals of disciplinary cases will be required to follow the district's policy on student discipline. Any applicable provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws or federal law will be followed by school officials in conducting hearings.

Adopted: January 1996

Amended: November 2009

Amended: October 6, 2014

Amended: February 2018

SOURCE: MASC

CROSS REF: JIC Student Discipline

CO-CURRICULAR AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The Somerville School Committee believes that student activities are a vital part of the total educational program and should be used as a means for developing wholesome attitudes and good human relations and knowledge and skills. Therefore, the schools will provide a broad and balanced program of activities geared to the various ages, interests, and needs of students.

The following will serve as guides in the organization of student activities:

1. The schools will observe a complementary relationship to the home and community, planning activities with due regard for the widespread and rich facilities already available to students.
2. The assistance of parents/guardians in planning activity programs will be encouraged.
3. The goal for each student will be a balanced program of appropriate academic studies and activities to be determined by the school, the parents, and the student. This should be a shared responsibility.
4. Guidance will be offered to encourage participation of all students in appropriate activities and to prevent over-emphasis on extracurricular activities at the cost of academic performance.
5. All activities will be supervised; all clubs and groups will have a faculty advisor.

Revised: January 18, 1996

Reviewed: September 2009

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:47
603 CMR 26:06

CO-CURRICULAR AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- (1) Advantages and privileges of public schools include all extracurricular activities made available, sponsored or supervised by any public school. No school shall sponsor or participate in the organization of outside extracurricular activities conducted at such schools which restrict students' participation on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation or national origin. 603 CMR 26.06(1) does not prohibit School Committees from allowing use of school premises by independent groups with restrictive membership.
- (2) No student shall be denied the opportunity in any implied or explicit manner to participate in an extracurricular activity because of the race, color, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation or national origin of the student except as provided in 603 CMR 26.06(7).
- (3) Each school system shall provide a fair distribution of athletic expenditures. Each school within such system shall provide equal opportunity for male and female students to participate in intramural and interscholastic sports. Factors considered in determining equal opportunity shall include budgetary allocations, the proportion of male and female students in the student body, the number and nature of activities offered, levels of competition, equipment (including rate of replacement), supplies, awards, uniforms, facilities, scheduling of games and practice times, travel opportunities and allowances, opportunities to receive equitable coaching and instruction at each level of competition and the availability of services such as medical and insurance coverage, publicity, clerical and administrative staff, scouting services and audio-visual aids.
- (4) In developing its athletic program, a school shall be required to demonstrate good faith by taking into account determined student interest.
- (5) In order to provide equal athletic opportunity, schools that sponsor intramural or interscholastic sports teams shall ensure that budgetary allocations and the provision of athletic activities and services are fairly distributed between students of both sexes based upon student interests and abilities.
- (6) A school may establish separate teams for males and females for interscholastic and intramural competition in a particular sport, provided that the requirements of 603 CMR 26.06(8) are satisfied.
- (7) Teams comprised primarily or solely of persons of one sex shall be granted equal instruction, training, coaching, access to available facilities, equipment and opportunities to practice and compete as teams engaged in a similar activity comprised primarily or solely of persons of the opposite sex.
- (8) Participation in extracurricular activities shall be actively encouraged by each school for both boys and girls and for racial and ethnic minorities. When offering extracurricular programs, schools shall take into consideration the ethnic traditions of the student body. Criteria not related to skill levels which act to exclude members of one sex or any racial, religious, or ethnic group represented in the school from participation in specific athletic or other extracurricular activities cannot be permitted.

Adopted: January 2010

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:47
603 CMR 26.06

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Student Organizations

Student organizations in the District shall be encouraged when they meet the criteria of contributing to student self-esteem and performance and should operate within the framework of state statutes, Somerville School Committee policies, and administrative procedures.

Each building principal shall develop general guidelines for the establishment and operation of student organizations within the particular school. Among other provisions, such guidelines shall require the approval of the principal prior to the formation of any club or organization in the school and the assignment of at least one faculty or designated adult advisor to each approved student organization. Within such guidelines will be provisions for a periodic review of all student organizations.

The formation of any student organization that may engage in activities of a controversial nature shall require approval by the board.

All student organizations shall be required to open membership to all interested and/or eligible students. Disruptive groups, secret societies, and/or gangs shall not receive recognition in any manner under this policy (see also Policy JICF).

All forms of hazing in initiations shall be prohibited in a student organization. No initiation shall be held for a student organization which will bring criticism to the school system or be degrading to the student.

The faculty or designated adult advisor must attend every meeting of the student organization whether conducted on school premises or at another location.

Student Organizations - High Schools

In addition to the above requirements, all clubs or organizations at the high school level will support some aspect of the High School's mission that all students become effective readers, writers, thinkers, and users of technology. The High School will encourage membership in its various clubs and activities in support of volunteerism, civic responsibility, tolerance, and healthful choices. These groups will model ethical behavior and help students in the daily activities of school and social interaction. The Headmaster is responsible for determining that the purpose of a student organization is related to the curriculum. The Headmaster is authorized to deny requests by unauthorized student organizations desiring to meet or form in a particular school; the Headmaster shall inform the group of the reasons for the denial. The students and/or group may submit a written request to the Director of Student Services for review of the principal's decision.

Revised: January 18, 1996

Amended: January 2010

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26.06

AWARDS AND CITATIONS

It is vital for the public to view the schools favorably, and one way to achieve that goal is through positive public relations. The public needs to be informed, not just through media initiated stories, but through stories of success that students and staff themselves want to be told.

Recognition of students and staff are an important part of public relations. Our schools are an important part of community life, and as such deserve a certain amount of media attention.

Students and staff will be recognized publicly at school committee meetings as per their level of achievement at that time. Building level personnel will send worthy recipients, in written form, to the office of the Superintendent of Schools.

Adopted: April 26, 1999

Reviewed: September 2009

STUDENT FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

The Somerville School Committee recognizes that fundraising is an important means of providing support for student activities. The School Committee, however, disapproves students going door to door to fund raise. Any fund raising activity is subject to approval by the School Superintendent /designee.

CROSS REFS.: JP, Student Gifts and Solicitations
 KHA, Public Solicitations in the Schools

Adopted: November 20, 1989

Amended: January 2010

STUDENT ACTIVITY ACCOUNTS

Student activities funds may be raised and spent to promote the general welfare, education and morale of all students and shall finance authorized activities of student organizations and the District.

Student activity funds are considered a part of the total fiscal operation of the District, and therefore are subject to the policies and regulations established by the Somerville School Committee and the Office of the Superintendent. The funds shall be managed in accordance with sound business practices—including sound budgetary and accounting procedures as well as audits—in the same manner as other District funds.

Authorized clubs, organizations and other extracurricular groups within the schools may use District facilities and equipment for fundraising if such use does not create an additional direct cost to the District or does not conflict with school use.

Revised: January 1996

Amended: November 2009

STUDENT ACTIVITIES FUND MANAGEMENT

Graduating Class Funds

Funds held on behalf of the Freshman, Sophomore, Junior and Senior classes at Somerville High School are to be held within the student Activity Fund Somerville High School. Such funds shall be designated by the class' Year of Graduation, such as Class of 1998, etc.

Once a class has graduated from Somerville High School, their funds should be removed from the Somerville High School Student Activity Fund no later than two years from the date of graduation. It is the responsibility of the class officers to arrange for these funds to be removed from the Somerville High School Activity Fund. When requested, and once all outstanding financial obligations of the graduating class have been met, the remaining balance should be removed from the fund by check transfer payable to the Class of XXXX. Checks payable to individual members of the graduating class are not permitted.

Should the class officers not request to have their funds removed from the Student Activity Fund within two years of their graduating, the funds will be forfeited by the class and transferred into the General Sub-fund portion of the High School student activity fund. These funds will then be allocated by a vote of the School Committee.

Class officers should be given a copy of this policy during the course of their senior year to ensure their knowledge of their obligations to perform under this policy.

Source: MASC

Adopted: December 2014

CONTESTS FOR STUDENTS

The schools may cooperate with community organizations and agencies desiring to sponsor activities in the District when they keep with the purposes and educational aims of the school. Such activities must be integrated into the school program without disruption or loss of instructional time for students and without imposing an unreasonable added workload on school staffs. Involvement in contests shall be approved by the Superintendent or designee.

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: November 2009

CITATION POLICY

Any member of the Somerville School Committee may recommend a community member, staff member, a student, a team or group of students to receive a citation for outstanding work or contribution. Public recognition will be done at a regularly scheduled school committee meeting and recorded as such in the official minutes of said school committee meeting.

Adopted: June 13, 2002

Reviewed: September 2009

INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS

The Somerville School Committee believes that students will benefit from the experiences in self-discipline and team effort made possible through participation in inter-school sports.

Participation in interscholastic athletics will be subject to approval by the Somerville School Committee and will be in accordance with regulations and recommendations of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association.

At the high school level, interscholastic athletic competition will include a variety of sports. Students will be allowed to participate in individual sports on the basis of their abilities and desire. Additionally, intramural athletic activities will be offered as an outgrowth of class instruction in physical education.

The Somerville School Committee is aware that team participation in athletic contests by members of the student body requires that "away games" be scheduled. It also recognizes that there is a need to regulate certain aspects of student participation in such contests. Therefore, the Superintendent/Designee will establish regulations to ensure the safety and well being of students and staff members who participate in these activities.

Revised: January 18, 1996

Reviewed: September 2009

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:47; 71:54A
603 CMR 26.06

SOMERVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS CONCUSSION POLICY

Introduction:

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 including, but not limited to, while participating in interscholastic sports, in order to protect their health and safety as required by Massachusetts law and regulations. The requirements of the law apply to all public middle and high schools, however configured, serving grades six through high school graduation. In addition to any training required by law, the following persons shall complete one of the head injury safety training programs approved by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) as found on its website: coaches; certified athletic trainers; trainers; volunteers; school and team physicians; school nurses; athletic directors; directors responsible for a school marching band; employees or volunteers; and students who participate in an extracurricular activity and their parents.

Upon the adoption of this policy by the School Committee, the Superintendent shall ensure that DPH receives an affirmation on school district letterhead that the district has developed policies and the School Committee has adopted a final policy in accordance with law. This affirmation shall be updated by September 30, 2013 and every two years thereafter upon review or revision of its policies.

The Superintendent shall maintain or cause to be maintained complete and accurate records of the district's compliance with the requirements of the Concussion Law, and shall maintain the following records for three years or, at a minimum, until the student graduates, unless state or federal law requires a longer retention period:

1. Verifications of completion of annual training and receipt of materials;
2. DPH Pre-participation forms and receipt of materials;
3. DPH Report of Head Injury Forms, or school based equivalents;
4. DPH Medical Clearance and Authorization Forms, or school based equivalents; and
5. Graduated reentry plans for return to full academic and extracurricular athletic activities.

This policy also applies to volunteers who assist with extracurricular athletic activities. Such volunteers shall not be liable for civil damages arising out of any act or omission relating to the requirements of law, unless such volunteer is willfully or intentionally negligent in his act or omission.

Most student athletes who sustain a concussion can fully recover as long as their brain has time to heal before sustaining another hit; however, relying only on an athlete's self-report of symptoms to determine injury recovery is inadequate as many high school athletes are not aware of the signs and symptoms or the severity concussive injuries pose, or they may feel pressure from coaches, parents, and/or teammates to return to play as quickly as possible. One or more of these factors will likely result in under-diagnosing the injury and a premature return to play. Massachusetts General Laws and

Department of Public Health regulations make it imperative to accurately assess and treat student athletes when concussions are suspected.

Students who suffer a concussion may appear to be "fine" on the outside, when in actuality they have a brain injury, limiting their ability to process information and are not able to return to play.

Incurring a second concussion can prove to be devastating to a student athlete. Research has shown that young concussed athletes who return to play before their brain has healed are highly vulnerable to more prolonged post-concussion syndrome or, in rare cases, a catastrophic neurological injury known as Second Impact Syndrome.

The following protocol will discuss and outline what a concussion is, the mechanism of injury, signs and symptoms, management and return to play requirements, as well as information on Second Impact Syndrome and past concussion syndrome. Lastly, this policy will discuss the importance of education for our athletes, coaches and parents and other persons required by law.

This protocol should be reviewed on a yearly basis with all staff to discuss the procedures to be followed to manage sports-related concussions. This protocol will also be reviewed on a yearly basis by the athletic department as well as by nursing staff. Any changes in this document will be approved by the school committee and given to athletic staff, including coaches and other school personnel in writing. An accurate synopsis of this policy shall be placed in the student and faculty handbooks.

LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. 111:222; 105 CMR 201.000

Chapter 166 of the Acts of 2010, an Act Relative to Safety Regulations for School Athletes

Adopted by Somerville School Committee: January 9, 2012

Amended: November 4, 2013

Amended: December 2015

SOMERVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS CONCUSSION REGULATIONS

Section I. What is a Concussion?

A concussion is a Mild Traumatic Brain injury. It is defined as a transient alteration in brain function without structural damage, but with other potentially serious long-term ramifications. In the event of a concussion, the brain sustains damage at a microscopic level in which cells and cell membranes are torn and stretched. The damage to these cells also disrupts the brain at a chemical level, as well as causing restricted blood flow to the damaged areas of the brain, thereby disrupting brain function. A concussion, therefore, is a disruption in how the brain works; it is not a structural injury. Concussions are difficult to diagnose because the damage cannot be seen. A MRI or CT Scan cannot diagnose a concussion, but they can help rule out a more serious brain injury to a student. Because concussions are difficult to detect, students must obtain medical approval before returning to physical activity following a concussion.

Section II. Mechanism of Injury:

A concussion is caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body. Any force that causes the brain to bounce around or twist within the skull can cause a concussion. A bump, blow or jolt to the head or body can be caused by either indirect or direct trauma. The two direct mechanisms of injury are coup-type and contrecoup-type. Coup-type injury is when the head is stationary and struck by a moving object such as another player's helmet, a ball, or sport implement, causing brain injury at the location of impact. Contrecoup-type injury occurs when the head is moving and makes contact with an immovable or slowly moving object as a result of deceleration, causing brain injury away from the site of impact. Indirect forces are transmitted through the spine and jaw or blows to the thorax that whip the head while the neck muscles are relaxed. Understanding the way in which an injury occurred is vital in understanding and having a watchful eye for athletes who may exhibit symptoms of a concussion so these student athletes can receive the appropriate care.

Section III. Signs and Symptoms:

Signs (what you see):

- Confusion
- Forgets plays
- Unsure about game, score, opponent
- Altered coordination
- Balance problems
- Personality change
- Slow response to questions
- Forgets events prior to injury (retrograde amnesia)
- Forgets events after injury (anterograde amnesia)
- Loss of consciousness (any duration)

Symptoms (reported by student):

- Headache
- Fatigue
- Nausea or vomiting/upset stomach
- Double vision/ blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light (photophobia)
- Sensitivity to noise (tinnitus)
- Feels sluggish
- Feels foggy

- Problems concentrating
- Problems remembering
- Trouble with sleeping/ excess sleep
- Dizziness
- Sadness
- Seeing stars
- Vacant stare/ glassy eyed
- Nervousness/anxiety
- Irritability
- Inappropriate emotions

If any of the above signs or symptoms are observed after a suspected blow to the head, jaw, spine or body, they may be indicative of a concussion and the student must be removed from play/physical activity immediately and not allowed to return until cleared by an appropriate allied health professional.

Section IV. Management and Referral Guidelines:

1. When an athlete loses consciousness for any reason, the athletic trainer will start the EAP (Emergency Action Plan) by activating EMS; check ABC's (airway, breathing, circulation); stabilize the cervical spine; and transport the injured athlete to the appropriate hospital via ambulance. If the athletic trainer is not available, the coach should immediately call EMS, check ABCs and not move the athlete until help arrives.
2. Any athlete who is removed from the competition or event and begins to develop signs and symptoms of a worsening brain injury will be transported to the hospital immediately in accordance with the EAP. **Worsening signs and symptoms requiring immediate physician referral include:**
 - A. Amnesia lasting longer than 15 minutes
 - B. Deterioration in neurological function
 - C. Decreasing level of consciousness
 - D. Decrease or irregularity of respiration
 - E. Decrease or irregularity in pulse
 - F. Increase in blood pressure
 - G. Unequal, dilated, or unreactive pupils
 - H. Cranial nerve deficits
 - I. Any signs or symptoms of associated injuries, spine or skull fracture, or bleeding
 - J. Mental-status changes: lethargy, difficulty maintaining arousal, confusion, agitation
 - K. Seizure activity
 - L. Vomiting/ worsening headache
 - M. Motor deficits subsequent to initial on-field assessment
 - N. Sensory deficits subsequent to initial on-field assessment
 - O. Balance deficits subsequent to initial on-field assessment
 - P. Cranial nerve deficits subsequent to initial on-field assessment
 - Q. Post-Concussion symptoms worsen
 - R. 99% will be symptomatic at the end of the game – only if symptoms worsen is ER necessary.
3. After a student athlete sustains a concussion, the athletic trainer will use the Sport Concussion Assessment Tool to assess and document the student's memory, concentration, balance, coordination and symptoms. On the signs and symptoms checklist, the athletic trainer will also check pulse and blood pressure of each student - only necessary when there is loss of consciousness or deterioration of a student with a suspected concussion. After the

initial evaluation of a concussion, all signs and symptoms will be tracked on the computer using the symptom score card sheet. The ImPACT concussion test will be given 48-72 hours post injury, and again when the student is symptom-free.

4. Any student who is symptomatic but stable is allowed to go home with his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) following the head injury.
 - A. If the head injury occurs at practice, parent(s)/guardian(s) will immediately be notified and must come and pick up the student athlete and talk to the certified athletic trainer in person.
 - B. If the injury occurs at a game or event, the student athlete may go home with the parent/guardian(s) after talking with the certified athletic trainer.
 - C. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will receive important information regarding signs and symptoms of deteriorating brain injury/function prompting immediate referral to a local emergency room as well as return to play requirements. Parent(s)/guardian(s), as well as student athletes, must read and sign the Concussion Information and Gradual Return to Play form and bring it back to the certified athletic trainer before starting with the return to play protocol.

Concussion Management:

High School Student Athletes:

- A student-athlete who is suspected of sustaining or who has sustained a concussion and/or has become unconscious during an athletic event shall:
 - Be immediately removed from play and no return-to-play that day.
 - Medical evaluation by the Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC) to determine the presence/absence of concussion.
 - SCAT3 evaluation
 - ImPACT Post-Event screening (48 -72 hours post injury)
 - No Return to physical activity until cleared by both the Primary Care Physician And the Certified Athletic Trainer(Appendix F1, F2, F3)
 - Proper Progression must be completed before final clearance will be provided
- Refer to Emergency Room:
 - Loss of Consciousness, amnesia, decreased neurological function, deterioration or significant personality changes.
- Refer to Primary Care Physician:
 - All students should have follow up care within 48 hours, PCP should sign off on gradual academic and physical activity instructions. Follow up testing will include both the SCAT3and the ImPACT test for high school student –athletes, given by the ATC/District Coordinator for Concussion Management

Elementary & High School Students:

Students who are injured during the school day or report any head injury or suspected concussions to the school nurse shall:

- Be removed from all physical or strenuous activity and/or recess
 - Be evaluated using the SCAT3 and/or Somerville Public Schools evaluation tool by the school nurse
 - Be referred to ATC/ District Coordinator for Concussion Management
 - Will not be cleared for physical activity until cleared to do so.
- Refer to Emergency Room:

- Loss of Consciousness, amnesia, decreased neurological function, deterioration or significant personality changes.
- Refer to Primary Care Physician:
 - Any student not exhibiting "red flags" should be seen by their primary care physician
 - All students should have follow up care within 48 hours and return with proper medical documentation of injury
 - Any student evaluated in the ER must have follow up care by the primary care or concussion specialist within 1 week time after initial assessment

Gradual Return to School

How does a concussion affect a student?

Common classroom activities can increase the symptoms of a concussion and slow the recovery time. The purpose of school is to receive instruction, to practice and reinforce and to demonstrate “mastery” of the material. Since a concussion affects mental efficiency and stamina, processing speeds and memory completing school work and taking exams can become increasingly difficult. Students may be able to listen and to learn, he/she just might not be able to demonstrate that learning at the same level and at the same speed as before the concussion. The role of a teacher is critical in proper management as you have the ability to monitor changes in their ability to learn and process information and their work production.

*** All students who have been diagnosed with concussion whether it has occurred during school activities, sporting events or outside of school will be provided with an academic plan to aid in the recovery process.

- It is highly recommended that the student who has suffered a concussion:
 - Remain at home 1-2 days after suffering a concussion so cognitive healing can occur. These days will be marked absent excused
 - Attempt a half day or abbreviated schedule upon return to school
- Any student who is highly symptomatic or has increasing difficulties during the school day will be placed on a shortened or abbreviated day.
- Teachers will be provided written information informing them their student suffered a concussion both in their school mailbox and electronically to understand the effects on learning and what symptoms students often exhibit in class. At SHS the ATC/District Coordinator for Concussion Management will provide this information. At the elementary school the school nurse or District Coordinator for Concussion Management will provide this information. Copies of this letter will be kept on file with the ATC/District Coordinator for Concussion Management, the School Nurse at elementary schools, and provided to the student and their family
- Students who have sustained a concussion shall not participate in physical education, recess vocational classes, dance, and band, or attend field trips or any extra-curricular activities until they are cleared to do so.
- No student who is excused from school or on a reduced day plan, is allowed to attend extra-curricular activities, unless given specific instructions by the treating physician

V. Gradual Return to Play Protocol:

1. Student athletes, with the consent of their parent(s)/guardian(s), will start taking the ImPact Test. The ImPact Test is a tool that helps manage the recovery process of a concussion, by allowing us to provide support for any deficits that exist. It is helpful in providing proper communication between coaches, parents and clinicians. The ImPact Test is a neurocognitive test that helps measure student athletes’ symptoms, as well as test verbal and visual memory, processing speed and reaction time. It is

- mandatory** for all student athletes to take the ImPact Test for a baseline score in accordance with Massachusetts State Law. The law states that all public schools must develop safety protocols on concussions and all public schools must receive information on past concussion history. The ImPact Test appears to be a promising tool in monitoring a student athlete's prior concussions, as well as any future concussions.
2. Each student athlete will complete a baseline test at the beginning of their sport season. **All student athletes and all club sports members will undergo ImPact testing.** Student athletes will be re-tested every other year. If a student athlete plays more than one sport during the academic year, their test will remain valid. For example, if a soccer student athlete also plays basketball in the winter, the student athlete will not have to take the ImPact Baseline Test again in the winter. If a student athlete posts scores below the norm, the student athlete will be re-tested at another time with either the certified athletic trainer or school nurse. Student athletes cannot begin practice until a valid baseline score is obtained during their designated time to take the test.
 - A. At the beginning of every sport season, student athletes are required to complete a concussion history form and return it to the athletic department. This information will be recorded in the student information system for tracking purposes.
 - B. Following any concussion the athletic trainer must notify the athletic director and school nurses, parents, coaches, teachers and staff.
 - C. Following a concussion the student athlete will take a **post-injury test within 48 to 72 hours following the head injury. STUDENT ATHLETES WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO MOVE ON TO FUNCTIONAL/PHYSICAL TESTING UNTIL THEIR IMPACT TEST IS BACK TO THE BASELINE SCORE, they are ASYMPTOMATIC, attending full days of school and have improved balance.** After a student athlete takes their first post-injury test, the student athlete will not be re-tested again for **5 days.**
 - D. If, after the first post-injury ImPact test, the athlete is not back to his/her baseline the parent/guardian(s) will be notified, and the student athlete will be referred to their healthcare provider and must have the Concussion Information and Gradual Return to Play form signed by a physician, physician assistant, licensed neuropsychologist or nurse practitioner stating when the athlete is allowed to return to play.
 - E. Following a post-injury test, the certified athletic trainer will take the Concussion Information and Gradual Return to Play form signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s) and fill in the date of all post-injury tests taken by each student athlete.
 - F. The certified athletic trainer will also document the date on which the athlete is asymptomatic and sign the document agreeing that all the above statements are true and accurate.
 - G. Once the athlete starts on the Graduated return to play progression, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified. **Student athletes who continue to exhibit concussion symptoms for a week or more must be evaluated by a physician before returning to play.**
 - H. Once a student athlete's post-injury test is back at the student athlete's baseline score, the student athlete will go through Gradual progression of activity. The student athlete must be asymptomatic for all functional and physical tests to return to play (RTP). All tests will be administered by a certified athletic trainer. SPS follows at minimum a six (6) step process. Students who have suffered collision

sports injuries and those who have suffered a previous concussion will have additional steps.

Exertional Post Concussion Tests/Graduated Progression of Activity:

- Zurich 2008 and 2013 Concussion Consensus Statement and UPMC guidelines (Appendix L1)
 - Step 1: Light aerobic exercise, which includes walking, stationary cycling or light stretching, keeping the intensity to 30-40% maximum percentage heart rate; no resistance training.
 - Step 2: Light to moderate aerobic exercise- light resistance training, interval training, balance exercise, 40-60% heart rate.
 - Step 3: Moderate aerobic activity and resistance training, 60 -80 % heart rate. Sport-specific exercise including skating, and/or running drills; no contact or head impact activities.
 - Step 4: Non-contact sport specific training drills involving progression to more complex training drills (e.g. passing drills) 80-90% heart rate. The student-athlete may initiate progressive resistance training.
 - Step 5: Partial Contact training. The objective of this step is to restore confidence and assess functional skills by the coaching staff. No scrimmaging.
 - Step 6: Full Contact Practice Return to all practice activity, including scrimmage play involving normal exertion or activity without restrictions. Collision sports with complete this step twice.
 - If concussion symptoms reoccur during the graduated return-to-play exercise protocol, the student-athlete will rest 24 hours and then return to the previous level of activity that caused no symptoms and then advance as tolerated.
 - If the student-athlete exhibits a re-emergence of any post-concussion signs or symptoms once they return-to-play, they will be removed from all physical activity and return to his/her primary care physician and/or the team doctor for further re-evaluation.

Section VI : Certified Athletic Trainer/District Coordinator for Concussion Management

- Educate parents, school nurses, teachers, staff, administrators on concussions and school committee approved protocols;
- Educate nurses on proper evaluation technique- using SCAT3;
- Act as liaison between students, families, teachers and school nurses;
- Responsible for sharing of information with teachers, staff, nurses and parents;
- Collaborate with PCPs and medical specialists;
- Plan and monitor gradual re-entry of student;
- Prepare and make changes to academic accommodations;
- Facilitate and communicate with all staff appropriate classroom accommodations;
- Facilitation of 504 plans when necessary;
- Serve as concussion expert at 504 meetings as needed;
- Work with guidance staff on how to provide academic assistance and follow up care;
- Educate teachers on importance of following accommodations;
- Coordinate the implementation of district-wide concussion policy;
- Serve as a primary source of information;
- Create return to play/sports protocol for students.

Section VI. School Nurse Responsibilities:

1. Participate and complete the CDC training course on concussions. A certificate of completion will be recorded by the nurse leader yearly.
2. Complete assessment with SCAT 3 when student enters Health Office (HO) with questionable concussion during school hours.
3. Observe students with a concussion for a minimum of 30 minutes.
4. If concussion is suspected, notify parent/guardian(s) and instruct parent/guardian(s) that student must be evaluated by an MD. All students should be seen within a 48 hour period
 1. Refer to Emergency Room:
 2. Loss of Consciousness, amnesia, decreased neurological function, deterioration or significant personality changes.
5. If symptoms appear after a negative assessment, MD referral is necessary. *Symptoms may appear 24-48 hrs. after initial assessment*
6. Allow students who are in recovery to rest in HO when needed.
7. Develop plan for students regarding pain management.
8. School nurse will notify ATC/District Coordinator for Concussion of any students or student athletes Educate parents about the effects of concussion and returning to school and activity.
9. If injury occurs during the school day, inform administrator and ATC/District Coordinator for Concussion and complete accident/incident form.
10. Enter physical exam dates and concussion dates into the student information system.

Section VII. School Responsibilities:

1. Review and, if necessary, revise, the concussion policy every 2 years.
2. Once the school is informed of the student's concussion, SPS contact or "point person" ATC/District Coordinator for Concussion Management should be notified.
3. ATC/District Coordinator for Concussion Management will provide the academic accommodation plan to assist the student during the recovery process.
4. The student's guidance counselor will work with the student on organizing work assignments, making up work and giving extra time for assignments and tests/quizzes.
5. Assist teachers in following the recovery stage for student.
6. Recognize that the student's ability to perform complex math equations may be different from the ability to write a composition depending on the location of the concussion in the brain.
7. Educate staff on the signs and symptoms of concussions and the educational impact concussions may have on students.
8. Include concussion information in student handbooks.
9. Develop a plan to communicate and provide language-appropriate educational materials to parents with limited English proficiency.

Section VIII. Athletic Director Responsibilities:

1. Provide parents, athletes, coaches, and volunteers with educational training and concussion materials yearly.
2. Ensure that all educational training programs are completed and recorded.
3. Ensure that all students meet the physical exam requirements consistent with 105 CMR 200.000 prior to participation in any extracurricular athletic activity
4. Ensure that all students participating in extracurricular athletic activity have completed and submitted their pre-participation forms, which include health history form, concussion history form, and MIAA form.

5. Ensure that athletes are prohibited from engaging in any unreasonably dangerous athletic technique that endangers the health or safety of an athlete, including using a helmet or any other sports equipment as a weapon.
6. Ensure that all head injury forms are completed by parent/guardian(s) or coaches and reviewed by the coach, athletic trainer, school nurse and school physician.
7. Inform parent/guardian(s) that, if all necessary forms are not completed, their student will not participate in athletic extracurricular activities.

Section IX. Parent/Guardian Responsibilities:

1. Complete and return concussion history form to the athletic department.
2. Inform school if student sustains a concussion outside of school hours. Complete new concussion history form following new injury.
3. If student suffers a concussion outside of school, complete head injury form and return it to the school nurse.
4. Provide school with written notice from primary care physician of student's injury and permission to attend school – have school concussion form filled out
5. Complete a training provided by the school on concussions and return certificate of completion to the athletic department. Acknowledge concussion education and school policy on Family ID
6. Watch for changes in your student that may indicate that your student does have a concussion or that your student's concussion may be worsening. Report to a physician:
 - A. Loss of consciousness
 - B. Headache
 - C. Dizziness
 - D. Lethargy
 - E. Difficulty concentrating
 - F. Balance problems
 - G. Answering questions slowly
 - H. Difficulty recalling events
 - I. Repeating questions
 - J. Irritability
 - K. Sadness
 - L. Emotional
 - M. Nervousness
 - N. Difficulty with sleeping
7. Encourage your student to follow concussion protocol
8. Enforce restrictions on rest, electronics and screen time.
9. Reinforce recovery plan.
10. Observe and monitor your student for any physical or emotional changes.
11. Recognize that your student will be excluded from participation in any extracurricular athletic event if all forms are not completed and on file with the athletic department.
12. Attend 504 meeting when necessary
13. Report all doctor's visits and updated recovery plans
14. Hold from all physical activity, including youth sports, dance and playing with friends

Section X. Student and Student Athlete Responsibilities:

1. Complete Baseline ImPact Test prior to participation in athletics.
2. Provide current physical and concussion history form prior to participation in athletics.
3. Participate in all concussion training and education Acknowledge concussion education and school policy on Family ID

4. Report all symptoms to athletic trainer, coach and/ or school nurse.
5. Follow recovery plan.
6. **REST.**
7. **NO ATHLETICS.- youth sports, PE, recess, dance, field trips or extracurricular activities**
8. **BE HONEST!**
9. Keep strict limits on screen time and electronics.
10. Don't carry books or backpacks that are too heavy.
11. Tell your teachers if you are having difficulty with your classwork.
12. See the athletic trainer and/or school nurse for pain management.
13. Return to **youth sports, PE, recess, dance, field trips or extracurricular activities** only when cleared by physician and the athletic trainer.
14. Follow Gradual Return to Play Guidelines.
15. Report any symptoms to the athletic trainer and/or school nurse and parent(s)/guardian(s) if any occur after return to play.
16. Return medical clearance form to athletic trainer prior to return to play.
17. Students who do not complete and return all required trainings, testing and forms will not be allowed to participate in sports.

Section XI. Coach & Band Instructor Responsibilities:

1. Participate in Concussion Education Course offered by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) on a yearly basis. Complete certificate of completion and return to the athletic department.
2. Ensure all student athletes have completed ImPact baseline testing before participation.
3. Ensure all student athletes have current physical on file and returned concussion history and health history form prior to participation in athletics.
4. Complete a head injury form if their player suffers a head injury and the athletic trainer is not present at the athletic event. This form must be shared with the athletic trainer, athletic director and school nurse.
5. Remove from play any student athlete who exhibits signs and symptoms of a concussion.
6. Do not allow student athletes to return to play until cleared by a physician and athletic trainer.
7. Follow Gradual Return to Play Guidelines.
8. Refer any student athlete with returned signs and symptoms back to athletic trainer.
9. Any coach, band instructor, or volunteer coach for extracurricular activities shall not encourage or permit a student participating in the activity to engage in any unreasonably dangerous athletic technique that unnecessarily endangers the health of a student athlete, including using a musical instrument, helmet or any other sports equipment as a weapon.

Section XII. Post Concussion Syndrome:

Post Concussion Syndrome is a poorly understood condition that occurs after a student athlete receives a concussion. Student athletes who receive concussions can have symptoms that last a few days to a few months, and even up to a full year, until their neurocognitive function returns to normal. Therefore, all school personnel must pay attention to and closely observe all student athletes for post concussion syndrome and its symptoms. Student athletes who are still suffering from concussion symptoms are not ready to return to play. The signs and symptoms of post concussion syndrome are:

- Dizziness
- Headache with exertion
- Tinnitus (ringing in the ears)

- Fatigue
- Irritability
- Frustration
- Difficulty in coping with daily stress
- Impaired memory or concentration
- Eating and sleeping disorders
- Behavioral changes
- Alcohol intolerance
- Decreases in academic performance
- Depression
- Visual disturbances

Section XIII. Second Impact Syndrome:

Second impact syndrome is a serious medical emergency and a result of an athlete returning to play and competition too soon following a concussion. Second impact syndrome occurs because of rapid brain swelling and herniation of the brain after a second head injury that occurs before the symptoms of a previous head injury have been resolved. The second impact that a student athlete may receive may only be a minor blow to the head or it may not even involve a hit to the head. A blow to the chest or back may create enough force to snap the athlete's head and send acceleration/deceleration forces to an already compromised brain. The resulting symptoms occur because of a disruption of the brain's blood autoregulatory system which leads to swelling of the brain, increasing intracranial pressure and herniation.

After a second impact a student athlete usually does not become unconscious, but appears to be dazed. The student athlete may remain standing and be able to leave the field under his/her own power. Within fifteen seconds to several minutes, the athlete's condition worsens rapidly, with dilated pupils, loss of eye movement, loss of consciousness leading to coma and respiratory failure. The best way to handle second impact syndrome is to prevent it from occurring altogether. All student athletes who incur a concussion must not return to play until they are asymptomatic and cleared by an appropriate health care professional.

It is extremely important to educate coaches, athletes and the community about concussions. On a yearly basis, all coaches must complete the online course called "Concussion In Sports: What You Need to Know". This course is offered by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). Student athletes also need to understand the importance of reporting a concussion to their coaches, parents, athletic trainer and other school personnel. Every year student athletes and parents will participate in educational training on concussions and complete a certificate of completion. This training may include:

- CDC Heads-Up Video Training, or
- Training provided by the school district

The school district may also offer seminars, speakers, and discussion panels on the topic of concussions. Seminars offer an opportunity for the certified athletic trainer, athletic director and nurse leader to speak about concussions on the field at practices and games and to discuss the protocol and policy that the district has enacted. Providing education within the community will offer the residents and parents of athletes an opportunity to ask questions and voice their concerns on the topic of brain injury and concussions. When it comes to concussions, everyone needs to be aware of the potential dangers and remember that a concussion is a brain injury. Whenever anyone has a doubt about a student athlete with a concussion, **SIT THEM OUT and have them see the appropriate healthcare professional!**

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. 111:222; 105 CMR 201.000

Chapter 166 of the Acts of 2010, an Act Relative to Safety Regulations for School Athletes

Adopted by Somerville School Committee: January 9, 2012

Amended: November 4, 2013

Amended: December 2015

STUDENT CONDUCT

The Massachusetts General Laws require the School Committee to adopt written policies, rules and regulations not inconsistent with law, which may relate to study, discipline, conduct, safety and welfare of all students, or any classification thereof, enrolled in the public schools of the District.

The implementation of the general rules of conduct is the responsibility of the Principal and the professional staff of the building. In order to do this, each school staff in the District shall develop specific rules not inconsistent with the law nor in conflict with School Committee policy. These building rules shall be an extension of the District policies by being more specific as they relate to the individual schools.

The purpose of disciplinary action is to restore acceptable behavior. When disciplinary action is necessary, it shall be administered with fairness and shall relate to the individual needs and the individual circumstances.

Students violating any of the policies on student conduct and control will be subject to disciplinary action. The degree, frequency, and circumstances surrounding each incident shall determine the method used in enforcing these policies. Most of the situations which require disciplinary action can be resolved within the confines of the classroom or as they occur by reasonable but firm reprimand, and/or by teacher conferences with the student and/or parents or guardians.

If a situation should arise in which there is no applicable written policy, the staff member shall be expected to exercise reasonable and professional judgment.

Adopted: November 2009

Amended: September 2014

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. [71:37H](#); 71:37H1/2; 71:37H3/4; 71:[37L](#); [76:16](#); 76:[17](#); 603 CMR 53.00

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

State law provides that:

The power of the Somerville School Committee or of any teacher or other employee or agent of the committee to maintain discipline on school property shall not include the right to inflict corporal punishment upon any student.

Established by law

Adopted: November 2009

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:37G

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OF STUDENTS

Maintaining an orderly, safe environment conducive to learning is an expectation of all staff members of the school district. Further, students of the district are protected by law from the unreasonable use of physical restraint. Such restraint shall be used only in emergency situations of last resort after other lawful and less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate, and with extreme caution.

When an emergency situation arises, and physical restraint is the only option deemed appropriate to prevent a student from injuring himself or herself, another student or school community member, a teacher or employee or agent of the school district may use such reasonable force needed to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

The definitions of forms of restraint shall be as defined in 603CMR [46.02](#).

The use of mechanical restraint, medical restraint, and seclusion is prohibited.

Physical restraint, including prone restraint where permitted under 603 CMR [46.03](#), shall be considered an emergency procedure of last resort and shall be prohibited except when a student's behavior poses a threat of assault, or imminent, serious, physical harm to themselves and/or others and the student is not responsive to verbal directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions are deemed inappropriate.

The Superintendent will develop procedures identifying:

- Appropriate responses to student behavior that may require immediate intervention;
- Methods of preventing student violence, self-injurious behavior, and suicide including crisis planning and de-escalation of potentially dangerous behaviors among groups of students or individuals;
- Descriptions and explanations of alternatives to physical restraint as well as the school's method of physical restraint for use in emergency situations;
- Descriptions of the school's training and procedures to comply with reporting requirements; including, but not limited to making reasonable efforts to orally notify a parent of the use of restraint within 24 hours of its imposition;
- Procedures for receiving and investigating complaints;
- Methods for engaging parents in discussions about restraint prevention and use of restraint solely as an emergency procedure;
- A statement prohibiting: medication restraint, mechanical restraint, prone restraint unless permitted by 603 CMR [46.03](#)(1)(b), seclusion, and the use of physical restraint in a manner inconsistent with 603 CMR [46.00](#),
- A process for obtaining principal approval for a time out exceeding 30 minutes.

Each building Principal will identify staff members to serve as a school-wide resource to assist in ensuring proper administration of physical restraint. These staff members will participate in an in-depth training program in the use of physical restraint.

In addition, each staff member will be trained regarding the school's physical restraint policy and accompanying procedures. The Principal will arrange training to occur in the first month of each school year, or for staff hired after the beginning of the school year, within a month of their employment.

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

Physical restraint is prohibited when it is medically contraindicated for reasons including, but not limited to, asthma, seizures, a cardiac condition, obesity, bronchitis, communication-related disabilities, or risk of vomiting;

The use of "time out" procedures during which a staff member remains accessible to the student shall not be considered "seclusion restraint".

This policy and its accompanying procedures shall be reviewed and disseminated to staff annually and made available to parents of enrolled students. The Superintendent shall provide a copy of the Physical Restraint regulations to each Principal, who shall sign a form acknowledging receipt thereof.

SOURCE: MASC

ADOPTED: August 2015

AMENDED: December 2015

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. [71:37G](#)

603 CMR [46.00](#)

STUDENT WELFARE

Supervision of Students

School personnel assigned supervision are expected to act as reasonably prudent adults in providing for the safety of the students in their charge.

In keeping with this expected prudence, no teacher or other staff member will leave his/her assigned group unsupervised except when an arrangement has been made to take care of an emergency.

During school hours or while engaging in school-sponsored activities, students will be released only into the custody of parents or other persons authorized in writing by a parent or guardian.

Reporting to Authorities - Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

Any school official or employee shall report any suspected child abuse or neglect as required by M.G.L. Ch. 119, S 51A.

In accordance with the law, the District shall establish the necessary regulations and procedures to comply with the intent of the Act consistent with the District's responsibility to the students, parents, District personnel, and the community.

Student Safety

Instruction in courses in industrial arts, science, homemaking, art, physical education, health, and safety will include and emphasize accident prevention.

Safety instruction will precede the use of materials and equipment by students in applicable units of work, and instructors will teach and enforce all safety rules set up for the particular courses. These include the wearing of protective eye devices in appropriate activities.

Safety on the Playground and Playing Field

The District shall provide safe play areas. Precautionary measures, which the District requires, shall include:

- A periodic inspection of the school's playground and playing fields by the Principal of the school and others as may be deemed appropriate;
- Instruction of students in the proper use of equipment;
- Supervision of both organized and unorganized activity.

Fire Drills and reporting

The District shall cooperate with appropriate fire departments in the conduct of fire drills. The Principal of any public or private school, containing any of grades 1 to 12, shall immediately report any incident of unauthorized ignition of any fire within the school building or on school grounds, to the local fire department. Within 24 hours, the Principal shall submit a written report of the incident to the head of the fire department on a form furnished by the Department of Fire Services. The Principal must file this report whether or not the fire department responded.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REFS: MGL 71:37L; 148:2A

Adopted: January 1996

Amended: December 2009

STUDENT INSURANCE PROGRAM

A noncompulsory accident insurance plan totally administered by an insurance company may be made available to students. The District does not assume any responsibility regarding service, claims, or other matters relating to the insurance program.

All students participating in competitive athletics shall be required to be covered by a medical insurance plan.

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: November 2009

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES AND REQUIREMENTS

Activities may include identification of student health needs, health screening tests (including eye and hearing screening tests), communicable disease prevention and control, promotion of the correction of remediable health defects, emergency care of the ill and injured, health counseling, health and safety education, and the maintenance of a healthful school environment.

The District recognizes that parents have the primary responsibility for the health of their students. The school will cooperate with appropriate professional organizations associated with maintaining individual and community health and safety.

The District shall provide the services of a medical consultant who shall render medical and administrative consultative services for personnel responsible for school health and athletics.

Procedures for Emergency at School

School personnel shall give only emergency care to students who become ill or injured on school property, buses, or while under school supervision, if the school nurse is otherwise unavailable or while being summoned.

Each year, parents shall supply information indicating where the student is to be taken in case of an emergency; the name, address, and phone number of a designated individual to be contacted in case the parent/guardian is not available; and any allergies or diseases the student might have.

The District shall maintain an Emergency Procedures Handbook, which shall be utilized by District personnel for handling emergencies. Emergency procedures shall include provision for care beyond first aid, which would enable care by the family or its physician or the Paramedic Assistance Unit of the Fire Department. In instances when the Paramedic Assistance Unit is required, every effort shall be made to provide the unit with the student's Emergency Card which lists any allergies or diseases the student might have. In the event of an emergency the school nurse will provide all pertinent health information to EMT's transporting said student. Any and all medication administration requests will be reviewed with parents and the child's Primary Care Physician

All students who experience an accident at school shall be evaluated by the school nurse. The school nurse will use her/his clinical judgment and inform parents and or initiate EMS. The nurse will inform the Principal/Headmaster and or Assistant Principal of the incident. The nurse will complete the nursing section of an accident report and submit a copy to the Principal/Headmaster for a signature and forward to the District Administrator for Student Services. Provisions shall be made (in all cases of injury or illness involving possible legal or public relations implications) for reporting such to the appropriate executive director of education immediately; teachers will promptly report to the principal or designee any accident or serious illness and such reports will be filed with the Director of Student Services.

Student Illness or Injury

In case of illness or injury, the parent or guardian will be contacted and asked to call for the student or provide the transportation.

Transportation of an ill or injured student is not normally to be provided by the school. If the parent cannot provide transportation and the student is ill or injured, an ambulance may be called. Expense incurred as a result of emergency ambulance use will not be borne by the District.

Revised: January 18, 1996

Amended: December 2009

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:53;54;54A;54B;55;55A;55B;56;57

Somerville Public Schools

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS OF STUDENTS

Every student in grades K –3, 6, 10 and all new students will be examined once in each school year for screening in vision. Every student in grades K-5, 7, 10 and all new students will be evaluated once each school year in hearing.

Every student will be required to provide documentation of a general physical examination three times: upon entering school and upon admittance to the fourth and ninth grades. The results of examinations will be a basis for determining what corrective measures or modifications of school activities, if any, should be recommended. A record of all examinations and recommendations will be kept in the health record stored in the school nurse's office.

Every candidate for a school athletic team will present the signed consent of parent or guardian in order to participate on a squad and will provide the school nurse and or athletic coach with a copy of a current physical examination conducted within the last year.

Whenever the school nurse finds a child suffering from any disease or medical problem, the situation will be reported to the parent or guardian in writing or by telephone contact if remedial treatment is recommended. A copy of the report will be filed at the school.

Revised: January 18, 1996

Amended: December 2009

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:53; 71:54; 71:56; 71:57

INOCULATION OF STUDENTS

Students entering school for the first time, whether at kindergarten or through transfer from another school system, will be required to present a physician's certificate attesting to immunization against diphtheria, whooping cough, poliomyelitis, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella, varicella, HIB, and TB evaluation, and such other communicable diseases as may be specified from time to time by the Department of Public Health. The only exception to these requirements will be made on receipt of a written statement from a doctor that immunization would not be in the best interests of the child, or by the student's parent or guardian stating that vaccination or immunization is contrary to the religious beliefs of the student or parent.

Established by law

Revised: January 18, 1996

Amended: December 2009

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 76:15

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
SCHOOL IMMUNIZATION REGULATIONS

Massachusetts School Immunization Requirements

	Child Care/Preschool¹	Kindergarten	Grades 1-6	Grades 7-12
Hepatitis B³	3 doses	3 doses	3 doses	3 doses
DTaP/DTP/DT/Td⁴	≥ 4 doses DTaP/DTP	5 doses DTaP/DTP	≥ 4 doses DTaP/DTP or ≥ 3 doses Td	4 doses DTaP/DTP or ≥ 3 doses Td; plus 1 Td booster
Polio⁵	≥ 3 doses	4 doses	≥ 3 doses	≥ 3 doses
Hib⁶	1 to 4 doses ⁶	N/A	N/A	N/A
MMR⁷	1 dose	2 doses measles, 1 mumps, 1 rubella	2 doses measles, 1 mumps, 1 rubella	2 doses measles, 1 mumps, 1 rubella
Varicella⁸	1 dose	1 dose	1 dose	< 13 yrs. = 1 dose ≥ 13 yrs. = 2 doses
Meningococcal⁹	NA	N/A	N/A	1 dose for all new students (applies to residential schools only.)

1. Hepatitis B vaccine is required for all children born on or after January 1, 1992
2. Five doses unless 4th dose was given after 4th birthday, then only 4 doses
3. Four doses unless 3rd was given after 4th birthday, then only 3 doses
4. Doses 3 and 4 should be given according to manufacturer's guidelines
5. A second dose of measles vaccine will be required for entry into 7th grade until 2002

Adopted: December 2009

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

The District is required to provide educational services to all school age children who reside within its boundaries. By law, however, admission to school may be denied to any child diagnosed as having a disease whereby attendance could be harmful to the welfare of other students and staff, subject to the District's responsibilities to handicapped children under the law.

The Somerville School Committee recognizes that communicable diseases which may afflict students range from common childhood diseases, acute and short-term in nature, to chronic, life-threatening diseases such as Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

Management of common communicable diseases shall be in accordance with Massachusetts Department of Health guidelines. A student who exhibits symptoms of a communicable disease may be temporarily excluded from school attendance. The District reserves the right to require a physician's statement authorizing the student's return to school.

The educational placement of a student who is medically diagnosed as having a life-threatening communicable disease shall be determined on an individual basis in accordance with this policy and accompanying administrative procedures. Decisions about the proper educational placement shall be based on the student's behavior, neurological development, and physical condition; the expected type of interaction with others in school setting; and the susceptibility to other diseases and the likelihood of presenting risks to others. A regular review of the placement decision shall be conducted to assess changes in the student's physical condition, or based on new information or research that may warrant a change in a student's placement.

In the event a student with a life-threatening communicable disease qualifies for services as a handicapped child under state and federal law, the procedures for determining the appropriate educational placement in the least restrictive environment shall be used in lieu of the procedures designated above.

Neither this policy nor the placement of a student in any particular program shall preclude the administration from taking any temporary actions including removal of a student from the classroom as deemed necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the student, staff, and others.

In all proceedings related to this policy, the District shall respect the student's right to privacy. Only those persons with a direct need to know shall be informed of the specific nature of the student's condition. The determination of those who need to know shall be made by the Superintendent.

Revised: January 18, 1996

Amended: December 2009

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:55

ADMINISTERING PRESCRIPTION MEDICINES TO STUDENTS

Prescription medication may not be administered to students during regular school hours unless such medicine is given to them by the school nurse acting under specific written request of the parent or guardian and under the written directive of the student's personal physician. Medication may be distributed to a student consistent with the individual student health care plan. Only the school nurse shall administer medication unless provided for in the field trip/medication delegation authorization from the Department of Public Health.

The School District shall, through the District Nurse Leader, register with the Department of Public Health and train and test personnel in the use of Epi-pens (epinephrine).

Following consultation with the school nurse, students who fall into the following exceptions may self-administer medications:

1. Students with asthma or other respiratory diseases may possess and administer prescription inhalers.
2. Students with cystic fibrosis may possess and administer prescription enzyme supplements.
3. Students with diabetes may possess and administer glucose monitoring tests and insulin delivery systems. It is suggested that this be performed in the school health room whenever possible.
4. Students with physician diagnosed life threatening allergies may possess and administer Epi-pens, if provided for in the student's medication administration plan.

SOURCE: MASC

Updated May 2006

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:54B

Dept. of Public Health Regulations: 105 CMR 210.00

Approved : December 18, 2006

Amended: December 2009

Massachusetts Association of School Committees - 2003

MANAGING LIFE -THREATENING FOOD ALLERGIES IN THE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Somerville Public Schools recognizes that students with life-threatening food allergies require reasonable accommodations necessary to ensure access to available education and education-related benefits. It is the policy of Somerville Public Schools that the management of life-threatening food allergies be accomplished in compliance with applicable state and federal regulations. Somerville Public Schools implements this policy and administrative procedures pursuant to the guidelines established by the Massachusetts Department of Education, in a document entitled, “Managing Life-Threatening Food Allergies in Schools” and other reliable resources relating to this issue.

It is the policy of the Somerville School Committee to establish age-appropriate guidelines for students within the school District in order to minimize the risk of students with life-threatening food allergies (LTA). The guidelines established might include building-based medical emergency plans, the implementation of Individual Health Care Plans (IHCP) that include an individualized emergency plan, effective training programs for personnel, students, and consultation with appropriate medical specialists.

The Somerville Public Schools maintains the expectation that specific building-based guidelines /activities will be established to insure that the health needs of all students will be met in the least restrictive environment. In order to assist students with developing the skills necessary to participate in all educational programs, building-based teams managed by the school nurse will communicate with parents and students to allow the student to gradually assume more responsibility for maintaining their safety as they advance from elementary school to secondary school.

The Somerville Public Schools has developed a protocol/guidelines for the management of life threatening food allergies. The school nurse will consult with parents, and where applicable with the student, to develop a safe and effective health plan so that the student will be able to access all educational programs. If appropriate, the school nurse may indicate on the IHCP and/or the 504 Plan that the student will carry the EPI-Pen on his/her person. Where this is a recommendation, all necessary training procedures and guidelines articulated in the policy will be adhered to and conducted by the School Nurse.

Legal Reference: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, 29 U.S.C. §794, the American Disabilities Act, U.S.C. §1201, et seq. and United States Department of Agriculture Regulations, 7 C.F.R §15(b), 105 CMR 210.000.

Reference Policy JLCD

Approved: May 7, 2007

Amended: December 2009

Dept. of Public Health Regulations: 105 CMR 210.00

Approved: December 18, 2006

Reviewed: December 2013

Massachusetts Association of School Committees – 2003

Somerville School Health
Life-Threatening Food Allergies Guidelines

PURPOSE

To minimize the risk of exposure to food allergens that pose a threat to Somerville students and to educate the Somerville school community about Life-Threatening food allergies (LTA).

1. Establish a building-based general Medical Emergency Plan and Life- Threatening Allergy Medical Emergency Plan.
2. Develop and implement an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) for all students with diagnosed life-threatening allergies, based on medical documentation.
3. Implement annual life-threatening allergy and EpiPen training for all staff.
4. Minimize the use of food during the school day.
5. Consistent with the Somerville Public Schools Wellness Policy (File: EFD), all food items brought into the schools are required to contain nutritional content information. Non-prepackaged food items are also required to contain food preparation information including where the food was prepared, a list of ingredients used in preparation of the food item, known allergens that may be included among the ingredients, and the following statement if applicable: *“Produced in a kitchen where nuts, tree nuts, or other allergy-producing products may have been present.”*

Family Responsibility

- Notify the school nurse and principal of your child’s allergies.
- Provide medical documentation from your health care provider to the school nurse.
- Provide a list of foods and/or ingredients that would cause a life-threatening reaction to the school nurse.
- Complete the medication permission form before your child enters school.
- Deliver/provide approved medications in proper containers to school on the first day of school.
- Meet with the school nurse to develop an Individualized Health Care Plan (IHCP) and Allergy Action Plan (AAP). This plan will include a mechanism for ongoing communication with school staff.
- Schedule a meeting with the classroom teacher to review the IHCP (Individual Health Care Plan). (Grades K - 5)
- Educate your child in the self-management of their allergy as age appropriate including: safe and unsafe foods, strategies for avoiding the allergen, symptoms of an allergic reaction, how and when to tell an adult a reaction is starting, and how to read food labels.
- Purchase a medical alert bracelet/necklace and encourage your child to wear it at all times.

- Provide the school with safe snacks to be used as stipulated in the IHCP.
- Investigate field trip destinations for potential issues (exhibits, activities) that may pose a risk.
- Go on field trips with your child, if possible.
- Participate in training and education in the classroom. (Grades K-5)

School Nurse Responsibility

When notified by the family of student of a LTA, the School Nurse will contact the parent/guardian, principal, and appropriate educational staff to inform them of the report of the LTA.

- Establish a basic Medical Emergency Plan for the building for use in any medical emergency.
- Ensure that an IHCP for each child with a life-threatening allergy (LTA) is created and implemented.

The School Nurse will discuss the LTA with the parent/guardian. Medical documentation from the student's HCP will be requested. Additional information will be requested by the School Nurse from the parent/guardian, including, but not limited to the following:

- Develop an IHCP, corresponding Allergy Action Plan (AAP) and Medication Administration Plan with the parents/guardian and a multidisciplinary school team (when appropriate) prior to school entry or at the first opportunity following a new life-threatening food allergy diagnosis.
- Maintain open and frequent communication between home and school.
- Communicate these plans to school staff that have a 'need to know' (e.g., principal, teachers, specialists, food service personnel, bus driver, coaches).
- At the beginning of each school year, provide education and training of all school staff to review the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis and EpiPen administration.
- Conduct in-service and education for appropriate staff, including before and after school programs and field trip designees, regarding an individual student's life-threatening allergies, symptoms, risk reduction procedures and emergency procedures, as described in their IHCP and AAP.
- Post a list of students who require EpiPens for allergic reactions in the health office. IHCPs and AAPs for those students will be available in their health records.
- Provide information on the availability of medical alert identification.

School/Staff Responsibilities

In order to minimize the risk of exposure to food allergens, the following guidelines will be followed.

- Emphasize the procedure of how and when to communicate with the main office and school nurse in the event of an emergency. This plan should include all school staff, coverage plans for the teacher and the nurse, and specific equipment to facilitate communication.

- Adopt and maintain a no sharing/no trading food policy. (Grades K - 5)
- Teach students and staff proper hand washing techniques before and after eating.
- Avoid the use of food for classroom and school-wide functions. (Grades K-5) Advise parents of any school activity that requires the use of food in advance of the project or activity as stipulated in the IHCP. (Grades K - 5)
- Limit the use of food for curriculum and instruction. If food is used, notify parents in advance as stipulated in the IHCP. (Grades K-5)
- Prohibit food on routine school bus routes. (Food may be allowed on longer trips with appropriate supervision by school personnel.)
- Minimize food sales as fundraising events during in-school time in elementary school stores.
- At the elementary level, provide guidelines for monitoring snack and lunch. In classes where children have a life-threatening allergy, the principal may:
 - send a letter strongly requesting that certain foods not be brought into schools;
 - establish within classrooms/cafeterias eating areas designated for the consumption of specific foods;
 - have flexibility in grouping students during the lunch period to limit exposure to potential allergens, and;
 - completely eliminate specific, potential allergens.
- Provide an educational program for staff on LTA in the classroom where there are students with LTA.
- Conduct training sessions for all school staff as soon as possible each school year. Training will include a review of the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis and the proper use of the EpiPen and will emphasize the importance of prevention and risk reduction.
- Emphasize the importance of early recognition of an allergic reaction and timely use of Epinephrine.
- Establish an emergency plan for field trips that includes how to activate EMS and who carries and administers EpiPen.
- Practice emergency LTA Medical Emergency Plan/Medical Emergency Plan twice each school year in September and January.

Reference Policy JLCD

Approved: May 7, 2007

Amended: December 2009

Dept. of Public Health Regulations: 105 CMR 210.00

Approved : December 18, 2006

Revised: December 16, 2013

Massachusetts Association of School Committees – 2003

Students with Comfort Care / Do Not Resuscitate Orders/Medical Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment

All Somerville Public Schools students will receive immediate treatment and first aid, including Cardiac Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and activation of 911 emergency medical services (EMS), if they suffer a medically life-threatening event at school. When a student's physician has issued a written Comfort Care/Do Not Resuscitate/Medical Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (CC/DNR/MOLST) Order with written authorization of the child's parent(s)/guardian(s), or of the student himself or herself if 18 years of age or older, and with expressed written instructions, the Order will be followed by the school and staff. The Order will be maintained within the student's records and may be rescinded at any time with the written request of the parent(s)/guardian(s), or the student himself or herself if 18 years of age or older. School personnel will honor a CC/DNR/MOLST order, when issued in compliance with this policy, and the procedures implementing this policy, and will not begin resuscitation in the event of cardiac or respiratory arrest.

Adopted by School Committee: May 4, 2015

Legal Ref.: M.G.L. Chap. 119, sec. 38

MGL Chap. 201D, sec. 5

Health Care Proxy Law, 1990

Health Care Reform Act, 2006

Comfort Care/Do Not Resuscitate Protocol, 1999

Chapter 305, Section 43 of the Acts of 2008

GUIDANCE PROGRAM

Guidance is defined as helping individuals understand themselves in the light of their abilities, aptitudes, interests, attitudes, strengths and limitations. This process should assist students in the development of their potential; their decisions relating to personal, educational, and vocational matters, and also in becoming capable of mature self-guidance.

The school system's guidance program will be based on this definition and developed from these broad fundamental principles:

1. Individuals are different from one another in their capabilities, aptitudes, interests, needs, goals, desires and values.
2. Conditions are improvable. Equality of educational opportunity will benefit the individual and society.
3. Guidance is a continuous and developmental process. Every experience of the individual influences his/her performance in some way.
4. Guidance does not propose to program an individual's course of action but rather tries to assist him/her in arriving at his/her own satisfactory solutions.

Guidance services will include: educational guidance; testing programs; occupational, career, and higher education assistance and information; study aids; consultation services; and personal developmental guidance as needed. These services will be available to all students.

While some of the problems of the individual may relate to behavior and consequently entail guidance on behavior, student discipline will not be a regular function of guidance personnel.

Revised: January 18, 1996

Reviewed: November 2009

LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. 71:38A through 71:38F; 71:46G
 603 CMR 26.04

GUIDANCE PROGRAM

Guidance Counselors and other personnel shall represent to the students a broad spectrum of education and career opportunities. Race, color, sex, religion, gender identity, or national origin shall not be considered as limiting factors in career determination.

“Career Day” programs and other occupational information shall include representatives of both sexes and of minority group members in a broad variety of occupational roles. Schools shall not permit materials including pictorial representations to be used to recruit students for employment, including training, that contain a preference of individuals of particular race, color, sex, religion, gender identity, or national origin. Any pictorial representation in such materials, in the aggregate, shall depict members of both sexes and of minority groups.

No material or tests shall be employed for guidance purposes which discriminate and/or limit choices of the bases of race, color, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or national origin.

Revised: January 18, 1996

Amended: December 2009

Amended: December 2014

LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. 71:38A through 71:38F; 71:46G
603 CMR 26.04

PROTOCOL FOR TRAUMATIC INCIDENTS

Overview

Purpose

When something sad or bad happens within a school community, especially if it is unexpected or violent, members of the community may experience trauma as a result. Trauma is a normal reaction to a painful event and can happen to anyone, and can cause distress and disruption to everyday life. The goal in establishing procedures is to help minimize the disruption, and allow for the swiftest possible return to the school routine.

The purpose of this protocol is to provide a procedure for all K-8 schools in the Somerville District to utilize in order to take immediate and appropriate action in the prevention, intervention, and postvention aspects of a traumatic incident that impacts any Somerville student or group of students in school.

Types of Traumatic Incidents

Some kinds of trauma that may have an impact on students or staff in a school are:

- Violence at school or in the community
- Student considered medically “at risk”
- Accident involving physical harm at school
- Suicide
- Homicide
- Drug overdose
- Sudden, accidental death

Crisis Team

The Crisis Team (CT) serves as a support network for students and staff in the event of a traumatic event. The Principal shall establish a crisis response team. The team will play a key role in the management of and response to traumatic incidents by any or all of the following:

- Delegating tasks
- Sharing the responsibility to make decisions
- Providing direct service
- Appointing a liaison between the school and outside agencies
- Documenting activities of the process
- Providing consultation for the staff
- De-briefing, evaluation and follow up

Team Membership

The Principal or Supervisor of Guidance forms the Crisis Team (CT). He or she assembles the appropriate team members for the specific incident, which will include at least one administrator. The Principal acts as or designates a Crisis Team Coordinator for the incident.

Membership Pool

- *Principal and/or Supervisor of Guidance*
- *Director of Student Services*
- *Assistant Principal*
- *School Nurse*
- *Counselors Educators*
- *Adjustment Counselors*
- *Mediation Specialist*
- *Somerville Mental Health Clinicians*
- *Teen Connection Clinicians*
- *CASPAR*
- *Police Officer*
- *Somerville TRN Manager or TRN Member*
- *Other personnel as appropriate*

Roles and Responsibilities of Crisis Team Members

- *Team Leader*
- *Medical/Health Coordinator*
- *Caregiver*
- *Communications Coordinator*
 - *Media Liaison*
 - *Parent Communication Coordinator*
 - *Faculty and Staff Communication Coordinator*
 - *Student Communication Coordinator*
- *Crowd Manager*
- *Provisioning*
- *Student-At-Risk Identifiers*
- *Intervention Leader*
- *Support Provider*

Protocol for Dealing with A Suicide Threat or Attempt

The following protocol describes a process to be followed whenever a student makes a credible threat or indication that he/she is contemplating suicide.

Referrals

- All such incidents shall be referred immediately to the Crisis Team Coordinator (CTC) or the student's guidance/adjustment counselor. Counselors will notify the CTC if they receive the notification first. The CTC will work with the appropriate counselor to manage the incident.
- The CTC will request the assistance of other Crisis Team members as necessary. An effort will be made to find out who else within the school community has relevant information pertinent to the student's current situation.
- The counselor and clinically trained Crisis Team member will assess the level of risk.
- The Crisis Team will follow up and review the actions taken.

Student Protection

- The student should remain with a staff member until a disposition has been made regarding how the incident will be managed. Students in crisis should not be left unsupervised.
- The Crisis Team will make decisions regarding all appropriate action to address the crisis, including parental notification.

Return to School

- A letter from a health care provider indicating that the student is returning to school should be provided by the parent/guardian and given to the CTC and school nurse. Parental involvement in planning a student's return to school is critical. Copies of the letter of reentry will be given to the guidance counselor and Building Administrators. Faculty members, as deemed appropriate by the team, will be notified of the circumstances upon the student's return.
- Safety Plan - There should be a re-entry meeting with parents, and that a safety plan be developed re: what to do in school if similar event happens again.

Protocol for Critical Incidents Requiring Immediate Attention

The following protocol must be adhered to whenever the school is experiencing a critical incident.

When an Incident Occurs

- Staff Members should call the Main Office on a classroom phone or intercom, reporting the nature of the incident and the location. A staff member should remain at the scene.
- The Main Office will contact the Crisis Team Coordinator and school nurse, when appropriate.

The Crisis Team Coordinator will

- Assemble an appropriate team as needed.
- Contact the school nurse, if necessary, who will
 - Report to the scene
 - Determine whether there is a medical emergency
 - If there is a medical emergency, notify medical support personnel
 - Remain at the scene until the medical support team arrives
- Direct office staff to contact support personnel (i.e., ambulance, fire, police, etc.)
- Assign Crisis Team Members to direct the medical support team to the scene
- Assign Crisis Team Members to various strategic locations in the school.
- Notify School District's Superintendent's Office
- Arrange a review by Crisis Team and all staff affected by the incident to debrief and assess the effectiveness of the protocol within five school days.
- Complete and file a Crisis Team Meeting form.

Return to School

- *Re-entry Plan*
- *Safety Plan*

Protocol for Either the Parent/Guardian or the Student Refusing to Seek Help Parent or Guardian Refuses

- If the parent/guardian refuses to pursue treatment for a student identified as medically “at risk,” the Crisis Team Coordinator or counselor will file a 51A form with the Department of Social Services.

Protocol for Incidents Which Take Place Outside School Hours

(2:45 PM – 8:06 AM or Weekends)

Before or After School Incident

- If a student is found medically “at risk” after 2:45 PM or prior to 8:06 AM, or on weekends, the staff member should call 911 and remain with the student until emergency help arrives.
- Following the incident the staff person should make a written incident report and review it with the CTC and Principal as soon as possible. Report should be forwarded to the School District Superintendent’s Office.

Postvention Protocol

The following is a protocol for dealing with traumatic event (including death) occurring within the school community.

Communication Network

The Principal or the Assistant Principal’s designee notifies the following simultaneously.

- The Crisis Team – The Crisis Team is called together as soon as reasonable upon notification of a critical incident. If incident occurs over the weekend or evening, the Crisis Team phone tree should be utilized for notification and to plan for a meeting as soon as reasonable. This meeting will take place prior to a faculty meeting. Every effort must be made to contact all team members promptly. Priority is given to this meeting over any other duties.
- Faculty – The faculty will report for a meeting at the end of the school day if the incident occurs during school hours, *or immediately before the start of the next school day.*
- Superintendent’s Office – the Superintendent of Schools should be notified of any incident involving sudden death as soon as information concerning the incident is available.
- Director of Student Services – The Director of Student Services should be notified immediately of any incident so that additional support personnel from other buildings can be utilized to help with the emergency situation if needed.

Crisis Team

The permanent Crisis Team, which is already in place, *may* be expanded as needed under the direction of the Principal, with consultation from the Crisis Team.

Functions of the Crisis Team

The most important function of the Crisis Team is the management of the crisis. During the initial meeting of the team prior to the general faculty meeting *and under the direction of the Principal*, the following tasks should be considered, where appropriate:

- Collection of facts surrounding the crisis
- Appropriate staff, preferably one who is familiar with the student should contact family to express our *concern* and ask for their input regarding school/student involvement.

- Identify the friends of the victim(s) and others affected. Determine the most sensitive way of notifying them
- Determine the appropriateness of a general school announcement or Connect Ed System call.
- Designate one person to handle media inquiries
- Discuss what facts should be given to the faculty and how teachers should present information to students and how they might respond to student inquiries.
- Designate a secretary to handle incoming calls from parents and students. Specific information should be given to the secretary to sue when responding to parents and students
- Prepare a statement regarding the availability of counseling services to students during the next several days. The homeroom teacher should present this information.
- Determine if there are siblings in other schools. If so, these schools should be notified of the incident.
- Schedule the next Crisis Team meeting.
- *Every effort shall be made* to notify parents of students directly affected prior to the students' arrival at home.
- Consideration should be given to what information all parents should receive and the best way to disseminate it.
- *Designate a communication coordinator for outgoing and incoming parent/school communication.*

Faculty Meeting

The following information should be provided at the faculty meeting following a critical incident:

- Facts about the incident
- Guidance and suggestions on helpful responses, how to present information to parents and the means of communicating this information to students.
- Announce the schedule and description of services, which will be available to students and how to communicate this information to students
- Information about support systems available for faculty members
- The date and time of the next faculty meeting
- Information regarding the wake and funeral arrangements. Teachers should be reminded to inform students that funeral attendance is a family decision for those under eighteen and parent permission is required.

Support Services Available

For Students may include:

- Group and individual counseling services provided by the school system and outside agencies
- Sign-in space should be designated for students who are seeking support services
- A Crisis Team member and appropriate space should be made available for students' peer group if deemed helpful
- Parents of students who seem particularly upset should be notified and provided with information about additional support services available in the community.
- Counselor may want to follow students' (*victim's*) schedule and speak to classmates
- Identify students at risk and "absent" students

For Teachers *may include*:

- A Crisis Team Member and space should be provided to assist teachers in need of support services
- *Listing of resources for additional support services that are available in the community.*

For Parents *may include*:

- Parents who have particular concerns should be referred to a Crisis Team Member who can respond to their concerns.
- A designated secretary should be assigned with information about support services available in the school system and the community.

For Crisis Team Members:

- Outside consultants should be scheduled to meet with the team if requested to provide further expertise and support. *The Crisis Team will meet to review process and experiences.*

Team Response Self Evaluation

- Should include time to reflect upon the protocol including how it was applied, it's effectiveness, and ways the protocol could be improved.

Adopted: May 1996

Amended: December 2009

**TRAUMA SENSITIVE SCHOOLS
VISION STATEMENT**

The Somerville Public Schools are committed to maintaining a safe, secure, and trauma-sensitive school environment in order to maximize individual student learning. District faculty and staff are knowledgeable of the fact that exposure to traumatic events may impact a student's academic, social, emotional, and behavioral success. The implementation of schoolwide and individual approaches is essential in helping students strengthen their resiliency in order to cope and succeed in their intellectual and interpersonal endeavors. Therefore, District resources are directed to support students in developing knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to make healthy choices, communicate effectively and respect themselves and others.

Adopted: October 2009

Reviewed: December 2009

STUDENT GIFTS AND SOLICITATIONS

Because of the embarrassment that might result among children, students will be discouraged from giving gifts to classroom teachers and other school personnel. For the same reason, there will be no formal exchange of gifts between students in the classroom.

Solicitation of funds for charitable purposes from students of the school system will be made only as approved by the Somerville School Committee.

Any organization desiring to distribute flyers or other materials to students in connection with fund drives may do so only with the approval of the Superintendent.

Revised: January 1996

Reviewed: November 2009

STUDENT FEES, FINES, AND CHARGES

The Somerville School Committee recognizes the need for student fees to fund certain activities. It also recognizes that some students may not be able to pay these fees. No student will be denied access into any program because of inability to pay these supplementary charges.

A school may exact a fee or charge only upon School Committee approval. The schools, however, may:

Charge students enrolled in certain courses for the cost of materials used in projects that will become the property of the student.

Charge for replacement cost of lost and damaged books, materials, supplies, and equipment.

Provisions will be made for those students who are unable to pay fees. However, these students are not exempt from charges for lost and damaged books, locks, materials, supplies, and equipment.

All student fees and charges, both optional and required, will be listed and described annually in each school's student handbook or in some other written form and distributed to each student. The notice will advise students that fees are to be paid and of the penalties for their failure to pay them. Permissible penalties include the withholding of report cards until payment is made or denial of participation in extra class activities while the student is enrolled in this District.

Any fee or charge due to any school in the District and not paid at the end of the school year will be carried forward to the next succeeding school year, as such debts are considered to be debts of the student to the District and not to a particular school.

Adopted: January 1996

Revised: December 2009

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.

The Superintendent will provide for the proper administration of student records in keeping with state and federal requirements, and shall obtain a copy of the state student records regulations (603 CMR 23.00). The temporary record of each student enrolled on or after June 2002 will be destroyed no later than seven years after the student transfers, graduates or withdraws from the School District. Written notice to the eligible student and his/her parent of the approximate date of destruction of the temporary record and their right to receive the information in whole or in part, shall be made at the time of such transfer, graduation, or withdrawal. The student's transcript may only be destroyed 60 years following his/her graduation, transfer, or withdrawal from the school system.

The Committee wishes to make clear that all individual student records of the school system are confidential. This extends to giving out individual addresses and telephone numbers.

SOURCE: MASC

Adopted: April 1996

Amended: December 2009

LEGAL REFS: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974,
P.L. 93-380, Amended
P.L. 103-382, 1994
M.G.L. 66:10 71:34A, B, D, E, H
Board of Education Student Record Regulations adopted 2/10/77, June
1995 as amended June 2002.
603 CMR: Dept. Of Education 23.00 through 23:12 also
Mass Dept. Of Education publication Student Records; Questions,
Answers and Guidelines, Sept. 1995

CROSS REF: KDB, Public's Right to Know

STUDENT RECORDS

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.

Application of Rights

603 CMR 23.00 is promulgated to insure parents’ and students’ rights of confidentiality, inspection, amendment, and destruction of students’ records and to assist local school systems in adhering to the law. 603 CMR 23.00 should be liberally construed for these purposes.

- (1) These rights shall be the rights of the student upon reaching 14 years of age or upon entering the ninth grade, whichever comes first. If a student is under the age of 14 and has not yet entered the ninth grade, these rights shall belong to the student’s parent.
- (2) If a student is from 14 through 17 years or has entered the ninth grade, both the student and his/her parent, or either one acting alone, shall exercise these rights.
- (3) If a student is 18 years of age or older, he/she alone shall exercise these rights, subject to the following. The parent may continue to exercise the rights until expressly limited by such student. Such student may limit the rights and provisions of 603 CMR 23.00 which extend to his/her parent, except the right to inspect the student record, by making such request in writing to the school Principal or Superintendent of Schools who shall honor such request and retain a copy of it in the student record. Pursuant to M.G.L. c.71, s.34E, the parent of a student may inspect the student record regardless of the student’s age.
- (4) Notwithstanding 603 CMR 23.01(1) and 23.01(2), nothing shall be construed to mean that a school committee cannot extend the provisions of 603 CMR 23.00 to students under the age of 14 or to students who have not yet entered the ninth grade.

Definition of Terms

The various terms as used in 603 CMR 23.00 are defined below:

Access: shall mean inspection or copying of a student record, in whole or in part.

Authorized school personnel: shall consist of three groups:

- (1) School administrators, teachers, counselors and other professionals who are employed by the School Committee or who are providing services to the student under an agreement between the School Committee and a service provider, and who are working directly with the student in an administrative, teaching, counseling and/or diagnostic capacity. Any such personnel who are not employed directly by the School Committee shall have access only to the student record information that is required for them to perform their duties.

- (2) Administrative office staff and clerical personnel, including operators of data processing equipment or equipment that produces microfilm/microfiche, who are either employed by the School Committee or are employed under a School Committee service contract, and whose duties require them to have access to student records for purposes of processing information for the student record. Such personnel shall have access only to the student record information that is required for them to perform their duties.
- (3) The evaluation team that evaluates a student.

Eligible student: shall mean any student who is 14 years of age or older or who has entered 9th grade, unless the School Committee acting pursuant to 603 CMR 23.01(4) extends the rights and provisions of 603 CMR 23.00 to students under the age of 14 or to students who have not yet entered 9th grade.

Evaluation Team: shall mean the team, which evaluates school-age children pursuant to M.G.L.c.71B (St. 1972, c.766) and 603 CMR 28.00.

Parent: shall mean a student's father or mother, or guardian, or person or agency legally authorized to act on behalf of the child in place of or in conjunction with the father, mother, or guardian. Any parent who by court order does not have physical custody of the student, is considered a non custodial parent for purposes of M.G.L. c. 71, s.34H and 603 CMR 23.00. This includes parents who by court order do not reside with or supervise the student, even for short periods of time.

Release: shall mean the oral or written disclosure, in whole or in part, of information in a student record.

School-age child with special needs: shall have the same definition as that given in M.G.L. c. 71B (St. 1972, c.766) and 603 CMR 28.00.

School committee: shall include a school committee, a board of trustees of a charter school, a board of trustees of a vocational-technical school, a board of directors of an educational collaborative and the governing body of an M.G.L. c.71B (Chapter 766) approved private school.

Student: shall mean any person enrolled or formerly enrolled in a public elementary or secondary school or any person age three or older about whom a school committee maintains information. The term as used in 603 CMR 23.00 shall not include a person about whom a school committee maintains information relative only to the person's employment by the School Committee.

The student record: shall consist of the transcript and the temporary record, including all information, recording and computer tapes, microfilm, microfiche, or any other materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics concerning a student that is organized on the basis of the student's name or in a way that such student may be individually identified, and that is kept by the public schools of the Commonwealth. The terms as used in 603 CMR 23.00 shall mean all such information and materials regardless of where they are located, except for the information and materials specifically exempted by 603 CMR 23.04.

The temporary record: shall consist of all the information in the student record which is not contained in the transcript. This information clearly shall be of importance to the educational process. Such information may include standardized test results, class rank (when applicable), extracurricular activities, and evaluations by teachers, counselors, and other school staff.

Third party: shall mean any person or private or public agency, authority, or organization other than the eligible student, his/her parent, or authorized school personnel.

Log of Access: A log shall be kept as part of each student's record. If parts of the student record are separately located, a separate log shall be kept with each part. The log shall indicate all persons who have obtained access to the student record, stating: the name, position and signature of the person releasing the information; the name, position and, if a third party, the affiliation if any, of the person who is to receive the information; the date of access; the parts of the record to which access was obtained; and the purpose of such access. Unless student record information is to be deleted or released, this log requirement shall not apply to:

- (a) Authorized school personnel under 603 CMR 23.02(9)(a) who inspect the student record;
- (b) Administrative office staff and clerical personnel under 603 CMR 23.02(9)(b), who add information to or obtain access to the student record; and
- (c) School nurses who inspect the student health record.

Access of Third Parties. Except for the provisions of 603 CMR 23.07(4)(a) through 23.07(4)(h), no third party shall have access to information in or from a student record without the specific, informed written consent of the eligible student or the parent. When granting consent, the eligible student or parent shall have the right to designate which parts of the student record shall be released to the third party. A copy of such consent shall be retained by the eligible student or parent and a duplicate placed in the temporary record. Except for the information described in 603 CMR 23.07(4)(a), personally identifiable information from a student record shall only be released to a third party on the condition that he/she will not permit any other third party to have access to such information without the written consent of the eligible student or parent.

The SPS has designated the following as "directory information" for the purposes of 603 CMR 23.07(4)(a): a student's name, address, telephone listing, date of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance, weight and height of members of athletic teams, class, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, degrees, honors and awards, and post-high school plans. Pursuant to 603 CMR 23.07(4)(a), the school may release "directory information" provided that the school "gives public notice of the types of information it may release under 603 CMR 23.07 and allows eligible students and parents a reasonable time after such notice to request that this information not be released without the prior consent of the eligible student or parent. Such notice may be included in the routine information letter required under 603 CMR 23.10."

For convenience, the text of 603 CMR 23.07(4)(b) through 23.07(4)(h) is reproduced below and reads as follows:

(b) Upon receipt of a court order or lawfully issued subpoena the school shall comply, provided that the school makes a reasonable effort to notify the parent or eligible student of the order or subpoena in advance of compliance.

(c) A school may release information regarding a student upon receipt of a request from the Department of Social Services, a probation officer, a justice of any court, or the Department of Youth Services under the provisions of M.G.L. c. 119, sections 51B, 57, 69 and 69A respectively.

(d) Federal, state and local education officials, and their authorized agents shall have access to student records as necessary in connection with the audit, evaluation or enforcement of federal and state education laws, or programs; provided that except when collection of personally identifiable data is specifically authorized by law, any data collected by such officials shall be protected so that parties other than such officials and their authorized agents cannot personally identify such students and their parents; and such personally identifiable data shall be destroyed when no longer needed for the audit, evaluation or enforcement of federal and state education laws.

(e) A school may disclose information regarding a student to appropriate parties in connection with a health or safety emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals. This includes, but is not limited to, disclosures to the local police department and the Department of Social Services under the provisions of M.G.L. c. 71, section 37L and M.G.L. c. 119, section 51A.

(f) Upon notification by law enforcement authorities that a student, or former student, has been reported missing, a mark shall be placed in the student record of such student. The school shall report any request concerning the records of the such child to the appropriate law enforcement authority pursuant to the provisions of M.G.L. c. 22A, section 9.

(g) Authorized school personnel of the school to which a student seeks or intends to transfer may have access to such student's record without the consent of the eligible student or parent, provided that the school the student is leaving, or has left, gives notice that it forwards student records to schools in which the student seeks or intends to enroll. Such notice may be included in the routine information letter required under 603 CMR 23.10.

(h) School health personnel and local and state health department personnel shall have access to student health records, including but not limited to immunization records, when such access is required in the performance of official duties, without the consent of the eligible student or parent.

Access Procedures for Non-Custodial Parents. As required by M.G.L. c.71, s.34H, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with the following provisions.

(a) A non-custodial parent is eligible to obtain access to the student record unless:

1. The parent has been denied legal custody based on a threat to the safety of the student or to the custodial parent, or
 2. The parent has been denied visitation or has been ordered to supervised visitation, or
 3. The parent's access to the student or to the custodial parent has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record.
- (b) In order to obtain access, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student record to the high school principal annually. The initial request must include the following:
1. A certified copy of the court order or judgment relative to the custody of the student that either indicates that the requesting parent is eligible to receive access as set forth in 603 CMR 23.07(5)(a), or a certified copy of a court order specifically ordering that the student records be made available to the non-custodial parent, and
 2. An affidavit from the non-custodial parent that said court order or judgment remain in effect and that there is no temporary or permanent order restricting access to the custodial parent or any child in the custodial parent's custody.
- (c) The non-custodial parent must submit a written request for a access each year stating that said parent continues to be entitled to unsupervised visitation with the student and is eligible to obtain access as set forth in 603 CMR 23.07(5)(a).
- (d) Upon receipt of the request (initial and annual) the school must immediately notify the custodial parent by certified and first class mail, in English and the primary language of the custodial parent, that it will provide the non-custodial parent with access after 21 days, unless the custodial parent provides the principal with documentation that the non-custodial parent is not eligible to obtain access as set forth in 603 CMR 23.07(5)(a).
- (e) The school must delete the address and telephone number of the student and custodial parent from student records provided to non-custodial parents. In addition, such records must be marked to indicate that they shall not be used to enroll the student in another school.
- (f) Upon receipt of a court order which prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to M.G.L. c.71, s.34H, the school shall notify the non-custodial parent that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial parent.

At least once during every school year, the school shall publish and distribute to students and their parents in their primary language a routine information letter informing them of the following:

- (a) The standardized testing programs and research studies to be conducted during the year and other routine information to be collected or solicited from the student during the year.
- (a) The general provisions of 603 CMR 23.00 regarding parent and student rights, and that copies of 603 CMR 23.00 are available to them from the school.

SOURCE: MASC

Adopted: January 1996

Amended: December 2009, March 2017

LEGAL REFS: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974,
 P.L. 93-380, Amended
 P.L. 103-382, 1994
 M.G.L. 66:10 71:34 A, B, D, E, H
 Board of Education Student Record Regulations adopted 2/10/75, as
 amended June 2002
 603 CMR: Dept. Of Education 23.00 through 23:12
 Mass Dept. Of Education publication Student Records; Questions,
 Answers and Guidelines, Sept. 1995

CROSS REF: KDB, Public's Right to Know

PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

The Somerville Public Schools is committed to enforcing the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), 20 U.S.C. 1232h, included in the Goals 2000 Educate America Act of 1994. PPRA applies to all funding provided by the United State Department of Education and seeks to protect the rights of parents to inspect or survey instructional materials if these material or surveys are funded by the United States Department of Education.

With respect to survey activities, survey materials, and instruction materials used by students and funded by the United States Department of Education, the Somerville Public Schools will:

- Make such materials available for inspection by parents.
- Obtain written parental consent if students are required to participate in a survey, analysis or evaluation that reveals information such as:
 - ✓ Political affiliations
 - ✓ Mental and psychological problems potentially embarrassing to the student and his/her family
 - ✓ Sexual behavior or attitudes
 - ✓ Illegal or self-incriminating behavior (such as use or possession of tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs)
 - ✓ Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships
 - ✓ Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, doctors, and ministers
 - ✓ Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such programs)

With respect to voluntary surveys of students, parents/guardians of students being surveyed will be contacted by a written notice in advance of the survey. This letter will include:

- The purpose and benefit of the survey
- Whether participation is encouraged or required
- How anonymity will be protected
- When, where, and by whom the survey will be administered
- How results will be disseminated
- Procedures for reviewing survey materials prior to administration
- Procedures for parents/guardians to inform the District if they wish to not have their child participate in the survey.

If student participation in a survey is required, then the school must obtain written parental consent prior to administration of the survey.

Parents of students who believe their rights under PPRA may have been violated may file a complaint with the United States Department of Family Compliance Office at (202) 260-3887. Complaints must contain specific allegations of facts giving reasonable cause to believe that a violation of PPRA has occurred.

Approved by Somerville School Committee: January 9, 2012

STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHS

Individual schools may arrange, in cooperation with the school's parent organization, student council, designated student committee, or a staff committee, to take individual student and/or class group pictures. Awarding of the photographic services shall be conducted in accordance with state law.

Individual and/or class group pictures may be taken at the school facility and during the regular school day hours. The pictures shall be made available for purchase by students and/or parents on a voluntary basis. The building Principal or his/her designee shall have final authority in authorizing the picture-taking program and will be responsible for overseeing the process.

Students may be required to have an individual picture taken for the cumulative file or identification purposes; however, no student shall be pressured or required to purchase photographs. The handling of all student photos and images will be consistent with the Family Rights and Privacy Act.

Adopted: January 1996

Amended: December 2009

**SOMERVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
NETWORK ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR STUDENTS**

PURPOSE

The Somerville Public Schools is pleased to offer its students access to the district's computer network, including access to the Internet. Access to the network will enable students to explore thousands of libraries, databases, and bulletin boards. Potentially, students will also be exposed to advertisements of various kinds.

The Somerville Public Schools believes that there is educational value in the Internet, and recognizes its potential to support district curriculum. Through the Internet, it's possible to communicate with people all over the world through discussion forums and electronic mail. Many valuable educational files may be downloaded from the Internet. Because of its sheer size and seemingly limitless resources, the Internet's educational potential is boundless. However, because of its broad reach the Internet also contains the potential for misuse. The following guidelines are intended to help ensure that students use this valuable resource in a safe and appropriate manner.

Families should be aware that some material that is accessible via the Internet might contain content that is illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or offensive. While our goal is to provide Internet access to support and promote student learning, students will have access to other information as well. The district believes that the benefits of student access to the Internet far exceed the disadvantages. Somerville Public Schools will make every effort to ensure that students use the Internet properly and students are expected to conduct themselves in a responsible manner when accessing the district network and the Internet. The district will seek to ensure that all student use of the Internet will be conducted under faculty supervision. However, faculty members cannot monitor student use at every moment and each student is expected to use it in a responsible manner and is accountable for his or her own appropriate use of the Internet. Before students are authorized to access the Internet they are required to review these Guidelines with their teacher and / or building Technology Facilitator.

ACCEPTABLE USE

Internet access through the Somerville Public Schools is a privilege and not a right and access may be terminated if this privilege is misused. Inappropriate conduct may also be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the policy manual of the Somerville Public Schools. The intent of this policy is to ensure that all use of the Internet is consistent with the educational goals of the Somerville Public Schools.

The following actions violate the Policy:

- Use of the Network for personal or recreational purposes or activities;
- Sending "chain" type letters and unsolicited bulk mails (Spamming);

- Accessing social networks, social bookmarking, blogs, wikis, discussion groups or "chat rooms", multiuser role-playing environments and video games for a purpose not directly related to an educational task;
- Use of the Network to buy, sell or advertise any goods or services;
- Use of the Network for gambling purposes;
- Any use of the Network for political or commercial purposes that is not directly related to the educational purposes of the Somerville Public Schools;
- Use of the Network to transmit profane, obscene, vulgar, sexually explicit, threatening, defamatory, abusive, discriminatory, harassing, criminal or otherwise objectionable messages or materials. (Students are also prohibited from visiting Internet sites that post such materials and downloading or displaying such materials.);
- Use of the Network for any illegal purpose or in support of illegal activities or in a manner that violates any federal or state law or statute, or an activity prohibited by any Policy of the district including but not limited to the use or dissemination of copyrighted materials;
- Plagiarism. (i.e. the taking of material created by others and presenting it as if it were one's own);
- Revealing one's own password, using the network login (user name and password) of another individual or pretending to be someone else when using the Network;
- Accessing, reading, altering, deleting or copying another user's messages or data without express written approval;
- Using technology resources to promote, support or celebrate religion or religious institutions;
- Use of the Network download or transmit profanity, vulgarities, obscenity or using other language that is considered offensive or degrading to others;
- Using harassing, racial, sexist or discriminatory remarks and other antisocial behaviors;
- Using encryption or security measures to avoid monitoring or review in the ordinary course of business or routine maintenance by the system administrator;
- Using district resources in a wasteful manner including but not limited to ink, toner and paper;
- Using the network in a manner that is inconsistent with the directions from teachers and other staff and generally-accepted network etiquette;
- Purposefully posting or divulging any type of private or personal information about yourself or another person;
- Using invasive software such as viruses, "worms" and other detrimental activities;
- Downloading freeware, shareware or other software which affects the system software of a computer;
- Attempting to log-on to the Network as the system administrator;
- Attempting to gain unauthorized access to the Network, including but not limited to, the use of personal hardware and attempts to override the domain policies of the Network.

RE: CYBER-BULLYING

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Bill S2404, Section 5, defines Cyber-bullying as:

“...bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying shall also include (i) the

creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.”

In accordance with the zero-tolerance **Bullying Prevention Plan** of the Somerville Public Schools, Cyber-bullying is prohibited on school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at school-sponsored or school-related activities, functions or programs (whether on or off school grounds), at bus stops, on school busses or other vehicles owned or operated by the SPS or their contractors, or through the use of technology or electronic devices owned, leased or used by the District, regardless of whether the Cyber-bullying occurs on or off the Network.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

Access of material that has been deemed inappropriate for educational use by Somerville Public Schools’ faculty or staff is strictly prohibited. If users encounter such material by accident, they should quit the application immediately. Students should report the incident directly to a teacher. Students will not have the opportunity to simply “surf” the Internet or browse among World Wide Web pages. Students will use the Internet for a specific educational purpose during lab time or for a class assignment.

ACCESS TO STUDENT FILES

All student files, including e-mail files and other Internet files and usage may be monitored by faculty for educational and administrative purposes, including the need to ensure that these Guidelines are being followed. Also, faculty may be asked to provide access to student files and records to law enforcement authorities. Students should not assume that the uses of Somerville Public Schools Internet access will be private.

PERSONAL SAFETY

The Internet is accessible to the public and to those individuals who may seek to contact students for inappropriate purposes. The Somerville Public Schools seeks to but cannot entirely screen the Internet for such inappropriate uses. Students are urged to be diligent, cautious and prudent about divulging personal information via the internet. Students should promptly inform their teacher or school administrator of any on-line communication that the student feels is threatening, harassing or otherwise inappropriate.

SYSTEM SECURITY AND RESOURCE LIMITS

Students are expected to follow procedures and guidelines that are issued in order to ensure the security of district computer systems and to respect technology resources limits. These include downloading guidelines and virus protection procedures that may be issued. Students are prohibited from utilizing non-district flash drives or other external storage device in a school computer without permission from district staff. The installation of any kind of software on district computers is strictly prohibited. Students are not allowed to use the district's computer resources to create their own web page unless it is in conjunction with a class assignment.

LIABILITY

The Somerville Public Schools assumes no responsibility or liability for:

- Any unauthorized charges or fees incurred as a result of use of the system/Network, including but not limited to telephone charges, long distance charges, per minute surcharges and/or equipment or line charges;
- Any financial obligations arising out of the unauthorized use of the Network for the purchase of products or services;
- Any user data, information, or materials stored on the Network;
- Any cost, liability or damages caused by user violation of this Policy, or any other inappropriate use of electronic resources of the SPS;
- The SPS makes no guarantee, implied or otherwise, regarding the reliability of the data connection, and shall not be liable for any loss or corruption of data resulting while using the system/Network.

Approved by the Somerville School Committee: June 3, 2002

Revised: November 27, 2007

Approved by the Somerville School Committee: December 17, 2007

Reviewed: May 2009

Amended: June 2011

Amended: March 2015

**PLEASE RETURN THIS PAGE WITH SIGNATURE AND DATE
TO THE STUDENT'S TEACHER**

Student

I have read the Somerville Public Schools Guidelines for Internet use. I agree to follow these Guidelines when I use the Internet or World Wide Web.

Student's Name: _____ Grade: _____

Signature: _____

Today's Date: _____

Parent

I have read the Somerville Public Schools Guidelines for Internet Use. I understand these guidelines and have discussed them with my child to ensure that he/she understands the importance of these Guidelines. My child understands that if these Guidelines are not followed, revocation of Internet privileges may be necessary and further disciplinary actions may occur.

Parent's Signature: _____

Today's Date: _____